CYD

Anthology

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Institute for Just Communities

Advancing knowledge, skill building, and strategic communication to create safe, just, and prosperous communities.
INTRODUCTION

JOHN P. TERRY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is with great pleasure that I introduce Volume I of the CYD Anthology series: a peer-reviewed collection that chronicles the breadth and depth of the Community Youth Development (CYD) knowledge base. It is our intention that this series become an essential resource and tool for scholars, policymakers, planners, practitioners, and students alike.

This Volume, as are those to follow, is dedicated to the collection and dissemination of the best in CYD theory, research, and practice. As such, the Anthology articles are organized around these categories and were selected based on a broad view of scholarship as conceptualized by Carnegie Foundation's Advancement of Teaching, in addition to B. Boyer's Scholarship Reconsidered (1990).1

The Volume is organized into five sections: (1) The CYD Framework, (2) Theory, (3) Research/Evaluation, (4) Practice, and (5) Special Selections. Sections 1 and 5, while not peer-reviewed, include articles deemed by the editors to be important archival material that expand the body of knowledge in the CYD movement.

The editorial board used a peer-review process to select all articles appearing in the Theory, Research/Evaluation, and Practice sections, including the best-judged submission in each of the categories. We are pleased to announce the recipients of those awards here:

Theory
Karen Pittman, “Balancing the Equation: Communities Supporting Youth, Youth Supporting Communities” (pages 19–24)

Research
Linda Camino & Shepherd Zeldin, “Making the Transition to Community Youth Development: Emerging Roles and Competencies for Youth-Serving Organizations and Youth Workers” (pages 70–78)

Practice
Joshua Sean Thomases, “Educating the Human Spirit: Schools in a Democratic Society” (pages 150–155)

Congratulations to each of you. We greatly respect the contributions you are making to the field.

As the Anthology collection illustrates, CYD is an integrative, value-driven theory of youth, community, and the world. CYD theory, which is based on research in such arenas as social psychology, physics, ecology, human development, and community psychology, values participation as a means of healthy development for individuals and communities. Youth and adults, working and playing as partners, view each other as competent resources to build and sustain community. Healthy communities, explicit in this theory, are free of racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, and other forms of social injustice and stratification. CYD theory is optimistic: we look to construct a reality based on “ought” rather than “is.” It is, in a sense, a prophecy wanting to be fulfilled.
Hughes and Curnan underscore this point in the CYD Framework discussion, stating that

CYD is intentional social change involving youth and adults working in partnership to create just, safe, and healthy communities. It is a dynamic philosophical, sociological, and educational movement powered by the energy created when youth and adults work together to affect community change and development. It engages communities to embrace their role in the development of youth, including those who are marginalized.

This framework, or mega-social theory, helps to delineate how we as CYD practitioners, policymakers, and researchers can think about youth and community and how we can act upon those thoughts. Within this context, researchers and evaluators will search for truth and explicate best practices, and investigate the efficacy of certain approaches, models, and practices to determine if CYD does in fact lead to healthier communities—and if so, what practical ingredients make it work.

CYD is an organic, value- and vision-driven theory, which approaches the world not as it is but as it could be. This understated but powerful philosophical assumption is one of the main ideas that separates CYD from other approaches. Ultimately, CYD looks to structural causes of social injustice and poverty, which are best approached and overcome through youth and adults working together in the context of community.

This Volume tells the story of CYD in its current state. It clearly identifies the need for greater theory building, particularly in the domain of research and evaluation, and points to the need for collaboration in knowledge building among theorists, researchers and evaluators, and practitioners. The contributions to this Anthology as well as those published in the CYD Journal stand as encouraging evidence that we are on our way to doing just that.

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1. See www.cydjournal.org/2000Spring/whatsnew2.html for more about our criteria for selection and the forms of scholarship as identified by the Carnegie Foundation.
2. See "Towards Shared Prosperity: Change-Making in the CYD Movement" in Section 1 of this Volume. "Towards Shared Prosperity" is the second iteration of a logic model for Community Youth Development. The first, also by Hughes and Curnan, "CYD Framework: A Blueprint for Action," appeared in the winter, 2000 inaugural issue of CYD Journal (Volume 1, Number 1) and is frequently referenced in this Anthology. The full text may be found on our website at www.cydjournal.org/2000/Winter/hughes.html.
We believe that Kids Can Free the Children has made a unique contribution toward ending the exploitation of children around the world. We are very proud to have been selected by the U.N. to be its lead NGO partner in a decade-long project aimed at raising awareness and promoting action to alleviate the plight of war-affected children. We are also proud of the work we have done in building schools and helping young people take charge of their lives in 35 countries around the globe. As good as our work has been, however, the liberation of children cannot be achieved by one organization. The effort requires broad and deep support and much activism at the local level.

This is why we applaud the publication of this first in a series of CYD Anthologies—and I am honored to have been asked to write the youth preface. Through the Anthology series and the CYD Journal, the word is disseminated to activists, scholars, policymakers, and youth that young people want to and can make important contributions to building community. Youth need to be involved for themselves and for the greater good of society. The perspective of young people is desperately needed if we are to create a better and safer world for children, for youth, for citizens everywhere. Yet the opinions of young people are seldom considered even when there is an issue that affects them directly. Many adults don’t think of us as having a role to play when it comes to issues of social justice, assuming that we have little to contribute. Yet who can better understand young people than other young people?

One of the consequences of a consumer-driven society is that many young people are bored by life in the suburbs. How many games of Super Intendo do you want to play? How many times do you want to go to the shopping mall? Young people long for something more meaningful to do in their lives, something more challenging, something that allows them to prove themselves. The death of Iqbal Masih moved me and my young colleagues to start Free the Children—and Free the Children answered the need in us for that challenge. Many important issues that focus on social justice and the environment, locally, nationally, and internationally, can and should be a rallying point for youth.

Now this connects directly with the Community Youth Development (CYD) movement. Youth want to have the opportunity to sit side by side with adults—to collaborate and work together on social issues. I believe this is important not only for what young people can learn but also for what they can contribute. I have had the chance to work with organizations that say they involve youth in decision making, but unfortunately there is always too great an imbalance of power. The truth is that usually all of the knowledge, skills, and power lie in the hands of the adults. Consequently, adults and young people alike become frustrated. Community Youth Development attacks the problem directly.

One thing adults and youth mentors can do is to help prepare young people for collaborative roles. This can happen in the form of training sessions in leadership, conflict resolution, or community organization/development. Every adult who works with young people must become aware of what youth and children can bring to the table. Too often they deprive youth of their voice by speaking for them—denying them their independence by doing everything for them. Many young people are very articulate. In my experience, they are usually the best spokespersons for their peers from the local to the international level. Young people can add a lot to a team: a youthful perspective, great enthusiasm, idealism, and an infectious
desire to help humanity. By helping youth to develop the necessary skills to bring to the table, adults are giving them an opportunity to have a voice, to be leaders of today among their peers, and to become the needed great leaders of tomorrow. As youth and adults continue to work together, more intergenerational dialogues and collaborations will take place. When this happens our communities will be safer, healthier, and happier. It seems to me that is the mission of Community Youth Development.

Youth empowerment, I might add, continues to drive what we do. We believe that we will create a better world by motivating youth, by means of concrete actions, to believe in themselves and their ability to create a better world for all, especially young people. I cordially invite you to get involved in our work. Please visit our websites at www.freethecchildren.com and www.leaderstoday.com.

MARGARET J. WHEATLEY

PRESIDENT, BERKANA INSTITUTE

One of the truly sad aspects of Western culture is that we’ve forgotten how essential and joyful it is to work with youth. As adults in this culture, we yearn for community and a sense of belonging. We long to feel connected to place and people once again. And we love our children but worry about them intensely. We know the world our children face is more complex and frightening, presenting challenges and temptations that seem only to grow worse.

It is time for us to wake up to the fact that both our longings for community and our worries about our children can only be solved by new connections across the generations. And not trivial connections, such as an occasional conversation, but strong bonds forged in the process of working together to serve others and improve life.

There are many influences in Western culture that keep adults and youth apart. From working in many other cultures, I’ve noticed how in the West we describe the stages of childhood as problems rather than growth. It starts with “the terrible twos,” and progresses until children reach adolescence, at which point we expect only trouble and grief from them. Confronted by so many images of “problems,” it’s little wonder that, when someone suggests involving youth in a community service project or an organizational event, we adults run the other way. The sad irony is that the more we exclude and withdraw from youth, the more problematic their behaviors become. When adults are not available, young people turn to one another to create the feelings of community and acceptance that all of us need.

No one likes feeling alienated from others, and it’s unnatural for adults to fear or turn away from their children. Beyond our personal feelings of loss of these primary relationships, we need to realize that our culture will continue to degrade until we find ways to welcome back our youth. Some have expressed a powerful thought: you can tell a culture is in serious trouble when its adults cross the street to avoid meeting its youth.

The book you are holding is a wonderful resource to help us adults learn how to walk back across the street to greet our youth, and to invite them into the important work of our communities. You will read of many different processes that have worked well, and of the underlying theory that can guide you to create your own processes. You will also learn of ways to evaluate the success of your ventures, and thus be able to contribute your learnings back to the rest of us. There is a great need for us all to be working together to develop new processes and methods for building and strengthening our communities. And as we realize that we can’t create community without involving youth in that work, we will all grow wiser and happier.

I’d like to share a bit of my own recent experience of working with youth leaders in many different countries. There are a surprising number of youth leaders emerging in many places and cultures—in North America, in war-torn countries in Europe and Asia, in Africa, South America, India—I meet them everywhere. They share a few characteristics. They know they don’t want to repeat the mistakes of the past—they don’t want to be bureaucrats, heroes, or dictators. They have suffered dearly from those forms of leadership and have vowed to work for a different world, one that works for all. They live the great phrase, “Think globally, act locally.” They hold the whole world in their vision, as they work hard in their local communities. They are committed to creating a new world through their acts of service and leadership.

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Yet they don't know what to do. They have energy, commitment, integrity, but they need to learn how to be a new kind of leader, one who affirms and nourishes the contributions of many others, one who knows how to bring out the best in people, one who realizes that he or she can't do it alone. They also know that they live in an interdependent world, that their actions will affect others far from them. They understand the deep systemic connections of this modern world. But still, they don't know what to do as leaders.

Nothing in my recent life has been more valuable and energizing than the work I've been doing with these youth leaders. They are as eager for my contribution as I am for theirs. Together, we think about what new approaches we might experiment with. Together, we envision a world where people feel connected to one another and experience the joy of good human relationships. Together, we focus on how to bring out human goodness and creativity. Together, we catch each other from falling back to an old style of leadership. We do it together, because no one of us knows enough to do it alone. And no one of us could ever develop the rich array of ideas and projects that are born of our diversity—of age, history, ethnicity.

These experiences are available to you when you invite youth into the work of your community or organization. Youth are eager to partner with us, which is to say they need to be respected for their contribution and welcomed into the conversation as equals. We don’t know the same things, but each of us is an expert in something, and every view may be essential to the success of our venture. My own experience of partnering with youth is that I receive more respect and honor than I ever imagined. I’ve had to avoid talking too long, or talking down, but when the relationship is truly reciprocal, respect is abundant, and we develop a deep caring for one another.

For many years, I’ve felt that the only way we can go through these turbulent times is by forming a strong social fabric, what Martin Luther King described as “an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” We have no way of knowing what will happen, where crisis or chaos will strike. This interdependent world is exceedingly fragile—the actions of very few can change life for everyone. The undetected rage of people who live far from us suddenly becomes visible and everything is forever changed. In this volatile and fragile world, our only strength is in our relationships—in the trust and caring we have for one another. Anyone who feels excluded from these relationships may strike back at us—violent behavior is a common response from those who feel mocked or invisible.

This is why I believe that the work of creating a strong and inclusive social fabric is our only hope for safety, the only way we can develop the capacity to cope with whatever happens next. We can’t create this safety net by our traditional practices of command and control. Nobody can order others to trust them, or to care about them. Nobody can design a strong community and just tell people what to do to implement it. Community always is created from the work we do together, and from how we treat one another as we do that work. Everyone must feel invited; everyone must be respected for their perspective and contribution.

Right now, our youth are standing on the other side of the street, waiting for us to invite them back. Together, we can weave the strong social fabric that will see us through these times. This fabric will be woven from the generosity and desire to serve that lives in the hearts of all of us.
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SECTION 1

CYD FRAMEWORK

The Community Youth Development (CYD) movement is dedicated to improving the security and quality of life for and with communities, families, and youth—with an emphasis on youth because they are powerful catalysts for change and can be positive forces in the creation of a safe, just, and prosperous world.

Since 1993 when CYD was coined as a term, many individuals and organizations have tested its core elements and created tools to facilitate and document the movement here and abroad. This article takes stock of that evolution in thinking and doing and presents an updated logic model for reflection on what the next generation of promises and challenges for the CYD movement might be.

Is CYD a movement? We think so—consider where the alternative, the status quo, has gotten us in the creation of safe, just, and sustainable communities. In this new era of interdependence, CYD offers an inspiring and validating framework for social change. Indeed, to some, the integrative quality of CYD is the healthiest alternative to the status quo. In democratic societies based on the full and healthy participation of youth and adults, CYD provides a vision of what is possible. Grounded in the work of activists, researchers, opinion leaders, and policymakers from a number of fields and disciplines, CYD combines multiple assumptions about the current environment and guides our interdisciplinary change-making agenda.

In practice, CYD is at once intuitive and challenging, requiring Herculean boundary-spanning efforts and a broad range of knowledge, ingenuity, resources, and individual and public will and commitment. People gravitate to CYD because the assumptions, strategies, and outcomes make sense and ring true with what they know, think, and believe about young people and the social, economic, and political challenges of the day.

The narrative and Framework chart that follows takes a fresh look at these matters and ideas.
Towards Shared Prosperity: Change-Making in the CYD Movement

Susan P. Curnan, Della M. Hughes

What are the cross-cutting assumptions that bring people together in the CYD movement? What is the world view/vision that motivates people to participate in CYD? What are people doing in the name of CYD; that is, what mix of disciplines, strategies, and actions are consciously undertaken to promote safe, just, and prosperous communities? In addressing these important questions, the authors provide a blueprint for the CYD movement.¹

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

—Eleanor Roosevelt, from a speech to the United Nations, 1938

Cross-Cutting Assumptions and Worldview

In this era of personal and political, local and global hate crimes, the need for healthy youth and families and safe, just, and prosperous communities is obvious. For those of us with a passion for justice, equality, and inclusiveness, which emanates from every individual, family, neighborhood, town, city, state, and country—and for those of us who are committed to the development of young people and communities—a chance for reflection, focus, and action renews our hope. We needn’t be held hostage to the iniquities of our past and present: we have the ability to change and the obligation to map the ongoing change process.

The words of Henry David Thoreau come to mind: “I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of [people] to elevate [their lives] by conscious endeavor.” Safe, just, and prosperous communities are possible; we can make them so by individual and collective conscious endeavor.

We recognize that in the workings of the world, we do not have control, but that we do have influence. We, therefore, promote strategies and actions that have the most leverage in creating desired change—strategies that are based on lessons from research and experience, that are politically feasible, and that are welcome in this nervous world.
The personal is indeed political, but with a nod to Tip O'Neill, all politics are not just local. The world, as witnessed most dramatically in the terrorist events this past fall in the United States, is inescapably part of our reality—more personally connected than many of us ever thought possible.

With this new understanding, the appreciation and valuing of other people—their countries, cultures, customs—make our need for connection to and participation in our own communities so much more vivid. Our families, neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities are learning laboratories for creating safe spaces that promote the positive development and good health of people, justice systems, and the responsible use of natural resources. Democracies thrive with engaged citizens. The world’s survival depends not only on engaged citizens, but also on knowledgeable, compassionate individuals who cherish human rights, the common good, intergenerational relationships, and our home, this fragile planet earth. In other words, the CYD movement may be seen as part of a global strategy for sustainable living where sustainable development is defined as “improving the quality of human life within the carrying capability of supporting ecosystems.”

Gro Harlem Brundland (2000, p. 187) poses a challenge to all of us in assessing our relationship to the earth:

- **We live in a time today when youth engagement has particular import and potential. Part of what makes this such a powerful time is the shift taking place in adult/youth relationships, one that... is as fundamental as the change that has taken place in gender relations and in relations between minority and majority cultures... As a result of technological advances in communications, no longer do adults necessarily have greater access to information and thus greater knowledge, which is the key to adults’ ability to maintain control over youth. Of course young people continue to need adults, but the nature of that need is evolving in a way that makes possible a more equitable youth/adult partnership.**

—Inca Mohammed

Community Youth Development is a paradigm shift. It is both an intuitively simple approach rooted in very basic values and a profound, complex set of principles and methodologies. CYD holds an appreciative, holistic, ecological, relational worldview, grounded in equality and justice, compassion, and sustainability—it is about interdependence in families and communities around the world. This approach serves as the basis for all action, as individual by individual, family by family, community by community; we work, as Gandhi said, “to be the change we want to see in the world.”

The work of CYD activists, policymakers, and educators contrasts with the norm in social programs and services in the USA, where the goal is to work on young people rather than with them. We as a society have often ignored broader community and societal issues and left young people out of important dialogue. And when we have addressed community issues, young people have seldom been involved as partners in community creation, maintenance, and change.

In general, we have not yet created healthy environments where all people can thrive and flourish. In particular, our systems serving youth tend to be based on a deficit-driven model that is not equipped to create space for healthy development and relationships. These systems can be partially characterized by the following:

- Inconsistent, fragmented, and crisis-driven services
- Inadequately prepared educators and youth and community workers
- Disconnected programs that lack community focus and as a result further increase dependence and fragmentation
- Traditional approaches that treat youth as objects rather than resources
- Vague values and philosophy of practice, which result in an idiosyncratic approach
- Overspecialized and overprotective youth and community workers
- Externally-driven practice
- Competing agendas of professional groups
• Politically-motivated funding
• History and learning that get muddled

This is where the paradigm shift comes in: what began as an effort to create better social, economic, psychological, environmental, and physical health for all young people evolved into a “diagnosed problem” model of treatment, which fails to look at the whole person in the context of families and communities. Youth are seen as a collection of problems instead of as future parents, neighbors, and workers who need maximum adult involvement, teaching, and encouragement to grow and be productive citizens. What began as an effort to have just, safe, and economically viable communities evolved primarily into the creation of affordable housing and jobs for adults. In this system, neighborhood development has been viewed in economic terms rather than as a comprehensive way to improve the overall quality of life for all residents.

CYD focuses on how we can harness the energy, creativity, and dedication of both youth and adults to create systems and communities that fully engage young people in their own development and in building sustainable community. As long as youth are viewed and treated as objects, adults will continue to deliver services and give them learning experiences. The alternative—the opportunity—is to co-create a “practice field” where adults and youth can learn together on a lifelong basis.

Meaning and Practice in the CYD Movement: Strategies and Outcomes, or What People Are Doing and Thinking in the Name of CYD

Youth and community activists who have learned about CYD feel a deep connection to its content and intent. It has moved many like Ross Pologe—who have devoted their lives to this endeavor—to feel their passion for the work renewed:

CYD has re-kindled my spirit—it has re-connected me to the reasons I got into youth work to begin with. This is all about building community, about caring relationships with each other, about respect and believing that all of us can be better human beings and citizens.

Given its foundation in the new sciences, quantum and chaos theory, as well as new understandings of biology and ecology, CYD fundamentally affirms that everything exists in relationship to everything else and that these relationships are constantly changing. It underscores the maxim that “we can never merely do one thing.”

Over several experimental years, CYD has succeeded in creating a new and larger context for youth in community. CYD assumes the involvement of young people in their own development and that of the community—in partnership with adults—to make use of their talents and increase their investment in community life. CYD is about “young people actively involved in the process of developing their own identity, self worth, independence, and sense of belonging, as well as their connection to family, community, the earth, and the sacred.”

Key principles of CYD include “creating a culture of respect and partnership; creating a just and compassionate society; creating safe space, creating a culture of appreciation; transferring practical, usable skills; being conscious stewards of relationships; and finding and living one’s true calling.”

A recent report by the Cornerstone Consulting Group (2001) on The Ford Foundation’s Community Youth Development Initiative (CYDI) notes:

Across the country—in communities large and small, urban and rural—Community Youth Development, under a number of names, is bringing adults together with young people to strengthen their community’s social, political, and economic capital... The added value of “community” in youth development seems to have gained a foothold in a number of the communities. Although the distinction between community youth development and traditional youth development remains elusive for some, the concept of Community Youth Development resonates with many.
The initial CYD framework (Hughes & Curnan, 2000, pp. 7-13) was first drafted in April, 1999 to provide a clear articulation of CYD assumptions, impact, strategies, and outcomes. The framework was co-created by the National Network for Youth CYD Guide Team, staff, and members working closely with Susan P. Curnan and Lisa LaCava of Brandeis University. Also called a “logic model,” the framework articulated the CYD theory of change and provided a picture of how CYD works: the way it links outcomes with program strategies as well as its under-girding theoretical assumptions and principles. The clarity of thinking that occurs from using the framework has become an important part of the overall education effort and success of moving CYD forward and a validating guide for work around the world.

The revised framework, Towards a Shared Prosperity (see page 6), captures the essence of the CYD paradigm. It is intentionally designed to be as large and open as possible while still retaining integrity. Youth development is inextricably linked with family and community development, community development with nation building, all of which are in turn linked to our connection with the earth. As evident in the framework, the relationship of the parts and the quality of the relationships are paramount.

Elements of CYD appear to be evident in many settings and methods: youth development, asset mapping, service learning, summer and after-school programs, community schools, adventure experiences, environmental action efforts, restorative justice and conflict resolution initiatives, youth civic engagement and youth activism projects, university-community partnerships, drug free schools, empowerment and enterprise zones, and street outreach are several examples. This is good news. Yet, we must also note that programs are often designed with conflicting and/or limited strategies when viewed from the more encompassing CYD assumptions. The Towards Shared Prosperity framework addresses these conflicts and encourages more holistic thinking and action and offers new strategies and activities to advance Community Youth Development.

... despite these promising signs and the continuing attractiveness of youth development concepts, there are also serious questions. Community participants note that it is easier, by far, to implement a youth development program than a... much more complicated youth-adult partnership for community development... The slow-moving nature of comprehensive change also complicates public perception of the development process, as some mistakenly expect early reductions in crime and substance abuse or gains in school performance... Although... the efforts are strongly felt and internalized by individuals and agencies... none of the communities has a plausible plan to gain widespread support.

... It is important to remember how young the field of youth development is and how much younger still is the Community Youth Development approach.

CYDI’s evaluative summary captures the essence of work by many organizations seeking to move beyond traditional youth development to a more integrated, holistic approach for building a healthier world. Through this process we continue to face many challenges—not least of which is pulling together the many strands of CYD into a comprehensive framework.

And So, We Build the Loom: The Need for a CYD Framework

Upon this gifted age, in its dark hour,
Rains from the sky a meteoric shower
Of facts... they lie unquestioned, uncombined.
Wisdom enough to leech us of our ill
Is daily spun; but there exists no loom
To weave it into fabric...

—Edna St. Vincent Millay
From Huntsman, What Quarry, 1939

Our biggest intent is to create a global voice for change in the practices and values used in all types of organizations everywhere. This voice will not come from well-crafted mission statements issued from some central authority. It will emerge from thousands of local circles as they are networked together.

—Margaret Wheatley
TOWARDS SHARED PROSPERITY

Change-Making in the CYD Movement

The CYD movement is dedicated to improving the security and quality of life for and with communities, families, and youth—-with an emphasis on youth because they are powerful catalysts for change and can be positive forces in the creation of a safe, just, and prosperous world.

Intentional Change
It is possible to share prosperity and create safe, just and prosperous communities, countries and a world where young people are partners and contributors working with adults to positively influence the conditions affecting the security and quality of their lives.

Youth and Families
- Many youth face lives of chronic unemployment, victimization, violence, welfare dependency, homelessness, imprisonment, substance abuse or dependency, poor health and other risk factors because of the lack of opportunities to acquire basic building blocks for healthy development.
- Together youth and adults can improve the quality of life and create safe, just and prosperous communities. This requires adults and youth to work together on policies and programs that provide opportunities to acquire the immutable building blocks for the development of healthy individuals, families and communities:
  - Sense of belonging (attachment and relationship)
  - Mastery (achievement and education)
  - Generosity (altruism and service)
  - Independence (autonomy and work)
  - Interdependence (sustainability and the sacred)

Communities
- Factors, such as racism, classism, gender discrimination, and homophobia, are the root of hate crimes and affect the ability to participate in routine activities in life. Human rights, such as can be found in the UN Declarations of Human Rights and Rights of the Child, are the foundation of a safe, just and prosperous world.
- All people have the innate ability to learn and prosper. Prosperity requires education, work, place skills, good health, income opportunities and asset accumulation, nurturing and healthy relationships, safe and adequate food and housing, support networks and community knowledge, and the developmental building blocks above.

Policy
- An asset-based framework offers a bridge between those who are committed to investing in the development of the capacities of people and those who seek to increase community productivity and economic growth. This framework also offers an alternative to existing social and economic policies and programs that tend to encourage fragmentation, deficit thinking and single service delivery.

Systems
- Intentional change requires systems thinking and acting and the involvement of multiple individuals and institutions. It also requires relationships that are rooted in mutuality, respect and reciprocity, and enable co-creation of new systems as well as co-learning among divergent thinkers.
- Knowledge comes from many sources. CYD holds that knowledge emerges from the complexity and rigor of practice, as well as theory and research. Theory, practice and research operate in a cycle of mutual enrichment, which is enhanced by opportunities for reflection and integration. By working collaboratively, philanthropic organizations, universities and communities can accelerate knowledge development and strategic communication in the CYD movement.

Sustainability
- Recent trends, including fear and insecurity due to terrorism, changes in public perception about and trust in government, increasing emphasis on the role of civic participation, the globalization of markets and its impact on local economies and the quality of life, dramatic shifts in the labor market, increased hunger and poverty, advances in technology, and recognition that young people are a powerful force for change, require government, nonprofit and private sectors to re-examine assumptions and practices in order to identify strategies that create safe and sustainable opportunities for people to grow and communities to thrive.
- Socially responsible communities with all parts engaged, e.g., business, schools, universities, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and government, are possible and can be sustainable. Everyone must be involved in addressing issues of inequality and empowerment, elimination of poverty, and respect for the earth’s living systems, and seek positive impact on future generations.

* Given the inclusiveness of the assumptions for CYD as presented in this framework, both the outcomes and strategies noted are only examples of what is possible—they must be tailored to each situation in which CYD is applied.

—Della M. Hughes and Susan P. Carman
**Youth, Families**
- Attention to and application of best practices in youth development; work force development; education reform, including service learning and out-of-school time; employability; service learning; etc.
- Engagement of families and youth in key community institutions and systems that impact their lives, e.g., education, health, law enforcement, justice, transportation, social services, arts and entertainment, banking and business, town and urban planning, and recreation.

**Communities**
- Adoption of human rights platforms, zero tolerance for hate crimes, and restorative justice approaches to violations of the law.
- Establishment of CYD learning neighborhoods, communities and countries that network to share lessons.
- Collaboration among community builders and activists; local, state and federal government; businesses; schools; universities; nonprofits; and faith-based organizations to address community issues.

**Policy**
- Influence on three forces of policy making: the rational research base, ensuring lessons from local initiatives and scholarly research are accessible and timely; the relational by actively engaging local, state and national policy makers in their work; and the political by using the media, voting and overall participation in civic life.
- Creation of regular mechanisms for dialogue among policymakers, and CYD educators and activists at local, state and national levels about implications of CYD for social policy.

**Systems**
- **Management, Leadership and Governance Capacity.** Creation of well-documented practice fields for CYD learning, including tools and programs for systems thinking and change management, system and program design, facilitative leadership and innovative evaluation research methods.
- **Knowledge Development.** Creation of a research agenda by engaging CYD leaders, university centers connected with the CYD practice field, and a network of community building/ action projects; formation of a coalition of active university/community partnerships that conduct joint research projects and network for cross-institutional learning.
- **Communication.** Establishment of workshops and granting programs for CYD projects, such as for creative writers and film makers; creation of sustained vehicles for public awareness, knowledge building and integration of theory, research and practice, and a library of resources.

**Sustainability**
- Connection between CYD leaders and movements for sustainable development; human rights, environmental justice, etc.
- Advancement of support and skills development networks of emerging young leaders; connection between them and CYD efforts.
- Development of a national program to recognize and certify CYD socially responsible businesses, schools, communities, etc.

**Youth, Families**
- Visible and measurable improvement in quality of life indicators including, health and safety; economic security and asset accumulation; education and aspiration for post secondary education; employability skills and workforce participation; healthy relationships with family, peers and support networks; perception of opportunity; safe, adequate housing and food; and civic participation and volunteering.
- Visible and measurable youth/adult partnerships addressing community issues and engaging in civic infrastructure.

**Communities**
- Citizens are free from fear and discrimination and have genuine freedom of expression, thought, religion and association.
- Positive neighborhood and community growth is accelerated as a result of support networks and sharing of information.

**Policy**
- All levels of government and the private sector value youth, families and communities as resources for a safe, just, prosperous and sustainable world.
- Flexible funding is provided for programs and services across levels of government and governmental agencies, the private and nonprofit sectors. The CYD approach is emphasized by government and philanthropic sources.

**Systems**
- **Management, Leadership and Governance Capacity.** Organizations, institutions, businesses and government utilize CYD grounded policies and practices.
- **Knowledge Development.** The body of CYD knowledge created from scholarship and practice, evaluation and research expands and is catalogued and disseminated. An array of CYD field books is developed.
- **Communication.** Routine high visibility media coverage of CYD topics and activities and a public education campaign are instituted that enables communities to learn from each other.

**Sustainability**
- The “tipping point” for social change is accelerated by linkage of movements with similar values.
- Neighborhoods and communities enjoy cleaner air and water and more green space and reduce consumption of nonrenewable natural resources.
- Certified CYD businesses, communities, etc. are more desirable places to work and live.
Toward a Shared Prosperity is a work in progress; it will always be as such because of the evolutionary nature of our goals. Many people in many neighborhoods and communities around the world are committed to change-making in the CYD movement. If our collective work is successful, we will hone the principles (assumptions) and outcomes, and use them as our compass for developing and implementing strategies and activities. Theoretically, the strategies—and especially the activities—should be flexible, to enable customization of particular locales and situations. Regardless, those who use the tool will have a template for their own work: the focus can readily be adopted for many types of organizations.

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Youth who bear an ethic of social responsibility emphasized in their families are more likely than their compatriots to be engaged in some type of service to their communities. They are also more committed to public interest goals such as helping their country, preserving the environment, and assisting the less fortunate.

—Constance Flanagan

References


1. The term “Community Youth Development” (CYD) was coined in March 1993 by the CYD Guide Team of the National Network for Youth.
7. Ross Polage, Fellowship of Lights, Baltimore, Maryland.
SECTION 1

CYD FRAMEWORK

The Community Youth Development (CYD) movement is dedicated to improving the security and quality of life for and with communities, families, and youth—with an emphasis on youth because they are powerful catalysts for change and can be positive forces in the creation of a safe, just, and prosperous world.

Since 1993 when CYD was coined as a term, many individuals and organizations have tested its core elements and created tools to facilitate and document the movement here and abroad. This article takes stock of that evolution in thinking and doing and presents an updated logic model for reflection on what the next generation of promises and challenges for the CYD movement might be.

Is CYD a movement? We think so—consider where the alternative, the status quo, has gotten us in the creation of safe, just, and sustainable communities. In this new era of interdependence, CYD offers an inspiring and validating framework for social change. Indeed, to some, the integrative quality of CYD is the healthiest alternative to the status quo. In democratic societies based on the full and healthy participation of youth and adults, CYD provides a vision of what is possible. Grounded in the work of activists, researchers, opinion leaders, and policymakers from a number of fields and disciplines, CYD combines multiple assumptions about the current environment and guides our interdisciplinary change-making agenda.

In practice, CYD is at once intuitive and challenging, requiring Herculean boundary-spanning efforts and a broad range of knowledge, ingenuity, resources, and individual and public will and commitment. People gravitate to CYD because the assumptions, strategies, and outcomes make sense and ring true with what they know, think, and believe about young people and the social, economic, and political challenges of the day.

The narrative and Framework chart that follows takes a fresh look at these matters and ideas.
Towards Shared Prosperity:
Change-Making in the CYD Movement

Susan P. Curnan, Della M. Hughes

What are the cross-cutting assumptions that bring people together in the CYD movement? What is the world view/vision that motivates people to participate in CYD? What are people doing in the name of CYD; that is, what mix of disciplines, strategies, and actions are consciously undertaken to promote safe, just, and prosperous communities? In addressing these important questions, the authors provide a blueprint for the CYD movement.

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

—Eleanor Roosevelt, from a speech to the United Nations, 1938

Cross-Cutting Assumptions and Worldview

In this era of personal and political, local and global hate crimes, the need for healthy youth and families and safe, just, and prosperous communities is obvious. For those of us with a passion for justice, equality, and inclusiveness, which emanates from every individual, family, neighborhood, town, city, state, and country—and for those of us who are committed to the development of young people and communities—a chance for reflection, focus, and action renews our hope. We needn’t be held hostage to the iniquities of our past and present: we have the ability to change and the obligation to map the ongoing change process.

The words of Henry David Thoreau come to mind: “I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of [people] to elevate [their lives] by conscious endeavor.” Safe, just, and prosperous communities are possible; we can make them so by individual and collective conscious endeavor.

We recognize that in the workings of the world, we do not have control, but that we do have influence. We, therefore, promote strategies and actions that have the most leverage in creating desired change—strategies that are based on lessons from research and experience, that are politically feasible, and that are welcome in this nervous world.

When I participate I change myself, my family, and my community.

—Carlos, age 17
The personal is indeed political, but with a nod to Tip O'Neill, all politics are not just local. The world, as witnessed most dramatically in the terrorist events this past fall in the United States, is inescapably part of our reality—more personally connected than many of us ever thought possible.

With this new understanding, the appreciation and valuing of other people—their countries, cultures, customs—make our need for connection to and participation in our own communities so much more vivid. Our families, neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities are learning laboratories for creating safe spaces that promote the positive development and good health of people, justice systems, and the responsible use of natural resources. Democracies thrive with engaged citizens. The world’s survival depends not only on engaged citizens, but also on knowledgeable, compassionate individuals who cherish human rights, the common good, intergenerational relationships, and our home, this fragile planet earth. In other words, the CYD movement may be seen as part of a global strategy for sustainable living where sustainable development is defined as “improving the quality of human life within the carrying capability of supporting ecosystems.”

Gro Harlem Brundtland (2000, p. 187) poses a challenge to all of us in assessing our relationship to the earth:

*The issues of the relationship between humankind and planet earth exist because our souls are too long for this short life. As far as we know, we are the only species that has the capacity to look beyond ourselves—to care about our posterity—to think in inter-generational terms... Our challenge today is to organize our knowledge, our tremendous scientific and technological potential... The question mark remains whether we have the political ability to organize and to change what we need to change.*

Community Youth Development is a paradigm shift. It is both an intuitively simple approach rooted in very basic values and a profound, complex set of principles and methodologies. CYD holds an appreciative, holistic, ecological, relational worldview, grounded in equality and justice, compassion, and sustainability—it is about interdependence in families and communities around the world. This approach serves as the basis for all action, as individual by individual, family by family, community by community; we work, as Gandhi said, “to be the change we want to see in the world.”

The work of CYD activists, policymakers, and educators contrasts with the norm in social programs and services in the USA, where the goal is to work on young people rather than with them. We as a society have often ignored broader community and societal issues and left young people out of important dialogue. And when we have addressed community issues, young people have seldom been involved as partners in community creation, maintenance, and change.

In general, we have not yet created healthy environments where all people can thrive and flourish. In particular, our systems serving youth tend to be based on a deficit-driven model that is not equipped to create space for healthy development and relationships. These systems can be partially characterized by the following:

- Inconsistent, fragmented, and crisis-driven services
- Inadequately prepared educators and youth and community workers
- Disconnected programs that lack community focus and as a result further increase dependence and fragmentation
- Traditional approaches that treat youth as objects rather than resources
- Vague values and philosophy of practice, which result in an idiosyncratic approach
- Overspecialized and overprotective youth and community workers
- Externally-driven practice
- Competing agendas of professional groups
• Politically-motivated funding
• History and learning that get muddled

This is where the paradigm shift comes in; what began as an effort to create better social, economic, psychological, environmental, and physical health for all young people evolved into a “diagnosed problem” model of treatment, which fails to look at the whole person in the context of families and communities. Youth are seen as a collection of problems instead of as future parents, neighbors, and workers who need maximum adult involvement, teaching, and encouragement to grow and be productive citizens. What began as an effort to have just, safe, and economically viable communities evolved primarily into the creation of affordable housing and jobs for adults. In this system, neighborhood development has been viewed in economic terms rather than as a comprehensive way to improve the overall quality of life for all residents.

CYD focuses on how we can harness the energy, creativity, and dedication of both youth and adults to create systems and communities that fully engage young people in their own development and in building sustainable community. As long as youth are viewed and treated as objects, adults will continue to deliver services and give them learning experiences. The alternative—the opportunity—is to co-create a “practice field” where adults and youth can learn together on a lifelong basis.

Meaning and Practice in the CYD Movement: Strategies and Outcomes, or What People Are Doing and Thinking in the Name of CYD

Youth and community activists who have learned about CYD feel a deep connection to its content and intent. It has moved many like Ross Pologe—who have devoted their lives to this endeavor—to feel their passion for the work renewed:

CYD has re-kindled my spirit—it has re-connected me to the reasons I got into youth work to begin with. This is all about building community, about caring relationships with each other, about respect and believing that all of us can be better human beings and citizens.

Given its foundation in the new sciences, quantum and chaos theory, as well as new understandings of biology and ecology, CYD fundamentally affirms that everything exists in relationship to everything else and that these relationships are constantly changing. It underscores the maxim that “we can never merely do one thing.”

Over several experimental years, CYD has succeeded in creating a new and larger context for youth in community. CYD assumes the involvement of young people in their own development and that of the community—in partnership with adults—to make use of their talents and increase their investment in community life. CYD is about “young people actively involved in the process of developing their identity, self-worth, independence, and sense of belonging, as well as their connection to family, community, the earth, and the sacred.”

Key principles of CYD include “creating a culture of respect and partnership; creating a just and compassionate society; creating safe space, creating a culture of appreciation; transferring practical, usable skills; being conscious stewards of relationships; and finding and living one’s true calling.”

A recent report by the Cornerstone Consulting Group (2001) on The Ford Foundation’s Community Youth Development Initiative (CYDI) notes:

Across the country—in communities large and small, urban and rural—Community Youth Development, under a number of names, is bringing adults together with young people to strengthen their community’s social, political, and economic capital... The added value of “community” in youth development seems to have gained a foothold in a number of the communities. Although the distinction between community youth development and traditional youth development remains elusive for some, the concept of Community Youth Development resonates with many.
... despite these promising signs and the continuing attractiveness of youth development concepts, there are also serious questions. Community participants note that it is easier, by far, to implement a youth development program than a... much more complicated youth-adult partnership for community development... The slow-moving nature of comprehensive change also complicates public perception of the development process, as some mistakenly expect early reductions in crime and substance abuse or gains in school performance... Although... the efforts are strongly felt and internalized by individuals and agencies... none of the communities has a plausible plan to gain widespread support.

... It is important to remember how young the field of youth development is and how much younger still is the Community Youth Development approach.

CYDI’s evaluative summary captures the essence of work by many organizations seeking to move beyond traditional youth development to a more integrated, holistic approach for building a healthier world. Through this process we continue to face many challenges—not least of which is pulling together the many strands of CYD into a comprehensive framework.

And So, We Build the Loom: The Need for a CYD Framework

Upon this gifted age, in its dark hour,
Rains from the sky a meteoric shower
Of facts... they lie unquestioned, uncombined.
Wisdom enough to leech us of our ill
Is daily spun; but there exists no loom
To weave it into fabric...

—Edna St. Vincent Millay
From Huntsman, What Quarry, 1939

The initial CYD framework (Hughes & Curnan, 2000, pp. 7-13) was first drafted in April, 1999 to provide a clear articulation of CYD assumptions, impact, strategies, and outcomes. The framework was co-created by the National Network for Youth CYD Guide Team, staff, and members working closely with Susan P. Curnan and Lisa LaCava of Brandeis University. Also called a “logic model,” the framework articulated the CYD theory of change and provided a picture of how CYD works: the way it links outcomes with program strategies as well as its under-girding theoretical assumptions and principles. The clarity of thinking that occurs from using the framework has become an important part of the overall education effort and success of moving CYD forward and a validating guide for work around the world.

The revised framework, Towards a Shared Prosperity (see page 6), captures the essence of the CYD paradigm. It is intentionally designed to be as large and open as possible while still retaining integrity. Youth development is inextricably linked with family and community development, community development with nation building, all of which are in turn linked to our connection with the earth. As evident in the framework, the relationship of the parts and the quality of the relationships are paramount.

Elements of CYD appear to be evident in many settings and methods: youth development, asset mapping, service learning, summer and after-school programs, community schools, adventure experiences, environmental action initiatives, youth civic engagement and youth activism projects, university-community partnerships, drug free schools, empowerment and enterprise zones, and street outreach are several examples. This is good news. Yet, we must also note that programs are often designed with conflicting and/or limited strategies when viewed from the more encompassing CYD assumptions. The Towards Shared Prosperity framework addresses these conflicts and encourages more holistic thinking and action and offers new strategies and activities to advance Community Youth Development.
TOWARDS SHARED PROSPERITY

Change-Making in the CYD Movement

The CYD movement is dedicated to improving the security and quality of life for and with communities, families, and youth—-with an emphasis on youth because they are powerful catalysts for change and can be positive forces in the creation of a safe, just, and prosperous world.

Intentional Change
It is possible to share prosperity and create safe, just and prosperous communities, countries and a world where young people are partners and contributors working with adults to positively influence the conditions affecting the security and quality of their lives.

Youth and Families
- Many youth face lives of chronic unemployment, victimization, violence, welfare dependency, homelessness, imprisonment, substance abuse or dependency, poor health and other risk factors because of the lack of opportunities to acquire basic building blocks for healthy development.
- Together youth and adults can improve the quality of life and create safe, just and prosperous communities. This requires adults and youth to work together on policies and programs that provide opportunities to acquire the immutable building blocks for the development of healthy individuals, families and communities:
  - Sense of belonging (attachment and relationship)
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Communities
- Factors such as racism, classism, gender discrimination, and homophobia, are the root of hate crimes and affect the ability to participate in routine activities in life. Human rights, such as can be found in the Universal Declarations of Human Rights and Rights of the Child, are the foundation of a safe, just and prosperous world.
- All people have the innate ability to learn and prosper. Prosperity requires education, work place skills, good health, income opportunities and asset accumulation, nurturing and healthy relationships, safe and adequate food and housing, support networks and community knowledge, and the developmental building blocks above.

Policy
- An asset-based framework offers a bridge between those who are committed to investing in the development of the capacities of people and those who seek to increase community productivity and economic growth. This framework also offers an alternative to existing social and economic policies and programs that tend to encourage fragmentation, deficit thinking and single service delivery.

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Sustainability
- Recent trends—including fear and insecurity due to terrorism, changes in public perception about and trust in government, increasing emphasis on the role of civic participation, the globalization of markets and its impact on local economies and the quality of life, dramatic shifts in the labor market, increased hunger and poverty, advances in technology, and recognition that young people are a powerful force for change—require government, nonprofit and private sectors to re-examine assumptions and practices in order to identify strategies that create safe and sustainable opportunities for people to grow and communities to thrive.
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- Neighborhoods and communities enjoy cleaner air and water and more green space and reduce consumption of non-renewable natural resources.
- Certified CYD businesses, communities, etc. are more desirable places to work and live.

Shared prosperity: the condition of thriving, success, well-being.

Safe, just, and prosperous communities, countries, and world where young people are partners and contributors working with adults to positively influence the conditions affecting the security and quality of their lives.

Sustainable communities with deep, broad and mature CYD practices throughout the world.
Toward a Shared Prosperity is a work in progress; it will always be as such because of the evolutionary nature of our goals. Many people in many neighborhoods and communities around the world are committed to change-making in the CYD movement. If our collective work is successful, we will hone the principles (assumptions) and outcomes, and use them as our compass for developing and implementing strategies and activities. Theoretically, the strategies—and especially the activities—should be flexible, to enable customization of particular locales and situations. Regardless, those who use the tool will have a template for their own work: the focus can readily be adopted for many types of organizations.

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References


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SECTION II

THEORY

Our Theory section attempts to move the reader through several overlapping layers of what is an evolving theory in the field of Community Youth Development. While having many historical antecedents, CYD as an integrated idea is young. This section provides some insights into the origins of CYD and the critical connection to community development. It underscores the challenges to developing both a strong field-centered theory and practice. A synergistic interaction between theory and practice is a critical dynamic to theory building in this field.

Because, in principle, CYD promotes organizational congruence with practice, we have included a discussion on organizational learning. Internal organizational development should reflect CYD values and define intentional strategies for evolving a CYD organizational culture. In addition to stressing congruency between thought and action, these strategies should include youth as partners in the process.

A third area of significance is civic efficacy. If youth are to function with full capacity within the community setting they need the skills and knowledge to do so competently. Community in its essence is political. Providing real-life opportunities for youth to learn such competencies should be a priority for community organizations and schools. In assuming this challenge, we must first create an alternative vision for organizing schools and communities as partners in educating our youth as citizen and community builders and then work to realize that vision.

While the contributors to this section add much to the understanding of what CYD is and how it may be applied, they only begin to open up the larger discussion on how to build breadth and depth to CYD theory and how it may be applied. The next step for CYD theorists is to address how, in effect, to create a truly interdisciplinary theory that cuts across previously hacked-out academic and practitioner domains to develop a holistic, ecological, and integrated view on youth and community development.
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: AN IDEA Whose TIME Has COME—AGAIN

Judith B. Erickson

This chapter provides a poignant historical overview to youth development in the United States. The author presents a progressive interpretation of the evolution of thought on youth development while delineating and discussing important watersheds that have led to the emergence of CYD.

Americans like to think of themselves as a child-centered society. Soon after the United States came into being, spurred on by the success of the revolt against Great Britain, our nation's founders began to think seriously about the special needs of the "young republicans" they would be raising. Since the early 19th century, Americans have paid attention to creating institutions and environments in which children might develop into adults who would fulfill the promise of the democratic experiment—adults who would guard the crucial balance of individual rights and responsibilities for the common good.

There has always been a paradox, however, between what we adults say, and what we actually do. While we say we are concerned with the child's "best interests," we frequently define these interests in terms of how they can be shaped to match the institutions and programs we have created. Thus, for example, after a century of juvenile courts designed to rehabilitate youth, we are increasingly trying them in adult courts and incarcerating them in adult jails for the adult felonies they have committed. At the same time, we are failing to exercise voluntary control on commercially profitable, but violent media, or to provide effective tools for keeping weapons from the hands of young people.

At other times, more subtle attitudes are involved. We can see the reflections of some of these attitudes in the popular metaphorical views of children and adolescents that adults have used for generations. Throughout our national history, we often have worked for or on behalf of young people, but have more often than not, failed to work with them so that they are empowered to help themselves. The language we have used reveals the narrowness of our vision and the potential for failure.

The Puritans, as concerned with life in the hereafter as here on earth, saw children primarily as sinners to be saved from a corrupt and weak nature inherited from the first parents, Adam and Eve. Although the ultimate decision regarding acceptance or rejection of Truth rested with the individual, a child otherwise had little room for self-expression.

New views of development began to emerge, however. Not only did these views begin to emphasize preparation for a successful life on earth, they also allowed a greater role for factors in the environment in which the child was being nurtured. For example, young people were often seen as vessels to be filled (with adult Truth, of course). Such a view still provided little place for youth empowerment.

As the 19th century progressed, children were seen as tender plants to be cultivated (reflected in the creation of "kindergartens," or in Frances Willard's description of the juvenile temperance movement as "moral horticulture"). As the industrial age dawned, youth became raw material to be shaped (Baden-Powell, for example, referred to his Boy Scout movement as a "character factory"). While adults did not give up their focal role, in the decades on either side of the turn of the 20th century, they did develop new tools and strategies for "shaping" youth that they hoped would meet their developmental needs and interests in age-appropriate ways. Juvenile courts, settlement house programs and youth organizations, children's pages in the newspapers, child labor laws, physical education classes in schools, pure milk stations, and playgrounds, for example, all appeared at this time.

The turn of the 20th century also saw the beginning of specialization in the field of youth work. Before long, young people became, metaphorically speaking, problems to be solved. As professional
specialization advanced, categories of young people became targets at which to aim programs. The fragmented system of youth services produced under the influence of these views (and which we still struggle to overcome today) has proved to be tragically inadequate. Too often, adults have responded to the inadequacy of the system they created by withdrawing funding and blaming youth for its failure. In the meantime, other forces have been at work, giving rise to new metaphors.

Following World War II, the growing independence of adolescents, the baby boom that produced so many more of them, and the increased numbers of households in which all parents were working to support them, led to another metaphor still powerful today: youth as a market to be exploited. An explosion of music, media, foods, clothes, and other goods and services appeared to appeal to teenagers’ current tastes and to mold and develop their future brand loyalties. It should not come as a surprise that a new metaphor emerged.

The 1970s saw a growing adolescent health industry that defined adolescents as diseases to be cured, and absorbed millions of dollars from families and their insurance companies to confine young people in psychiatric and chemical dependency facilities. By the 1980s, the report, “A Nation at Risk” brought still another metaphor into vogue: youth as risks to be reduced. Although “at-risk youth” remains a popular concept, we notice a recent and (to our minds) encouraging shift in application of the concept of risk away from children themselves to the settings—homes, schools, neighborhoods, and communities—in which children are growing up.

While metaphors tend to rise and fall in overall popularity, once applied, a metaphor rarely completely outlives its usefulness to someone! Thus, outmoded metaphors may continue to lurk in adult consciousness to become translated into youth programs (witness, for example, some of the recent character education curricula) and sometimes even into the bricks and mortar to contain them. Rising statistics on “rotten outcomes” for young people, in spite of myriad programs designed to improve them, seem to make the case that most of our metaphors have been too narrow and too simplistic in the vision of youth they imply. There are other metaphors available that can sustain a broad, holistic vision of positive youth development.

Bill Loquist, in his many works on prevention, long stressed the need for viewing youth as resources and youth as community builders. Such metaphors tell us that young people need not wait until they reach adulthood to be active participants in community life. Rather, they capitalize on youths’ creative energies, enthusiasm, and altruism to undertake needed activities that can change the institutions that affect their lives, and further, can increase a sense of stakeholdership in their communities. Perhaps even more important, such metaphors empower young people to become active agents in their own development. Only when fresh images replace the outmoded views that have limited our vision will adults and young people be able to form the kinds of dynamic partnerships that will enable us all to fulfill the democratic ideals of enlightened and active citizenship envisioned by our nation’s founders.

2. This metaphor derives from Locke’s view of the child as clay to be molded, and Rousseau’s view that at birth, a child presented a “blank slate.” See Christian Nutting, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House (1989). Originally published in 1847.
4. The term “character factory” was applied by historian E. Wingfield-Stratford to the British system of public schools. Cited in Michael Rosenthal’s The Character Factory: Baden-Powell’s Boy Scouts and the Imperatives of Empire, New York, Pantheon Books (1986).
6. Public and private sector funding of programs “targeted to youth” grew during the depression era, and again in the 1960s, as means to building the Great Society. Later critics of these programs—often with little first-hand knowledge of what had been accomplished—complained of the uselessness of “throwing money at” social problems.
7. Selina Guber’s and Jon Berry’s advice on how to “tap into the $7 billion kids spend and the $120 billion of purchases they influence” is one of several recent works on this subject. See Marketing to and Through Kids, New York, McGraw-Hill, Inc. (1993).
8. Changes in health insurance regulations in the 1970s and 1980s inspired service providers to create new definitions of adolescent mental health problems for which they could be treated. See Michael Balterman and Judith B. Erickson, “Adolescence is Not a Medical Condition,” Minnesota Medicine, 71, (1988).
Avenues to Adulthood or Avenues to Civic Anemia?

KIRK A. ASTROTH, DOUG BROWN, JOHN POORE, DICK TIMM

What are the best strategies for helping young people steer a positive course on the broad avenues to adulthood? How can we support young people and their capacity to contribute to the creation of equitable, safe, and strong communities? The authors summarize the critical elements necessary for Community Youth Development and offer a new way of understanding the relationship between youth development and prevention.

Core Vitamins of Community Youth Development

Positive youth development, a core element of Community Youth Development (CYD), is "a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences that help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent." Positive youth development addresses the broader developmental needs of youth, such as relationships with caring adults, safe places and activities, physical and mental health, marketable skills, and opportunities for service and civic participation. These "five fundamental resources" have been the centerpiece of America's Promise. The Search Institute's list of 40 developmental assets is another way of conceptualizing the inputs necessary for positive youth development (Blyth, 1993).

Recent research studies, including those by Public/Private Ventures, the Rand Corporation, the Public Education Network, Columbia University, and the National Academy of Sciences, have shown that when young people are able to participate in safe and healthy youth development activities, they are less likely to become involved in the high-risk, unhealthy behaviors that can delay or derail positive development. Research has also clearly delineated the necessary elements of effective—or vibrant—youth development experiences (Astroth, 1999, pp. 5-11).

Young people who are involved in meaningful roles as contributors and originators (not as pawns, to use a term current in constructivism) are also able to develop the confidence, competence, connections, and character to lead healthy, productive lives. Helping youth develop these skills and values in preparation for the challenges of adolescence and the independence and responsibilities of adulthood is possible through high quality, out-of-school youth development programs. Such experiences include after-school education programs, leadership development, mentoring, youth clubs, sports and recreation activities, and child welfare and community service activities. As a step beyond positive youth development strategies, Community Youth Development provides consistent, sustained engagement with young people as partners and resources for a wide range of community issues and institutions, rather than as objects or recipients of adult wisdom or generosity.

On the highways to adulthood, young people in our country experience multiple roadblocks to having real influence or power in the decisions that affect them and to participating in the very institutions that foster a sense of belonging in our society. If and when kids enter the picture, it's usually in terms of getting them to stop doing something, not in encouraging them to get more involved. Young people are routinely excluded from social institutions because of their age, but they are also excluded because of race, fashion, gender, language differ-

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ences, and income levels (children are more likely to be poor).

Employment is another area where young people are systematically excluded. Although researchers have observed that “to be gainfully employed in America is to have a place in this society” (Miringoff & Miringoff, 1999, p. 143), youth unemployment in 1996 was 16.7 percent—more than three times the national average. Yet, according to Marc and Marque-Luise Kiringoff, “The concept of work is threaded through the most fundamental beliefs of the nation, embodying an expectation of plentiful opportunity and fair rewards for those willing to invest their efforts” (Miringoff & Miringoff, p. 143). When young people are excluded from participating in this and other cultural arenas, it is easy to understand why they feel disenfranchised and alienated from the rest of society. As one youth commented during a focus group interview about the current “scapegoating” of youth, “It’s enough to make you wanna take drugs.”

What makes CYD unique? This approach sharply contrasts with deficit-based models that focus solely on youth problems and the negative outcomes we hope to prevent. Under the “diagnosed-problem” model of treatment, youth are seen as a collection of problems to be fixed, rather than as future parents, neighbors, voters, political leaders, and workers who might benefit from maximum adult involvement, participatory learning, and the encouragement to grow and become productive, contributing adults (Hughes & Curran, 2000, pp. 7-11). As we have been slow to learn, efforts that rely on risk-reduction strategies fail to adequately prepare young people to assume productive roles as adults. Risk reduction is only part of the story, and not a very empowering story at that. As Karen Pittman (1999) has stated on a number of occasions, problem-free is not fully prepared or fully engaged.

In the current prevailing deficit model of framing youth, community-based organizations are required to outline a set of activities that will be carried out in a community in order to land a “prevention” grant. Rarely are any of these activities or programs chosen or designed by the targeted youth. For the adults at these organizations who need their jobs, it’s tough to break this pattern. But who ultimately benefits? The adults who know how to play the funding game benefit, rather than the youth who have definite needs and who could make meaningful contributions to their communities.

In contrast, Community Youth Development is about creating supportive communities for young people and empowering youth to actively engage in their own development while contributing to the well-being of the larger community. We just work to ensure that our youth have opportunities to do so if we want them to fulfill their potential. Hence, CYD is developmental rather than prescriptive. The distinction may appear subtle, but it is conspicuous in practice, and the implications are enormous for those who embrace the deficiency model of youth policy.

Community Youth Development shifts the dialogue from one that focuses on youth with problems to one that asks how communities can help youth develop the confidence, competence, connections, and character to contribute to the community, not only today, but also later, as adults. The focus is on providing the “core vitamins” of CYD rather than the prescriptive medicines of treatment or remediation. Community Youth Development focuses on bolstering what kids need and deserve, not on what they don’t have or how their impact on the community can be neutralized.

What are the core vitamins of Community Youth Development that equip youth to be fully prepared, engaged and vibrant citizens?

- Bonding through the support and guidance of caring adults
- Competence—social, emotional, moral, behavioral, and cognitive
- Mastery of skills
- A sense of personal identity
- Meaningful engagement, not tokenism
- A sense of hope and belief in the future
- A sense of personal safety and belonging
- A sense of spirituality
- Valuing the contributions of young people and fostering mutual reciprocity
- Self-determination
- A sense of personal responsibility
- A sense of personal influence and efficacy

Becoming an effective CYD practitioner does not mean simply putting a new label on what we’ve always done. Rather, it requires a shift in thinking, especially on the part of many who have labored in the trenches of prevention for so many years. The medical model and deficiency approaches of prevention have systematically viewed youth as patients
and clients, not as partners or allies. In contrast, a Community Youth Development approach means:

- Accepting that youth input is not the same as youth involvement or empowerment; youth must be genuinely engaged and involved in significant and meaningful ways.

- Becoming flexible in thinking about new strategies and applying existing resources in new ways.

- Recognizing that youth development does not occur in isolation from family, community, and country.

- Partnering with other youth organizations to design new ways to provide services, raise funds, and develop and promote improved policies for young people.

- Recognizing that adolescent development is natural, complex, and evolving.

- Realizing that young people's development is supported through involvement with people or places that offer real-time intellectual, spiritual, social, or emotional nurturing.

- Reengineering or reinventing, rather than simply reorganizing, the business of youth work.

- Providing access to learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

CYD is not about what all youth need, like assets, but is sensitive to the differing needs of young people. In this model, adults function more as coaches and facilitators—"the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage," as Bill Lofquist puts it so eloquently (1989). In Community Youth Development, adults share decision-making authority and truly vibrant youth groups strike a balance between being "firmed yet flexible." The atmosphere surrounding vibrant youth groups feels different than that of typical youth groups: vibrant youth groups pulsate with an energy and vitality that reflect the central role of youth involved in decision making and community transformations—and it’s in the group climate that one really notices the difference.

What, then, is the relationship between Community Youth Development and prevention? For far too long we have characterized youth development as an outcome or result of prevention efforts. The logic used to go like this: Teach kids to quit smoking through self-esteem enhancing activities, discussions of the harmful effects, exploration of alternative activities, and other strategies, and youth will develop into healthy, self-assured, contributing adults. Wrong. For too long these approaches have treated youth like the categorical funding that fuels them. Fix the particular "ailment" and go on to the next troubled youth. As such, youth are merely seen as a collection of problems instead of as future parents, neighbors, and workers who need maximum adult involvement, teaching, and encouragement to grow and become productive, contributing adults.

Can we really feel a sense of success if we convince a jobless, sexually-active teen who has a drug abuse problem to quit smoking? This is not really "progress." Deficit-based approaches see only parts of the whole, and typically fail to deal with the whole child in the context of community and family. In contrast, Community Youth Development organizations engage young people's strengths. Consequently, young people actively take part in crafting solutions to community issues—not as recipients but as initiators. Research and practice demonstrates that CYD experiences, which are built upon youth needs, lead to prosocial outcomes and the prevention of a range of risk-taking behavior.

The hollow mantra that prevention is a panacea for youth development is entrenched in prevention literature and the prevention field. For instance, in a recent book on the nation's health, the authors make the following statements without a footnote or research reference (Miringoff & Miringoff, 1999, p. 119):

*Drug use creates a distinctive set of problems for young people. Serious abuse can create a climate of alienation, making it difficult to navigate successfully through adolescence. Heavy drug use, particularly when begun at young ages, may cause a lifetime of problems, including suicide, crime, failure to complete school, impairment of health, and the disruption and endangerment of future careers and families."

The authors could perhaps more accurately have said, "Serious alienation can create a climate of serious drug abuse, making it difficult to navigate successfully through adolescence." But the latter view would in turn force us to attack our systematic efforts to exclude young people from meaningful participation in our culture, rather than taking the easier tack of attacking their use of reality-numbing drugs. Have we ever pondered that perhaps the stifling nature of adult reality is something that is just too hard for adolescents to take?

According to these authors, drug use creates alienation rather than alienation leading to drug use. In defining the issue in this way, we can conveniently
ignore the critical vitamins needed for youth development, and frame the issue in terms of preventing negative behaviors by reducing access to drugs rather than helping youth engage in meaningful roles and thus avoid destructive behaviors.

So, where does all this lead? Figure 1 illustrates how the Community Youth Development approach begins with youth needs and ultimately links with prevention. Please understand that we have not tried to list all the elements of asset building, vibrancy, resiliency, risk/protective factors or negative social outcomes, but have listed a few examples in each box. It’s the nature of the relationship that is most important.

The Community Youth Development methodology places the needs of youth as the starting point rather than the needs of prevention, the organization, the grant, or the program. CYD is the foundation and prevention is the result. In contrast, programs that are not built on the needs of youth or that are designed (either intentionally or by default) to frustrate these needs inevitably lead to failure—for the program and for the young people they purport to serve.

Think of this as “vitamin deficiency.” Programs that put the emphasis on the numbers of hours spent in activities or on donor-driven outcomes, rather than on youth empowerment and program quality, fail to provide the right “nutritional supplements” or atmosphere for successful youth development. In addition, programs that are one-shot or short-term in nature, have high staff turnover, or are dominated by control-oriented adults who do not give youth decision-making or policymaking roles, will contribute to youths’ lower academic achievement, higher incidences of acting out, rebellion, and alienation, and lower levels of bonding and attachment. Programs that merely concentrate on keeping youth busy for a certain number of hours per week will also miss the mark. The consequences of such programs are “nutritionally deprived” youth.

These youth will be more likely to express themselves in socially negative ways, to feel and act disengaged, to make poor lifestyle choices, and become detached from their community. Understandably, such youth are more likely to experiment with drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, engage in risky sexual behaviors, skip school, steal, and act in other socially deviant ways to make up for their deprivation.

Teen pregnancy prevention is a good example. We know that the best teen pregnancy prevention strategy instills in young women a sense of hope and a belief that they have a role to play in the future. Many young women who feel that they have no viable options for the future choose to have a child—despite all the alternatives available to them—because parenthood provides them the role and status they have been denied in other parts of their life (Glenn & Nelson, 1988). They clearly have not been made aware of or given access to the many alternative choices.

Unfortunately, prevention has become a substitute for bringing young people into meaningful roles in the design of community-based efforts. No amount of prevention aimed at disenfranchised and marginalized youth will have a positive impact, because their basic “nutritional” needs have been frustrated and derailed from the outset. Thus, genuine youth development must start early and must be sustained throughout adolescence.

Although we have been slow to learn this, young people are hungry to contribute to their communities in meaningful ways. Over 25 years of research and practice have shown that if we value the contributions of youth, families, and communities, we can help ensure that youth will lead safe, healthy, productive lives, and contribute positively to their community. Through CYD, we can feed their need to be involved, provide the means for them to thrive, and begin to quench their desire for influence and the ability to make meaningful contributions.

Montana’s Red Lodge Youth Council: CYD in Action
The Red Lodge Youth Council (RLYC) is a case in point. Started in 1999 as a spin-off of a group of young people working with John Poore to reopen the Boys & Girls Club, which had closed due to financial and board leadership issues, a group of 6th and 7th graders helped organize a community-wide forum focusing on the need for after-school programs and, with adults, developed a new strategic plan for the Club. When the Club re-opened successfully, the group decided to expand the scope of its efforts to improve conditions for community youth. The original members invited more young people and several adult leaders to join their team, asked the City Council to recognize them as a subcommittee, and named themselves the Red Lodge Youth Council. Their goal was threefold: giving young people a voice in local affairs, addressing issues affecting youth in their community, and charting a course for Red Lodge to become a healthy and just community for youth.

Led by 14-year-old Angela Schilz, RLYC is a sub-committee of the City Council and an adjunct program of the Boys & Girls Club of Red Lodge. The Youth Council consists of 12 youth in grades 8 through 12 and seven adults representing the schools, the justice system, the Boys & Girls Club, the city government, and the community at large.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Needs</th>
<th>Outcomes Desired</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of safety and structure</td>
<td>High quality programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastery of skills</td>
<td>Sustained efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of hope and belief in the future</td>
<td>Autonomy-oriented adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Consistent staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-worth</td>
<td>Real-time learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal responsibility</td>
<td>Youth as partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>Opportunities to succeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>High levels of trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful role</td>
<td>Flexible but firm structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valued and respected</td>
<td>Safe environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of competence</td>
<td>Programs connected to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonding and connection to others</td>
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All youth and adult members share equal voting privileges and all officers on the RLYC are youth. An adult coordinator from the Boys & Girls Club is paid to help organize the program.

The Youth Council positions youth, adults, and community organizations side-by-side in a process of envisioning, planning, and building a healthy and just community for youth. In addition, Youth Council members lead community forums focused on youth-adult collaboration and asset building, participate in local decision-making involving the city, schools and the Boys & Girls Club, and engage in hands-on community building.

RLYC activities include the following:

- Researching and collecting data on local youth issues
- Leading community forums, presentations, and planning sessions
- Developing a long-range plan describing the needs of our youth
- Hosting a five-day wilderness leadership retreat
- Promoting strategies to improve conditions for youth throughout our region
- Working to secure several youth positions on the local school board
- Planning and overseeing construction of a local skate board park

- Coordinating the first Celebration of Our Youth event to recognize outstanding achievements of young people that fall outside of academics and sports
- Coordinating a program to provide healthy activities for teens on weekend evenings

John’s experiences as an educator in multiple settings—in schools, as a youth worker at a Boys & Girls Club, and as coordinator of the Youth Council—provided him with a unique opportunity to compare the CYD process to more traditional roles. Five areas are highlighted here:

- Shifting the typical practitioner’s focus from pre-chosen outcomes to process
- Overcoming preconceptions that can hinder quality work between youth and adults—i.e., youth are not capable of handling decisions about budgets, or adults only want to control youth and develop programs to “fix” youth problems
- Acting as an environmental governor—i.e., someone who closely monitors how power is being deployed within the group and helps participants manage its rightful distribution
- Serving as the skill broker—i.e., helping young people identify the skills needed to accomplish a particular objective and providing an opportunity for them to learn those skills
Elements of Vibrancy
Resulting in . . .
- Higher academic achievement
- Lower rates of delinquency
- Lower teen pregnancy
- Higher levels of bonding
- Lower school truancy
- Higher prosocial skills

Risk/Protective Factors
Promoting and fostering . . .
- Prosocial behavior
- Civic engagement
- Attachment and bonding
- Healthy lifestyle choices
- Neighborhood attachment
- Compassion for others
- Generosity
- Decision-making
- Creative activities
- Constructive use of leisure time
- Sense of purpose

Asset Building
Leading to the prevention of negative outcomes such as . . .
- Substance abuse
- Teen pregnancy
- Sexual experimentation
- Suicide
- Delinquency
- Truancy
- Risk taking behavior

- Functioning as the group’s lackey (buying donuts and making sure there is a flip chart for meetings is far different than developing a lesson plan with learning outcomes)

In making the shift, most educators will confront a certain amount of cognitive dissonance—even a minor identity crisis—as they struggle to reconcile these new experiences with their days in school, when teachers were the power brokers. Over time, however, the benefits clearly outweigh the tensions: richer dialogue informs higher quality decisions, deeper relationships across age groups make communities more resilient, long-held myths of nature versus culture are confronted as young people take on leadership roles, and ownership over the health of the community is spread into a greater number of caring and capable hands.

Conclusion
Positive youth development efforts must be intentional and be built on the foundation of youth needs, not program or organizational needs. Positive youth development is a process that occurs in vibrant youth groups that incorporate the core vitamins of youth development that have been identified through research and practice. Successful programs that hope to help youth thrive and flourish are those that focus on meeting the developmental needs of youth, thereby providing them with the nutritional requirements to prevent problems in their later lives. Regardless of the specific label, Community Youth Development is the conceptual and practical thread that weaves together the asset-building, vibrancy, resiliency, and risk/protective factor models.

After reflecting on her year of service as one of six Montana AmeriCorps “Promise Fellows,” Liz Stahl’s poignant observations about her community work sum it up best:

As a Promise Fellow in 1999, I was able to travel to many of the communities in my area and meet with adults who had the desire to better the lives of youth. In retrospect, I see now that too few youth were present at these meetings. I have learned that it is quite common for adults to devise a program that will “help” the youth in their community and then the program stumbles along for a time before it dies from lack of youth input. I believe that the youth in this day and age need to be a part of the process that changes their situations.7

Easier said than done—but that’s our challenge and our goal.

References


1. From the Younger Americans draft legislation, Sec. 103-13. For the full text, visit the National Youth Development Information Center website at www.nydic.org.

2. For a list of the five fundamental resources at the core of America's Promise, see their website at www.americaspromise.org.


5. We are indebted to Karen Pittman for the concept of “core vitamins” for youth development. See “The Power of Youth Engagement,” Youth Today 8, No. 5 (1999).

6. Many of these ideas for approaching youth development differently come from Reconnecting Youth & Community: A Youth Development Approach (1996) from the National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth, Washington, DC.


Kirk A. Astroth, Ed.D, is professor and extension 4-H Specialist with Montana State University—Bozeman. Over the past 20 years Kirk has worked as a teacher, a counselor in the YMCA program, a work crew supervisor of court-referred youth in the Model Cities/Neighborhood Youth Corps program, and a volunteer in the Upward Bound Program and the Child Advancement Project. He has published numerous articles on positive youth development and prevention, including “I’m OK, You’re At Risk,” “More Than Good Intentions: A Developmental Model for Building Strategic Alliances,” and “Beyond Resilency: Fostering Vibrancy in Youth Groups.” His work has been included in several books, including Teens At Risk: Opposing Viewpoints (1999), The Scapegoat Generation (1996), and the Monograph on Youth in the 1990’s (1995). As a result on his research in Montana on the elements of effective youth groups Kirk originated the concept of “vibrant” youth groups: a subject that he has written about and published extensively. Kirk and his wife are parents of a 5-year-old who keeps them connected to what’s really important.

While still in high school, Doug Brown began his commitment to youth as a member and volunteer at the Helena YMCA and as an aid to underprivileged and economically depressed youth. After graduating from the University of Montana and teaching in rural Montana he returned to the Helena YMCA as a professional director, focusing on physical educa- 
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John Poore currently serves as executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of Red Lodge, Montana. He also serves as the adult coordinator of the Red Lodge Youth Council. He is the founder of Eco Education, an urban environmental education program that helps young people gain an awareness and knowledge of the natural world and the skills to collaborate with adults to address environmental issues in their neighborhoods.

Dick Timm lives in Billings Montana and is an agency resource manager with Aid Association for Lutherners/Lutheran Brotherhood: a fraternal company that is the national corporate sponsor for Search Institute’s Healthy Community Healthy Youth. His work with communities, organizations, and congregations focuses on implementing and sustaining the asset model. Dick is also an active member of the Montana Collaboration for Youth, which consists of all of the major youth-serving organizations in Montana.
The decades between 1960 and 2000 have seen tremendous shifts in youth policy and practice in the United States. These shifts have altered the definition of young people’s responsibilities, rights, competencies, and needs, as well as those of their families, institutions, and communities. Changes are evident in the way youth, family, and community issues are framed—for example, how the “deficits” language has been softened by the concept of “assets.” We’ve witnessed a shift in the roles that young people, families, and community residents are encouraged to play as stakeholders in their own development. In addition, we’ve seen increases in the youth, family, and community fields’ understanding of how much the well-being of their respective populations co-varies. Most importantly, and most recently, there has been a growing awareness of the synergy created when young people, families, and community stakeholders plan and implement projects together. As we think about where this can take us, let us begin by examining the past four decades in greater detail.

Looking Back

1960s. The sixties witnessed a growth in public and political attention to identifying and understanding youth with serious problems, such as dropouts, runaways, unwed parents, abused children and youth, and delinquents. Who were they? Why were they in trouble? What did they need? The numbers of youth with problems was rising, as were the associated direct costs, and recognition that the indirect costs associated with the loss of skilled human capital was emerging. Dollars began to flow to increase the capacity to work with these populations in public institutions.

1970s. The birth of a response to these young people focused on alternative youth services in the seventies. The growth of these programs, made possible by increases in federal and state dollars for “troubled” youth, marked a shift in thinking about working with young people in difficult circumstances. Though these youth were in need of help, they were seen as capable of making decisions and helping themselves. The programs built on, rather than squelched, young people’s sense that they could make a difference. By the end of the seventies the calls for programs that addressed young people’s needs before they ran away, dropped out, or became pregnant began to grow. It was during this time that the National Network for Youth was established.

1980s. A new emphasis on primary prevention took hold in the eighties. Practitioners and policymakers honed in on the high cost and modest effectiveness of crisis programs, but the focus remained on reducing problems. Hundred of programs and curricula emerged to stop teens from drinking, smoking, having sex (or unprotected sex), being truant or violent. As the redundancies became clear (multiple programs targeting the same young people), the calls for comprehensive prevention programs grew louder.
1990s. It was in this decade that the youth development approach began to take root. The idea that “problem-free is not fully prepared” took hold. This sparked calls for increased funding of non-problem-focused programming, in addition to changes in approach and funding among programs and practitioners who traditionally worked with vulnerable youth. The National Collaboration for Youth grew in members and visibility. Youth-worker training received attention. The idea that “young people grow up in communities, not programs” also gained currency, encouraging a new call for greater community investment in youth development. A renewed emphasis was placed on the establishment of the National Commission on Youth and Community Service. It was also during this time that the National Network for Youth coined the term “Community Youth Development” (Pittman, 1996, pp. 4-8) to signal a new approach to youth development. This approach was powered by the belief that young people and adults could work together to change their communities into places where young people could grow up healthy.

Looking Forward
The good news is that youth participation is in. It has emerged as a powerful strategy for engaging older youth. It holds the promise of instilling a sense of civic and social responsibility in adolescents and young adults and bringing new energy and optimism to community problem solving. But balancing the goals of individual youth development and youth and adult action for community change will require significant work. And staying committed to the young people most in need will require constant vigilance.

The Next Paradigm Shift: From Youth Participation for Youth Development to Youth and Adult Partnerships for Community Change
As noted, significant progress has been made in promoting the argument that community change is critical to youth development—indeed, young people do not grow up in programs, but in communities. And the argument that meaningful participation is critical to youth development has been well documented—especially among older youth who are ready not only for more choice and voice, but for more opportunities to have a visible impact. But the idea that youth participation is critical to community change has not been firmly embraced (see Figure 1). Without persistent advocacy, youth participation will be promoted as a community program rather than as a community principle.

Data from Community Change for Youth Development—a multiyear demonstration project undertaken by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) to assess the capacity and impact of a community’s ability to increase the “core vitamins” for youth development—can be used to demonstrate this point. Youth surveys in three communities revealed that young people are aware of their own needs as well as the needs of their communities (Sipe & Ma, 1998). The data confirm that young people know what the problems are and have a sense of how to address them and, with the right support and resources, can make a positive change. Consider the following:

- Young people feel the effects of crime and violence
- They see the results of idleness and lack of supervision
- They frequently participate in structured activities as young teens, but participation declines with age
- They lack work and employment opportunities
- They want adult support
- They want to help make things better

The P/PV project hopes to help fill these voids by providing communities with technical assistance and leveraging dollars to increase five core “vitamins” for youth: adult supports, positive activities in the non-school hours, meaningful work and service experiences, opportunities to be involved in shaping their own environments, and support through transition periods (e.g., middle school to high school).

Equally important is that the list above cries out for solutions. This is where definitions of youth participation become critical, for they determine the timing and extent of youth engagement in solving
problems. For a moment, let’s fast-forward two years to the future and assume that the surveyed communities have put a range of responses in place: community policing, citizen patrols, extended-hours youth centers, apprenticeships, mentoring programs, school-based service and a youth service corps, for example. Presumably, young people are the beneficiaries. But which initiatives did they suggest or help plan? For how many did they advocate? How many have youth volunteers or employees?

If the phrase “they [the youth] want to help” were interpreted narrowly by the adults in power, the answer would be probably just a few. In this scenario, while youth participation is likely in many programs, youth will only volunteer or be hired in those programs that have youth service or employment as their goal. In contrast, if the phrase “they want to help” were interpreted broadly as “they want to help address each of the issues they raised,” the answer could be quite different. Young people, suddenly, become “at the table” stakeholders in planning and implementing every response from community policing to mentoring. The numbers of youth involved—not just as participants, but as staff, planners, organizers, and volunteers—skyrockets when participation is seen as a principle rather than a program.

We must echo Barry Checkoway’s warning:

_There is a tendency in the youth development field to accept all notions of youth participation and to embrace all forms of practice. Some of what passes today as “youth participation” actually may be a new form of agency service delivery in disguise._

Youth participation for youth development. Youth participation for community change. Different goals, different strategies; maybe even different proponents and funders. This isn’t surprising: it’s a critical distinction that I, for one, have been slow to grasp. It is a distinction that, if grabbed, will shape the way youth development ideas are marketed in the years ahead. It took a decade of work to move the idea that young people don’t grow up in programs, they grow up in communities. Perhaps we can accelerate the learning curve for the next challenge—participation shouldn’t occur just in programs, it should occur in communities.

The Next Definition Shift:
From “Problem Youth” to “Problem Solvers”
While most would agree that there have been positive shifts during the last 40 years of youth policy, these changes have had some unexpected consequences. Slowly but surely, we have shifted the focus and resources away from older, marginalized youth to elementary and middle school youth who are “at risk” of, but not struggling with, the problems that caught the public’s attention several decades ago. The younger/lower risk group is where “smart investments” are now being made, investments that are seen as having a pay-off in both problem reduction and work-force preparation. The rapid growth of federal and state funding for after-school programming (e.g., the 21st Century Schools program) is a testament to this. While these investments are clearly needed, many in the youth field feel that once again one age group—this time elementary and middle schoolers—is being pitted against older, non-college-bound youth in the competition for public attention and public dollars.

There is reason to be concerned that the next 40 years will see a quiet reversal of progress for young people in the most vulnerable situations. While the idea of promoting the development of “fully prepared youth” will continue to take hold, it will be realized through strategies in policy-reinforced practices that reach young people earlier—with the expectation that they will thrive on relatively light but constant doses of support. Those who do not—those who are “on track” at age eight but begin to slip at 12 and are clearly “off track” at 15—may not receive the supports and opportunities they need to regain their position.

There is a real danger that the “early investment” push, combined with the lingering “fix then develop” mentality, will make it less likely that the young people most in need of services and supports and opportunities will get them. Even as it becomes clear, not only that “problem-free isn’t fully prepared” but that “fully prepared isn’t fully participating,” it is possible that young people on the margins—especially those 15 and older—will remain there. Evidence is mounting that those who, at 16, have not connected with something—school, work, sports, activism—are at high risk of remaining “disconnected.” Recent research reveals that older youth have fewer supports and opportunities than younger adolescents and that the consequences of this disconnection are dire. The set of studies, spearheaded by Douglas Besharov at the American Enterprise Institute, concludes that young people who are disconnected during three or more transitional years between ages 17 and 23 are significantly more likely to end up poor, on welfare, in prison or unemployed as adults.

We will do a disservice to all young people if we do not find ways to create a public idea of youth as change agents: one that starts rather than concludes with the engagement of young people whose lives
and communities are most in need of change. The nineties brought us perilously close to promoting youth development strategies that fail to address the realities of those most in need. We cannot repeat this mistake as we promote youth participation.

Next Steps: Youth Engagement for Community Change as a Public Idea

Community Youth Development promises to be a powerful tool for transforming organizations that currently work with youth. Dedicated organizations have made enormous strides over the past few years in making this goal a reality through the articulation of good organizational practice. But there is a larger challenge: reaching those organizations and individuals who do not have youth problems or youth development as a priority. These audiences need a simpler and cleaner message about the power of youth participation for community improvement and community change.

Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich (1998) talks about the power of public ideas—ideas that are promoted through public policy, implemented through mission-driven organizational practice, and rooted in individual beliefs and expectations. It seems almost impossible to achieve gains engaging young people as agents of change without making Community Youth Development an idea that is well ingrained in the public consciousness. This lesson is brought home clearly when youth participation is viewed through an international lens.¹

Along with colleagues in seven countries, Connie Flanagan, a researcher at Penn State, conducts comparative research on adolescent views of the “social contract.” She underscores the importance of “collective responsibility,” a concept embodied in two key youth institutions: family and school (1998, pp. 457-475):

Youth who bear an ethic of social responsibility emphasized in their families are more likely than their compatriots to be engaged in some type of service to their communities. They are also more committed to public interest goals such as helping their country, preserving the environment, and assisting the less fortunate. Likewise, feelings of student solidarity and identification with the institution of the school are related to adolescents’ civic commitments across countries, despite the fact that the school’s role as a training ground for democracies is less developed in some countries than others.

Flanagan goes on to talk about the importance of broader public policies:

I’ve been struck by the extent to which national and state policies shape the contexts in which adolescents make decisions. Through minimum wage and child labor laws, the structure and funding of school systems, or subsidies for higher education, to name a few, the state’s policies inform widespread beliefs about what are functional choices and normative behaviors for teens. In fact, such policies even define the boundaries of adolescence.²

We will have to work carefully in this country to identify or create the public ideas that undergird a sustained effort to bring all young people into the civic, social, and economic arenas of their communities as lifelong learners, workers, and change agents. We must recognize that this public idea, like any stable platform, must have at least three legs: one in policy, one in public opinion and values, and a third in organizational practice. We could argue for the importance of a fourth leg in youth culture, for this idea must resonate with young people, tap into their resources, and unleash their potential.

The convergence of interest in youth participation creates a window of opportunity to promote the quality and quantity of supports and opportunities for young people and adults to work together as effective citizens committed to social and community change (see Figure 2). This opportunity could be wasted, however, if the expectations of those who can potentially fund, plan, implement, participate in, and evaluate these efforts are not raised significantly. To maximize impact, youth participation must be seen as:

- Critical to the immediate well-being of communities and institutions, not just the youth involved. There is a need to define and maintain a balance between individual development and civic or community change.

- Occurring everywhere, not just in separate youth-specific projects. There is a need to define youth participation as an integral part of community planning and problem solving rather than as a series of discrete, compartmentalized projects.

- Occurring in many forms—service, governance, advocacy, organizing.

- Involving learning and work, as opposed to uncompensated volunteering that is detached from career interests.
Figure 2. Youth Action

Youth Contributing to Communities

Young people and adults working together to create the necessary conditions for the successful development of themselves, their peers, families and communities.

Communities Supporting Youth

Youth Action is youth of all ages, circumstances and backgrounds making a difference building skills, supporting people, voicing opinions, acting on issues, leading causes, advocating for change, creating solutions, organizing groups, educating others, assessing progress in their lives and others' — their peers, families, organizations and communities — by taking on challenging, visible roles as interns, observers, volunteers, staff, advocates, educators, planners, council members, team leaders, organizers, founders with others — their peers, near peers, family members, community members, youth professionals other adults — to address issues such as racism, poverty, homophobia, the environment or improve community housing, jobs, safety, commerce, infrastructure, human services, education, arts, culture, media, faith, and ethics, civic participation, social interaction and the individual growth of residents.

• The right and responsibility of all young people, not just those well positioned to “give back” because of income, education, or family background.

In pursuing this vision we need to find a balance between the rights and responsibilities of young people. Insights gained from conversations with young people and practitioners in other countries suggest that youth participation for community change is sometimes the easiest part of the equation. The hard part is ensuring that young people can not only access resources and opportunities, but also become active in sharing and exercising power. Without this affirmation of basic rights for all young people, we are in danger of sponsoring another call to service, where young people are not full partners in their own development or that of their communities.

This article draws from the writing on youth development, youth participation and youth leadership by The Forum for Youth Investment staff over the past year, with support from the Ford Foundation, the Haas Jr. Fund, and the Surtka Foundation. While I take full responsibility for this presentation, the ideas reflected were developed jointly with Merita Irby, Thad Ferber, Steve Mokwena, and Jules Dunham.

References

1. But opportunities to participate are not evenly distributed among the youth population. Younger teens have more opportunities than older teens; white youth have more opportunities than nonwhite youth. Research conducted for Independent Sector in 1996 makes clear that there are differences in participation between different population groups. For example, the survey found that while 63.3 percent of white teenagers reported volunteering in the past year, only 42 percent of black teens and 44.1 percent of Hispanic teens reported such activity. This is a lower rate of volunteering than was reported for blacks in 1992 (down from 52.8 percent). The same research also reveals that black and Hispanic youth are less likely to be asked to volunteer than their white counterparts. See Volunteering and Giving among Teenagers 12 to 17 Years of Age: Findings from a National Survey. Survey conducted by The Gallup Organization for Independent Sector. Washington, DC: Independent Sector (1997).
2. For further discussion on the core vitamins for CYD see the article, “Avenues to Adulthood or Avenues to Civic Anemia?” (Astroth et al) in this Volume, pp. 12-18.

4. *America’s Disconnected Youth* (CWLA Press, 1999), a study edited by Douglas Bejarow of the American Enterprise Institute, reveals that young adults who are idle for six months out of a year (not in school, not working, or not married to someone who is working or in school) during three or more transitional years, between ages 17 and 23, are significantly more likely to end up poor, on welfare, in prison, or unemployed as adults.


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Youth Leadership for Community Change

Julia Burgess

The importance of theoretical and historical connections between youth development and community development cannot be underestimated. This article provides a basis for a holistic approach to community development, particularly in urban and poor communities, and underscores the importance of youth involvement in community building.

Too often, families, communities, and public institutions in our urban areas fail to recognize and harness the tremendous energy and commitment of young people to make positive social change. Though in many cases children are the majority of the population, such as in public housing, there are many youth in low-income communities who have great untapped creative and leadership potential but few positive opportunities to develop it. Some grassroots community activists feel that youth leadership may be the only way to bring residents together to seriously address the future of these low-income areas that are under extreme pressure, from both external and internal forces.

At the national, state, and local levels, there has been a renewed emphasis on the importance of community in supporting human growth and development, creating economic opportunity, and establishing shared values and activities that connect people with one another in meaningful, participatory ways. This focus on community has been building at the same time that states and localities have gone through extraordinary restructuring of service systems to respond to the transfer of spending authority to states and welfare reform.

Community organizations face formidable challenges as they work to rebuild low-income communities: crime, decreasing government funding, increasing responsibility for providing basic services to community residents. Most of these communities are in cities or nearby suburbs that have become increasingly isolated both racially and economically. Many are also undergoing a rapid population change because of soaring immigration. At the same time, poor public transportation, the high cost of new infrastructure development, and overdevelopment are causing many middle- and upper-income suburbanites to rethink their quality of life. Now the land on which many low-income communities sit is being looked at covetously by people who not too long ago fled to the suburbs.

Low wages, poor schools, fear of displacement, and racial and ethnic tensions have created tremendous stress for low-income inner-city residents. This uncertainty is compounded by attempts by numerous local organizations to take a proactive approach toward planning for the future of these areas. Many inner-city residents feel that the aims of some of these agencies and community leaders may not be in their best interests.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that many of these residents are uninvolved, pessimistic, and cynical. In the past they have promised much but have received little. Feeling incapable of acting to protect their interests, many residents turn inward, often engaging in self-destructive behavior and further isolating themselves from the mainstream. This has resulted in unstable grassroots community leadership, poor community integration, and relatively few efforts at community self-help in the face of the severe decrease in social services and a changing population. Tangible evidence of this is the lack of trust between racial and ethnic minorities, weak grassroots community organizations, and high gang activity that is fueled by the lucrative sale of illicit drugs.
In this context, youth are often seen as the cause of much of the deterioration that has plagued low-income communities. Existing youth groups are too often isolated or not included in community-based development plans. The result has been an increasing gap between our alienated, angry young people and the adults engaged in well-meaning community development or social change efforts.

A 1997 survey of more than 6,000 Seattle high school students revealed that 86 percent of them—residents of the inner city as well as those living in affluent suburbs—felt that their community did not care about them. In his influential 1994 report, "Involving Young People in Neighborhood Development," Barry Checkoway of the University of Michigan School of Social Work found that, while “neighborhood development organizations are strategically situated to promote youth participation ... most do little or nothing to promote” the involvement of young people. “Why is it,” he asks, “that neighborhood activists who are progressive on matters of race, class, or gender tend to be conservative on matters of youth participation?”

Young people rightly expect adults to provide them with the tools they need for a decent future. One way to achieve that is for community-based organizations to engage and involve youth in their work; to encourage young people to recognize their own leadership potential; to understand the broader barriers to community change; and to act with other youth or in concert with adults to confront and overcome those barriers. Involving youth in community organizing to work for systemic change may be the key to rebuilding our low-income communities and to developing a new cadre of leadership for these communities.

Community Change Efforts
A broad variety of community-based programs and initiatives have been developing in urban communities, offering great promise to rebuild and positively affect the lives of their residents.

Some of these efforts have originated as service system reform, as attempts to restructure public services to be more responsive to and connected with the communities they serve (education, health, mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice), or to create new, more preventive services and supports that are rooted in the community itself (family support programs, youth development programs, community centers).

Others have focused on building an economic infrastructure through creating new housing opportunities, new economic institutions, and new pathways to jobs. Still others have focused on building participatory opportunities for community residents that emphasize empowerment, mobilization, political education, advocacy, and mutual aid.

While these spheres share some common philosophical underpinnings and often exist within the same community, they generally operate independently from one another. Moreover, they have different cultures and values and embody different strategies for producing community change. Often they have no knowledge of the others’ existence, let alone any detailed understanding of the others’ missions and how they might connect with one another.

Building communities of necessity will entail taking action in all three spheres. Service system reform will not be successful if there is no economic opportunity and no cohesion within the community to enable residents to use their skills and abilities. Economic growth depends on having a workforce with the skills and habits to do the work and a civic infrastructure to support those workers. Community empowerment requires access to high quality education and other public services, as well as viable opportunities for employment and economic activity.

Youth development, participation, and empowerment are inextricably tied in with all of these efforts to change communities. Youth work has generally been part of a service network of public and private agencies. The concept of Community Youth Development points out the advances that have been made in seeing the benefits of engaging youth in their broader community context. In order to be more holistic, more and more community economic development organizations are adding youth programs to their portfolio. Many community organizing groups have begun to include youth, and independent youth organizations have often grown out of organizing efforts. But because these spheres of community change have developed so independently, youth workers have little knowledge of community economic development and community organizing.

By understanding these various spheres we can discover how youth can play a leadership role in bringing about community change that serves the interests of low-income, grassroots community residents, including youth. These interests cannot be met and sustained without community organizing at the base.

Service System Reform
It is generally recognized that the current system of publicly financed services has many flaws. It has been described as crisis oriented, deficit driven, and fragmented. It includes both the public sector and myriad not-for-profit service providers that receive public support.
Attempts to reform service systems to be more comprehensive, integrated, and community-based are not new. Most recently, they have begun as efforts at collaboration, with an emphasis not on merging existing systems but on establishing common goals across systems and collaborating to meet them. The diversity across reform efforts is immense. Still, they generally share a set of six common perspectives and approaches:

1. They seek to involve both public institutions and existing service providers in their deliberations and actions. Through collaborative approaches they seek to leverage reforms within existing systems, rather than dismantle them.

2. They believe in the importance of education and human services in helping people to learn, grow, and change.

3. They generally seek consensual solutions and often are averse to conflict. They emphasize planning, discussion, and evaluation, and they are very process oriented.

4. They often speak in a complex, jargon-filled professional language, making it difficult for people not versed in that language, especially community residents and youth, to participate. Leadership comes from service providers, not from residents themselves. Community resident and youth participation in planning processes is often token or advisory. There is often an expressed concern that professional training is necessary.

5. Social service reformers generally operate on the assumption that public institutions operate in good faith and with good will.

6. While there may be a particular emphasis placed on improving services, supports, and outcomes in specific distressed neighborhoods, outcomes affect the entire locale (Bruner & Parachini, pp. 10-11).

Community Economic Development
One of the central vehicles for initiating and carrying out community economic development are community development corporations, or CDCs. These are nonprofits organized and controlled by local residents and generally structured and staffed to be able to participate in certain federal financing and development programs for housing and economic development.

Early CDCs tended to see their missions in broad terms, addressing not only building a community's physical and economic infrastructure, but also taking on a range of other issues. Though many developed out of community organizing efforts, they see their unique role as leveraging resources to create the physical infrastructure that disinvested neighborhoods need to grow and their residents need to live. This is partly because this infrastructure development is a core element of economic development and partly because funding opportunities for development primarily have focused on this element alone.

Today, CDCs are putting renewed emphasis on comprehensive approaches to building community. It is based on a recognition, both by CDCs and by those that have supported and financed their development, that the best way to fight poverty and increase economic opportunity in poor neighborhoods requires investment in a variety of activities and structures that comprise the fabric of community: mutual assistance networks, social and economic relationships, public safety, and education, to name a few. Many have active youth programs. Community economic development is thus changing as reflected in:

- A shift toward more comprehensive approaches to community development that include non-brick-and-mortar activities, including social development

- A heavier emphasis on community organizing as a strategy for identifying and developing community leaders and shaping the kinds of local issues that affect the progress of community renewal

- A renewed emphasis on community planning and the development of a community-building plan as a prerequisite to development activities

- A more intensive effort to include and involve neighborhood residents in the organization, planning, and implementation of community renewal efforts

- Increased emphasis on making sure there are clear lines of accountability between community economic development and the community that it represents

- More interest in developing collaborative relationships among community economic development and the continuum of support systems at the neighborhood level (Traynor, 1993, p. 12)

But while there are thousands of CDCs in the country today, their continued viability depends on
their ability to secure capital for infrastructure development, particularly housing. In fact, some of the effort to diversify health care facilities, day care centers, and youth programs is a reflection of the marketplace itself. With fewer federal funds available for housing development and other investments, many CDCs are now broadening their horizons. They see human services as an industry with the opportunity for creating successful economic ventures, as well as meeting people’s service needs. The human service industry uses and expends capital, employs millions of workers, and creates output or products.

For the most part, CDCs favor concrete action and an entrepreneurial approach. Their emphasis is on efficiently generating “products” or “deliverables,” such as housing units or clients served. This approach may shortchange the need for “process” (often perceived as messy and time consuming), community participation, and the transfer of skills to neighborhood residents, including youth.

Community Organizing
“Community organizing” is the origin of the definition of Community-Based Organization” (CBO). In its strictest terms, a community-based organization is one that is controlled by and accountable to the residents of a geographic community. Youth have not played a big role in the past as members of these organizations. Until recently, in low-income neighborhoods, when not in school or at work, youth have been found in youth programs sponsored by service providers, or they are “in the streets.”

Many people equate community organizing with conflict. As the sole organizing tactic, a confrontational approach may seem to be antithetical to the collaboration or joint venturing exhibited in the social service reform and community economic development spheres. In fact, community organizing encompasses a broad array of strategies aimed at overcoming barriers imposed from outside the community. Organizing efforts extend from confrontational organizing, to organizing that emphasizes self-reliance and does not seek changes from larger public systems, to “consensus organizing” that avoids confrontation and starts by finding common ground. The actual strategy of community organizing is a hybrid.

Community organizing groups and leaders are dedicated to gaining control over their communities. This may be achieved in two ways: by gaining a share of the power and resources held by other institutions and organizations, or through local self-determination. Whichever the approach, community organizing shares a belief in the power of community residents to address their own needs.

Community organizing is an asset-based approach to community building—an alternative to long-standing government and private interventions that characterize and respond to poor neighborhoods in terms of their deficiencies and needs. Because it focuses on building hope, linkages, leadership, and on teaching people about the inner workings of their communities, community organizing is conducive to community building work. Some contend that the real gains from organizing have less to do with specific victories than with the new skills that residents acquire and the increased resident influence and change that can result.

Although community organizing efforts require dedication and commitment, they do not necessarily require outside start-up capital, specialized expertise, or access to institutional resources. Therefore, independent youth organizations that have the energy and commitment to ideals that are characteristic of young people can flourish.

Further, continued cutbacks in funding for services, especially from the public sector, are causing renewed community interest in activities and programs that encourage self-sufficiency and self-determination.

Though it is more difficult to generalize about the culture of community organizing, most grassroots community organizing groups share a worldview. Like self-help and mutual-aid groups, community organizing structures stress self-determination and are distrustful of comfortable, professional, or bureaucratic approaches to issues and nine-to-five advocacy. In fact, the community organizing culture often tends to devalue professional expertise and consider it a form of social control, rather than a form of assistance and help. Community organizers usually have a deep commitment to social justice and a strong, underlying belief in the dignity and capacity of people to solve their own community’s concerns.

Coming Together: Youth Leadership for Social Change
Each of the three spheres—service system reform, community economic development, and community organizing—has its own objectives, worldview, culture, skills, and resources. But the spheres are complementary and, if connected, will enhance youth and community development as follows:

- First, it has been documented that communities want a comprehensive approach (Okagaki, 1995, p. 18).
- Second, it has been shown that the much talked about “breakdown of the family” is related to the
collapse of “community.” Without the support a community gives families in many aspects of their lives, such as education, health care, employment opportunities, and reinforcement of self-esteem, families have difficulty functioning properly. And vice versa; without healthy families, a community begins to crumble (Cleveland Foundation Commission on Poverty, 1992, p. 4).

• Third, community building’s premise that social reforms must be connected to community revitalization requires service system reformers and community developers to work responsively and cooperatively with community residents (Kotloff, Roaf, & Gambone, 1995, p. 1), including youth.

• And fourth, community building must be directed by the community itself if it is to endure, underscoring the vital contribution to be made by community organizing (Campaign for a Sustainable Milwaukee, 1994, p. 3).

Joint action through coordinated work may further individual as well as collective agendas:

• There is value in reducing fragmentation or the duplication of effort by individuals involved in these different spheres. Increasingly, both the service system reform and community economic development spheres are seeking participation from grassroots organizations and community organization leadership. And all are looking to involve youth in their processes.

• Different spheres bring different assets to the table that are needed by others. For example, service providers have sought to be an employer for community residents, including youth. CDCs have secured financing for construction of health and human service facilities. Community organizations have helped create and operate charter schools and developed other community service organizations.

• Working together can help to better define the full needs of the community and construct a comprehensive perspective of what needs to occur to ensure success in community building.

• And politically, lone efforts within each of the spheres may lack the power to produce the level of effort necessary to effect change. Together they may be able to create alliances, momentum, and the critical mass of activity needed to achieve tangible gains on a community level. They will also be able to influence public opinion (Bruner & Parachini, pp. 29–30).

It will not be easy to bring these three spheres together, as each has its own culture, funding sources, and sense of security. And where there is not familiarity, there is sometimes a lack of trust. Foundations have been playing a pivotal role in bringing representatives to the table through comprehensive community initiatives. A mutual concern for youth is developing as another bridge builder, as service providers realize that youth must be seen not just as recipients of services or clients, but as an integral part of the community. In order to maintain quality housing, community economic development organizations must involve resident youth in their planning and decision making. And community organizations are recognizing the vast potential of organized youth in developing the power that residents need both to leverage services for their communities and as part of a community’s assets for developing self-sufficiency.

In very low-income communities, community-based organizations face significant barriers in their work to involve residents in ongoing work for systemic change. Action research undertaken by the Center for Community Change has led to one inescapable conclusion: the fear and cynicism within low-income communities and their grassroots organizations have become so deep that they can only be overcome if youth organize to educate and convince adults that they must find meaningful ways to involve young people if communities are to survive (Center for Community Change, 1995).

This will not be easy. The integration of young people in community-based work for social change means changing the very culture of our community organizations, and creating bridges between existing youth and adult groups. It means providing a forum for, and listening to, a wide range of young people. It means going beyond the “successful” young leaders, and listening—really listening—to the rest; the gang members, the quiet achievers, the influential “clique” members. It means incorporating and acting on a youth-led agenda for change. It means designing or supporting leadership and educational programs for young people and adults, through which they can build their sense of belonging to a community, channel their anger, and develop their skills as leaders in the context of real community and systemic change.

In the past few years, more and more community-based organizations, which are accountable to their constituencies, are beginning to grapple with this issue. They are finding that young people are able to bridge many of the perceived differences within communities, especially racial and ethnic, that keep adults from working together. These community-based organizations are showing that when
young people are successfully engaged in community change work, the results provide the opportunity to nurture and develop the potential of all neighborhood residents.

In addition, when young people take a positive leadership role in the community, adults are moved into similar activity. With youth at the helm, residents take a good look at themselves and their community and demand a qualitatively different standard of behavior for themselves, their neighbors, and local institutions. Collaboration among all residents increases people’s sense of personal and community control. Residents begin to expect better provision of services, police accountability, better schools, and investment in the housing stock. This encourages community cohesiveness, self-sufficiency, citizen participation, and trust.

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How Organizations Learn: An Intentional Evolutionary Approach to Organizational Development and Change

Anne Dougler, John E. Terry

How do learning organizations flourish? In this article the authors view the change process through the eyes of Intentional Evolutionary Design (IED) within the larger context of cultural change being spearheaded by the “cultural creatives.”

Intentional Evolutionary Design

Transformational change is sometimes presented in the well-worn metaphor of metamorphosis, wherein the caterpillar is transformed into the butterfly. While romantic, this imagery omits two important differences. First, given longevity, the caterpillar has no choice but to transform into a butterfly. She could not, for example, choose to be a frog or stay a caterpillar. Second, once transformed into a butterfly, that is the end of change: nothing remains but procreation, aging, and death.

These important differences underscore two underlying assumptions of Intentional Evolutionary Design (IED):

- Change is intentional and not predetermined
- Change is ongoing and therefore not terminal

It is an unavoidable truism that it is not in the natural order of systems, human or otherwise, to remain at rest. One unique capacity of humans is that we are able think and plan and then act upon these thoughts and plans to bring about changes in our condition. Whether we choose to exercise this capacity is a matter of will.

Among the candidates for an intentional evolutionary approach to change are organizations that (1) want to reset their vision and aspirations but feel trapped in the old way of doing things; (2) have created a new mission and vision but cannot seem to put them into practice; or (3) are unable to break the bonds of hierarchical relationships.

While organizations may resist, and refrains such as, “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it” may mix with the urge to “return to the good old days,” pressure to respond to new internal and/or external forces is an ever-present reality of life, both organizational and personal.

When people are pushed to make changes, anxiety may be their first and most pervasive response; they might feel overwhelmed or out of control. Psychologists refer to such reactions as cognitive dissonance: when something happens that threatens the status quo, we become confused and/or angry and generally feel insecure and aroused. It is not in our natures, either organizational or personal, to tolerate such a state. We move to resolve the dissonance, perhaps by clinging to the old ways and trying to repair what is wrong, or by pursuing a new path to transactional change or even to transformational change.

IED recognizes dissonance, along with its creation and management, as a key component of organizational change. This is an important point to remember and one we will come back to later. An organization may move to resolve its dissonance in three basic ways: self-repair, transactional reforms, or transform (see Figure 1).

Self-repairing reform is best seen as a “fix-it” response. Methadone treatment, for example, may be seen as a self-repair response, both for the client and for the community. A transactional response carries the organization further along to challenge some basic assumption(s) and reach some new level of awareness. For example, a community mental
Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I: Pre-Planning</th>
<th>Phase II: Start-Up</th>
<th>Phase III: Involvement</th>
<th>Phase IV: Installing Change</th>
<th>Phase V: Sustaining Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze existing conditions and culture (past and present)</td>
<td>Set goals and objectives: implement on small scale</td>
<td>Widen involvement within organization: expand to community</td>
<td>Modify culture &amp; conditions to reflect vision (future)</td>
<td>Keep the process open and generative</td>
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health center, recognizing the need for more than a symptom-treating approach, may de-emphasize methadone treatment and launch a new personal growth and development initiative for at-risk youth.

Transformational change embraces a longer-term dynamic process that carries the organization into a new awareness, a new way of seeing things, and thus to a new way of responding and, importantly, a new way of learning. The organization moves toward a basic restructuring of how it views the world, how it does its business, and how it relates to its internal and external realities and constituencies. Note that the transformational organization implements internal reorganization as it reframes its response to the external world. It is this character of these organizations that their internal relationships reflect the paradigm they project on the external world. The organization that values people values its staff, the organization that sees resources in youth sees resources in its staff, the organization that can nurture adult/youth partnerships can create staff teams that transcend normal hierarchies. These new relationships lead to new assessment and new knowledge—and thus the cycle evolves.

An organization moving in this direction may be said to be on the road to becoming a learning organization. A person following this path may be said to be on the road to empowerment or self-actualization.

The IED Framework

The new story. The IED organization must be vision driven. It must, in other words, be able to envision a new reality and be able to anchor change efforts in that reality. In effect, this is an effort to bring into play what Ray and Anderson (2000) refer to as the "new story.” Those who have read Daniel Quinn’s Ishmael are familiar with the fictional discussion between the gorilla Ishmael and the narrator around the need to change life’s story. The need, as Ishmael points out, is to make a leap from the old story—ways of thinking and doing—into a new story. Peter Senge (2001, p. 17) points to the same need, stating:

*The only thing that can be said with some confidence today is this: we cannot continue to live the way we are living for the next 100 years. The earth won’t support it. So we know there is going to be a lot of turbulence and a lot of basic change. We are taking a long journey here and its going to take a few generations.*

Ray and Anderson (2000) maintain that this fictional dialogue between gorilla and man, this “innovative process” Senge refers to, is actually our counter thesis to the prevailing traditional paradigm (old story). Currently, these authors assert, three subcultures exist within modern societies: modernists, traditionalists, and cultural creatives. These subcultures represent 93 million, or 48 percent, 48 million, or 24.5 percent, and 50 million, or 26 percent of the U.S. population, respectively.

Of these three subcultures, the modernists “accept the commercialized urban-industrial world as the obvious right way to live. They are not looking for alternatives. They are adapting to the contemporary world by assuming rather than reasoning about, what’s important, especially those values linked to economic and public life” (Ray & Anderson, p. 32).

Traditionalists (Ray & Anderson, p. 32) tend to romanticize the past in their effort to fend off an intrusive modern world that they don’t fully understand: sex, violence-
loaded movies and TV programs, government agencies, big banks, and insurance companies, the phone companies. They are also fending off a world in which what they have to offer is not rewarded, and in which they feel they cannot succeed. They generally want black-and-white categories that offer a feeling of certainty. Finally they look for ways of life that are comforting and familiar repetitions of their youth.

Ray and Anderson continue (p. 32):

Cultural creatives are different in almost everything that concerns [the lifestyle] of the modernist or the traditionalist. . . . [They] choose a life that's distinct from that of other mainstream Americans . . . [They] live day to day in a somewhat alienating modern environment. This is not the way they ideally would live in a culture they had made themselves . . . they are not people who define their lives in terms of consumption.

The cultural creatives are crafting the new script. Yet, according to Ray and Anderson, they have little awareness of how large their numbers are and what a coherent subculture they represent. Such an emergent awareness could add tremendous impetus to the momentum the new story is already gaining.

The new story organization stands in juxtaposition to the old story organization. The old story organization is immersed in activity traps. A condition that finds the leadership and staff focused on outcomes, activities, funding dictates, and/or political efforts that are externally determined, and, which lock their organizations into a culture that perpetuates conditions that:

- Fragment services and externalize the organization's purpose (a political and funding process that draws organizations into reactive, crises-oriented, fund-seeking activity sinkholes)

- Promote hierarchical leadership

- Inhibit the development of unifying visions— including the sharing of theory and practice

- Victimize youth through the clinicalization or criminalization of youth problems

In contrast, the new story organization is:

- Intentional—reaching the vision or new reality is a thoughtful action process occurring within an open system. It is a complex process that requires leadership, guidance, and intelligence.

- Participatory—engaging staff and youth in planning, implementation, and evaluation of program design.

- Evolutionary—moving developmentally over time through discrete stages toward the achievement of the vision/new reality.

Furthermore, the new story employs an approach that is:

- Appreciative—seeing that within the organization lie the strengths and resources key to its healthy development. To appreciate this is to acknowledge that every system and person within the organization is a resource.

- Applicable—leading to generation of knowledge (theoretical and applied) that can be put to practical use and made accessible to those who need to use it.

- Proactive—helping the community to take an active role in guiding its own evolution.

- Collaborative—entering the key players, including the evaluator, into collaborative relationships with the community.

The spiral of learning. As depicted in Figure 1, the evolutionary process in the IED framework may be seen as developmental, cycling through five overlapping phases.

In this system, learning builds developmentally and incrementally. A failed plan or strategy is not necessarily a failure or setback, but a clue to the need for adaptation. The process of learning is neither linear nor cyclical. It may more accurately be envisioned as a spiral, as represented in Figure 2.

As we have diagrammed it, the learning begins within the homeostatic or the "let's not fix it" organization. This is pedagogical on our part, for the process may very well occur further along the spiral. But to understand the sociopsychological dynamics of the process, we reason that homeostasis is a good place to begin. For it is here, within the closed system that perceives that everything is going fine, that the role of leadership comes into play in initiating change.
Leadership. Leadership within the IED framework takes on a new context and special role. Leadership is the source of what we refer to as inspirational dissonance. Recall that we said change would not occur without dissonance—some powerful challenge to the status quo (note a seeming contradiction further on in the spiraling process when change becomes the status quo). At this point the leadership may provide the initial infusion of dissonance and energy to begin the process of change, and the authority necessary to guide that process along an intentional evolutionary path, as depicted in Figure 2. It is crucial that leaders have the skills needed to intentionally guide the organization into and through the processes of homeorhesis (flow state), and to maintain the flow as the learning organization develops the necessary ongoing capability to guide the organization in attaining a preferred future.

Inherent in success is that the leadership promotes an organizational culture that values the following attributes:

- Commitment to a coherent, articulated vision that is universally supported and presents a new story view of opportunities.
- Vigorous pursuit of opportunities to practice new ways of doing things in order to realize the new story view.
- Participation of staff and youth as partners and resources in bringing about the new story.
- Learning and reflection as paramount to action—the importance of learning through reflection on and conversation about how these new ideas and practices “feel” and how they are “working” will be validated by providing time and space to think, reflect, and converse.

Such a culture nurtures a drive to competency, the drive to become the best the organization possible in pursuing its vision. The organization and its members pursue the clarification and improvement of thought, perception, feelings, and behavior. This leads to a powerful sense of competency and enhanced performance.

Homeorhetic learning. Homeorhetic learning means learning from within the flow while simultaneously learning how to direct the flow. This is the crux of intentional evolution. To recapitulate, it is here that the skill of the leadership to guide the process of homeorhesis—the state of flow—is paramount. Learning organizations intentionally go on learning—that is their modus operandi and modus vivendi. However, they need guidance to keep their focus.

Guiding the flow. A designated guide team, representative of the organization and committed to the long-range vision, can help to form and direct the flow. Guiding the flow is the team’s major responsibility. This is itself a learning process, whereby the guide team, charged with functioning at some allegorical level, must learn to continuously guide the translation of thought into action and avoid the pitfall of retreating back into the old story, an ever-present human tendency.

This process requires two levels of analysis—one directed in toward the organization, and the other directed out toward the larger system or context within which the organization is functioning. The guide team must learn and exercise three separate but interlocking skills: guiding change within the organization, connecting the organization to the new story externally, and getting out of the old story and into the new. Transformation occurs when the organization’s actions, internally and externally, are congruent with the new story.

Leaping ahead. The fact is, this latter state—i.e., becoming congruent with the new story—is far more difficult to achieve than it is to think or talk about. Falling back is far easier than leaping ahead. When things get tough we have the choice of falling back or leaping ahead. Leaping ahead projects us over obstacles and is thus an appropriate metaphor here, because walking or running implies a fairly linear process and constant contact projects us across boundaries, real, psychological, or spiritual, as we enter a cognitive realm not grounded in prior experience. Making such a leap is yet another skill to be learned.

The learning is, as we said earlier, neither linear nor smooth. Once an organization goes beyond the transactional and embarks upon the journey of the transformational, it has charted a new and exciting course. But, as in a rush down a rapids, moments of terror and doubt will be evoked—this course will not be without pain and error. Organizations starting on the path to transformation may still be hooked into the old system, including the thoughts, feelings, and actions that pervaded its culture. Learning the new way is not easy and does not come from reading a book or going to a workshop. It evolves out of practice. Taking the new vision out on a road test—i.e., in a workshop—is the beginning and may initially be fun, exhilarating, and even easy. But trying to apply new ideas to actual practice is when it gets tough. In workshops we learn words and definitions, concepts and simulations, but will they hold up
in the trenches? How are they applied? How many times have you observed the jargon phenomenon, where everyone has the words and can talk the “constructs,” but can’t seem to make the leap needed to “walk the talk?”

Achieving success. Successful learning organizations will, in our opinion, need to be intentional and evolutionary in perspective and be willing to commit significant resources to the job. Money is not the only resource. Time, for example, is a significant resource. Recognize that substantive cultural change within your organization will take time, several years at least. A commitment to learning as a value means designating a specific time and place for staff to learn. Learning requires reflection, conversation, and action in a never-ending interactive relationship. The popular notion of practice fields (Dosher, 1996) is a concrete acknowledgment of this need. Practice fields require an honored, permanent, and prominent place.

IED organizational change is not a new “gizmo”—it’s a new way of seeing things. Getting there requires a process that reflects the values discussed above. It must be expected that the change will come about over time. Different organizations will begin in different ways and take different paths as they pursue their vision. Vision and values provide a compass and the learning spiral provides a map—the workers chart the course. Curnan and Hughes (2000) provide more insight into this point in their CYD framework.

Figure 2. IED Learning Spiral

The IED Learning System Internationally Guides Homeothesis by employing Vision, Practice, and Reflection in Pursuit of Competence

SOME SOURCES OF DISSONANCE

Internal:
Loss of Funds
New Leadership
Inspirational Leader

External:
Shifts in Public Opinion
Shifts in Funding Priorities
Rise in Social Movements
Changes in Local Politics

(Key: ➔ = Dissonance)
The honeymoon period following the vision-setting exercises could end abruptly and painfully. What’s in place to save the vision? Determining this is the role of the guide team. Dissonance can be foe or friend, and successful organizations’ guide teams will have processes in place to capitalize on the initial enthusiasm and facilitate the flow.

The National Network for Youth, for example, supported by a DeWitt-Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, invested considerable money and time over an eight-year period to promote such organizational change. Understanding the need for solid process, they invited the Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA) to teach its Technology of Participation (ToP) method. This method empowers participants to facilitate a change process over time and to break vision down into winnable, workable components. Other methods exist as well, such as those developed by the former Associates for Youth Development (Lofquist, 1983) and more recently by MIT’s Peter Senge and his colleagues in the Society for Organizational Learning. The caveat here is that while there may be more than one path to a learning organization, to quote the old anonymous adage: “If you don’t know where you’re going, you’re not likely to get there.” Take a compass and map and chart your destination.

Some organizations are successful without calling in outside facilitators. It is our view, however, that knowledgeable outsiders can facilitate and focus decision makers and thus ensure a greater likelihood of success. A good facilitator provides good process control, like the traffic officer in a busy intersection. Further, the facilitator can provide to the process what the coach provides to the team—good solid coaching.

Another important formal structure that cannot be over-emphasized is evaluation. Typically deployed as a method to judge successful programs and thus to give a thumbs up or down signal for future funding, program evaluation has generally been ineffective in its capacity as a coach, although this is shifting. For example, Kibel (2000) of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) has developed, along with colleagues, a promising method called Journey Mapping. In the IED process, the key role of evaluation is to inform both the learning process and the drive for competency. A solid, integrated evaluation design is an indication of the value the organization has placed on learning.

Within the IED approach, evaluation is appreciative, applicable, proactive, and collaborative. It serves both the summative and formative needs of a learning organization. What is summative in this context? Traditionally, the primary role of summative evaluation has been to judge the efficacy of a program or intervention after it has been completed. IED assumes there is no completion. Summative evaluation provides impetus at strategically and regularly determined intervals, which are recommended on an annual basis. More formal in its format than formative evaluation, summative evaluation provides the context and the data to guide the organization’s intentional and continuous evolution. This is a time when major decisions or midcourse adjustments are made.

Formative evaluation is the process through which evaluators provide feedback on an ongoing basis at regular intervals, usually quarterly. Formative evaluation provides the context and basis for forming and reforming the activities so important to adaptive learning organizations. Ideally, this process is integrated into the learning methods of the practice fields.

IED stresses both summative and formative evaluation. The major task of both is to provide insight and knowledge about the following questions:

- What can organizational members do to be effective as they intentionally create and maintain learning communities?

- How can a self-generating learning community be nurtured and sustained?

- What are the values and processes that actually deepen the relationship between thinking and doing?

Conclusion

IED gives organizational innovators a compass and map to chart their journey. The leadership and organization set the course and determine the speed and direction of the flow of evolution with the help of evaluation. Learning to manage homeorhesis is learning to know the process is not linear but in flux. The flux is the narrative or the story that is being told: a story that is constantly being re-created and formed from the relationship among the innovators, the evaluation, and the evolution. In the continuous pursuit to learn, the model stresses the evaluation as an integral component, along with a guidance system, such as a guide team, and practice fields. With this three-legged approach the learning organization can flourish.

References


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COMMUNITY, YOUTH, DEVELOPMENT: THREE GOALS IN SEARCH OF CONNECTION

KAREN FITZMAN

Community development and youth development are inextricably linked. They share a dependence on economic opportunities, hinge on family health, and require active citizenship. The author clearly outlines the logic for this linkage and highlights strategies needed to realize viable, long-term goals.

In 1994, the National Network for Youth (NNY) embraced Community Youth Development as the term that best captured the unified essence of effective youth work, saying that it reflects the critical need to continue “working in partnership with young people to strengthen or regain their ties to community—whether it be family, neighborhood, school, or friends—and working with communities to value and support youth.”

Adopting this vision requires shifts in practices and priorities, as the goal becomes less about delivering services and more about offering supports and creating opportunities. NNY, as a network of youth workers and youth organizations, has spent the past few years fleshing out what these changes in organizational and professional practices are and how they can be brought about. Organizations like the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, a longtime partner with NNY, complement NNY by focusing a major part of their educational and technical assistance efforts on national and local policymakers and funders in order to increase their understanding of the interconnections among these goals.

Getting the public to embrace this vision, however, requires more.

As youth workers, policy researchers, funders, and advocates come together to plan the work that will support the development of the maximum number of young people in the maximum number of communities in this country and around the world, it is important to be able to articulate quickly and clearly the logic of why community development and youth development are inextricably related, are dependent upon economic opportunities, hinge on the basic health of the functions of family and citizenship, and are, in the end, the only long-term strategies for preventing or reducing youth and community problems. Explaining these connections, and how the nature and scope of funding and services for youth need to change in acknowledgement, requires succinct answers to several basic questions.

Q: Why youth development?

Because prevention and treatment, while important, are inadequate goals. “Problem-free is not fully prepared.”

In talking about prevention over the past decade, we have applied a basic public health model that suggests that we have to treat those who have the problem or disease, modify the attitudes and habits of those at risk of contracting the problem because of their behavior, and educate those not yet engaged. Cancer treatments, smoking cessation, and anti-smoking campaigns reflect this three-tiered public health approach to fighting lung cancer. The public health model is a triage approach that says we must do those three things, that just doing one or two isn’t enough.

The model has merit and has been heavily applied to the array of youth problems—originally substance abuse and most recently violence. It has brought legitimacy to the idea of prevention. But it is not enough. When applied to more complex individual issues such as violence, unemployment, or early pregnancy, it limits strategies because of its focus. When we talk about prevention, we are talking in terms of problems. But no matter how early we commit to addressing them, there is something
fundamentally limiting about having everything point to a problem. In the final analysis we do not assess people in terms of problems, but potential.

Case in point. If I introduced an employer to a young person I worked with by saying, “Here’s Katib. He’s not a drug user. He’s not in a gang. He’s not a dropout. He’s not a teen father. Please hire him,” the employer would respond, “That’s great. But what does he know, what can he do?” If we cannot define—and do not give young people ample opportunities to define—the skills, the values, the attitudes, the knowledge, the commitments that are desired as forcefully as we can define what we don’t want, we will fail. Prevention is an inadequate goal. Problem-free is not fully prepared.

In thinking about vulnerable, disadvantaged, or marginalized youth (or families or communities), it is often assumed that we have to fix problems first. The problems must be addressed. But it is a commitment to development—the offering of relationships, networks, challenges, opportunities to contribute—that motivates growth and change.

Because academic and vocational competence, while critical, are (1) not enough and (2) not attainable without the development of a broader set of skills, values, and commitments and connections.

What are the goals we, as a society, have for young people? Beyond the specific goal of staying out of trouble, the policy literature usually contains broad statements about how we want young people to be good citizens, good neighbors, good workers, and good parents. The academic and programmatic literatures usually push farther, articulating general lists of competencies that we want for young people. These go beyond academic competence. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development and numerous other commissions and organizations define a generic set of competencies that broaden academic competence to include cognitive or intellectual competence and also include employability—good vocational skills, career knowledge and attitudes; physical and emotional health; and civic, social, and cultural competence.

The problem is that we have not established developmental benchmarks or defined the steps needed to acquire this fuller range of competencies. As end goals, high school and post-secondary education and employment are the primary measures of “developmental success.” Consequently, the educational field is littered with individual benchmarks such as being on grade, passing courses, scoring well on achievement tests, and national benchmarks such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Vocational experts and the business community are developing indicators of vocational competence or readiness. But definitions of competence in the other areas are blurry at best. In these areas, success is still largely defined as lack of problems (e.g., pregnancy, violent or delinquent behavior, gang involvement, racist behavior). Clearly, a key task in linking prevention with development is to broaden our definition of desired/expected competencies beyond academic skills and employment. Shifting goals from gang prevention to civic involvement, for example, requires a fairly dramatic shift in strategies.

But broadening the definition of competencies is only half the challenge. While broadening our definition of expected competencies, we also must accept the importance of a second set of outcomes—those that allow young people to be not only competent, but connected, caring, and committed. In addition to skills, young people must have a solid sense of safety and structure, membership and belonging, mastery, and a sense of purpose, responsibility, and self-worth. We have to acknowledge the importance of Maslow’s basic needs hierarchy and the interconnection between the development of confidence and the development and application of competence.

Defining competence or youth outcomes solely in terms of the competencies and knowledge that we want them to have, rather than in terms of the broader psychosocial components that make them confident young men and women, limits our strategies and undermines our chances of success.

Q: Why community and youth development?

Because youth development requires inputs that are best supplied by the family, neighbors, and community.

The literature on factors influencing youth development suggests seven key inputs. There is steady attention to the sizeable inequities in two of the seven key inputs—access to basic care and services that are appropriate, affordable, and, if necessary, confidential, as well as to high-quality instruction and training. The interminable inequities in these inputs across race, gender, and income require sustained attention. But there are other inequities that can exacerbate these more obvious differences. Safe, stable places are important. That place can—and should—be home. But it can be a religious organization. It can be school. It can be the community center. Also critical are opportunities to develop sustained, caring relationships and social and strategic networks; challenging experiences that are appropriate, diverse, and sufficiently intense;
and opportunities for real participation and involvement in the full range of community life—not just picking up trash on Saturdays.

Development requires engagement. It is fostered through relationships, influenced by environments, and triggered by participation. And it is both ongoing and resilient. We cannot just intervene at one point and assume that all will be fine; nor can we, with good conscience, fail to intervene, assuming that it is already “too late.” This need for constancy in relationships, environments, and participation means that those best positioned to influence development are the “natural actors” in youths’ lives—family, peers, neighbors, and community institutions. Relationships, environment, and participation are the essence of what defines community. These key things can be artificially structured—young people can be assigned mentors, bussed to safe and stimulating environments, and required to do service. But these key ingredients are primarily found in and generated by the community. Programs and organizations do have an impact on youths’ lives, but this impact is either amplified or dampened by the quality and congruence of what else is going on in young people’s families, peer groups, and neighborhoods. The impact of family and community life on youth development is unchallenged. There are, as always, young people who “beat the odds,” but it is the differences in family and community that determine those odds.

Because community development requires an investment in and by youth.

Increasingly, definitions of community development in terms of economic and physical capital are giving way to broader definitions that balance these resources against investments in human and social capital—residents with good individual skills and strong interpersonal ties. Investments in youth are some of the most important investments to be made.

Too often, however, when young people are factored into the equations for community development, they are factored in as deficits. Youth violence, delinquency, and gangs are seen as signs that a community is not worth an investment. Investment in solutions to youth problems is seen as a necessary component of broader investments in community stabilization and rebuilding. Long-term community development, however, requires not only an investment in building the human and social capital of young people, but a commitment to use that capital as it is being built and to see participation in community problem-solving as the best way to build skills and connections.

Community investments in knowing, training, and engaging youth should not be seen as “sunken costs”—the paybacks are considerable. There is ample evidence that engagement of youth in community problem solving benefits both youth and community. There is also evidence that community engagement in youth development has benefits. Communities that rally around their youth find it easier to rally around other issues.

Q: Why Community Youth Development?

Because programs are not enough. Services are not enough. Intervention and treatment are not enough. Professionals are not enough.

Young people do not grow up in programs; they grow up in families and communities. Resiliency research has demonstrated that young people who beat the odds have many of the components of confidence just described (good social and problem-solving skills, a sense of independence and purpose) and have, somewhere in their lives, caring adults, high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution. We need to scan youth’s environments for these types of ingredients. Scanning the community for programs does not yield an accurate reading of the community resources available, just as assessing youth for problems never yields an accurate assessment of potential.

Community Youth Development (CYD) signals a renewed commitment to a philosophy that moves beyond programs, services, and treatment. At its core is a set of principles that, according to former executive director of the National Network for Youth, Della Hughes (1994, pp. 3–5),

requires orienting ourselves to thinking about youth development and community responsibility in a way that demands that all youths, especially those who are troubled and in trouble, be given the opportunity to finish the business of growing up—regardless of their life circumstances.

Next Steps
Whether one uppercases CYD, uses the British term youth and community development, or simply works to link these three words in ways that leave little room for traditional words like deficit, deviance, and deterrence, there are some very basic things that have to be done to thoroughly root out all traces of the “professional-fix-problems” philosophy:
Broaden the goals. Goals determine strategies. When we talk about problems, we end up talking about programs and services, and we think about interventions in discrete blocks of time. When we talk about development, we end up talking about supports and opportunities and recognize the importance of continuity, challenge, and choice. As discussed, rethinking strategies requires reprioritizing goals. Applying what we know about youth development suggests some obvious strategies. We have to broaden the goals to include not just success in school and jobs, but also health, social, and civic competencies. And not just competencies, but the confidence and connectedness needed to use them well.

Broaden the practices. Services are not enough. All youth need a mix of services (things that are done to or for them, such as health care, housing), supports (things that are done with them to help build their capacity for decision making, resource identification, problem solving), and opportunities (things they can do to build and apply skills, gain and offer experiences). The mix will change, but if supports and opportunities are not a part of the formula, youth will not engage, and development will not occur.

Broaden the actors. Deprofessionalize youth work. Engage and empower families, neighbors, residents, and youth to acknowledge and address individual and community problems. Make absolute commitments to use organizations as catalysts for change. Go beyond traditional volunteer models to foster change agents. Community and youth organizations often lament that the institutions with the budgets (schools, public social services agencies, juvenile justice departments) are not in the community. But programs and organizations have to recognize that there are important layers between them and young people that have to be acknowledged and respected. Families, peers, and neighbors are more than program volunteers; they are key influences in young peoples’ lives who need to be engaged.

Target without trapping. Resources need to be targeted to maximize impact and to match the needs of young people with the resources available. But targeting often involves outside judgments, not only about who needs resources but also what resources are most needed. Youth, families, and communities are trapped in dependency or boredom when it is assumed that those who have problems have no potential, no solutions. Vulnerable youth and families need opportunities to create, contribute, and care, just as much as they need counseling and crisis services. Assuming that “fixing” linearly precedes “development” reduces the likelihood that either will happen.

Define and evaluate the whole. Anyone who has worked intensely on any discrete youth problem (e.g., teen pregnancy) learns quickly that the problem is intertwined with education, with opportunity structures, with family connection and support, and with a range of developmental issues that cannot be ignored if any intervention is to be successful. Rather than applying our understanding of human motivation, however, we have taken a complex process, divided it into small units, developed programs to address the discrete parts, and then reacted with surprise when there is little overall improvement. Two things happen when we focus too heavily on a single problem. We weaken the possibilities of both documenting impact (by tracking only a narrow set of outcomes) and having an impact (by focusing too narrowly on a specific set of inputs). Many programs argue that they are comprehensive in approach and broad in services; all should be evaluated against some basic outcomes that reflect the full set of competencies and connections desired.

Build the core first. Another consequence of our discrete, problem-based approach is that core supports and opportunities never really get fully developed. It is easier to get funding for problem-prevention curricula and counselors than for core programming and staff. These activities are often developed on a shoestring budget and never reported to the funding agency, for they are deemed outside the defined scope of work. However, given what we know about the adolescent development process, we need those core supports and opportunities to be relatively stable and accessible if anything else is to work. To achieve these core supports as sidebars of a targeted program is to marginalize what should be central and to focus on what should be more at the margins of our efforts.

Be both advocates and service providers. The list of key inputs is intentionally place-generic. It states what is needed, but does not specify where it is found. If a young person can get all that naturally, on their block, within family and from neighbors through an assortment of informal experiences, then a carefully structured program is not needed. If, however, these things are not available in the neighborhood in sufficient quantity and quality, then programs—structured offerings of services, supports, and opportunities delivered to achieve defined goals—should be created. But these programs should follow one of two roads. They should either
become a part of the community—permanent, indigenous institutions—or they should work to strengthen the families, neighbors, and community institutions sufficiently so that the program is no longer needed.

The mistake that is made all too often is that we, the professionals, come in, put the program in place, and believe it will solve the problem. With full understanding of the constraints involved, we have to acknowledge that services are not enough. At some point, programs and staff—who are not working as hard to make things happen naturally within the family and community as they are to make them happen inside their doors—burn out. If programs, over time, do not work to transform themselves and/or the communities in which they operate, they shift from being part of the solution to being a part of the problem.

The commitment to youth and community development—exemplified by the stellar work of local organizations and networks across the country—is growing steadily. The shifts needed in philosophy, program, practice, and pacing are difficult and require constant monitoring. But the payoffs are impressive, and the alternative, in neighborhoods and with youth where the organization is not just trying to supplement family and community but to be a substitute for them, is professional burnout and community atrophy.

Reference

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Educating for the Seventh Generation

John P. Terry

What if schools worked collectively within their communities, preparing youth to enter healthy, sustainable relationships with themselves, others, and the biosphere? And what if new partnerships could flourish among teachers and youth, youth and youth, teachers and parents, and home and school? This article explores a vision of such a future.

Observing the Dawn

Each generation, in partnership with the past, builds democracy anew. As the dawn of the new millennium breaks we should follow the counsel of Black Elk, the Oglala Sioux shaman, and plan for the "seventh generation" hence. Specifically, we must meet the spiritual, educational, and physical needs of the next seven generations.

But what will the population look like in years to come? Demographers point out that the trend toward increased ethnic diversity in the United States and Canada will not peak until well into the 21st century. The majority in North America will no longer be white; pluralism will be the rule. Already most middle-sized to large urban schools include diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and social class populations. Many urban schools are now predominantly minority. Soon the Hispanic population will equal and surpass the African-American population. Every day, new arrivals from Asia, South America, the Middle East, and the Balkans—fleeing political, ethnic, and/or religious persecution—seek refuge and freedom in North America. Many of them bring religions, traditions, and languages foreign to mainstream North America. Some have emigrated from countries devoid of democratic roots.

In the early decades of the 20th century similarly large numbers of immigrants, mostly from Ireland and Eastern Europe, introduced a disdained religion, new customs, and foreign languages. The response to these new waves of immigration was neither welcoming nor inclusive.

Three related social movements converged to limit the opportunities for the new immigrants: the eugenics movement, the IQ and testing movement, and the vocational school movement. Despite their cloak of scientific respectability, these three movements were deeply influenced by racial, social, class, and gender biases. Together they created a climate of school reform that resulted in uniformly rigid, stratified schools modeled after that early 20th century paradigm of efficiency—the factory.

The Eugenics movement. Late 19th century thinkers such as Galton and Binet laid the groundwork for inequality in mental ability that persist to this day. Francis Galton, British scientist and cousin to Charles Darwin, founded the Eugenics movement at the turn of the 19th century. Based on the notion that human characteristics were unequally distributed across populations, eugenicists proposed that the physical, moral, and intellectual qualities of the human race be improved through planned breeding. The movement became popular in the United States and Canada, and led to compulsory limits on the breeding of mental "misfits," paupers, and criminals. It also led to negative stereotyping of Irish and Eastern Europeans as "inferior."

The IQ and testing movement. The French psychologist Alfred Binet at the close of the 19th century founded the IQ and testing movement. Binet, director of the psychology laboratory at the Sorbonne, developed testing techniques designed to distinguish between retarded and normal children in order to segregate the former for special instruction. His work was picked up by U.S. eugenicists, most recently including Arthur Jensen and Richard Herrnstein, who fostered the notion that intelligence is an inherited mental property unevenly distributed
among humans according to a strict statistical pattern. This pattern came to be known as the curve of normal distribution, or the “bell curve.” Accordingly, people were divided across a continuum from the mentally retarded (approximately two percent of the population) to very superior (approximately two percent), with the middle representing those of average intelligence (approximately 50 percent of the population).³

The vocational education movement. Based on the growing belief that the American school system should be dedicated to the improvement of human capital as a means for economic growth, the vocational education movement promoted the view that schools should be organized on the model of factories—that is, students should be separated on the basis of intellectual and “vocational” capacity. Lower-rated students would learn the skills necessary to become artisans, assembly line workers, and common laborers, while those rated higher would be trained to become managers and leaders. This led to the establishment of the comprehensive high school, which was initially designed to provide different curricula to students based on their innate abilities. It also led to the rigidly stratified and pedagogically barren school environments we encounter today. Frederick W. Taylor, the father of scientific management, positively influenced this movement. The voice of John Dewey, the great philosopher-educator and outspoken proponent for democratic schooling and experiential education, was essentially muted.

Despite Dewey’s many writings and the popularity of his philosophy, the formal educational system never really embraced his ideals or practice. Egalitarian movements of the past several decades (civil rights, women’s, and gay/lesbian rights) aimed their sights at the social injustices inherent in a system built on a foundation of social stratification. These movements did much to challenge, if not vanquish, social injustice in the system. Little headway, however, has been made in breaking down the rigid, fractional, pedantic classroom or the authoritarian, factory-regime administration of the typical school. Reformers from John Dewey to Peter Senge recognized that the best institution available for teaching democratic values and a positive view of diversity is formal public education. A civic culture, as Aristotle pointed out centuries ago, is culturally transmitted, not inherited.

Educating for a Civic Culture
Let’s seize the challenge of the new millennium to resolve fragmentation, social inequity, and cultural war, and negotiate a new contract for our public schools that models democratic philosophy. Our new contract ensures that schools educate for a civic culture that promotes virtue common to all—embracing divergent cultural and religious views, respecting biodiversity, and ensuring a sustainable planet. Such a culture should pose no legitimate threat to religious or individual freedom—quite the contrary.

How do we invite such a diverse infusion of peoples into our communities and schools and simultaneously guarantee, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, that “all people are created equal and endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”? How do we create and transmit a civic culture that honors the golden rule, “Do unto others as you have them do unto you”? How do we sustain a culture that celebrates diversity and unity on a daily basis? What might our school/community vision be in such a culture?

Democratic thinkers who support the idea that educating for a secular culture is educating for democracy have addressed some of these questions. Thomas Jefferson argued that the survival of a democratic society depends on the ability of schools to produce an informed, literate public. Horace Mann added that promotion of democratic virtues requires schools to provide a common political culture. John Dewey insisted that the virtues and habits of living in a democratic society are learned through experience, and that the learning experiences that nurture the acquisition of those virtues must be integral to the school curriculum and culture (Dewey, 1966).

More recently, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970) provided a key insight: education should be liberating, and liberation occurs within the context of history and community. Every human, regardless of his or her current condition, is educable and capable of exercising political control over their life and contributing to the health of community life.

Current systems thinkers, particularly Margaret Wheatley (1994, 2001) and Peter Senge (2000, 2001), bring renewed energy to the issue. Applying the theory and practice of learning organizations to schools provides the opportunity to rethink education and to see schools as holistic milieus. Our schools can and should be places where formal learning and community meet to engage in the healthy development of community; to nurture habits of the heart, soul, and mind. Schooling should be a liberating and healthy experience in which youth are empowered to promote social justice, to sustain biological diversity, and to nurture democratic principles.

Watering the Roots of the Future
Dewey and Freire insist that educating for democ-
racy extends beyond the exercise of memorizing facts or comparing and contrasting abstract ideas or data. Knowing the specific causes of the American Revolution or the Civil War, for example, does not guarantee that a student will be tolerant or fair and practice the virtues of social justice, any more than cramming for a final exam in religion guarantees an epiphany.

It is axiomatic in the field of community psychology that empowerment at the local level is achieved through participation by the local community. This principle also applies to schools. Yet, until recently, few successful models for local community development in schools seem entrenched and enduring. Now the tide is turning: substantial knowledge and experience have resulted in burgeoning efforts across North America, and indeed the world. Some of these efforts have been discussed in previous issues of New Designs for Youth Development, the CYD Journal (Cureton & Furlong, 1997; Fisher, 2001; Miller, 2001; Murphy et al., 2001; Sanchez, 2000), as well as in the pages of this Anthropology (see Benard, Ogden, Thomas). Picture schools working collectively within their communities, preparing youth to enter healthy, sustainable relationships with themselves, others, and the biosphere. Within the classroom, teachers join in the learning process with students. Social justice begins with the expectation that every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, class, or physical or mental challenge, is a resource—able to make a valuable contribution to the intellectual and spiritual life of the class and the community. Students actively help each other succeed. Working in teams, students learn to value and employ all members as resources. Students engage in an intuitive understanding of the processes and values that undergird a democratic society, a healthy community, and a sustainable biosphere. This environment is ripe with questions that take learners beyond the exchange of information, along open-ended dialectical paths. For example, Who is in control of the use and development of our environment, including our technologies and economies? Who is to decide how these technologies and economies will be used? What effects will today’s decisions have on seven generations hence?

Beyond the classroom, the school directs and develops its own community in a way that models the classroom. In the process of developing this capacity, new forms of parent/teacher/youth collaboration flourish. New collaboration among administrators and teachers and students develop. These collaborative efforts expand throughout and beyond the school and community.

In other words, each generation, in partnership with the past, builds democracy anew.

The future is at hand. We have the social knowledge, the pedagogy, the right questions, the technical skills, and appropriate models needed to seize the opportunity before us.

References
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1. According to Black Elk, all planning and all action should try to take into account the effects it might have on seven generations hence; not just on immediate or short-term effects.
2. For an excellent discussion of the Eugenics movement and related efforts to measure and differentiate people see Stephen J. Gould's work, The Mismeasure of Man.
4. See, for example, Dewey's work, Democracy and Education.

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Youth participation is a core strategy for promoting youth and community development. The National Commission on Resources for Youth first outlined the strategy over 26 years ago (1974):

Youth participation is involving youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with the opportunity for planning and/or decision making affecting others . . . There is mutuality in teaching and learning (between youth and adults) where each age group sees itself as a resource for the other and offers what it uniquely can provide.

Many youth advocates believe that young people should be directly involved in organizational policymaking and governance, not only program implementation. This expectation goes counter to long-held societal norms. As early as 1949, August Hollingshead observed that the United States tends to protect young people rather than having them take on decision-making roles and responsibilities. Specifically, Hollingshead (1949) observed that the United States creates programs that “segregate adolescents from the real world that adults know and function in. By trying to keep the maturing child ignorant of this world of conflict and contradictions, adults think they are keeping him pure.” Others attribute the segregation to a generalized fear of young people and the stereotypical belief that youth are enmeshed in a period of stress and unable or unwilling to look outside of themselves and their peer group (Glassner, 1999). Furthermore, court decisions often question the ability and willingness of youth to contribute to others and take responsibility for their behavior (Melton, 1993; pp. 99-103; Steinburg & Cauffman, 1996, pp. 249-272).

It is therefore not surprising that adolescents are typically isolated from community decision making and that adults have limited experience in engaging them in collective problem solving or action (Camino, 2000, pp. 11-20). Nor is it surprising that adults in the United States have little confidence in youth as community decision makers. For example, only 24 percent of adults have confidence that youth can represent their community to a city council. Smaller percentages have confidence that youth can organize a community service project or serve as voting members of the school board (Zeldin, 2000).

This situation is ironic because, across the country, young people are frequently collaborating with adults to make critical decisions ranging from program design, to community organizing strategies, to approval of financial grants, to organizational governance. Indeed, this is fundamental to the principles and practices of Community Youth Development. These practices depend on adults having the belief that young people are willing and able to participate in the operations of organizations and communities. Unfortunately, there are scant data available on youth in decision making, despite the importance of such information for informing policy and practice (Hein & Sherrod, 1998).

It was within this context that the present research was conducted. This article focuses on two main questions: (1) Are there benefits to adults and youth organizations when youth are at the decision-making table? (2) If yes, what are the conditions that result in positive outcomes?
This focus reflects our assumption that society will not fully support youth in policy making roles until there are valid data showing that the strategy contributes to adult development and organizational effectiveness. This is not to diminish the importance of assessing youth outcomes; in fact, we are doing so by maintaining contact with the young people in this study and examining youth in decision making across a full range of community contexts. But, from a public policy perspective, we remain convinced that some of the most relevant data will be that which examines the reciprocal influences among youth, adults, organizations, and communities. A sole focus on youth outcomes is too limiting to inform efforts at social change.

Research Methodology
Before I get to the heart of our research, a brief note on language. Arriving at the right language is always troublesome, but critical. For advocates, clear articulation of issues offers a guide for debate and action. For researchers, a clear conceptualization of constructs allows others to replicate and interpret study findings. For these reasons, I would like to offer the following definitions, which we used to guide our work.

- **Youth infusion** refers to the fundamental goal—to integrate youth and young adults into all spheres of social or community change. At the organizational level, an institution is infused when youth are valued as full partners and when structures are created at multiple levels to ensure that the voice of young people is represented in decision making.

- **Youth in decision making** is a fundamental aspect of youth infusion. It refers to those situations where youth work—typically in partnership with adults—to set the overall policy direction of organizations, institutions, and community coalitions. These terms often refer to young people working on boards of directors, sanctioned committees, planning bodies, and advisory groups.

Using these definitions, we selected an intentional sample, identified through nomination, of organizations that were making good progress in infusing youth or that engaged young people in key decision-making roles. This approach—aiming to achieve maximum variation on the construct in question—is the appropriate strategy for discovery research in a new field of study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Overall, we interviewed 29 adult and 19 youth (defined as 21 years old or younger) members of 15 youth-serving organizations. Eight of the organizations have had young people on their boards of directors for a minimum of two years. Seven organizations have no youth board members but have strong histories of involving youth in program decision making. We also conducted focus group interviews in Washington, DC, and San Francisco.

Our analysis strategy of these data was grounded in the extended case study method (Bawden, 1991). We first constructed a theoretical framework derived from exemplary community practice and extent research. We then compared these data, in an iterative and formative fashion, to the theoretical framework. Over time, some of our initial assumptions proved false and others were supported. The data revealed new patterns. Thus, the analysis is based not only on the individual accounts and experiences of respondents but is also anchored in existing theory and research.

After completing this phase of the analysis, we used the strategy of informant checks to verify our data. A draft version of the study findings was sent to all participating youth and adults for their review. Errors of fact and quotation were corrected. We also considered comments on data interpretation and the tone of our reporting and made modifications as appropriate.

Results: A Good Fit for Youth and Adults
In all of the interviews, we asked youth and adults a fundamental question: “What unique qualities do youth and adults bring to the table?” Many had trouble answering this question. Some did not want to stereotype, others did not want to acknowledge differences, and still others did not believe that differences existed. As the interviews continued, however, most respondents could identify key differences in the ways that “typical” adults and youth contributed to decision making. It also became clear that effective decision making was characterized by a synergy between youth and adults.

**Youth contributions.** It was most frequently reported that young people bring an underrepresented voice to decision making, and that youth are best positioned to understand the interests and concerns of young people. One young person, for example, asserts that “we have the knowledge of the day,” while another noted that “we’re living what we’re deciding.” Moreover, young people bring connections and links to other youth in the community, thus expanding the knowledge and skill base of the organization.

According to the adults we interviewed, young people also bring a fresh perspective to organizational decision making. They are less afraid than adults to challenge existing organizational processes and culture and seem to be less inhibited by social
norms. "They're not jaded and faded," claims one adult staff person. Young people have a way, rarely subtle and often fresh, of bringing attention to their needs and concerns, which are often applicable to others. In one organization, the board members quickly realized that the issues raised by youth also pertained to adults. "It is not just the youth who may feel silenced or who might benefit from defining terminology," stated an adult board member.

Another adult described the following event:

_During the middle of a board discussion, a 12-year-old board member scribbled something on the back of his name placard. He then held up the placard, which stated "JARGON," and told the board that they all need to speak the same language so that everyone can have the same level of understanding—or at least define jargon when it is used._

Young people are driven to explore issues of social justice. They are experimenting with their own principles and political ideas, leading many to become involved in cause-based action. These developmental attributes are a good fit with organizational needs. In many organizations, we discovered that young people become the keepers of the vision. Their action orientation can be used to propel organizational vision into reality. Furthermore, almost every adult stressed that young people often bring a sense of community to decision-making forums. One adult describes their meetings as interesting, energetic, and productive—qualities she attributes to the participation of youth. Following the young people's lead, board members seem to enjoy one another's company and have fun, commenting that "this is contagious throughout the organization."

**Adult contributions.** Adults also bring critical assets to governance bodies. Adulthood is a time of "generativity," stimulating adults to pass on their knowledge and skills to the next generation. It is not unexpected, therefore, that young people were most appreciative when adults shared the expertise, experience, and lessons that they had gained through years of working with a variety of organizations. The adult contributions were maximized when the young people perceived that the guidance was offered in the spirit of mutuality and partnership. Consider the comments of two young people:

_Young people need to hear, "We adults will be here to support you, but you, the young people, will be leading; you are in charge."_  
_Adults who are open minded are more capable of effectively supporting youth. They have to know when to step back._

_We need adults to teach us what they know . . . as allies to us. What we are looking for is someone who will treat us like equals. When adults look down on us not only does it feel bad but it hinders what we're able to do._

Adults have institutional power not accessible to young people. With this power comes access to a range of human, community, and financial resources—essential elements for organizational success that are not typically available to youth. Adults also offer a range of administrative and programming skills acquired through experience. When adults offer this support, youth can concentrate their expertise, interests, and time on the more mission-driven and action-oriented aspects of the organization, a role that most youth reported they prefer. One youth observed:

_Many adults bring corporate experience; they see things that have happened before, what worked, what did not. These adults have the macro view of things, rather than the bottom up._

**Youth-adult partnership synergy.** Individual contributions are important. Ultimately, however, organizational decision making is a collective concept and, at its best, is a process that integrates the respective strengths of youth and adults. This synergy, according to those we interviewed, can result in a level of power and energy greater than the sum of its parts, propelling decision-making groups to increased innovation and productivity. We discovered that in this atmosphere of collaboration everyone becomes more committed to participation, honest appraisal, reflection, and learning.

Two program directors described the synergy between youth and adults in their organizations:

_Having youth involved in decision making changes the adult/staff role from parental authority figure to partner. It improves staff performance. This is much different from the traditional adult role of telling kids what to do. Youth embrace this autonomy and freedom to influence the organization. Youth are searching for meaning. Our organization is searching for answers. When I create an environment where both needs are met, my job here is done._
As young people perceive that they are policymakers rather than recipients of services, their role changes: they begin to set higher expectations for themselves and for the organization. These same processes lead adults to set higher expectations for themselves and for youth. This leads to a tough implementation paradox. Adults and youth need to have positive experiences with each other before becoming committed to partnership, but there are important preconditions to be satisfied before youth and adults are motivated to engage in ways that result in those positive experiences. Two youth board members explain:

There is just as much baggage coming from the young as from the adults. It's easier for adults to change when they see young people doing good work. It is enough for the adults to see it happen. For young people, they need to first see that the relationship with the adult board members is beyond a business one. Every young person needs a relationship with at least one board member that goes beyond a meeting that happens three times a year. When the relationship is formed, we work hard.

Adults have to see something in action before they buy into it. The proof is in the action . . . or else, having us around is just cute or a waste of time. Over time, the adults watch us, the board members come to realize that we can learn just as fast as them. We all get more comfortable and can get down to the business at hand.

Outcomes of Youth in Decision Making
There is little doubt that engaging young people in decision making has positive influences on the academic achievement, psychosocial development, civic identity, and competence of young people. Data from our research initiative confirm and expand on these findings, and speak to the developmental processes underlying these positive youth outcomes. These findings will be presented in future articles. In this section, our aim is to highlight the positive effects on adults and organizations.

Benefits for adults. It is clear that adults benefit from collaborating with young people. Foremost, adults begin to see youth as contributors to organizational solutions because they experience young people's competence and skills firsthand. One board member noted that his involvement "has opened my eyes to the capabilities of youth." The same adult commented,

[I was surprised to see] their interest and willingness to work together toward something that benefits others, and how youth are capable of staying focused while working through difficult and tedious tasks. Youth embrace their responsibility and are empowered by it.

Adults also gained knowledge, skills, and a growing sense of competence through sharing decision making with young people. It was not unusual, for example, for adults to report that they were making better decisions and doing so with more confidence. A related outcome for adults was the development of a stronger sense of community connectedness—a quality that emanated directly from the breakdown of isolation. As adults became more connected with the youth, they started to become more connected with the organization as a whole, which resulted in a foundation of commitment and energy to the mission and people of the organization. For example, three adults speak to their experiences:

I was resistant to youth on the board at first. But now I know them. My listening skills and understanding have increased dramatically. I get to see young people all of the time now. I personally see and hear the passion of young people and this gets me more interested and engaged.

Since young people got here on the board, the power and the work gets shared more. And the fun—the fun is shared. It's doing it together, figuring it out together.

When young people are not involved, things do get done on the board. But there is less connection to what the organization is doing.

Benefits for organizations. We discovered that involving youth in decision making also changed the organization. And, according to both adults and youth, this change was for the better. Foremost, by effectively incorporating youth into the organizational decision-making structure, youth involvement becomes the norm. The principles and practices of youth involvement become embedded within the organizational culture. According to one adult staff member, "Now it's difficult to even think about not involving youth in everything we do." As youth became infused in more of the decision-making forums, the organizations and adults found that they became better connected to the strengths and needs of young people. As one program director notes:
If you involve kids, they'll tell you what does and does not work right away. They know what motivates their peers and what turns them off completely. Recruitment is much easier when the young people are brainstorming strategies.

It is not simply that youth can inform organizations about contemporary youth culture. While this is important, many adults emphasized that involving young people in decision-making roles forced the organization to become more focused on and committed to their mission. We heard numerous examples of how young people serve as the promoters of the organization's mission. One adult commented, "Oh my gosh, young people are better at establishing a mission for our planning efforts than we are." In two organizations, young people were formally given the role of "protecting" the organizational mission. In other organizations, the role evolved informally. Two youth comment:

My role was more in direction setting. This was an unspoken role. I didn't have a hat with "direction" written on it.

My job is to set the agenda, to ensure that we stay consistent with our history and stay excited about our future.

Many of the organizations, as they became more adept at including young people at the table, began to place a greater value on inclusivity and representation, realizing that their programs benefited when multiple and diverse voices were included in decision-making processes. Youth decision makers encouraged organizations to alter their programming and reach out into their communities in more diverse ways. One adult board member commented, "It makes you think, gee, anyone can have a great idea whether they're young, or over 50, or black, or something else."

As some of the organizations gained prominence and visibility in their communities, they set higher expectations for other community organizations.

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**Making It Work: Hampton Coalition for Youth**

Hampton, Virginia, is a place where young people have become integral to city government, where they are in demand and demanding change. According to Cindy Carlson, director of Hampton Coalition for Youth, "You can't do anything around here without asking for youth input."

In the beginning, says Nate Cherry, "I was bored—with a tank full of gas, a pocket full of money, and nothing to do." Nate was frustrated with what he saw (not) happening in city government, so he got involved with the Youth Commission and later became a youth planner for the City Planning Department. As a city planner, Nate became responsible for helping to develop a comprehensive city plan for the next ten to 20 years, with a focus on youth concerns.

The Youth Commission began in 1996 and is comprised of 20 young people from area high schools who represent a broad spectrum of youth throughout the city. The Youth Commission has the same power as the adult city planning commission, including the power to appropriate money. They provide policy recommendations to the City Council, monitor implementation, and educate the public on policy issues. They also award grants for youth-adult partnership proposals and serve as liaisons on adult commissions. Currently, five city boards or commissions have youth members.

Hampton youth representation has brought about significant changes and new vision within the community. Consider these two examples:

- **Youth were successful in changing a city ordinance and providing public education to improve bicycle access throughout the city.**

- **Members of the youth commission offered a proposal for parkland development that was adopted over other, adult-written proposals because of its sensitivity to diverse use, as well as historic and environmental impact.**

Hampton is developing a community culture with new norms that support youth input. In explaining this process, two members wrote a memo to my research team:

We place a much greater emphasis on youth infusion throughout the community. We see governance as involvement in neighborhood groups, schools, city government, as well as youth serving organizations... Youth should not be looked at as individuals invading "adult turf" or people that adults are afraid to work with. Youth are not alien or a new creation just discovered, but simply a newly considered group to include in the decision-making process... Our goal is to make the entire community a better place for all youth, not just youth in one organization.
Furthermore, as this transformation process occurs, funders increasingly request that youth be put on boards. In fact, some organizations we interviewed also effectively use young people to pitch funding requests. Youth are powerful spokespersons when requesting money from funders, and are sometimes harder to refuse than adults making similar requests.

Benefits for communities. This study did not consistently identify community-level outcomes that could be attributed to youth infusion, a fact we attribute to two reasons. First, the majority of organizations had been engaging young people in decision making for fewer than four years. Their efforts were still focused on experimenting and making the organizational shifts that would ultimately contribute to community change. Second, the number of infused organizations is still relatively few. As more organizations within a given area adopt youth infusion into their operating philosophy, it is likely that these communities will eventually experience a cultural shift, as is being experienced in Hampton, Virginia, San Francisco, California, and a few other places.

Conclusions: Creating Conditions for Organizational Change

Societal structures and beliefs do not properly support youth in policymaking roles. The organizations in this study, therefore, are going against the grain in their experimentation of the potential of youth infusion. Our research strongly supports their efforts. Organizations can achieve an impressive array of positive outcomes when they make youth and adult partnerships an operational priority, and when youth are infused into organizational decision making.

Organizational improvement is not easy to initiate. Sometimes young people are not fully prepared or motivated. Sometimes adults try to exert too much control and are domineering. Sometimes, the organization is not ready to do what it takes (see sidebar “Barriers to Bringing Youth to the Table”). Youth and adults often emphasized that sustaining organizational change is far more difficult than initiating it! Our research identifies the following key conditions that support sustained innovation in organizations that contribute most strongly to positive outcomes:

- **Changing organizational structure.** The top decision-making body in the organization needs to be committed to changing its own goals, agenda, and activities. When a governance body is focused on vision and learning, there is room for young people to make substantial contributions. If it is more traditionally focused on rule making and management, then it is less likely that young people will have a significant voice and influence.

- **Providing adult leadership.** Organizational change is facilitated by an adult visionary leader with institutional power and authority. Without this leadership, traditional management structures and stereotypic views about young people are often too powerful to overcome.

- **Creating authentic youth-adult partnerships.** Simply interacting with youth is not sufficient to ensure adult attitude change. Change occurs when:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Barriers to Bringing Youth to the Table</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Our research identified six salient barriers to initiating change:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Unwillingness to get involved.</strong> Having not been invited to the table before, many youth are skeptical that their voice and vote will count. It is critical that organizations demonstrate inclusivity early on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Lack of a support network.</strong> Simply bringing youth to the table is not enough. Early on, concerted efforts need to be made to ensure that the young people are given the opportunity to succeed and to show the adults that they can contribute.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. The governance work is goal-oriented toward meaningful outcomes. We found that adult attitudes did not change when the decision making was perceived as merely symbolic.

2. Young people perform well in the boardroom or in other places that adults regard as their turf. It is important for adults to witness youth succeeding in the nuts and bolts of organization improvement.

3. Adults observe youth engaged in community action that has real payoffs for residents.

- **Empowering adult staff and volunteers.** Adults are most likely to resist youth infusions if they themselves do not feel included in decision-making processes. When adults feel excluded, they resist others coming to the table who may be perceived as being more prepared or welcome.

- **Selecting and training youth.** Just like adults, young people who are nominated to take on key governance roles should be carefully selected and trained. The most successful organizations created scaffolding for youth to work their way up through the organization, engaging them in a variety of leadership opportunities before they were selected for board participation. As one youth emphasizes, “Nothing reinforces an adult stereotype quicker than experiences that substantiate already-held beliefs.”

- **Acknowledging age differences.** A 14-year-old differs significantly from an 18- or 19-year-old across multiple domains (cognitive, physical, socio-economic, and legal). Adults initially respond differently to youth of different ages. The organizations in this study respect these differences. They began their change processes by first involving older youth (typically between the ages of 17 and 21) before integrating younger adolescents into the top governance roles.


References


Shepherd Zeldin, Ph.D., joined the faculty of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison after fifteen years in the voluntary sector as a policy analyst and youth worker. Dr. Zeldin integrates multiple forms of scholarship to inform and support healthy communities for youth. As a researcher, Zeldin studies the effects of youth participation on adolescent and community development. As a program manager, he directs national initiatives on youth-adult partnerships for community change. As a teacher, Dr. Zeldin offers service learning courses to graduate students, and conducts community outreach through a joint appointment with Wisconsin Extension's Department of 4-H/Youth Development.
Youth Infusion: Preparing for Success and Positive Outcomes

There are few structures or norms to promote youth infusion in the United States. The community partnerships and organizations in this research, therefore, had to learn by doing, often through tough times. Fortunately, we can all learn from their pioneering work. The following self-assessment is grounded in our analysis of effective practices and is designed to help organizations and community coalitions prepare for the challenges and benefits of youth infusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readiness for Infusion</th>
<th>7. Are there multiple roles for participation within organizations, to provide choice for young people, depending on their competence and interest?  yes  no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Has your group talked to and learned from others who have successfully engaged in youth infusion strategies? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are there adults with institutional power in organizations and communities who are motivated to champion the change process over the long term? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are there groups of young people with institutional authority who are charged with monitoring and evaluating the change process over time? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Are multiple community organizations ready and willing to support each other throughout the transition? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Opportunities for Infusion</th>
<th>8. Are there multiple roles for participation within the civic structure of communities?   yes    no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>5. To guide selection of youth and adults for decision-making positions, is there a clear definition of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to succeed? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are mechanisms in place to recruit a diverse array of youth and adults from the community? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Supports for Infusion</th>
<th>9. Are the available roles challenging and relevant from the perspective of young people?    yes    no</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Once youth and adults are selected, is there initial and ongoing training for them to develop their abilities? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Are there mechanisms—formal and informal—for the youth and adults to gain a sense of synergy, community, and trust? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. In decision-making forums, are youth and adults expected to learn together and explore new ideas (as opposed to simply establishing policies and rules)? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Do the young people believe that their ideas will be taken seriously by other group members? ___ yes ___ no</td>
<td></td>
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Scoring

*There is no scoring!* Encourage multiple individuals representing diverse stakeholder groups to complete the self-assessment. Talk about it. Reflect. Problem-solve. Make a plan, being realistic about the time it takes to make important change, and go to it. Put the self-assessment tool away for a few months, and then engage in the process again.
COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT RECONSIDERED:
A LOOK AT SOME ORIGINS OF OUR PRACTICES

DOUGLAS MAGNUSON, SUSAN HUDSON, CHERYL BALDWIN

Contemporary youth development challenges and opportunities are similar to those faced by the social reformers of the Progressive Era. The authors demonstrate how the practices of Community Youth Development are informed by and based on ideas from those reformers, applying their ideas about democracy, play, purposeful acts, and freedom.

The phrase “youth development” has become the dominant way to work with youth in informal educational and leisure settings, both as an ideal and as a methodology. Youth development is a response to the perception of a “youth problem” (Cohen, 1997) and the fact that communities do not raise youth as well as they might. Recent attempts to merge the ideas of community development and youth development reflect nicely the recognition that the youth experience is not simply a youth problem—or a problem with individual youth, but rather exists in relationship to and in the context of wider community phenomena and processes (e.g., Hughes & Curman, 2000; Perkins, Borden, Keith, & Villaruel, in press; Pittman, 2000; Rollin, 2000).

These concerns about youth and the Community Youth Development (CYD) response are not new ideas or practices. The roots of CYD originate in the Progressive Era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Furthermore, because the social and economic conditions of that period parallel our own, innovations of the Progressive Era are relevant still. In this article we review some of these parallels and propose that some of the practices of the reformers in the Progressive Era exemplify what Community Youth Development ought to be about.

The Progressive Era and Social Change

• Concerns about youth in the Progressive Era related to at least four issues: The transitional difficulties caused by dramatic urbanization and industrialization (Cross, 1990)

• The perception that modern life was missing valuable social and developmental experiences provided by small communities

• Worries about the moral climate of modern life, especially for youth

• The quality of life for the poor, for immigrants, and for youth

These concerns were related to the pervasive effects of economic change on human development—changes that challenged accepted ideas about “what it means” to have a good life and to be a good and moral person.

Contemporary sociocultural and socioeconomic changes resemble those of fin-de-siècle 19th century. Once again there is an increase in the gap between rich and poor, a shift in the modes of economic production, an expectation that labor will be mobile, and a number of changes in community life. Especially as a result of economic change, there is also an increased sense of life’s risks (Campbell, 1987; Giddens, 1991).

Perceived threats to the development of character. A widespread belief of the Progressive Era was that small, rural communities fostered moral character, while urban life threatened that world. To respond to this perceived threat, youth organizations, public parks, and recreation services, and fresh-air funds were developed to relieve the anxieties of the modern age by duplicating traditional rural communities,
such as summer camps, with the hope that youth participation would build a character strong and resilient enough to withstand the effects of modern, urban society. While these institutions provided a refuge from the modern world, they did not necessarily prepare youth to participate in it. However valuable these efforts, they were incomplete, because they addressed neither the risks nor the difficulties of sustaining a fully mature, adult identity in a modern world.

Risk and contingency: threats to identity. Giddens (1991) says our modern, western culture has a pervasive sense of the riskiness and contingency of life. Baumeister and Tice say that we are estranged from traditional ways of understanding who we are. Earlier, Erikson (1950) contended that “identity” is the metaphor for our age, because achieving a stable and mature identity is so difficult. According to Baumeister and Tice (1986, p. 4):

*The modern difficulty with identity must be understood as resulting from a change in identity, or rather in the way identity is created and shaped. Unlike our ancestors, who seemed to know who they were without much trouble, we have somehow come to use uncertain or unreliable means for defining ourselves.*

Like Erikson, Baumeister suggests that identity has become increasingly important even as the social institutions that nurture it have become unstable and subject to personal choice rather than necessity. Geographical home, ancestral family, marriage, job, social rank, gender, age, bodily characteristics, moral goodness, and religion have lost much of their socializing effectiveness as sources of stable identities. Moreover, when these other sources of identity are weak, the institution of the family is asked to make up the difference—an expectation that is beyond the means of many families.

Age segregation. Another contemporary threat to maturity is the continued segregation of youth from the lives of adults. This is not a new problem (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Kett, 1977, Fine & Mechling, 1993). According to Hollingshead (cited in Kett, p. 253):

*By segregating young people into special institutions such as the school, Sunday School, and later into youth organizations such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts for a few hours each week, adults apparently hope that the adolescent will be spared the shock of learning the contradictions of the culture. At the same time, they believe that these institutions are building a mysterious something variously called “citizenship,” “leadership,” or “character,” which will keep the boy or girl from being “tempted” by the “pleasures” of adult life. Thus the youth-training institutions provided by the culture are essentially negative in their objectives, for they segregate adolescents from the real world that adults know and function in. By trying to keep the maturing child ignorant of this world of conflict and contradictions, adults think they are keeping him “pure.”*

The concepts of adolescence and youth—our understanding of the meaning of being a person of that age—are products of social segregation, and many of the so-called characteristics of adolescence are by-products of this segregation. But some research points to the notion that adolescence and youth as a social stage may be in decline or evolving into a new form:

*It is often said that we live in an age of prolonged adolescence, but it is obviously not adolescence that is being prolonged, at least not the sort of conformist and ingenuous adolescence that emerged as a moral ideal and social experience between 1890 and 1920. Beginning in the 1930s and increasingly since 1940, both sponsored institutions for young people and the youth subculture have affected a progressively younger age group. But if adolescence is waning, what is taking its place? There are two possible answers: a more pronounced adult orientation on the part of young people, or a different kind of youth orientation. Oddly, a plausible case can be made for each (Kett, 1977, p. 266).*

Examples of these two orientations can be found in the many accomplished young people in academic and athletic pursuits; the intelligent youth who quit high school to pursue adult interests; the increase in post-secondary study by high school students; the participation of young people in community development activities such as emergency volunteer services, urban design, or health promotion; and youth who earn adult-like salaries working in the computer industry. These examples can be interpreted as exceptions to the rule or, alternatively, as what is possible when age is not used as a guidepost to youth development.
Community Youth Development
in Historical Context
If it is accepted that there are similarities between our present social situation, marked by a transition from an industrial to an information and services economy, and that of the 19th century, marked by a transition from an agrarian and rural economy to an urban and industrial economy, it may be possible to learn something from the previous era about the actual and potential meaning of youth development (and related threats to character).

We propose that some Progressive Era reformers were attempting to transform relational, human experience in daily life, using metaphors of play, democracy, and freedom. They believed that the goal for youth work was to organize with youth the kinds of worlds and practices that prepared them for mature adult life, even when all of the possibilities of that adult life were not known with certainty. When and where ultimate outcomes were uncertain, their aim was to immerse youth in a worthwhile, purposeful life and encourage participation in democratic processes, opportunities to exercise freedom, and re-creation of experience of play.

For example, Jane Addams (1902), Henry Curtis (1930), Joseph Lee (1915), Luther Gulick (1920), and Hedley Dimock (1929) promoted an historically situated, developmental understanding of what it means to be a good person and what this understanding meant for how youth ought to be organized. They proposed an intentional reorganization of youth’s everyday life—in contrast to what they perceived to be life-denying, inhuman, and unethical human development practices.

Their vision involved a necessary connection between the qualities and meaning of a good life and the principles that govern how youth learn to live that good life. These principles brought philosophy and educational pedagogy into the daily life of youth as an intentionally organized “curriculum of daily life.” Thus Dimock (1929), for example, organized summer camps where the curriculum and the pedagogy were grounded in the freedom to make basic choices about how to live and where working out the meaning of this freedom in democratic living with others was the daily existential necessity. Our contemporary task, represented by the phrase Community Youth Development, is to take these principles of democracy, freedom, and play into our communities.

Worthy living is education. Progressive Era reformers promoted immersion in an active, vibrant life. The meaning and method of learning how to live was what Kilpatrick (cited in Dimock, 1929) called the “purposeful act”:

If the purposeful act be in reality the typical unit of the worthy life, then it follows that to base education on purposeful acts is exactly to identify the process of education with worthy living itself. The two become then the same. . . . And if the purposeful act thus makes of education life itself, could we reasoning in advance expect to find a better preparation for later life than practice in living now?

Jane Addams (1902) said, “There is no education so admirable as that education which comes from participation in the constant trend of events” (p. 93). Addams’ Hull House is the exemplar of immersion in meaningful, purposeful action.

The idea of immersion contradicts some recent youth development practice, especially that based on our cultural ideal about the innocence of childhood and adolescence. This ideal may prevent the development of mature character in two ways: by leading us to protect youth from the course of life events in which character and courage are developed, and by promoting ideologies of youthhood and adolescence that trivialize daily life for youth. Instead, we might learn from our predecessors that protection is not enough; involvement in life and active participation in shaping the quality of life is a requirement for the development of character.

This assumes that our youth problem is not simply about protecting innocence, reducing risk, instilling resiliency, or adequate preparation. The developmental challenge is how to “co-create” (Hughes & Curnan, 2000) with youth possibilities for free, democratic, and purposeful action focused on transforming the daily quality of life for both youth and adults.

Another conceptual example of our difficulties is illustrated by the idea of “competence” as a goal of youth development. Masten and Coatsworth (1998) define competence as:

. . . a pattern of effective adaptation in the environment, either broadly defined in terms of reasonable success with major developmental tasks expected for a person of a given age and gender in the context of his or her culture, society, and time, or more narrowly defined in terms of specific domains of achievement, such as academics, peer acceptance, or athletics. It carries the dual meaning that there is a track record of such achievement (competent performance) and also that the individual has the capability to perform well in the future. It refers to good adaptation and not necessarily to superb achievement (p. 206).
The list of developmental tasks as examples of competence includes success, being rule-governed, self-control, adjustment, getting along, and involvement. There are no explicit moral categories, and many of the items on the list have moral dimensions that are not specified (“success,” for example). Further, the idea of “effective adaptation” assumes that processes of development are unidirectional; specifically, that the child adapts to the social institutions. The equivalence of adaptation and successful development is an unacceptable view of development in its entirety, given the examples of the Hitler Youth (Koch, 1975) and other totalitarian schemes of youth development, which endorse the idea that morality is equivalent to “community convention” (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972).

Indeed, CYD methodology suggests that community conventions are often part of the problem. A way out of this conundrum was offered by Addams (1902, p. 3) and others. We find in their work a response to popular culture:

All about us are men and women who have become unhappy in regard to their attitude toward the social order itself; toward the dreary round of uninteresting work, the pleasures narrowed down to those of appetite, the declining consciousness of brain power, and the lack of mental food which characterizes the lot of the large proportion of fellow-citizens.

A third difficulty of youth development practice in this vein relates to individualistic conceptions of morality. Addams (p. 3) recognized that contemporary moral and social ideals no longer corresponded to the economic reality and that individual moral instruction was only part of the solution.

To attain individual morality in an age demanding social morality, to pride one’s own self on the results of personal effort when the time demands social adjustment, is utterly to fail to apprehend that situation.

Addams believed that the ideals of a good life needed to inform the social and economic system, rather than the other way around. Specifically, she envisioned an “education which comes from participation in the constant trend of events” (p. 93), the community rather than the isolated family as the basic social and moral unit, the opportunity for dignified work, and the demand that everyone have enough material resources on which to live. These principles were the foundation of her perspective, and working out how to live a good life was both the goal and the process of development. This is one meaning of “developmental.”

Addams’s vision is in sharp contrast to the ameliorative, therapeutic, and protective directions that some theoretical and professional fields have taken over the past 50 years. It is not that these directions are wrong, but they are incomplete and partial conceptions of human development. Addams, Gulick, and Dimock suggested that the purpose of human development has a reciprocal relationship with the means and methods of development: thinking about, working on, and playing with issues of “ultimate concern” are both means and ends.

Democracy as goal and method. The reformers understood the multidimensional nature of the practice of democracy—its political, social, leadership, and group dynamic implications. For example, Hedley Dimock (1929, p. 41) created a summer camp where democracy was the program:

Camp directors who are also educators and who are not unaware of the implications of psychology and sociology for character education find themselves compelled to operate their camps on the basis of a cooperative, life-centered curriculum. They have entirely lost faith in the notion that character is developed by setting up programs for campers to go through. The findings of psychology have demonstrated that character is not produced in any such convenient way. . . . A growing number of camp directors, therefore, hold the conviction that the curriculum cannot and should not be created in advance. To camp directors of this persuasion, the camp is the curriculum. The recognition that learning and living are identical, that growth is in proportion to purposeful participation, and that experience is valuable in the degree to which it is social or shared constitute the earmarks of camp educators. . . . In camps of this type no program of an organized sort exists until it emerges from . . . the community.

Indeed, democracy is the curriculum. Dimock understood that character development was not possible without giving youth the freedom to be “purposeful”—to practice democracy in a way that provides a bridge to the daily life of youth in communities.

The meaning of character and human development. A further contribution of our predecessors has to do with the philosophical anthropology, which is represented by their practices and values. When the reform-
ers objected to a program or social practices, they often objected not just to the methodology but also to the inadequate philosophical anthropology—and understanding of character—it represented. As in the previous quote by Dimock, character cannot be produced or manufactured: it must be invited and lived.

"Character" in this sense refers to the free choice of to whom and to what one is responsible (Kupferman, 1991). What was remarkable about the pioneers was their willingness to take risks—their confidence that democratic, free choice and exploration within a purposeful life-world would be a compelling invitation to youth and adults. This framework of youth development offers a more compelling understanding of personhood than one based on the provision of skills, competencies, and assets— for youth and adults alike.

Indeed, the reformers suggested that skills, competencies, and assets emerge from the necessity to participate in democratic action and from their role in sustaining a meaningful life. The youth worker’s role in contemporary culture, then, is inverted from a protective function to that of inviting democratic participation.

The practice of freedom and renewed adult relationships with youth. Gulick (1920, p. 260) said, “If we can use freedom, it works.” The advantage of the many informal CYD settings is their potential ability to offer a true partnership with youth that avoids the custodial, coercive, and manipulative strategies that youth experience in so many areas of their lives. Coupled with persistence and patience, this long-range commitment is more effective in advancing youth development than the most sophisticated intervention or training strategy.

Gulick’s perspective challenges us to stop relying on hoped-for certainties of “program” and “delivery system” in youth services. Youth programs are increasingly asked to demonstrate their effectiveness through “outcome-based” evaluation. We believe that our predecessors would have viewed this with some dismay. In the hope that we can guarantee outcomes, we too often sacrifice the very conditions that are necessary for development and character.

While the promise of certainty of outcome is tempting, it is a futile one. Seasoned CYD practitioners understand that the practice of democracy involves the possibility of failure. Removing that possibility undermines the human development values at the heart of the original vision.

Those reformers who attached their practices to progressive education recognized the need to give up control, at least as we typically understand it, in working with youth. In the earlier example, Dimock’s (1929) summer camp, the developmental process was described as a commitment to democratic engagement. This type of engagement requires us to forfeit direct control over youth. This does not mean that we also forfeit adult authority, but rather that adult authority is mediated through democratic practices, whose standards youth and adults are obligated to uphold.

This type of engagement is a requirement for successful and meaningful life. Democratic engagement does not predetermine the outcome, but instead leaves room for creative, imaginative response, as well as the possibility of failure—both trivial and profound.

Re-creative play

We are coming to see that the best preparation for life is living; and play... is much nearer to a life of business or politics or society than is the schoolroom and its studies. If we seek to train for society, it would be hard to find a better method; for play is social in its nature, and it requires friendship for continuance. While there is rivalry, there is also comradeship as an essential element in all good play. If a boy would prepare himself for politics and affairs, where will he get a better experience than in the leadership and organization of the playground? Nearly all leaders of men have probably been trained in this way (Curtis, 1930, p. 54).

Play is the most perfect democracy... In the playground we have a voluntary democratic organization (Curtis, p. 75).

They [children] need the kind of play that make for those relationships between individuals that will be true to the adult ideals which belong, and should belong, to the community (Gulick, p. 246).

Clearly, the reformers understood the essential parallels between democracy, freedom, and worthy living. As illustrated in the above quotes, play is also important, both as a value of experience and as an activity. In this the reformers foreshadowed Piaget.

Furthermore, like democracy and freedom, play does not need to be justified by external criteria. Play is not valuable because it improves math scores or because it provides a release from the pressures of everyday life. Play is life; it is in this domain that we are most human. In contrast to the grim moralism of many youth programs and the invasion of informal education by goals borrowed from academic and
social education, the reformers staunchly defended children and youths' right to play unsupervised and uncontrolled by adults. Our culture is suspicious that children's play is naturally antisocial and anti-authority; on the contrary, the reformers knew that play is essential to our humanity.

Summary
In this article we suggest that there are parallels between the social conditions of the Progressive Era and our own, especially in relation to the impact of rapid social change, and that we can learn something from the Progressive Era reformers about how to respond to such change, especially in terms of youth development.

We further suggest that the reformers recognized the need for an intentional organization of a "curriculum of everyday life." CYD practices accept responsibility for such a curriculum. The types of values our predecessors pursued—e.g., purposeful acts, free play, freedom, and democracy—are processes, activities, and criteria of Community Youth Development as well as outcomes of "worthy living." Outcomes and processes, therefore, cannot be separated from each other; they are one and the same. If this theory has merit, we must be prepared to practice these values with youth in CYD settings; this practice is both a moral commitment and a skill. The commitment to such a point of view has profound implications for how programs are managed, planned, and evaluated; for how youth experience is interpreted by youth and by adults; and for the activities, purposes, and commitments that are chosen in the wide variety of informal, educational settings. Currently, few take these ideas seriously, although pockets of experimentation exist in a small number of schools (Dennison, 1969), in radical street work (de Oliveira, 2000; Thompson, 1999), and in some early childhood programs (Morgaine, 1999). Other experiments have been described in CYD Journal (e.g., Burgess, 2000) and by Finn and Checkoway (e.g., 1998). As we work to renew older community institutions and launch new initiatives, we can derive confidence that these efforts have historical precedent.

References
de Oliveira, W. (2000). We are in the streets because they are in the streets: The emergence of street social pedagogy in Brazil. Binghamton, NY: Haworth.
1. Jianyu Wang and Jennifer Edgar Atherton helped review the literature. Funding in support of this project was provided by the Rosa Janssen and Henry R. and Nancy Meyer Fund.

2. The working assumption about the nature and purpose of being human.

3. For more discussion of this point, see Pring, 2001, and Magnuson, submitted for publication.

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Section III

Research & Evaluation

When Kurt Lewin, the father of social psychology and originator of participatory research, insisted that “there is nothing as practical as a good theory” he simply meant that if you had an idea—a good one, about how things worked in the social world—its test for “goodness” would be its applicability to real world situations rather than its contribution to the abstract, ethereal world of ideas alone. For example, if you had the idea that low school performance of minority children could be accounted for by low expectations, the goodness of that idea or theory could be tested in the real world. This, of course, is exactly what Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson did in their seminal work on self-fulfilling prophecies, Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teachers’ Expectations and Pupils’ Intellectual Development. They discovered that teachers who had lower expectations for minority children telegraphed those expectations behaviorally. The children, in turn, behaved as expected and performed lower. Now the beauty or goodness of this finding was its immediate application to real-life settings. A plethora of practices based on the theory were developed and nearly every shopping list that categorizes student success and failure now includes among the top items the importance of the role of expectations.

It is important to acknowledge the significance of having a good idea, testing it, and, if found practical, bringing it into the realm of practice. It is also important to note two other facts: first, you do not have to be a researcher to have a good idea, and second, good ideas can emerge from practice as well as from theory or research.

The six selections chosen for this section (three on research and three on evaluation) illustrate attempts to test for goodness.

One of the greatest intellectual challenges that lies ahead for CYD is to develop a research and evaluation paradigm that actually captures the ecologically dynamic synergy of an operating CYD community, organization, or initiative. As of this writing, the editors are not aware of any such approach and encourage work on developing one. In this pursuit we have much to learn from the new sciences of chaos and complexity (Waldrop, 1992; Lewin, 1992; Gell-Mann, 1994; Wheatley, 1992) as well as Boyer’s work Scholarship Reconsidered (1990) and Ray and Anderson’s The Cultural Creatives (2000).
A RESEARCH-BASED MODEL FOR THE DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

SUSAN F. BARKMAN, KRISANNA L. MACHTMES

In this chapter the authors present a user-friendly, cost-effective, research-based model for CYD program design and evaluation that addresses the four-fold development of youth—head, heart, hands, and health.

Designing Effective Evaluation Tools
Community Youth Development (CYD) professionals have always struggled with how to design and evaluate their programs most effectively. Although several tools have emerged to address this problem, most fall short of their goal. The problem is that some of the models are very specific, focusing, for example, on the development of science process or workforce preparation skills. Other models evolved from the life-skill or risk-protection literature and have a broader scope, but they are not easy to use. Therefore, a need exists for an easy-to-use, comprehensive, research-based model that encompasses all the skills needed for youth to become confident, capable, caring, and contributing adults.

In order for a model to be effective in both the design and evaluation process, it is important that CYD professionals understand the theoretical framework on which the model and evaluation instruments are developed. For example, if a professional wants to help youth learn problem-solving skills, they need to know what the research says are the necessary components ("skill set") in order to develop that particular skill. The problem-solving skill set includes six items:

1. Identify/define the problem
2. Analyze possible causes
3. Identify possible solutions
4. Select the best solution
5. Implement the solution
6. Evaluate progress and revise if needed

This skill set is essential in designing an effective program that will give youth opportunities to reach the targeted skill outcome. Further, by designing the evaluation tool around the skill set, the evaluation results will yield reliable and valid data. This evaluation data provides valuable information that is useful in both program improvement and program impact.

The accountability demands for youth development programs have greatly increased in recent years. Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in 1993 and the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act (AREERA) in 1998. Both acts require all governmental entities to be accountable for their use of federal funds. State and county governments are also requesting data to show the impact of their funding dollars being spent for youth development programs. In addition, most private funding sources are now requiring that outcome evaluation strategies be an integral part of any proposal. In simple terms, they are asking, "How has the program facilitated achievement of the targeted youth development outcomes?"

It has, therefore, become essential that CYD professionals be able to measure and verbalize the impact of the programs they design and implement. The problem is that most professionals and administrators have little or no formal education in program evaluation. Consequently, most evaluation data focus on immediate outcomes, such as increased awareness, knowledge gained, and (possibly) attitudinal changes. Few youth-oriented pro-
grams focus on short- and/or longer-term outcomes such as changes in behavior, practices, policy, or the social, economical, or environmental impact of the program. Those that do tend to be costly and often need an evaluator’s help. In addition, youth development programs are often scattered over a wide geographical area. This distance between the implementation sites and the central agency often results in miscommunication, leading to the use of a variety of methodologies and tools to evaluate the same program.

These problems together—limited evaluation expertise, lack of funds to meet increased demand for accountability, lack of instruments that yield reliable data, and the need for an easy-to-use system—provide strong evidence for the establishment of a comprehensive model that encompasses the breadth of the Community Youth Development field. To address these needs, we designed the Four-Fold Youth Development Model and website, which we describe in this chapter.

The Development of the Four-Fold Model
The Four-Fold Model encompasses 47 development skills that youth need to develop into confident, capable, caring, and contributing adults. The model is based on an extensive search of both theoretical and empirical research. A selected few of the databases used in the literature search included:

- ERIC
- DAI (Dissertation Abstract Index)
- PYSCH Index
- Social Science Index
- Academic Full Text (Online)

The Four-Fold Model combines four existing models: the SCANS Workforce Preparation Model, the Science Process Skill Model developed by the National Network for Science and Technology, Iowa State University’s Targeting Life Skill Model, and the Search Institute’s Internal Assets Model.

As shown in Figure 1, each category (head, heart, hands, and health) has an accompanying matrix, which illustrates the relationship of the skills in each model. (Gray sections in the matrix indicate that a particular model does not include skills in that area.) For example, the Search Institute’s Internal Assets Model focuses primarily on skills in the heart and health categories, with little emphasis in the areas of head and hands. The SCANS workforce competencies are found throughout the head, heart, and hands categories, but very few exist in the health area. The Science Process Skills are primarily located in the head and hands category, with only one skill in the heart and health categories. Although the Targeting Life Skills Model provides the broadest approach, the model still has several gaps. It groups all the workforce preparation skills into marketable skills, which makes it very difficult to measure each individual skill.

By combining the best of each of these models, the Four-Fold Model creates a common language among CYD professionals. In addition, the model’s website (see www.four-f.purdue.edu/fourfold) provides the skill sets for each individual skill, thus formalizing the link between program design and evaluation.

How Do the Model and Website Work?
The Four-Fold Youth Development Model and website provide solutions to the four problems described earlier: limited evaluation expertise, lack of funds to meet increased accountability demands, lack of instruments that yield reliable and valid data, and the need for an easy-to-use system. The solution to these problems is described below.

A common language. To address the problem of limited evaluation expertise, it is necessary to establish a common language for youth development professionals that is easily understood. We have used the Logic Model to provide a framework for this common language and a foundation on which to build the Four-Fold Model. As shown in Figure 2, the Logic Model illustrates the flow between inputs, outputs, and outcomes, and establishes the link between both program design and evaluation. The inputs, outputs, and outcomes are common elements in all youth development programs, and can be described as follows:

**INPUTS**
The resources and contributions that the youth development organization and others make to the effort—time, people, money, materials, equipment, etc.

These inputs are converted into

**OUTPUTS**
The activities, products, methods, and services that reach people who participate.

These outputs are intended to achieve certain

**OUTCOMES**
The changes that occur for children, youth, families, groups, communities, organizations, and systems. Outcomes range from immediate to long-range; from learning to action to long-term social, economic, civic, and environmental impact.
Cost-effectiveness. The Four-Fold Model and website enable CYD professionals to address the demand for increased accountability with little increase in funds. Purdue University is bearing the developmental cost associated with the design and implementation of the website, which contains the evaluation tools, analysis software, and program for generating the evaluation report. The cost to organizations and youth development professionals is minimal (i.e., a small user fee, Internet access, and printing of relevant materials) while the benefits are far reaching. Evaluation data can be used for program improvement or leverage for continued or additional funding from stakeholders, or to strengthen community support. The central agency can compare and compile data from sites for comprehensive reports to government and/or other funding agencies.

Reliable instruments. To address the need for instruments that yield reliable and valid data, the Four-Fold Model provides research-based instruments that have been pilot tested and have established psychometric properties. These instruments can be used by a variety of youth organizations as long as their programs are designed around the mastery of the skill set items. Purdue University has already developed four evaluation instruments and is working with other universities to develop instruments for each of the remaining 43 targeted youth development outcomes. This process includes an extensive review of the relevant literature to determine the skill set and to develop each skill instrument. As a result of this literature review, an item pool of 25 to 30 questions is generated and pilot tested. Final instruments range from 10 to 14 questions, based on the size of the skill set. Each instrument is pilot tested both qualitatively (questions are checked for
ambiguity) and quantitatively. Reliability on original pilot skill instruments tested thus far have ranged between .60 and .80.

When using the website, the user simply selects and downloads the evaluation instrument for the specific outcome they are trying to measure. The instrument, a behavioral questionnaire, is a five-point Likert-type scale designed to measure whether the educational intervention has helped youth develop the skill. Youth indicate how often they perform a particular behavior. Whether a youth has developed a skill is based on the accumulated frequency on all the skill set items. We recommend a post-post design, where the first post-test is given immediately following completion of the program and the second post-test is administered a minimum of one month following the first post-test. It is important to remember that the evaluation is based on the skill set, so skill set items need to be an integral part of the youth development program, and youth must be given the opportunity to practice the items.

Ease of use. The Four-Fold website addresses the need for an easy-to-use system. The site provides everything the CYD professional needs to design and evaluate their program, at their finger tips. The Internet serves as the delivery system for the model. By using the Internet, the model is available to all individuals regardless of financial standing. After clicking on a targeted youth development skill, the user will find a definition of the skill and what skill set items make up that skill. The user then has several links to choose from including “evaluation and instruments,” “research and abstracts,” “teaching and activities,” and “links to related sites.”

The “evaluation and instruments” link allows the user to download instructions on using the instrument, the psychometrics associated with each instrument, and instructions on how to enter the data. This option also allows the user to enter data, have it analyzed, and print a report. Each instrument is in a Portable Document Format (PDF) file, which means the format will be maintained when it is printed or saved for future use. The “research and abstracts” link allows the user to view abstracts of research studies online or in print. This section is particularly good for researchers who want a thorough review of literature on a skill. By clicking on the “teaching and activities” link, the user will find sample educational activities designed to enable youth to practice and master skill set items. Last, the links to “related sites” points the user to other valuable information that addresses the skill being mastered.

What Makes the Four-Fold Model Different from Other Models?
We have incorporated several unique features that distinguish the Four-Fold Youth Development Model from existing models.

Inclusion of components, or a skill set, for each individual skill. Each skill in the Four-Fold Model is based on theoretical and empirical research. From that research, we identified the necessary components that youth must have in order to master that particular skill. These components provide a critical link between program design and evaluation and provide CYD professionals with the tools necessary to design research-based programs. Also, by designing the evaluation tool around the skill set, the evaluation results will yield reliable and valid data useful in both program improvement and program impact. When designing a new program, youth development professionals simply go to the Four-Fold website to determine the skill set items for their targeted skill.

For example, in order for a youth to master communication skills, they need to be working on the following skill set items:

- Be aware of their own communication (verbal, nonverbal, listening) style
- Understand and value different communication styles
- Practice empathy
- Adjust their own communication style to match others’ styles
- Be able to communicate essential information
- Manage the interaction between themselves and others

As CYD professionals design a program to develop communication skills, they need to include activities that allow youth participants to learn about and practice each of the above skill set items.

In addition to factual information about communication styles and effective listening strategies, CYD professionals may include role-playing activities where youth could practice all the above skill set items. These activities might also be videotaped, so youth could observe and critique themselves. An example includes games such as “back-to-back,” in which youth have to verbally communicate essential information about putting a puzzle together without using hand movements or having eye contact. It is
## Figure 2. Logic Model/Linking Program Design and Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES – IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do we need to achieve our goals?</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff, Volunteers, Time, Money, Materials, Equipment, Technology, Partners</td>
<td>Workshops, Meetings, Camps, Projects, Publications, Media, Web Site, After School, Programs</td>
<td>Who needs to: - participate? - be involved? - be reached?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from E. Taylor-Powell, University of Wisconsin at Madison (1999).

### Inclusion of research study abstracts
Granting agencies often require citations from previous research in order to establish some basis for the grant request. Practitioners can use the Four-Fold website as they write grants, and it is also available to researchers who want a thorough review of the literature on that topic.

### Inclusion of sample educational activities
This feature allows professionals to review sample activities that are specially designed to provide opportunities for youth to practice and master skill set items. This is essential in order for participants to achieve the program’s targeted outcomes. In addition, these activities are designed to accommodate varied learning styles (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile) and developmental levels. These activities provide an opportunity to observe and review each participant’s progress without using the typical paper-and-pencil tests. Instructions for these activities can then be downloaded and incorporated into the program curriculum.

### Linkage to statistical software to easily analyze data
Practitioners only need to enter the data and click on the “analysis” button. The program automatically calculates the necessary statistics. This analysis program categorizes the results by demographics, thus providing the data necessary to create strong impact statements for stakeholders and/or program improvement.

### Impact on Intended Audience
The Four-Fold Model and website is having a tremendous impact on the Community Youth Development field. As of March 1, 2000 there have been 1754 hits on the main page of the website. These hits represent individuals outside of Purdue University. Twenty-six different youth development groups have entered data into the database for analysis. One school district that was a recipient of a U.S. Department of Education 21st Century Grant has used the report generated by the analysis in their first-year annual report.

As a cost-effective, user-friendly system that provides instruments and statistical analysis resulting in reliable and valid data, it is being used by a variety of CYD professionals without hiring an evaluation expert.

The greatest impact created by the model is the convergence of all types of CYD professionals. For
the first time, they have a graphic representation of how various models relate to each other, thus promoting a prosperous exchange of ideas and the creation of a national database with comprehensive indicators that can be used to further research in youth development. This site provides a critical link between program design and evaluation. In addition, we are coordinating an effort to establish a National IMPACT Center to increase the capacity of community-based youth organizations to design and evaluate their programs. The center will unite a broad array of youth organizations and professionals to collaboratively conduct research and develop additional evaluation instruments for the expansion and enhancement of the Four-Fold Youth Development website. All instruments will be pilot tested nationally and subsequently placed on the Internet for practitioners’ use. Although the server for this virtual center will be housed at Purdue University, center staff will be located throughout the country. The web-based evaluation system will benefit all levels of CYD professionals, from the local community practitioner to the national director. The greatest benefits will be realized by the youth themselves who, by participating in more effectively designed programs, will further develop life-long skills.

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5. In 1999, the authors presented a research paper on “Scattered Site Evaluation” at the annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association. This paper received the President’s Prize for the Maximin Award, and is the backbone for the evaluation on the website.


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**Krisanna L. Machines, Ph.D.,** is the “Partners for Better Communities Program” coordinator and evaluator. She is responsible for evaluating community-based programs including educational websites. Dr. Machines’s research efforts are in quantitative methodology and evaluation of youth programs.
Making the Transition to Community Youth Development: Emerging Roles and Competencies for Youth-Serving Organizations and Youth Workers

LINDA CAMINO, SHEPHERD ZELDIN

Community Youth Development requires youth workers and youth-serving organizations to assume new roles. The authors identify these emerging new roles and discuss the scope of the shift needed to realize sustainable change.

The last 20 years have witnessed strong trends toward a valuing of community building, civic society, civic participation, and the democratic ideal, both in the United States and internationally (Dahl, 1998). It is no coincidence, therefore, that Community Youth Development (CYD) has emerged within this context and puts at its center the goal of just and healthy communities (Hughes & Curran, 2000; Pittman & Wright, 1991). What makes CYD unique is that it seeks to build on the creativity, passion, and capability of young people to be current, rather than future, participants in social-change efforts. Consequently, CYD emphasizes the new roles that young people are assuming in community arenas as full partners and leaders. The emphasis is well placed. Given a substantial history of the medicalization of youth work (Krueger, 1998) and society’s misinformation and stereotypes of youth, spotlighting the strengths and capabilities of youth is long overdue.

At the same time, however, far less attention has been devoted to exploring the implications that CYD holds for youth-serving organizations and youth workers—the structures and people who help make CYD happen. Youth workers are playing critical, but often unarticulated and unsung, new roles in CYD. As they step beyond the walls of organizations and into community contexts, youth workers face new challenges. They must work with adults, not only youth. They must work with a wider variety of volunteers, not only organizational staff and program volunteers. They must work on building community capacity and infrastructure, not only directing and implementing programs. In effect, youth-serving organizations and youth workers are now being called on to be different types of change agents. They are expected to build community, while concurrently promoting youth development.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify key challenges and opportunities facing youth organizations and youth workers as they implement CYD in day-to-day community life. CYD cannot only be a framework for action; it must also include a blueprint for supporting such action. We seek to provide part of the blueprint by addressing three questions:

- What are best practice themes of CYD?
- What are new areas of work for youth-serving organizations that result from these themes?
- What are new roles and competencies useful to CYD workers?

Methods

Our analysis combines several types of scholarship, as articulated by Boyer (1990). One is the scholarship of integration, “making connections across the disciplines... doing research at the boundaries where fields converge and fitting one’s own research—or the research of others—into larger intellectual patterns” (Boyer, 1990, pp. 20-21). Another is the scholarship of application. While Boyer discussed a scholarship of application “in which theory and practice vitally interact, and one renews the other” (p. 23), the data we draw upon include a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach allows knowledge to emerge inductively from investigating the wisdom of
practitioners, and thus also somewhat resembles Boyer's definition of the scholarship of discovery—
"the freedom to think freshly, to see propositions in
every kind of changing light" (Bowen, quoted in

It is ironic that, in institutions of higher education,
the tendency is for the scholarships of integration
and application to be the least valued. If a main
goal in the behavioral sciences is to ultimately pro-
mote healthy development, it cannot be achieved by
attention to models and research alone; those pro-
viding and administering services need to be guided
and supported (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Not only,
then, is there "nothing as useful as good theory"
(Lewin, 1935, p. 64); we contend that there is also
"nothing as theoretical as good practice" (Zeldin &
Camino, 1998, p. 36). Knowledge generated at the
borderland between theory, research, and practice is
that which illuminates innovation and advances
new conceptualizations.

As such, several data sources inform this chapter:

- We draw on data we have collected in researching
  and evaluating many CYD projects across the coun-
try over the past decade. These evaluations
  employed standard ethnographic methods of in-
depth interviews and observation of key community
  events and activities. Surveys were used frequently
  to provide quantitative measurement to the analysis.

- We have worked directly for and with youth and
  community organizations. Our participation in
  community-building initiatives provides experi-
tial data to the analysis. In some cases we were evalu-
ators and organizational consultants. In other
  cases we worked as service providers in communi-
ties. These varied experiences, documented through
  field notes, allowed us to view the issues from the
  perspectives of youth workers and residents.

- An additional source is written materials pro-
duced by organizations, coalitions, and sponsors
  of CYD. Such documents illustrate the hopes and
  dreams of innovative practitioners. In reviewing
  and analyzing such materials, one gains a strong
  understanding of the field as it struggles over time
to create a collective identity, a body of research,
  and a set of best practices. These data provide
  a baseline and an ideal; they set the benchmarks
  and high expectations that organizations and
  youth workers are expected to achieve.

Best Practice Themes of CYD
A fundamental premise of CYD is that there is over-
lap between youth and community development. To
begin to examine evidence for this premise, we
reviewed lists of written values and principles issued
by youth-serving organizations, community-build-
ing initiatives, and coalitions for violence prevention
across the country. Values and principles of practice
are important because they describe the belief sys-
tems and values of collective entities (Dunst, 1994).
They help identify the content and issues that the
field believes are relevant, and which therefore are
in need of action.

We reviewed and analyzed four sets of guiding
values and principles from diverse fields:

1. Over 20 youth-serving organizations and initia-
tives (Pittman & Zeldin, 1995)

2. A consensus of over 100 urban coalitions and
foundations (National Community Building Net-
work, 1997)

3. A consortium of funders and nonprofit leaders
supporting violence-prevention initiatives (Na-
tional Funding Collaborative for Violence Pre-
vention, 1998)

4. A nonprofit management-education initiative
that was formed by an expert panel after review-
ing a broad range of programs in higher educa-
tion (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1997)

Together, the sets represent a total of 50 lists of
written value statements and principles of practice;
each of the sets represents the aggregate endorse-
ment of many individual organizations. Figure 1
summarizes our analysis presenting common themes
that resulted from content analysis, and specific
statements that illustrate each theme.

Content analysis of the values and principles
statements revealed that they cluster around three
major themes:

1. Identify and build on assets as well as needs.
Emphasis is placed on identification and response
to issues from the perspective of local stakehold-
ers. The aim is to build on existing strengths of
individuals and communities in order to prepare
residents to take on future challenges.

2. Engage citizens and promote local control. The
virtues of voluntary action, with people working
collectively to address common concerns, is high-
lighted. The aim is to create social capital within
communities so that local stakeholders can take
control of local issues.

3. Create partnerships for capacity building and
systemic change. Community building is gener-
ated through collaboration among diverse stakeholders across fields and sectors. The aim is to create long-term commitments that result in sustainable change in structures and systems, formal and informal.

The themes indicate a level of consensus about CYD. It appears that diverse fields—youth development, community building, and prevention—are indeed coalescing around principles of citizen engagement and shared power. Programs and initiatives are valuing “community as a whole” as much as individual well-being.

For youth-serving organizations specifically, the implications are two-fold. First, the themes illustrate Salamon’s (1992) assertion that nonprofit organizations of the near future will be in the business of building community and its infrastructure as much as their own survival. Second, the implication is that building on strengths, empowerment, and engagement are more than buzzwords. Youth-serving organizations appear to be very much in the fore-

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**Figure 1.**

Common themes and illustrative statements of guiding values and principles from youth development, community building, and violence-prevention initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify and Build on Assets as Well as Needs</th>
<th>Incorporate a range of appropriate academic disciplines into the content of the curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Build on the strengths of participants. Offer a range of developmental opportunities to address needs. Program culture must recognize cultural strengths and differences.</td>
<td>Include the perspectives of the nonprofit, profit, and public sectors. Organize to leverage greater change through marketing, evaluation, and dissemination. Focus on sustainable, comprehensive, integrated, and long-term commitments. Emphasize systemic change objectives, such as institutional policies, organizational structure, and curriculum innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Build on past programming investments, lessons, and relationships. Respond to the needs of practice and the concerns of practitioners. Grow out of the needs and desires of those who are served.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is no cookie-cutter approach to building community; the best efforts flow from and adapt to local realities. Value cultural strengths. Promote the values and history of many cultural traditions and ethnic groups. Build on community strengths, local capacities, and assets. Past efforts have too often addressed community deficits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Partnerships for Capacity Building and Systemic Change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Provide opportunities for participants to be resources to each other. Programs must advocate for improvements in larger environment—housing, public safety, economic security.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Violence is a multifaceted issue for our society that encompasses systemic as well as individual and community components. For this reason, violence must be addressed in its broadest sense. Diverse, intersectoral, and egalitarian community collaboratives can best define problems and develop solutions to local violence issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage Citizens and Promote Local Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Youth must choose their own goals and methods for achieving them. Systems must share power with youth to facilitate their movement from dependence to interdependence. Participation should be voluntary. Participants should be involved in planning and implementing activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Incorporate a range of appropriate academic disciplines into the content of the curriculum. Include the perspectives of the nonprofit, profit, and public sectors. Organize to leverage greater change through marketing, evaluation, and dissemination. Focus on sustainable, comprehensive, integrated, and long-term commitments. Emphasize systemic change objectives, such as institutional policies, organizational structure, and curriculum innovation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building community requires work by all sectors in an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, and respect. It takes time and committed work to make such collaboration more than rhetoric. Local action includes local efforts to confront institutions and policies that contribute to violence. Integrate community development and human service strategies because each needs the other to be successful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:**

* Youth development (Pittman & Zeldin, 1995)
> Violence prevention (National Funding Collaborative for Violence Prevention, 1998)
> Nonprofit management education (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 1997).

* Community building (National Community Building Network, 1997).
front of helping communities, not only individuals, acquire and sustain a collective capacity of competence, confidence, and compassion.

However, this type of work represents new terrain for youth-serving organizations. The ways that youth organizations can best address these new areas is the focus of the next section.

**New Roles for Youth-Serving Organizations**

As youth organizations move into the business of community building—creating places and social networks that have a shared sense of identity, spirit, and public contribution—the central challenge becomes one of taking on new roles and responsibilities in ways that strengthen, not detract from, the “bottom line” priority of creating optimal conditions for youth development. Based on our data and experience, we believe there are three new roles for youth organizations:

- Defining and describing youth and community development for multiple stakeholders
- Identifying and mobilizing untapped and unacknowledged community resources
- Organizing broad-based support

**Defining and describing CYD for multiple stakeholders.** Identifying and building on community strengths and working with youth as partners in community building are somewhat new. Although several of the concepts and approaches have roots in prior trends, they have not been state-of-the-art for the past 25 years (Camino, 2000). A well developed language that fully conveys the principles and practices has not been articulated yet for the current generation of community-based youth development. We have found this to be true time and time again in our interviews with stakeholders, observations at community meetings and conferences, and reviews of field materials.

CYD is at once familiar and foreign. Its intuitive appeal is both a strength and a drawback. That is, CYD may be so intuitively appealing that it appears deceptively simple. Our evaluation experience highlights that years of prior experience with concepts and approaches emphasizing youth problems and community deficits make it difficult for individuals and organizations to shift fully to CYD. Thinking and action centered on the collective often continues to be passed over as too nebulous or difficult. Further, CYD is entering places where many separate collaborations, coalitions, and task forces have previously existed. Sometimes these efforts are well connected and integrated, but more typically they are loosely connected, or even operating independently.

Different groups may use similar words or phrases, but in fact the underlying concepts widely differ. Such was the case with youth and adult teams from ten rural, isolated communities that participated in a recent three-year CYD initiative of the National 4-H Council (Camino, 1999a; National 4-H Council, 1999). A primary goal of the initiative was to assist youth and adult volunteers, supported by local Extension agents, to improve the quality of youth and community development in their communities. One of the most difficult challenges for these youth-adult teams was to understand and develop a way to talk about CYD among themselves, let alone with other community residents and stakeholders. Concepts and terminology such as “youth-adult partnerships,” “community visioning,” and “asset mapping” were new. Also, team members frequently interpreted the concepts through the lenses of prior experience with intervention and prevention of youth and community problems. It took nearly three years to change these perspectives, to begin to formulate a language for CYD, and for team members to feel equipped well enough to convey them to fellow community residents.

In larger urban areas, there may be adequate resources to support a variety of intermediary organizations that take on this function (Camino, 1998). In smaller communities where resources are stretched, it is likely that individual organizations or coalitions have to take on this critical role of definition and description.

**Identifying and mobilizing untapped and unacknowledged resources.** Defining Community Youth Development and its strategies is one task. Bringing diverse stakeholders together around CYD is quite a different challenge. Current philosophy about community development holds that the ability of a community to create and sustain its capacity is, in large part, dependent on identifying and then accessing untapped and unacknowledged community leaders, resources, and spaces and places.

“Asset mapping,” spearheaded by the work of McKnight and Kretzmann (1992), has become the catch phrase for identifying and mobilizing internal resources at the community level. In the last decade, several models have been developed, such as Mapping Community Capacity (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1992), YouthMapping (Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, n.d.), and Building Community (National 4-H Council, 2000b). The Building Community model is perhaps distinctive for its comprehensiveness and explicit attention to CYD, and for its emphasis on youth and adults working together on behalf of their communities.

In our experiences with communities that employ
asset mapping, we have consistently observed that residents are unaccustomed to viewing youth as full-
fledged community members. Far more common is the view that youth represent potential future
resources. Consequently, youth are not expected to be strong civic contributors to the work. The unfor-
tunate result is that youth are most often left out of the conceptualization and planning phases. Even
when youth are present at meetings, their voices typically tend to be muted or discounted.

The experience of one small Midwest community illustrates the dynamics and potential of mapping
initiatives (Camino, 1999b, 2000b). The community began the process with high enthusiasm, with both
youth and adults regularly attending meetings. For a long while the voices of the youth were drowned out
by concerned adults who had resided in the community for years, and who therefore thought they could
best identify the entire range of community resources. Yet, over time it became clear that young
people had knowledge of many resources that adults overlooked. Those resources included several youth-
serving organizations that had not been “sitting at the table” at the outset.

Mapping represents a rather straightforward way for youth-serving organizations to contribute to, or
head up, CYD efforts. Youth organizations tend to have specialized knowledge of the community. Fore-
most, they can help coalitions identify “youth-friendly” organizations, places, and people typically
overlooked by initiatives. Second, youth organizations can use mapping to promote and elevate youth as
community experts and decision makers. These organiza-
tions in fact may be the only ones with the motivation and expertise to do this work. Finally, youth orga-
nizations can bring the principles and practices of youth
development to the map. In so doing, youth organiza-
tions can teach by word and by demonstration.

Organizing partnerships and broad-based commu-
nity support. No one organization can accomplish
the work of integrated youth and community devel-
opment. Identifying and mobilizing the “usual sus-
perts” as well as untapped resources only gets an
organization so far. Quickly, it finds itself in the
business of partnership.

Working in partnerships is not new for most
youth-serving organizations. What is new, however,
is the necessity to foster and sustain a long life for
community coalitions. When coalitions are built to
address a specific problem—as they historically
have been—they often crumble when members feel
that adequate responses have been achieved, or
when the problem is perceived to be so overwhelm-
ing that members quickly “burn out.”

The technique to achieving sustainable coali-
tions is to ground their structure in broad communi-
ity support and membership, and to orient them
toward a positive vision of the future. In terms of
CYD, it becomes necessary to engage stakeholders
in a vision for all youth, not only those at high risk,
and for the hopes and dreams of residents, not only
for amelioration of community problems. The
importance of specifically orienting residents to
CYD, for instance, was underscored recently in a
primarily Native American community in Montana
(National 4-H Council, 2000a). Community mem-
bers created a vision emphasizing native language
revitalization, youth tribal councils, and family
wellness programs. The new vision replaced a prior
concentration on areas of deficiency. In addition, the
visioning process brought new stakeholders com-
mitted to community improvement, led to new
action planning, and energized members of the
group, youth and adults alike.

Recognizing the need to garner broad community
support was another major lesson learned from the
evaluation of a multiyear Boys & Girls Clubs rural
outreach initiative (Camino & Zeldin, 1996). The
purpose of the evaluation was to identify “what it
takes” for a club to have a positive impact on the
surrounding community. Among the new clubs
launched throughout the nation, the most successful
in exerting such influence were those in which the
directors built relationships with key community
leaders, not only parents and teachers. Building rela-
tionships also afforded directors opportunities to
teach other stakeholders about youth development.
Directors found the strategy to be win-win. Out-
reach and advocacy brought youth development cen-
ter-stage status on the agendas of leaders. Addition-
ally, the efforts underscored the contribution a club
could make to the overall health of a community.

Broad-based support for CYD also involves cre-
ating linkages beyond organizations and programs
to local volunteer community service. Nationwide,
voluteer service, particularly service learning, is the
most prevalent modality for connecting youth and
community development. Service learning seeks to
balance the academic needs of youth with commu-
nity needs, and can be a significant vehicle for both
youth development and CYD (Zeldin & Tarlov,
1997). Scarcely a new arrival on the scene, service
learning has been elevated only recently as an effec-
tive learning strategy for young people, and equally
important, as a strategy to forge collaborations
among youth organizations, schools, adult resi-
dents, and voluntary community groups (Schine,
1997; Thompson & Perry, 1997).

Building bridges to service learning in elemen-
tary and secondary schools proved to be a key CYD
component for a student-led service center at the
State University of New York at Oneonta and for a youth leadership organization in Washington, DC, both of which we worked with during the past several years. In each case, the design and implementation of service learning initiatives required staff to enter schools, to provide a rationale and instruction for service learning, and, ultimately, to find consensus on the meaning of “Community Youth Development” with principals and teachers. Further, each initiative accessed funds available from the Corporation for National Service, thus bringing stakeholders from local service commissions into the emerging base of community support.

Just as youth-oriented organizations are broadening their horizons to effect community change, traditional Community Development Corporations are expanding their missions to focus on youth development. According to Armistead and Wexler (1997), CDCs are seeking to overcome the historical distinctions of community development as a “place-based” strategy and youth work as a “people-based” strategy. Consequently, CDCs are looking to share their expertise with youth organizations, and, conversely, are actively seeking information and advice from youth development workers. This dynamic offers opportunities for youth-serving organizations to build support for CYD.

New Roles and Areas of Competency for CYD Workers

CYD necessarily poses new challenges to youth workers. Youth workers must increasingly share goals and authority with peers in other organizations, as well as with youth and adult community residents. In effect, youth workers have to be adept at managing partnerships and complex systems. Many youth workers are aware of the need, but may lack specific skills. For instance, a national sample of 130 youth workers and 100 trainers of youth workers ranked community-related and collaboration skills as highly significant to the effectiveness of their work (Zeldin, 1993). At the same time, respondents indicated that they were not proficient in these skills and registered a demand for relevant training.1

Based on our data and experience, we believe there are three areas of competence that are critical for youth workers engaged in CYD:

- The ability to foster and support youth and adult leadership
- The ability to foster and support youth-adult partnerships
- The ability to seek out and build on the strengths of diverse groups of people

Ability to foster and support youth and adult leadership. In CYD, youth leadership strengthens and connects the goal of youth development with that of community building (Burgess, 1998). Leadership does not develop naturally among youth, however. In our multiyear evaluations of youth leadership programs, we have found that youth workers need to intentionally create contexts and situations for development to occur (Zeldin & Camino, 1999). In these programs, grounding the leadership effort in a social cause was fundamental. It was the passion of cause-based action, identified by youth themselves, that was the primary motivation. For example, in one program that operated in an immigrant neighborhood in a large city, youth were bored with small community-service projects, such as cleaning the local stream and its walkway, which were identified by adult staff. Once youth had primary voice and choice, their energy, enthusiasm, and commitment increased dramatically. Formerly unwilling to put more work into projects than their stipends stipulated, they worked tirelessly for immigrant and undocumented workers’ rights—a cause that was heartfelt and personal due to many of the youths’ own experiences.

Further, youth workers in the leadership programs we evaluated provided experiential opportunities and training in the requisite skills of community development, such as facilitation of meetings, project planning, preparing press releases, giving oral presentations, and the like. Youth workers also created opportunities for youth leaders to display their skill and show their competencies to “the next generation”—younger children—in their communities.

CYD also requires adult leadership. Because a great deal of CYD action involves volunteers, it is important to recognize that most adult volunteers also need leadership development. Knowing when to lead and when to follow is based on neither intuition nor age alone. Camino’s (2000a) research found, for example, that adult volunteers are frequently rookies at community work. Among 40 adults striving to work in youth-adult partnerships, most were in need of training and ongoing assistance in sharing power and authority—not only with youth, but also with other adults.

To be sure, helping adults develop leadership entails promoting the sharing of power, training in facilitative, rather than directive, skills, and grounding in the basics of project-related work, such as ways to run meetings and set priorities. In our experience, adults also benefit from support and assistance to honestly explore their previous learnings about the nature of leadership and power, their own styles of leadership, and how they might have acted as leaders in the past, but have not labeled their actions as such.
Ability to foster and support youth-adult partnerships. Closely related to fostering youth and adult leadership is fostering youth-adult partnerships. CYD work will be implemented most of the time by teams of youth and adult volunteers. Looking across many initiatives, it has become clear that youth workers need a range of skills not required under traditional “service” or “mentoring” paradigms. For most adults and youth, the shifts in perspective require overcoming deep societal stereotypes. The work includes helping youth and adults find balance between values of respect and equality on the one hand, and the realities of age and experiential differences on the other hand. The challenge cannot be underestimated.

We have found that locating such a balance, while not easy, provides a foundation for youth-adult partnerships that can endure. For example, in one community (Camino, 2000a), youth and adults vowed that they would avoid structuring partnerships hierarchically, with adults being the bosses and youth the workers. Determined to be egalitarian, adults shied away from coaching youth on critical tasks of community projects. Several youth, not knowing exactly what to do, procrastinated and did not follow through on the first community-wide event. At the 11th hour, adults rushed in to put things in order. The young people were embarrassed with their performance. They were also upset with adults’ criticism of their performance and questioned why adults had not offered proactive guidance.

Ultimately, it is critical for youth and adults to work together on purposes that matter to the both of them. When this occurs, as in the case of young people serving with adults in governance positions, the organization is strengthened. Zeldin et al (2000) researched 15 organizations where young people were “at the table.” They found that the principles and practices of youth involvement became embedded within the organizational culture, that the organization placed a greater value on inclusivity and representation, and that such shifts resulted in the organizations reaching out to the community in more diverse ways than they had previously. Again, however, it must be stressed that these positive outcomes are not always easy to achieve. Such outcomes require youth workers to be visionary leaders, while concurrently giving significant power to youth and adults to make decisions collaboratively. Also, they require youth workers to advocate for organizational change. The structures and cultures that define most organizations in the United States are currently ill suited for youth and adult leadership to be practiced in partnership.

Ability to seek out and build on the strengths of diverse groups of people. Every community has groups of people or segments of populations that differ from one another. The type of diversity will vary by community and situation, be it race, ethnicity, class, culture, age, and so on, but the underlying dynamic is building what John Gardner (1991) terms “wholeness encompassing diversity.” It is crucial to CYD to be able to include and involve a diverse range of individuals and, moreover, to know how to build on their strengths.

Three best practices in working with diverse groups, particularly along racial, ethnic, and social class lines, were demonstrated in two studies of youth workers (Camino, 1992, 1995). Best practices used by effective youth workers included:

1. Recognition of various dimensions of diversity and the belief that they are fundamental components of identity, among both individuals and groups

2. Ability to assist others in overcoming “isms”

3. Ability to use diversity positively to make community action relevant and innovative

The importance of attending to diversity is further highlighted by our experience in working with youth leadership programs in several neighborhoods in Washington, DC (Zeldin & Camino, 1999). Among white youth workers, the tendency was to catalyze action and to achieve some results quickly as part of the youth leadership component. The logic was that early achievements would best lead to development of leadership skills, which in turn would spark further achievements. African-American and Latino youth workers, however, believed that the essential first step was to explore elements of historical racism and oppression. In youth leadership groups, these workers emphasized the intertwining nature of racism and identity, and how the dynamics affected individuals and communities. The logic was to uncover these elements and discern their relationships before progressing to action steps.

Both of these examples underscore the importance of youth workers in using their expertise and experiences confidently, and in explicitly articulating the rationale of their approaches. Over the years, we have found that, all too often, youth workers at all levels shy away from extended dialogue and debate with community residents. Fear of overshadowing or disempowering local residents can lead youth workers to take an overly detached stance. Unfortunately, however, a detached perspective rarely leads to the objectivity that is intended. More typically, it encourages lack of engagement and fosters dissatisfaction and frustration among residents. We have found that local residents place
more trust in youth workers who can lead by balancing empowerment with guidance, by combining “hands-off” and “hand-on” management.

A case in point occurred in one CYD organization with which we worked for several years. After many neighborhood association meetings, youth and adults decided to approach a local government agency for financial assistance to erect landscape a bus stop. A youth worker who had been working with the group had had negative experiences with the agency in the past, and thought that the request would be futile. However, he voiced neither his opinion nor experience because he did not wish to be the “nay-sayer” or appear to “know better” than residents. With a great deal of effort, the group developed a proposal and held many discussions with agency representatives, but in the end the request was not funded. Later, the group learned of the worker’s experience with the agency and resented the fact that he did not inform them of it. Rebuilding trust between the group and youth worker was an issue for nearly a year afterward.

Concluding Remarks

The vision of CYD is to create more just, compassionate, healthy, and capable communities where youth—indeed all residents—will thrive. Ensuring that the vision becomes reality remains a central challenge for individuals, organizations, and policies. CYD, with its call to broaden our focus from individual youth to collective communities, is both ambitious and significant.

The scope of the shift can be intimidating. In this chapter, we have sought to use research findings to identify leverage points for beginning sustainable change. As noted, youth workers are being called upon to enact new roles. Certainly, new roles require training and professional development opportunities. But calling attention to the new day of CYD and the training needs of individual youth workers is not a panacea. We, as a society, hold extraordinary expectations of youth workers. We expect them to carry out an astonishingly diverse range of functions and to be equipped with an array of skill sets. The work of youth workers cannot, and should not, substitute for the organizational shifts necessary to support CYD.

In acknowledging the interdependence of community institutions and agencies in creating healthy communities, organizations will have to be prepared to handle this reality. The work of CYD cannot be an add-on to the already burdened program agendas of organizations. Organizations and institutions will find it necessary to take stock of their programs and operations, and be prepared to jettison some features to make room for others. In brief, CYD requires organizations to be prepared to change some of their identities, vision, programming, and decision-making processes.

Neither can organizations make the shift to CYD without modifications and reforms in public policy. Because community settings are larger than programs, and because community building and partnerships involve a more diverse set of organizations and individuals than programs, policymakers—including funders—will have to make changes in the types of support they offer communities for youth development. Sufficient funds and time to enable organizations to develop staff and build their own capacity, as well as help build the capacity of communities, will be required.

References


1. Parts of this article are based on an earlier whitepaper, “What Does It Take to do Community Youth Development?” by Linda Camino. This project was supported by the DeWitt-Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund and the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, National 4-H Council.

2. We use a broad definition of the term youth worker in this paper, representing a cross-section of jobs. Youth workers include front-line workers, managers, supervisors, and administrators in a wide range of settings, such as community-based organizations, national organizations, different levels of the Cooperative Extension system, and so on.


4. Recent curricula are beginning to meet these demands (see, e.g., Krueger et al., 1999; University of Minnesota Extension, 2000).

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Shepherd Zeldin, Ph.D., joined the faculty of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison after fifteen years in the voluntary sector as a policy analyst and youth worker. Dr. Zeldin integrates multiple forms of scholarship to inform and support healthy communities for youth. As a researcher, Zeldin studies the effects of youth participation on adolescent and community development. As a program manager, he directs national initiatives on youth-adult partnerships for community change. As a teacher, Dr. Zeldin offers service learning courses to graduate students, and conducts community outreach through a joint appointment with Wisconsin Extension’s Department of 4-H/Youth Development.
Social policy increasingly calls for closer connections between schools and their communities to strengthen families, neighborhoods, schools, and other institutions that influence youths’ academic performance. For example, most states support at least one major policy initiative to integrate health and human services and schools. Many long-standing programs and policies, such as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now encourage and, to some extent, fund the participation of youth agencies, parents, and other community institutions in planning school improvement. Schools and community agencies can extend their partnerships through first-ever federal and state funding for after-school programs.

These collaborative policy initiatives rest on many principles of practice long espoused by proponents of Community Youth Development (CYD). Among them, youth develop, grow, and learn, not only in schools but also in broader community contexts including families, neighborhoods, workplaces, youth organizations, and other non-school settings. Young people’s sense of agency, belonging, and competence can be fostered in these multiple settings in ways that directly impact their performance in school (Pittman & Wright, 1991). Accordingly, schools can expand opportunities for youth to learn by strengthening the connections to these community institutions.

While various policy initiatives describe why schools and community agencies should expand their partnerships, evidence about how to accomplish these collaborations has lagged behind. Research studies regarding school-community connections have been few and far between and difficult to find in mainstream sources. Research tends to cast a broad net and relate a range of inputs to various youth outcomes, rather than to focus on the particular connections in practice that may matter for learning. Rich research traditions regarding families, peers, neighborhoods, and work lend urgency to arguments that these aspects of community affect youths’ learning. However, findings from this research tend to highlight the importance of factors beyond the control of neighborhood institutions (e.g., whether youth reside in single- versus two-parent homes, poverty rates, etc.) rather than deliberate actions neighborhood institutions can take to improve young peoples’ opportunities to learn.

In many communities, this policy-research-practice gap poses significant barriers to schools and other youth agencies in using the new policy opportunities to forge closer connections. While schools have increasing sources of public funding available for school-community collaboration, schools also face increasing pressure from federal and state governments to adopt research-based approaches to school improvement. In the absence of relevant, user-friendly research about the relationship between community collaboration and school improvement, schools are hard-pressed to argue with countervailing calls for schools to focus like a laser-beam on teaching and learning in classrooms. School-community partnerships need access to evidence about why such collaboration mattered to students’ school performance and how non-school agencies could help advance the academic mission of schools.

To address this policy-research-practice gap, we
spent over two years reviewing almost 100 scholarly research articles concerning how community agencies and school-community connections may matter to youths’ “opportunities to learn” and teachers’ “opportunities to teach.” “Opportunities” in this context means the resources, occasions, and supports that youth need to achieve high academic standards and that classroom teachers need to help their students achieve these goals. We included research on the effects of family, peers, neighborhoods, and work on youths’ learning, as well as harder-to-find evaluations of school-linked service initiatives, service learning and community service programs, school-to-work activities, community-based youth organizations, and “hybrid” efforts that strategically combine elements from each of these categories. This review aimed to fill gaps in the research by focusing on the day-to-day practice of school-community sites across categories that seemed to matter to youths’ school performance—grades, behavior, graduation rates, and school climate, as well as emotional and physical well being, vocational ability, and citizenship.

A Research-Based Definition of School-Community Connections for Teaching and Learning

When school-community connections enhance opportunities for youth to learn and for teachers to teach, they share a set of broad design features. These features describe what school-community sites do when they provide the resources, occasions, and supports that youth need to achieve at high levels, and that teachers need in and out of school to help their students achieve at these high levels. Figure 1 outlines these features.

In summary, connections between schools and communities have the greatest impact on learning when the partnerships provide a range of activities and supports for youth in both academic and non-academic areas. This means that partnerships do not simply provide academic tutoring after school and otherwise extend the academic day but build on natural teaching moments in community settings. For example, a sports team provided a setting for youth to develop math skills when compiling team statistics, to practice problem-solving skills when figuring out how to raise money for new uniforms, and to exercise leadership skills when youth coached each other. A school-linked Family Resource Center hired youth to manage the office, provide childcare, and assist in the medical clinic, and in the process these activities built youths’ skills in writing, organization, and science.

Whether or not a school-community partnership can involve all youth, the collaborative assumes that all youth need appropriate supports for learning. Such a focus means that school-community partnerships do not simply add programs to the regular school or community program for youth with special needs or circumstances. Rather, the partnerships engage in fundamental improvements in core aspects of schooling.

School-community partnerships do not wait until youths’ problems have been “fixed” before engaging them in challenging learning opportunities. Rather, partnerships recognize that all youth can and do learn from a range of situations and opportunities. Partnerships enrich these opportunities by engaging youth in studying and devising solutions to their own problems and concerns, and by building trust and shared values among youth and adults of varying abilities.

Partnerships that have the greatest impact on youths’ learning tailor their programs—both those they import from outside their neighborhoods and those they grow locally—to youths’ particular needs and interests. High-impact programs not only feature youth in central leadership roles in all aspects of program development, they build in opportunities for continuous program changes by youth and adults.

High-impact partnerships take a youth-centered approach. This means they move beyond developing collaborative services teams, linking services with schools, and building particular inter-organizational models. Instead, youth-centered partnerships assess their value in terms of how they contribute to youths’ day-to-day experiences in and out of school and grow and change their partnerships to fit youths’ developing needs and strengths. Program leaders with the greatest impact not only collaborate but also promote efforts of individual agencies in the interest of more efficient or higher quality service delivery.

When school-community connections have a high impact on youths’ learning, they view a range of adults in youths’ lives as their teachers. High-impact partnerships provide opportunities for these teachers to learn from one another about how to support individual youth. For example, in a collaborative after-school arts program, classroom teachers and visiting artists worked together to teach African drumming and bookmaking. Throughout the program, the classroom teachers observed other professionals working with their students, and were able to see their students in non-classroom settings with new opportunities to display their talents. Similarly, the visiting artists learned from the classroom teachers how to build their individual lessons into a sequenced curriculum as well as new ways to teach reading.

Notice that the features of organizations, collaborations, and practice appear as a series of continuums. This variable definition reflects research findings that no one school-community partnership will be able to exemplify high-impact features all the time—i.e., the features that seem most closely correlated with significant improvements in learning and teaching. Creating connections is a difficult develop-
**Figure 1.**
School-Community Connections for Opportunity to Learn and Opportunity to Teach  
*A Framework for Research and Practice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOW IMPACT</th>
<th>HIGH IMPACT</th>
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| **Focused on discrete needs**  
- Specific services are provided based on the particular needs of youth (e.g., youth with poor mental health receive counseling services). Focused on whole youth. | **Focused on whole youth**  
- Youth need academic and non academic supports to reach high academic standards. Sites provide youth with an array of supports to succeed and multiple ways to access learning resources and develop new competencies.  
- Recognizes that youth learn throughout their day—on their athletic teams, in their community services projects, and in less formal interactions with adults and peers—in ways that can and do improve youths’ performance in school.  
- Accordingly, they aim to strengthen youths’ learning experience in and out of school. |
| **Targeted for youth “at risk” or “in need”**  
- Services and supports are provided to certain youth considered in need of additional academic and nonacademic supports to participate successfully in school.  
- Programs tend to be added on to otherwise unchanged regular school programs Focused on all youth. | **Focused on all youth**  
- Whether or not the initiative can involve all youth, the sites assume that all youth need appropriate support for learning.  
- Ongoing improvements in the overall school program as well as community resources are necessary to provide these supports. |
| **Deficit-oriented**  
- Focused on fixing problems, meeting needs, and avoiding risk as a precondition to learning (including programs that aim to achieve goals other than learning in order to enhance learning).  
- Youth are clients and recipients of services. | **Strengths-based/pro-social and developmental**  
- Recognizes that all youth, schools, and communities have strengths and seeks to build on these while meeting youths’ needs.  
- Youth are engaged as co-constructors of solutions to their own problems and concerns.  
- Building trust and shared values is essential.  
- The focus moves beyond the provision of services at or near a school campus and is concerned with the day-to-day interactions among youth and the various adults at a school-community site. |
<table>
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<th>Low Impact</th>
<th>High Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Generic, standardized programming</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Essentially generic programming unrelated to the community.&lt;br&gt;• Programs and/or program models developed by national headquarters or another outside source; carried out without consultation with or reference to the youth they are to benefit.</td>
<td><strong>Responsive to specific youth and neighborhoods</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Programs, whether brought in from the outside or developed locally, are designed with the specific interests and needs of local youth in mind.&lt;br&gt;• Flexible programming changes as the needs and interests of participating youth change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization-centered/adult-centered</strong>&lt;br&gt;• “School-community connections” means integration or a linking of organizations.&lt;br&gt;• Efforts focus on meeting the needs of adults (including parents) as a primary strategy to improve student outcomes.</td>
<td><strong>Youth-centered</strong>&lt;br&gt;• “School-community connections” means the experiences of youth in and out of school are connected and used to strengthen the other. “Connection” occurs at the level of the youth.&lt;br&gt;• Relationships with or social networks among adults and peers within and beyond the school are important features of these connections.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expands access to information for various professionals who work with youth</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Provide opportunities for teachers, youth workers, and others to learn about youths’ experiences in their school and their various communities.&lt;br&gt;• Tends to focus on expanding the information available to classroom teachers about why their students may not be achieving.</td>
<td><strong>Expands funds of knowledge for youths’ multiple teachers in and out of school</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Recognizes that youth have multiple teachers throughout their day each of whom brings essential and different knowledge, experiences, and expertise to bear in their relationships with youth.&lt;br&gt;• Provides multiple opportunities for these teachers to learn from one another and to enhance and expand their professional practice.</td>
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mental process, and partnerships will grow at different rates along various dimensions over time. Locating each feature on a continuum also suggests that engaging in low-impact activities can build important organizational and collaborative capacity in schools and youth organizations to deepen institutional relationships over the long term.

These features of partnerships that improve opportunities to learn and to teach come from experiences and evaluations across a range of partnership categories, including school-linked services, service learning, school-to-work, and community-based youth organizations. In practice, these features appear most often in efforts that combine elements of partnerships in each of these categories. For example, St. John’s Educational Thresholds Center (see sidebar) provides social services linked to schools, opportunities for work and service learning, and a strong role for youth organizations.

**Implications and Conclusions**
These selected findings and our findings overall have a number of implications for practice, research, and evaluation related to Community Youth Development.
St. John's Educational Thresholds Center:
The Building of a Beacon

In the summer of 1993, school-age youth participating in St. Johns Educational Thresholds Center (a community-based youth organization) decided that they wanted to feel safer in their neighborhood—the North Mission in San Francisco, California. First the youth surveyed 12 street corners and found 10 of them “dangerous.” Then the youth drew maps of their neighborhoods, indicating the dangerous and safe places, and presented their maps to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. The youth enlisted the help of local shop and restaurant owners and launched Quick Calls. Today, if you walk down 16th Street in the North Mission District, you will see Quick Calls signs in many storefront windows. These signs signal to youth that they can use the phone in any participating business to call home if they feel unsafe. St. Johns works with elementary school youth to maintain the signs and otherwise continue and expand their relationship with business owners in their school neighborhoods. In these ways, Quick Calls not only provides resources to youth at a time of need, but also works to change the relationship between youth and adults in this densely populated commercial neighborhood.

Quick Calls is one example of several partnerships developed by St. Johns Educational Thresholds Center and neighboring schools. For example, St. Johns, Everett Middle School, and Sanchez Elementary School were primary partners in a California Healthy Start school-linked services collaboration that brought together 25 agencies at each school site to provide a range of formal and informal services and supports for youth. These collaborations laid the basis for Everett becoming the first Beacon School in San Francisco. Drawing on the resources of their various partners, the Community Bridges Beacon (CBB) resource center at Everett offers after-school tutoring and case management. Neighborhood youth of all ages participate in after school clubs and service learning at Everett and at St. Johns.

CBB also houses BOSS—Beacon Office Student Servers. Through BOSS, students receive credit for their extracurricular activity requirement, a paycheck, and training in job skills as they answer phones, greet visitors, prepare materials for meetings, and perform other office jobs. BOSS has recently evolved into a school-to-career awareness initiative in all classes at Everett, which includes a week-long speaker series organized by youth who participate in the program.

St. Johns’ school partnerships literally bridges the gap between in-school and out-of-school learning. In math classes at Everett Middle School, students learned how to design and tally surveys for use in the community assessment for their Healthy Start grant application. In a language arts class, youth wrote and practiced speeches they later delivered to the San Francisco school district about conditions in their community and their school. In Kid Power, a weekly elective for Everett students and the youth advisory board to the Healthy Start site and CBB, students wrote and practiced their speeches for the San Francisco Youth Summit. Also through Kid Power, students designed and practiced a two-hour lesson they gave to Stanford University students on how to construct community maps and use them to assess the quality of neighborhoods for youth.

St. Johns Urban Institute, partners with San Francisco Unified School District to run a summer school for neighborhood youth in grades 5 to 9. The Urban Institute facilitates conversations among summer school teachers about how to provide a varied and integrated educational experience for youth in the summer around a theme youth choose.

Through these links with classroom teachers and its other activities, St. Johns essentially facilitates and otherwise participates in formal and informal interdisciplinary professional networks for youths’ various teachers in and out of the classroom. St. Johns youth are not clients, but active participants in constructing solutions to their own concerns.
CYD in research and practice has come to refer to a varied set of occasions, activities, and partnerships for youth, only some of which can and do have a demonstrable impact on learning. CYD impacts youths’ learning when it involves particular forms of school-community connections—connections that provide high quality, mutually reinforcing learning opportunities in and out of school, that build on the strengths of all youth, and that promote the professional development of youths’ various classroom and community teachers. Successful connections do not simply extend the regular school day, but build on youths’ natural opportunities for learning in the community institutions with which they choose to associate. When connections contribute to students’ improved performance, schools do not simply act as distant partners awaiting community change, but actively reform in ways consistent with the research-based principles of practice highlighted here.

Generic principles of best practice, common throughout the literature on Community Youth Development, generally stem from research not specifically concerned with learning. Accordingly, these principles often fail to capture the particular practices that contribute to youths’ learning. Furthermore, such principles of practice generally appear out of context, and, accordingly, do not reflect that “best practices” at one location may lead to “worst practices” in another. Research and evaluation might yield better information for practice if researchers and evaluators focused on the relationship between specific practices and outcomes and if they illuminated the day-to-day learning experiences of specific youth in particular neighborhoods, youth organizations, schools, and other community institutions.

Researchers and evaluators have long recognized that Community Youth Development and its predecessors pose fundamental challenges to implementation. By their very nature, such ambitious improvement efforts proceed incrementally and with difficulty, even when and perhaps precisely because they are going well. Even those CYD partnerships that have a significant impact on students’ school performance have struggled to embody all the principles of best practice to a significant degree. Implementing certain practices sometimes comes at the sacrifice of others. By contrast, tools for research and evaluation in the reviewed literature tended to provide summary judgments about the success or failure of partnerships, usually after relatively short periods of time (i.e., three to five years). Evaluators and researchers might better observe the complex practice of Community Youth Development with research designs and instruments that capture the tradeoffs of implementation as they unfold over time.

Reference


3. While the idea for Beacon Schools originated in New York City, San Francisco has become one of several cities across the country to provide grants to community-based organizations to partner with schools to transform schools into community centers.

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THE CIVIC COMPONENTS OF COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

JOSEPH KAHNE, MERRIS I. HONEG, MULBE W. MLAUGHLE

Democracy cannot work by remote control. If we truly wish to prepare today's youth to become tomorrow's leaders, we must work with them to ensure that they become informed, concerned, and active citizens—citizens with the capacity and commitment to work together to identify both shared concerns and appropriate ways to respond to these concerns.

Multiple Measures of Citizenship Suggest Waning Participation

Over the past several decades, citizens' involvement in civic affairs has been declining. According to U.S. Census data, participation in elections has also been on the decline. Decreases in voting occur across all groups of people, but have been particularly great among low-income individuals and young adults. Figure 1 shows an overall decline of 14 percent from 1972 to 1996. Rates for young voters between the ages of 18 and 20, and 21 and 24 declined 17 percent and 18 percent respectively. The 1996 voter turnout of 54 percent represents the lowest rate since 1924.

Citizens, of course, must do much more than passively cast votes. Civic democracy requires that individuals become active participants in the life of the community. For democracy to work, individuals cannot simply attend to their personal priorities, they must also consider the needs and goals of their neighbors, discuss and come to understand their differences, develop shared goals, and become part of community-wide efforts to pursue these priorities.

Unfortunately, several studies show that these forms of civic participation are declining along with voting rates. When one examines forums for civic discussion, be they legislative sessions or television talk shows, one finds a fractious environment that often does not contain well-reasoned debate or meaningful signs of broad concern. Indeed, as a culture we seem to be turning inward—more and more citizens seem focused on their own special interests and personal needs. New home construction in gated communities is the fastest growing sector of the housing market.

Gaining Youth Involvement

Youth are criticized to an even greater degree than their parents for a lack of civic concern and activity. They are frequently portrayed as alienated and self-absorbed and rarely viewed as good citizens.

Is this depiction fair? Not particularly. If youth are less informed or involved, it might simply be because they have not been invited to participate in a meaningful way. Indeed, researchers found that youth were three times more likely to volunteer when they were asked than when they had to seek out volunteer opportunities. Similarly, when teenagers felt their schools encouraged voluntary service, 75 percent of the students volunteered. While there is more to citizenship than performing acts of community service, the implications of this finding are substantial.

There is mounting evidence that Community Youth Development (CYD) strategies and the work of many youth organizations respond to this challenge. For example, Robert Putnam's recent book, Making Democracy Work, used data collected over 20 years to demonstrate that membership in community-based organizations fosters strong ties among individuals, broad social concern, and the ability to pursue collective efforts. Similarly, after analyzing data from a massive survey, Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady (1995) concluded that belonging to community organizations and participating in extracurricular activities (with the exception of team sports) increased the likelihood that youth would vote, have skills and attitudes needed for civic participation, and be active participants in the social and political life of their community.
Indeed, community youth organizations have long played an important role in both fostering civic commitments and capacities—generally by engaging youth in meaningful collective endeavors focused on significant community issues. Two factors make this focus more important than ever. First, as noted above, there is substantial evidence that such participation, the lifeblood of our democracy, is declining, and this trend must be reversed. Second, the attention that schools are paying to this goal appears to be declining as a consequence of the vastly increased focus on high-stakes testing. Since doing well on standardized tests is not sufficient to safeguard democracy (in fact, students in some nondemocratic nations outperform our students on standardized tests), the need for those running CYD organizations to focus on civic participation and democratic priorities has increased.

Fortunately, many youth organizations are doing more and more work that directly connects to this democratic agenda. Initiatives that engage youth in community service and service learning opportunities, for example, are becoming common. These efforts, in which youth work together to identify and respond to social needs, model the importance of civic activity and provide opportunities to develop the skills such actions require.

Such projects can take numerous forms. Community mapping projects, for example, are becoming more common. These projects help young people to identify community assets—places, programs, services, and opportunities for themselves and other community residents. This information can then be shared in a variety of ways with groups, organizations, and individuals. In this process, youth benefit from numerous opportunities to develop social- and work-related skills while learning about and helping to develop positive aspects of their communities. In addition, some youth organizations provide their members with concrete opportunities to participate in democratic governance by giving them significant roles to play in running their organizations and in determining the form and focus of particular youth programs.

Project Leadership
Project Leadership was one effort we studied that embodied this focus on service and citizenship. The initiative grew out of a youth minister’s vision and was part of one church’s broader effort to engage community members and actively revitalize the neighborhood. The curriculum this minister developed advanced youth commitment to civic participation in several ways. One was a strategy of appointing “senior leaders.” In the spring of 1997, four senior leaders (ages 15 – 21) took a four-day retreat with the project directors during which they learned about strategic planning and developed an extensive plan for the summer—including their neighborhood improvement goals, budgets, youth recruitment strategies, and interview protocols. The leaders decided, in their words, to “transform the vacant lots in [the neighborhood] into beautiful and useful gardens and parks.” They also identified 40 specific tasks associated with carrying out their plans and assigned responsibilities. These tasks included writing letters to aldermen and block-club leaders, purchasing supplies, constructing flower boxes, journal writing, and morning devotions focusing on the book of Nehemiah. Upon their return from their retreat, they interviewed and selected 15 “junior leaders” (ages 12 – 14) from a pool of 30 applicants.

Once the project began, the project director was careful to give the senior leaders space to lead and worked constantly to structure meaningful leadership opportunities. For example, he arranged a meet-

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**Figure 1.**

Voting Statistics Based on U.S. Census Data and Shown in Percents
ing with a man in the neighborhood who owned a back hoe, and then had the youth explain to that man what they needed and had them negotiate a price for use of his machinery. Similarly, as a thunderstorm approached one day, 15 of the youth were working outside and saw the enormous dark clouds. “Do you think it will pour?” one senior leader asked. Several were convinced it would, while others were not sure. The supervisor said nothing. With the storm less than ten minutes away, he called the senior leaders over for a meeting. “What are you going to do when it starts pouring?” They were silent. “You need a plan,” he reminded them. It took a few minutes for them to develop one, then they rushed to get tools and materials inside. The entire group got wet, but they worked efficiently as the rain started. Within a few minutes they were inside writing in their journals.

In addition, in varied ways, Project Leadership furthered youth’s commitment to working collectively to improve their community. During the planning retreat, for example, the senior leaders decided that their main criterion for selecting junior leaders was that “they wanted students who would stay and give back to [the neighborhood] when they got older.” This project had a clear effect on some youths’ sense of civic responsibility. One youth spoke for others when he emphasized the value of civic responsibility. We asked, “Have you talked with people in the community about what you are doing?” “Yeah,” he replied:

I talked to a lot of people in the neighborhood. There’s this one elderly lady next door, me and her had this conversation about when we first started doing [the work] there was a whole bunch of big trees up there and she saw me up there cutting them down. She called me over to her and she was saying how proud she was to see them trees coming down, but she was getting scared that [it wasn’t going to get done] and she said if I didn’t do it, or if our group didn’t do it she was going to go out there herself and do it. So I said that we were going to do it and you don’t need to be doing it.

Youth in this project also talked about ways that participation had shaped their plans for the future. For example, one participant told us:

I want to be a slum buster for this community five or ten years from now. On my own, if I see a vacant lot damaged, just bring my rake and shovel and clear this lot and then go to the next. And once they see me doing that, hands will come in together and we’ll be united in this community.

While there is substantial research demonstrating that initiatives like Project Leadership and related activities frequently support the development of civic skills and attitudes, researchers and evaluators have also found that many of these initiatives do not reach their full potential. Civic and leadership skills are not guaranteed to develop organically through involvement with the community. They require time for discussions of community strengths and needs, opportunities to focus directly on developing leadership skills, and detailed reflection regarding previous experiences.

Implications
If we want youth to develop the capacity for and commitment to civic participation, we first need to give them the opportunity to do so. Further, this opportunity must be provided in a developmentally appropriate and systematic way. In this regard, two challenges are worthy of special attention: skill building and developing citizenship.

Building skills. First, providing youth with opportunities to discuss and work on challenging group projects has been found to build their collaborative skills and their decision-making capacity. Time must also be set aside to help youth practice various leadership skills and group processes and to reflect on activities after their completion.

Real day-to-day work finds youth workers often engaged with groups of young people in activities that have a real audience or meet a real need. Such activities tend to foster participants’ motivation and their sense of agency and belonging, as well as their civic capacities and commitment. Indeed, research indicates that student development is greatest when youth feel they “made important decisions” and were “free to develop and use [their] own ideas.” (Honig, Kahne, & McLaughlin, 2001). The challenge facing youth workers is to provide enough structure and control so that dangerous situations and excessive frustration do not occur, while still providing opportunities to develop leadership, group, and decision-making skills.

Sometimes, however, in their desire to produce a high-quality product, youth workers create activities in which young people end up mainly following directions. For example, if one lets 14-year-olds select the flowers, vegetables, and layout for a community garden, it may take longer to create and be less successful than if an experienced gardener created the plan. If the developmental potential of this
activity is to be maximized, however, youth need to be given substantive responsibilities related to research, planning, and implementation. These responsibilities are necessary, even though—or perhaps because—they will sometimes not respond adequately.

**Developing citizens.** Second, talk of promoting citizenship often emphasizes notions of civic duty. Youth workers, religious leaders, teachers, parents, and others emphasize that youth should be “good citizens”—responsible, helpful, trustworthy, kind, altruistic, etc. These traits are clearly important civic virtues that youth organizations can promote. At the same time, this focus is not always sufficient. Citizens must do more than help; they must also figure out who needs help, why help is needed, and what methods in addition to individual acts of kindness might help solve problems. Yet, studies of youth organizations indicate that such issues often receive little attention. Thus, Harry Boyte, a leader in the field, worries that those engaged in community service develop their “sense of membership in a community [but] disavow concern with larger policy questions, seeing service as an alternative to politics.” The call here is not necessarily to engage 12-year-olds in complex social analysis—although this is appropriate for older youth and may, under appropriate circumstances, be well within the reach of 12-year-olds (see for example, Terry & Woonteleir, 1998). Rather, it is to emphasize that for youth to develop as citizens they must engage controversial issues and consider the ways the government, businesses, and other institutions can shape and reshape their world.

In short, youth need opportunities to work together on projects that matter to them and to their communities. These activities are most effective when they do more than follow directions. Young people benefit from chances to collectively discuss, debate, plan, lead, and reflect. By providing these opportunities, youth organizations can do a great deal that prepares and motivates youth to become active and full participants in the democratic process.

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1. For more details regarding this project see Kahne & McLaughlin (1998).

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Community Youth Development (CYD) professionals engaged in social change depend for success on the full participation, collaboration, and commitment to growth of those individuals, teams, or organizations they aim to support. Many of the benefits that accrue through their supportive efforts appear unmeasurable or can only be measured through timely and intrusive processes. Examples of these benefits would include resilience to negative peer pressures, sensitivity to the needs and fears of peers, discovery and tapping of latent potential, and appreciation for the wonders of nature and human existence. Further, the diverse and often extemporaneous skill sets employed in the supporter-beneficiary relationships to achieve these benefits extend well beyond rote practices and may be hard to pin down. Consequently, CYD professionals have lacked a user-friendly, self-empowering framework for aggregating and gauging the sum total of their successes and a means for explaining systematically how these have been achieved. Journey Mapping is offered as such a framework.

Journey Mapping is an integrative approach that is helpful in capturing the spirit, as well as the data, of programs and initiatives aimed at Community Youth Development. Conventional measurement approaches tend to focus on concrete evidence. They aim to capture tangible, countable results. Further, they typically employ mental models that connect the actions of the service provider to the outcomes for beneficiaries through one-way, causal linkages. Integrative approaches aim to augment these conventional approaches in two ways. First, they focus on growth processes that influence body, mind, and spirit, and that, therefore, include but extend beyond easily observable results. Second, they acknowledge the importance of two-way relationship building that encompasses but extends beyond one-way causal links. Both supporter and beneficiary are sharing time, relating to one another, and learning and growing together.

Integrative approaches have not yet earned the credibility and respectability of the more conventional approaches. This can be attributed, at least in part, to the bottom-line orientation of many who control the purse strings regarding what gets measured and who sets the standards for what is considered credible and respectable. A bottom-line orientation is directed at measurable results, hard causal evidence linking actions to results, and ultimately at discovering and applying cost-effective solutions to complex problems. This orientation carries low thresholds of tolerance for those who argue continually and passionately for the importance of interventions that support genuine growth, deepening relationships, and touch the spirit of those they reach. The bottom-liners view much of what the latter get excited about as pie in the sky, unsubstantiated, and likely to be costly if brought to scale (since relationships are labor intensive). In turn, the latter view the bottom-line orientation as a gross oversimplification of what is going on, likely shortchanging what is most important (namely the human dimension), and tending to promote short-term, stopgap measures rather than fundamental change.

Journey Mapping aims to capture the positive aspects of the bottom-line orientation, while also attending to growth, spirit, and relationships. A key to success here requires the recognition that growth and results are not poles of the same dimension (as are north and south, positive and negative, or love and hate), but rather are hierarchically associated.
Growth is a higher-order concept, of which results are an important constituent element. Similarly, relationships and causal linkages are hierarchically associated. Relationship building that awakens spirit is a higher-order concept that includes but extends beyond causal connections. Results and causal links can be extracted from a careful study of growth and relationship building, but an investigation centered on results and causal links does not serve well in uncovering and deepening understanding of growth and relationship building. Therefore, in developing the Journey Mapping framework, primary attention was paid to devising a system that could capture and measure the relationship building and growth processes central to the work of many types of programs and initiatives. This led naturally to story telling, and from there to Journey Mapping.

Capturing the Stories
Organizations and programs engaged in transformation work are often poorly equipped to tell their respective stories in detail. There are three good reasons for this. First, many programs don't recognize how much they are losing by not telling their stories well. They are too busy adding to them. When pressed to explain or justify their work, they are prone to throw together some often-repeated catch phrases and a couple of anecdotes featuring successful clients, and figure that will do. After all, they think, their stories are not that important; what counts is helping others.

Second, unless one person dominates the operation, no single person has all the key information needed to capture the details of a program's story database. More often than not, that information is spread all over the office and beyond, or buried in the memories of the leadership, staff, clients, and other stakeholders. These information holders frequently meet both formally and informally to discuss issues, tackle problems, consider opportunities, and celebrate successes; rarely do they meet to document, synthesize, and learn from their collective experience.

Third, a useful, friendly, efficient, and self-administered methodology for capturing and sharing the detailed stories of organizations and programs engaged in transformative work has not existed until now. The closest approximation to such a method has been the writing of case notes. However, because such notes primarily serve the note-taker and are not meant to be aggregated across clients, they do not combine easily to offer a total picture. Moreover, they fail to meet the important challenge posed by the qualitative researcher, Charles Ragin, of "trying to make sense of the diversity across cases in a way that unites similarities and differences in a single, coherent framework" (Ragin, 1987).

My book, *Success Stories As Hard Data* (Kibel, 1999) presented a structured and replicable protocol for capturing stories. It reflected almost a decade of work with a wide range of programs, built on the pioneering work of Louis Guttman on mapping sentences (Shye, 1994), and emerged as a coherent methodology only after considerable design and redesign. Following the protocol, stories were selected by program staff and mapped as a chronological sequence of transactions between a change agent (typically, but not always, program staff) and a beneficiary (typically, but not always, a program client). A mapped story, for example, might have this form:

Map 1. Program staff helped client X.
Map 2. Program staff referred client X to provider P.
Map 3. Provider P helped client X.
Map 5. Program staff helped client X again.
Map 6. Client X helped himself again, reaching a milestone.
Map 7. Client X helped a peer.

Twenty-eight conventions were suggested for use in reconstructing a story. These conventions insured that story mappers, working independently with the same information, would relate the stories in a near identical manner. Further, each transaction so mapped was coded and scored. The conventions helped insure that independent coders would assign the same codes and produce the identical score when analyzing a transaction.

Unfortunately, two glaring problems with the story mapping method (called "Results Mapping") became more apparent as it gained popularity and widespread usage. First, the conventions forced program staff and others to relate their work through a structure that they found artificial. The method generated highly structured, mapped stories, but these stories lacked passion. In pursuit of science, the art and spirit of story telling had been sacrificed. And second, while the collection of mapped and scored stories produced through Results Mapping pulled together information that previously was unshared and often buried, the resulting story database was not exceptionally valuable as a guide to future actions. Mappers could draw on these data to point out where the program might employ volunteers more productively or promote client self-efficacy, rather than dependence on the program. But, in most cases, they could have drawn the same conclusions and offered similar advice based on focused discussions with key staff. In short, the stories promoted neither new learning nor provocative feedback, which was the primary intent of Results Mapping.
From Stories to Journeys

These problems were resolved in 1999 with a shift in imagery from stories to journeys, with a move from structured story mapping to more relaxed journal keeping, and with the replacement of the coding system with a unique growth plotting and scoring algorithm.

To avoid confusion with Results Mapping, the revised methodology was renamed “Journey Mapping.” Employing this new methodology, mappers compose journal updates much as a news reporter might write a breaking story. The mappers might be CYD professionals describing how some student, group, or organization has benefited through their relationships with these professionals. Or, the mappers might be students or teachers sharing their own personal or professional growth experiences. Although Journey Mapping can be done manually, its full potential is realized when employed through the Internet. A password-protected website is used for this purpose.

The mapping process involves four operations. First, the mapper provides a detailed narrative and short synopsis of the growth and results that have occurred during the reporting period (usually, but not necessarily, the preceding month). Also included in the narrative are descriptions of the actions taken and relationships built to trigger these changes. Second, the mapper marks the journey plotter to indicate progress or setbacks that have occurred during the reporting period. The selections made on the plotter generate a growth status score. Third, the mapper indicates which of a set of nine pre-defined and customized success markers have been attained, either partly or fully. Fourth, from a predefined and customized list, the mapper indicates which types of individuals, agencies, or events were primary contributors to the growth and results observed.

As these decisions are made, corresponding reports are instantly updated. At any time, the mapper or another authorized stakeholder can review a report to determine how many journals are being kept; the high, low, and average growth status scores for those being mapped; the number and percentage that have achieved each of the success markers, in part or in full; and the frequency of appearance of the different primary contributors in the mapped journals. Report data can also be generated based on sort field selections (e.g., data for males only, for students in the fifth grade only, or for a particular cohort being tracked).

Mapping Options

Most mapping is done through detailed journal keeping. A detailed journal is akin to a diary with periodic entries. Each map of the journal is captured on a separate page (if done manually) or separate screen (if the Internet application is used). Narrative accounts are composed by the mapper for each entry. These describe what has taken place since the previous entry and identify achievements or setbacks. Sufficient information should be provided on these narratives to justify the selections made on the growth plotter, success marker set, and key contributor set.

In some cases, particularly when program staff are the mappers and being required to keep track of large numbers of clients, summary journals are maintained for a portion of the client base in place of detailed journals. A summary journal is akin to a single-page diary. Here all initial entries and subsequent updates are captured on a single page or screen. Narrative reporting is kept to a minimum, say to a line or two of text for each update. This cuts down considerably on mapping time, but at the sacrifice of clear and complete documentation and justification for claimed growth and results.

Detailed journal keeping might require upwards of five to ten minutes per entry, and entries are typically updated monthly. Because summary journeys keep the length of narratives and associated composition time to a minimum, a new entry to a summary journey takes less than one minute to complete. Therefore, if a program has, say, 100 clients and staff are doing the mapping, they might select ten clients to map through detailed journals and capture data for the remaining 90 clients through summary journals. Should beneficiaries be keeping their own journals, then detailed journals are recommended for all.

Where several individuals, teams, or organizations are exposed to virtually the same interventions and move along together on the same growth path at a similar pace, then a group journal is used to capture progress for all of them at the same time. For example, a support group for children of alcoholics might be mapped as a group journal rather than as separate journals for each participant. Group journals are typically kept in summary format. A count is maintained for the number of individuals, teams, or organizations in the group for report statistics.

Finally, if the individuals, teams, or organizations being mapped are being impacted through a single event or series of events and anticipated growth impact is modest, then event mapping is used to capture the activities and outcomes—in summary format. For example, a prevention-focused presentation in a high school auditorium or a fundraising program on the weekend would be documented and assessed through event mapping. Unlike group journals, which track the progress and growth of a cluster of program beneficiaries, event maps focus on the event delivered and simply record the number of participants in attendance. A simple event scoring algorithm is used instead of the more elaborate journey
plotter to gauge the impact on participants and focuses on outputs (what participants received immediately) rather than on outcomes (longer-term behavior changes).

The Journey Plot
In his classic work, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949), Joseph Campbell proposed that there was a single master plot for all transformative journeys. He explained:

Whether the hero be ridiculous or sublime, Greek or barbarian, gentle or Jew; his journey varies little in essential plan. Popular tales represent the heroic action as physical; the higher religions show the deed to be moral; nevertheless, there will be found astonishingly little variation in the morphology of the adventure, the character roles involved, the victories gained. If one or another of the basic elements of the archetypal pattern is omitted from a given fairy tale, legend, ritual, or myth, it is found to be somehow or other implied—and the omission itself can speak volumes for the history and pathology of the example.

In short, an underlying, all-compelling pathway seems to define all heroic journeys. If an individual, group, organization, or community deviates from this archetypal pathway, she, he, they, or it will inevitably be drawn back to the archetypal pattern. Journeys have differed and will continue to differ in the details, but not in the basic plot line.

Campbell’s formulation of the heroic journey involved three stages (departure, initiation, and return) comprised of 17 distinct steps. The steps were expressed in romantic language and included, as examples, “the call to adventure,” “supernatural aid,” “the belly of the whale,” and “woman as the temptress.” For the sake of clarity and ease of use, as well as a desire to make the language of the journey accessible to all, the basic plot line as used in Journey Mapping was reformulated as a multi-stage, 15-level journey. Key concepts from Abraham Maslow’s (1968) hierarchy of basic needs and from the trans-theoretical model of change (Prochaska, 1984) were included in this reformulation.

In the revised version, referred to either as the “journey plot” or “growth plot,” the prototype journey has 15 levels, each of which includes three sublevels (designated as a, b, and c). In brief, the “a” sublevel indicates entry to the new level; the “b” sublevel suggests progress or deepening of experience at that level; and the “c” sublevel denotes the completion of that level and readiness for further progress at advanced levels.

The beginning of the heroic journey (levels 1 through 5) has a singular focus: a specific issue area or opportunity exists that has attracted the hero(ine) to the journey. At this point, the journey is not yet “heroic.” It is transactional rather than transformative: the program offers to provide a service or opportunity, a hero(ine) accepts the offer, actions are taken, and the hero(ine) receives the benefits.

Transformation implies drawing out inner resources in support of changes in being and doing. This is indicated by a shift from singularity to multiplicity. The hero(ine)’s journey advances to include receipt of multiple and varied services or participation in expanded and diverse opportunities (level 6). For example, what began as participation in a youth fitness program has progressed to a daily regimen of weight lifting and jogging.

With further advancement (levels 8 through 10) there is a sustained, qualitative shift. Now the diverse elements that have been added to the hero(ine)’s life are synthesized within a new lifestyle—with personal, social, and political components. The fitness-oriented hero(ine) now is eating differently, waking up earlier, reading different materials, promoting different issues, and spending time with different folks than was the case when (s)he first began exercising. The hero(ine) has become a community builder, impacting others through personal example and deeds. With still further advances (levels 12 through 15), there is a complete transformation. The hero(ine) is marching to a different drummer, guided by a different set of values and ideals. Her sense of self has radically changed. His understanding of his life’s purpose bears little resemblance to earlier usings. The caterpillar has spread its wings to find a butterfly within. Metamorphosis has occurred.

The prototype journey of the hero(ine) includes three qualitatively different hurdles at different stages of the journey. First, at level 3, the hero(ine) has to decide whether the journey is worth beginning. Are the costs and possible inconveniences or risks worth the projected rewards? Second, with the journey underway, the hero(ine) comes face-to-face with these or other concerns and must make life adjustments or more dramatic changes to continue on this pathway (level 7). Third, deeply rooted obstacles to further change are met head on (level 11). “Do I like whom I have become and am becoming?” the hero(ine) asks. “Am I ready for a future that is nothing at all like the one toward which I always thought my life was heading?”
Two Examples of the Journey Plot

While the plot line of the heroic journey is set, the language used to describe each level and sublevel is customized for each new application. This is done for two reasons: to help the mappers relate to and quickly grasp the concepts, and to increase the likelihood that two independent mappers will plot a particular journey in a nearly identical manner. Two examples illustrate this. The first example is the journey plot being used by a group of high school juniors and seniors in Texas who are each delivering a multi-session course in alcohol-related risk to elementary school students. They are plotting their own individual growth as prevention educators. Their journey plot reads:

I heard about the teaching opportunity (1a), I learned more about it (1b), and I had a good picture of what it was about (1c).

I got somewhat excited (2a), more excited (2b), and very excited (2c) about the possibilities of teaching the course.

I encountered some obstacles to participating (3a), considered options (3b), and found ways to overcome those obstacles (3c).

I was selected to teach the curriculum (4a), participated in classroom observations and prepared my lessons (4b), and completed the training weekend (4c).

I started using the skills I learned in training and taught the first lesson (5a), got a sense of how I would like to teach future lessons and expanded my skills (5b), and had more success with each additional lesson (5c).

I witnessed a gradual change in myself (6a), in my confidence in my role (6b), and in a growing sense of ownership of the project (6c).

I encountered obstacles in teaching the course (7a), brainstormed solutions with my peers and instructors (7b), and applied these solutions to overcome the obstacles (7c).

Since completing my year teaching the course, I have noticed changes in my knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (8a); these continued for an additional six months (8b) and for more than one year after the teaching experience (8c).

I spoke to peers, family, and community members about what I was learning and teaching (9a), and witnessed changes in their thinking (9b) and behaviors (9c) about issues related to underage drinking and alcohol-related risks.

[Note: Only the first nine steps in the 15-step journey applied to this situation.]

The second example is the journey plot being used by teams of students from New England and Canada, in grades 5 – 12, who are emerging as stewards for their environment. Specifically, these students are being given the knowledge and support needed to be effective data gatherers and advocates for policies that affect watersheds feeding into a section of the Atlantic Ocean called the Gulf of Maine. In this case, it is a group journey for each team that is being plotted. The plot includes titles for each level and reads:

Exposure. We first heard about the opportunity to be stewards at the beginning of the school year (1a) and learned more (1b) and still more (1c) about the opportunity during the next several weeks.

Attraction. We found the opportunity to be somewhat exciting (2a), very exciting (2b), and looked forward to beginning a project (2c).

Barriers. We discussed the time commitment and other challenges to being successful as advocates (3a), figured out ways to meet these challenges (3b), and agreed to continue (3c).

Learning. We learned about the Gulf of Maine and the threats to it (4a), talked about the type of project we would like to do (4b), and selected a first project (4c).

Starting. We began participating in a project (5a), helped to make it work (5b), and shared what we did with others (5c).

More involved. We got involved in a special job or new project (6a), helped to make this a success (6b), and shared these new results with others (6c).
Problems with staying involved. We had to make choices about staying involved or becoming more involved (7a), discussed these as a group (7b), and decided to continue (7c).

This is important for us. We found new ways to get more involved (8a), had new types of success (8b), and had still more successes (8c).

Involving others. We got other youth or adults interested in joining (9a), helped get them started (9b), and worked with them as guides (9c).

Speaking out. Some of us appeared on television, radio, or in the newspaper, or presented to a committee or board (10a), made multiple appearances throughout the community (10b), and the community has used this information in its planning or decision making (10c).

We're the experts. After more than two years in this role, community groups or outside organizations are asking for our help (11a), we provide expert consultation and meet their needs (11b), and have contributed to the literature (11c).

[Note: Levels 11 and 12 were combined for this application.]

Lasting impact on our community. Our work has improved the community or environment somewhat (13a), a lot (13b), or in an extraordinary way (13c).

Lasting impact on our state or province. Our work has improved our state or province or its environment somewhat (14a), a lot (14b), or in an extraordinary way (14c).

Lasting impact on the Gulf of Maine. Our work has improved the Gulf of Maine watershed beyond my local community somewhat (15a), a lot (15b), or in an extraordinary way (15c).

Computing a Growth-Status Score for the Journey
In each of these examples, the journey progresses in relatively linear fashion from level 1 to level 2 to level 3, etc. For many applications, however, the journey progress follows different pathways for different hero(ine)s. One pathway, for example, might move from 1a to 1b to 2a to 2b to 1c. A second pathway might move from 1a to 3a to 3b to 3c to 1b to 2a. A third pathway might move from 1a to 2c to 1b to 3a to 3b. The combinations become more varied as additional levels are added. This ability to accommodate a wide variety of pathways within a single prototype journey plot affords power to the formulation as a generic tool for capturing change and transformation processes of all types and for individuals, teams, and organizations with varied personalities and readiness to change.

Edward deBono introduced an interesting distinction between “rock logic” and “water logic” (deBono, 1990). As applied here, rock logic would dictate that journey progress moved in lock-step manner from 1a to 1b to 1c to 2a to 2b, etc. In contrast, water logic suggests that the pathway between any two sublevels of the journey can flow along varied gradients depending on interest level, circumstances, and opportunities. Because water logic is the rule rather than the exception when mapping journeys, the farthest sublevel reached is not a good measure of how far a journey has progressed. For example, a journey could reach 9a (“got others interested in the journey”) and still not have reached 5b or 5c (“early successes on the journey”) or any of the other sublevels between levels 5 and 9.

To accommodate water logic, a simple scoring algorithm was developed. Each sublevel reached at levels 1 through 4 (“contemplation and preparation for the journey”) earns one point; each sublevel reached at levels 5 through 7 (“the early journey adventure”) earns two points; each sublevel reached at levels 8 through 10 (“the advanced journey”) earns three points; each sublevel reached at levels 11 and 12 (“emergence as the champion of the journey”) earns four points; and each sublevel reached at levels 13 through 15 (“the legacy”) earns two points. A single bonus point is awarded for beginning the journey (at 5a). To account for sublevels that were not achieved before the journey itself had advanced beyond the need for these earlier sublevels, empty sublevels are automatically back-filled and scored when sublevels 5a, 8a, or 12a are reached. The ultimate score is 100, indicating that all 45 sublevels were reached (a truly heroic or saint-like achievement).

The resulting growth-status score is very useful for obtaining a quick sense of how a particular individual, team, or organization is progressing. A score of 12 or under suggests that the hero(ine) is still engaged in contemplation and/or preparation and has not fully committed to the journey itself. A score of 15 indicates that the journey has started. Scores in the high teens or low twenties suggest forward progress and possibly the encounter of obstacles. Scores in the low to high thirties point to sustained shifts in lifestyle or in team or organizational behavior. Scores in the forties and fifties suggest that journey activity has progressed beyond personal needs and challenges to embrace those of the community. Still higher scores are reached only when the
hero(ine) has emerged as a movement leader or exemplary role model for the nation and world.

Scores for all the individuals, teams, or organizations engaged in the journey, when sorted and arrayed, provide a unique and provocative profile of program success. At a glance, one can see how effective the program has been, and with whom, in encouraging movement through the various stages, levels, and sublevels. Positions along the journey can readily be detected that represent premature stopping points or unsurmountable obstacles for many.

Success Markers
Journey Mapping focuses on both results and growth attainment. To capture results, up to nine success markers, which are progressively more difficult to achieve, are established for each set of individuals, teams, or organizations whose journeys are being mapped. The markers are customized for each new Journey Mapping application. After composing the narrative for a new journal entry, the mapper reviews the set of success markers and indicates which of these have been met either in part or in full since the last entry.

These markers are grouped in three sets of three each. The first set (“expect-to-see markers” labeled x1, x2, and x3) are defined as achievements that virtually all beneficiaries should reach during their early months on the journey. The second set (“like-to-see markers” labeled as y1, y2, and y3) represent more difficult and longer-term targets that more than half of the beneficiaries should reach through continual participation in journey-related activities. The third set (“love-to-see markers” labeled z1, z2, and z3) are set for the truly successful among the beneficiaries and depict the highest level of achievement that might possibly be expected on the journey.

To illustrate, consider the two earlier examples. For the teenagers in Texas delivering the course in alcohol-related risk to elementary schoolchildren, success markers were set by the program staff, with input from some of these teenagers. As they mapped their individual journeys, the teenagers indicated which of the markers they had achieved in part or in full.

y1. I have shared information from the course with peers.

y2. At least some of the elementary school students have shared their personal experiences based on what they learned.

z1. I have made recommendations or taken actions to improve the quality of the program.

z2. My confidence and competence as an alcohol-prevention educator has increased.

z3. The elementary students are now equipped with knowledge to make safe decisions.

The New England and Canadian teams also self-rated their set of success markers. These were:

x1. We can point to the Gulf of Maine (GOM) watershed on the map and can name some threats to the watershed in our community.

x2. We can name some things we can do to protect the watershed in our community.

x3. We took part in a project in our community that may help protect the GOM watershed and made a presentation of the results.

y1. After completing this project, we made a decision to get involved in another project or job to help protect the GOM.

y2. We took leadership in selecting and designing a project in our community.

y3. For some of us, our ideas about future education or career have been influenced by these experiences.

z1. We can point to at least three adults who respect and value what students can do to protect the GOM watershed.

z2. We have gotten other youth and adults involved in protecting the GOM.

z3. We are working with youth and adults from other communities around the GOM.

As is appropriate, some of the success markers are objective and easily documented, while others are more subjective and open to interpretation. In general, when devising sets of success markers, the design team is challenged to strike a balance between objective and subjective measures that seems appropriate to them and to their funding sources. Where required, all success markers can be defined in physical, measurable terms or linked to test-score results. Alternatively, they can be tied to observable behaviors, or they can reflect judgments made by program staff or self-reported attitudes or behaviors.
What is the connection between success-marker achievements and growth-status scores? These two sets of indicators of change are clearly related. As the journey progresses and the corresponding growth scores increase, the more difficult success markers become more likely. The growth scores indicate how far hero(ine)s have progressed at different times along their respective journeys; the success markers denote which achievements have been made along the pathways.

Handling Complexity
It is rare that any single program or individual assumes sole responsibility for the growth and transformation of others. More often, several partners will network and interact to promote such change. Included among these partners might be other programs of the same agency, other agencies, community groups, family members and friends of those affected, and expert consultants. Dramatic changes on the journey, for better or worse, might also be attributable to catalytic events beyond anyone’s direct control (e.g., an injury, winning the lottery, loss of a job). The Journey Mapping process provides a means for easily capturing the frequency of involvement of these key contributors. Each time a journal is updated, before saving the work, the mapper checks off the contributors who have appeared in active and meaningful ways in that journey segment. These selections are fed directly into the appropriate report and presented as frequencies of appearance in the journals. For many applications of Journey Mapping, interest is focused on a single type of beneficiary (e.g., students with chronic illnesses, adolescent substance abusers, or youth in an after-school program). For some applications, however, ultimate success is linked to growth and change of several different types of beneficiaries. Among these will be primary beneficiaries (i.e., those for whom the program was created), side partners (e.g., other service providers, family members, and alumni who work closely and frequently with the program staff and primary beneficiaries), funding sources, when the aim is to challenge them to change their priorities and approach to long-term funding, and systems gatekeepers (i.e., those who wield the power to impact the journeys of others for better or worse and whose continual support is critical for sustained successes). Through mapping the growth of these various parties, a complex and digestible picture—with supporting narratives, scores, and measures—emerges of the full impact of the effort.

To illustrate, a program recently launched in Santa Clara County, California, is focused on students who have been identified as having learning differences, which prevent them from benefiting from traditional instruction methods or in demonstrating their knowledge through traditional testing methods. This program is comprehensive in scope and includes work with students, teachers, and parents. To understand, gauge, and improve the multi-level efforts underway, journals are being maintained for all three categories. Customized journey plots and sets of success markers are being used to capture movement and achievements for individuals within each category. In addition, changes taking place at the school building or district level to support the work of the teachers, parents, students, or program staff are also being tracked through journals and success markers. Through the mapping process, progress on all fronts is being captured, scored, and expressed through a rich array of data, allowing problem areas to be quickly pinpointed and addressed and all sorts of successes to be discovered and celebrated.

Community system change offers perhaps the most complex scenario. Here, a wide range of beneficiaries needs to be included in the mapping process. These include a variety of affected community members, as well as agencies and organizations whose own growth is a key to the success of those they serve. Further, to insure long-term sustainability, the skill sets of growing numbers of project champions (i.e., those community members capable and willing to spearhead projects) and resource champions (i.e., those community members with the skills and aptitude to secure new resources for expanded programming) need to be fostered. Mapping the development of these champions offers a unique way to gauge future viability of the community effort. Additionally, to estimate the reach of the effort, the event mapping option provides a simple way to track and document community events, routine service provision, and additions or improvements to the community physical and social infrastructure.

A Normative Perspective
Journey Mapping is a highly descriptive but also normative tool. Continually referencing the 15-level journey plot and nine success markers, the attention of the mappers and other stakeholders is drawn to what ought to be happening. The plot and markers posit the possibility of fundamental change, help articulate the directions and outcomes that are most highly desired, and offer metrics to gauge and communicate movement toward the ideals.

This is an empowerment model in the truest sense of that term. The Internet application was designed to allow authorized individuals to easily create or modify journey language, success markers, sets of key contributors, and sort fields. The methodology is
totally handed over to mappers in an incredibly user-friendly format that is very quickly mastered. A user manual and an Internet-based self-trainer allow new mappers to master the mapping process at their own speed. There is no “expert” standing between programs and their data, which allows for a more intimate and responsible relationship between the data and the program. The external consultant role, where required and invited, is that of “methodology coach.” In that role, the challenge is helping mappers to maximize their use and the benefits they derive using Journey Mapping.

The Power of the Internet
The use of the Internet as the platform for Journey Mapping has several advantages. First, by supporting an electronic database, features such as easy retrieval, automatic computation, and instant reporting become available to all authorized users. Second, all users interact with the same, latest version of the application. There is no old or outdated software; as features are added, everyone instantly has access to these. Third, access to the application can be gained from any type of computer and from any location with Internet access capability. Students mapping their journeys, for example, can log on in the computer lab at school or from their home computer and access their journals. Fourth, should permission be obtained from appropriate parties, mappers can opt to “publish” their journals and make them available for others to read and learn from. An electronic library is maintained of all published journals and a search option allows journals to be located by category (e.g., youth development, adolescent substance abuse, or asset building) or location (e.g., Florida, New England, or West Africa).

How secure is a Journey Mapping database from outside eyes? To access an application, unique user names and passwords are required. Data passing between the mapper’s computer and the server where data are stored are encrypted. Users are prompted automatically to change their passwords monthly. The application also has a lock feature, which allows only the mapper who first created the journal to revise or update it. There is one additional person per application (usually, a senior staff person or an evaluator) who can access these journals to provide feedback and quality control. Of course, few sites are totally secure from hackers who want to get into them and possibly create mischief. Accordingly, mappers are advised to use aliases when composing their journals and avoid providing information or making statements that might possibly prove hurtful or damaging if placed in the wrong hands.

Minimal Start and Report-Generation Time
A customized application can be set up and used to generate useful data in relatively little time. In most cases, a program or set of programs can be online with less than one day of design work and preparation of its Journey Mapping application. As a complementary bonus for the funder or sponsor, there is no need to wait around for quarterly, semi-annual, or annual reports; the application automatically generates reports to reflect and summarize the latest data that have been provided. Authorized personnel can get online and view journals, benchmarks, and other progress measures at any time and draw their own conclusions regarding program performance.

References


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Someone once said, “Charisma without a program is always ineffectual.” It is easy to conjure up images of persuasive talkers who fall short in the doing—the dreamer without a plan, the politician without the capacity to govern.

In contrast, many leaders of the Community Youth Development (CYD) movement have charisma to spare, but also a rapidly growing set of programs. Without evaluation capacity, however, the movement may be destined to plateau long before it realizes its full potential. Typically, “evaluation” consists of taking a snapshot of “outcomes” at the end of a program to prove to a funder that it worked or failed. Too little, too late, these limited evaluation techniques often shortchange the CYD movement, and in so doing they sometimes make programs famous, sometimes put them out of business, and usually make no difference at all. We have to do better. Evaluation can and should be used as an ongoing management and learning tool to improve the effectiveness of CYD programs.

To gain greater recognition for the CYD movement, we must improve our organizational learning through widespread use of credible and innovative (or as the researchers say, rigorous and relevant) evaluation and research. We must increase capacity among CYD practitioners, funders, policymakers—and, yes, even evaluators.

Recently, a growing movement has emerged that broadens the way we think about evaluation. Rather than existing as a “stand-alone event” that occurs at the end of a program to judge merit or worth, evaluation is an ongoing process, one that provides leaders with useful and usable information for decision making. Reframing evaluation in this way allows managers to collect and analyze important data—from assessing community needs prior to designing programs and services, to making connections between activities and intended outcomes, to changing program design when needed, to providing evidence to funders that yours is an effort worth supporting.

As it turns out, there is a groundswell of interest in this area, particularly around the link between evaluation and management. Though this link is vitally important for CYD professionals, capacity building and professional development opportunities are still few and far between.

Here are two important questions for CYD leaders to consider:

- How can we use evaluation information and innovations in evaluation methodology to improve CYD programs and shape policy?
- What do managers and leaders in the CYD movement need to know and be able to do regarding evaluation?

This article focuses on preparing for evaluation—in particular, the process of selecting an evaluator—and addresses a third question: How do CYD leaders select an evaluator or evaluation team that is right for their organization, one that will provide useful and usable information?

The case study that follows addresses the selection of evaluators from a national organization serving women in the welfare and prison systems.

Ultimately, the moral of this story may be that unanswered questions are far less dangerous than unquestioned answers. Despite recent changes in the way evaluation is perceived, funders, managers, practitioners, and researchers still rely on the traditional model of the external, third-party evaluator who conducts a stand-alone evaluation with little participation or involvement of the organization’s staff or program participants. Too often, this unquestioned model or “answer” leads to the same outcomes that the organization faced—an uninform-
Case Study
An organization serving low-income women in three communities hired an outside evaluator to assess the early stages of an innovative program for young women living in poverty. Not having a great deal of expertise with evaluation design, the director and key staff hired evaluators based primarily on their expertise in traditional evaluation methods.

For several reasons, the relationship failed and the evaluation was not useful to staff or other key stakeholders. For example:

- Staff did not believe the evaluators understood how to work effectively with the women in the program.

- Staff felt the evaluators had markedly different perspectives or values about how to define success or a positive outcome, and what was considered important enough to document. For example, the evaluators defined a positive outcome as securing employment where income taxes were withheld, while seeming to ignore outcomes the staff considered critical, such as increased sense of self, healthy relationships, coping and problem-solving skills, etc.

- Staff did not consider themselves knowledgeable enough about the technical aspects of evaluation to effectively make the case for why the evaluation, as planned by the expert evaluators, would not yield useful information.

- Staff understood neither their potential roles in determining the purpose and goals of the evaluation, nor the evaluators’ roles. Both staff and evaluators assumed it was the evaluators’ job to design the evaluation and define roles; thus roles and expectations were never explicitly discussed. Because the evaluators’ expertise was in traditional survey research and impact studies, they assumed their job was to judge the merit or worth of the program through traditional paper-pencil surveys and follow-up telephone interviews. Without an evaluation team that empowered staff and other key stakeholders to contribute and shape the evaluation, critical information about the women being served was never uncovered or utilized. For example, many of the women produced false statements on the survey (e.g., noting they were not on welfare when, in fact, they were). Staff had been concerned that this would be a likely scenario on a paper-pencil survey, given the women’s distrust of “forms” they did not understand from people they did not know. Such experiences had almost always meant bad news in their lives. Staff also knew that many of the women in the program did not have telephones in their homes. Thus, follow-up phone interviews—an important second phase of data collection—were not going to be an effective means to collect information. However, because the staff and evaluators were not working together on an evaluation team, none of this information was utilized or acted on during the evaluation.

- Staff, who were very dedicated to the women being served and sensitive to the multiple barriers and difficulties they had faced, began to resent the evaluators for their seeming lack of sensitivity to these women and the fact that the evaluation might feel intrusive and impersonal to them. Consequently, the relationship quickly deteriorated, and most staff members and participants were disappointed with the final report. One staff member put it this way, “I didn’t even see our program in this report. Or the women. Or really what the women got out of the program. None of that was in there.”

Although the organization’s first experience was not as positive as it might have been, it provided an important opportunity for the staff to come together and discuss what they had learned and how they might change the way they thought about and implemented evaluation. In the second year of the program, given a chance to hire a new evaluator, staff members reevaluated their hiring criteria. The most important characteristics to look for in an evaluator, they decided, included someone who had values and a philosophy that matched that of the organization. They also wanted to hire an evaluator who, like them, was an advocate for the cause of women in poverty. Finally, they wanted to ensure that this evaluator would treat the women served with the same high level of respect and care that each program staff person and volunteer did. In addition, staff decided to have an upfront discussion with the new evaluator about the active, participatory role they wanted to play in the evaluation design and implementation. This process of determining explicit hiring criteria and openly discussing roles and responsibilities led to the hiring of an evaluator who designed a participatory and developmental evaluation approach that worked more effectively both for staff and for the women served.

Key Questions for Evaluators
The staff of the organization highlighted in this case study learned several key lessons, which led to a more useful and positive evaluation process and
design. The following are several questions, based on this staff’s experience, that CYD leaders should address each time they engage in an evaluation, regardless of its purpose or goal.

What type of evaluator do we need? In addressing this question there are generally three options: 1) You can hire an external evaluator contracted from an outside organization. 2) You can assign the responsibility for evaluation to a person already on staff or hire an internal evaluator to join your organization. 3) You can use a combination approach, where an internal staff person takes primary responsibility for conducting the evaluation with the help of an external consultant who might assist with the technical aspects of evaluation (such as survey analysis or gathering specialized information). The decision you make will depend on answers to questions such as these:

• How important is an outside perspective for this evaluation?

• Does our evaluation require specialized evaluation skills?

• Is it politically important to engage a third-party evaluator?

• Is it critical that our evaluator is familiar with the program and our organization?

• How important are opportunities for ongoing, day-to-day data gathering and informal feedback between the evaluator and key stakeholders?

In the end, though, the formation of an evaluation team consisting of key staff, relevant stakeholders, and evaluators is more important than whom you hire. Through teamwork and ongoing dialogue, an evaluation team approach will ensure that a well-planned and appropriate evaluation emerges. A team approach will also ensure that many perspectives have an impact on knowledge of the program, and that appropriate actions are taken based on this knowledge. Ultimately, the evaluation results will be more accurate, fully developed, and useful, and will more likely lead to action.

What role should the evaluator play? Whether you decide on an external or internal evaluator, or some combination of the two, it will be important to think through the evaluator’s role. As the goals and practices in the field of evaluation have diversified, so too have evaluators’ roles and relationships with the organizations and programs they evaluate. Yet, many organizations, like the one highlighted in the case study, do not realize that they can and should take an active role in determining the evaluator’s role. Depending on the primary purpose of the evaluation and with whom the evaluator is working most closely, an evaluator might be considered a consultant for continuous improvement, a team member with evaluation expertise, a collaborator, an evaluation facilitator, an advocate for a cause, or a synthesizer of information.

The evaluator’s role will influence the criteria you use to select them, and so the questions of what selection criteria to use and what role the evaluator should play should be considered together. For example, if the role of the evaluator is to determine outcomes and the difference the program made, you might look for an evaluator with traditional methodological expertise and experience—particularly in the area of outcome evaluation. If the evaluator’s role is to facilitate program improvements and changes, you might look for someone who has excellent communication skills, a good understanding of the program and people served, organizational develop-
opment knowledge and skills, strong critical thinking skills, and facilitative leadership abilities.

One role that is not often considered is in the realm of capacity building, so that evaluation activities and processes can continue once the final evaluation report is submitted. A part of every evaluator's job (internal or external) is to assist in building the skills, knowledge, and abilities of other staff and stakeholders. In my view, it is better to have an evaluator who has spent time working with staff and can integrate evaluation activities into day-to-day project management and delivery, than to have a perfectly constructed evaluation with strong recommendations that no one uses, with no one able to continue the work.

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Both the Theory and Research/Evaluation sections raise an important caveat: Do not expect to find a complete, ideal, replicable model of Community Youth Development. CYD organizations and practices do not leap full-grown from the head of theory, and there is no one single method or model to be emulated. Patience is a key requisite to the process, as is the acknowledgement of time and intentional effort. Progress will occur in a spiral and hopefully be transformative rather than linear.

Our Practice section illustrates the fact that while CYD practitioners start with different emphases, by applying principles to practice and practice to principles, they form a common insight: the cycle of practice–reflection–practice is an essential feedback loop. CYD approaches may be applied to all domains of youth and community development—the spiritual, physical, social, intellectual, and emotional. In this context, youth participation is the cornerstone, and participation in the civic life of one’s community plays an important role in developing both self and community.

Two obvious challenges for CYD practice emerge from this section. First is the need to integrate various components and venues of development into the larger whole of the youth and community experience. Mind, soul, body, community develop together, and we heartily encourage practice that reflects this fact. Second is the importance of informing theorists, researchers, and evaluators of the “goodness” of practice in promoting the accumulation of knowledge. Practice is not just a set of discrete activities to be observed and measured. It is rather a dynamic, complex, interactive fabric of relationships conducted within a rich ecological context. We challenge researchers and practitioners to join hands in integrating their work to create a richer and more informed body of work.
Youth Leading Now! Securing a Place at the Table

Anne B. Hoover, Adam Kendall, Amy Weisenbach

In order for the Community Youth Development vision to be fully realized, we must create a society in which young people are full citizens, empowered to contribute ideas and make decisions. This chapter highlights recent progress in the movement for youth in decision making and explains how it contributes to the larger movement for Community Youth Development.

Youth in Decision Making: Moving Toward a Vision of Community Youth Development

Community Youth Development (CYD) is about creating just and compassionate communities that value and encourage democratic participation by all people, not just adults. However, the idea of inviting youth to sit at the table is not one that all people embrace. For example, adults frequently sit together discussing young people without even questioning the fact that youth are not part of the discussion. Entire conferences are focused around youth issues, yet not one young person speaks, sits on a panel, or leads a workshop. Often, young people are not even invited to attend.

Communities that do not embrace the concept of young people as full partners in decision making are losing a tremendous wealth of knowledge, energy, and experience. That is more than just a nice-sounding statement: research supports it. A recently released study by Ph.D. Shepherd Zeldin and his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin-Madison confirms that involving young people in organizational and community decision making indeed has benefits. In addition to the benefits for young people, Zeldin’s study shows that youth involvement results in positive outcomes for adults, organizations, and communities (2001, p. 8):

Adults (in our study) came to understand the needs and concerns of youth, and became more attuned to programming issues, making them more likely to reach outside of the organization and share their knowledge and insights. They gained a stronger sense of community connectedness.

Both community development and youth development are facilitated to a greater degree when young people are involved in real, authentic, equal partnership roles for the purpose of creating better communities, organizations, and institutions. This means that young people have the same terms of office as adults, that they are provided with the same financial resources to participate, and that they have an equal vote. It also means that young people are viewed as capable, and are recognized as important individuals with unique ideas, experiences, and talents to share. It means that one young person is not seen as the voice of all “youth,” but rather that all young people are full community members who have a range of diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Viewing young people as assets and engaging them as such allows communities maximum benefit from the energy and talents that young people bring to the table. It also allows young people to experience maximum developmental benefit. In an equal partnership, young people experience accountability in the context of a relationship among equals, which is one of the key elements of healthy development defined by Gisela Konopka (1973).

The youth in decision-making movement is about changing the role of young people in society, and thus promoting Community Youth Development. This article explores this growing effort and the work that organizations and individuals are doing to promote these ideas.

The Youth Participation Movement

In 1996, Community Partnerships with Youth, Inc. and Youth on Board convened a national Wingspread conference, funded by the Johnson Foundation, to
discuss the changing role of young people in society. The goal was to lay the groundwork for building a national movement for youth in decision making.

The conference’s youth and adult participants envisioned a society in which young people are full citizens. In other words, whenever and wherever decisions are made that affect young people or their communities, youth are there, ready to contribute to the discussion and take part in the decision-making process.

If you substitute the word “youth” with “people” in the participants’ vision, it resembles the U.S. Founding Fathers’ words that defined the values of American democracy. John Stuart Mill was adamant about the importance of people being heard:

*It is important that everyone of the governed have a voice in the government, because it can hardly be expected that those who have no voice will not be unjustly postioned to those who have.*

—Hanna Petkin

We would do well to heed Mill’s advice. Until young people have the opportunities and support to step up to authentic leadership roles in their communities, they will remain disengaged, and many will continue to be disengaged in adulthood.

A Movement Whose Time Has Come

The youth in decision-making movement is not entirely different from other civil rights movements of the 20th century. In fact, nearly every other group that has been disenfranchised has demanded a place at the table. In his book, *The Seapogat Generation*, sociologist Mike Males writes (1996),

*Young people are the last group we are allowed to systematically and openly exclude. An adult may be able to represent the issues of youth, but can they represent the spirit and interests of youth?*

Wendy Schaetzel Lesko of the Activism 2000 Project concurs:

*Youth want to participate, and more adults are realizing the long tradition of making decisions for youth without youth has failed. Community leaders and social organizations realize their efforts to address issues such as pollution, drug abuse, drunken driving, and school violence are much more effective when young people have contributed their ideas and gotten involved to solve these problems.*

Since the Wingspread conference in 1996, the youth participation movement has boomed. Not only have youth development organizations caught on, but other private and public organizations and institutions have also come to recognize the important voices and perspectives that young people bring to decision making.

During the two years following Wingspread, advocates of youth in decision making continued to connect with one another and partner with additional stakeholders. As a result, in 1998, the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development (then a division of National 4-H Council) agreed to house the “At the Table” initiative. National 4-H Council was a logical host for the initiative, as it had been a key player in the movement. The sidebar that follows, excerpted from the publication “14 Points: Successfully Involving Youth in Decision Making,” describes how National 4-H Council expanded its board of trustees to include young people.

While housed at the Innovation Center, At the Table is a collaborative initiative, driven by the field to support and expand the youth in decision-making movement nationally. A design team of youth and adults met in September 1998 to develop a plan of action for the initiative. This plan has served as the foundation for the work of At the Table, as it reflects the vision and goals of the various partners in the field. Four key areas of work have emerged as a result of the plan. This work is carried out as part of the At the Table initiative, as well as by organizations and individuals in the field. The four areas are:

- **Capacity building** to help adults and young people work better together and to help organizations bring youth to the table

  - **Research** to document the impact of youth in decision making

  - **Partnership building** to seek new connections and identify additional “unconnected” stakeholders

  - **Information sharing** to share ideas and learning among geographically and organizationally diverse partners, and to build a dynamic presence for the movement on the Internet

  These strategies are helping us to build what is becoming a strong national movement; past successes and future plans are discussed in the sections that follow.

**Capacity Building**

One thing is clear as we work to bring young people into organizational and community decision mak-
ing—there are many challenges and obstacles. Barry Checkoway at the University of Michigan has written a resource book entitled *Adults as Allies* (1995) in which he lists some key obstacles that adults can help young people overcome as they begin to make important decisions for their community, organization, or school. Specifically:

- Youth often lack the knowledge of technical community issues that are conducive to creating change.
- Youth often have fewer resources than their adult counterparts; they often act as individuals rather than as part of a group such as a board or council.
- Youth have experienced adult resistance to their efforts.

Part of overcoming these obstacles is the provision of training programs for both youth and adults that prepare young people to serve in a decision-making capacity. One leader in the field, Community Partnerships with Youth Inc. (CPY), trains young people to serve in decision-making roles, especially at board and advisory council levels. CPY’s experience with youth in governance—particularly working with a board of directors whose participants were largely under age 18—taught them that for youth to be effective board members they need education and training. Their training approach also recognizes the importance of education and training in youth development for the adult members of the board.

When CPY evaluated their training materials, they heard from one organization that

> for youth, one of the benefits of the training and governance experience meant a greater sense of confidence in speaking up in public or speaking with adults, or a clearer sense of mission. It might also mean a greater understanding of group decision making, or better listening and communication skills.

Trainees also reported that adults benefit from the training experience by seeing greater potential in youth and greater flexibility in understanding others’ points of view.³

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### Youth in Governance and National 4-H Council

Though National 4-H Council, with its youth-based mission, has always involved young people in roles as consultants, advisors, committee, and task force members, youth were left out of one vital role: decision making in its governance structure. National 4-H Council is a private partner for the nationwide 4-H youth programs, which serve more than six million young people nationwide.

A 1990 marketing research study of why youth left 4-H found that the young people were “tired of being in an organization run by adults who thought they knew what was best for kids.” Further study led to the Council changing its mission. Today, the mission is “to advance the 4-H youth development movement, building a world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change.”

The idea of including youth on the Council board at the highest level of decision making initially met with resistance. Adult board members were used to making decisions for youth, not with them. So even when two young leaders joined the board with full voting privileges in 1992, things did not change immediately. The youth didn’t feel comfortable talking at the board meetings. They were given no orientation and did not know what it meant to serve on a board. Similarly, no one prepared Council members for the challenges of integrating young people into the boardroom. Before long, the youth decided to take action to make things easier for future board members. Drawing on the resources of Youth on Board, Council staff created an orientation protocol and materials for all future National 4-H Council board members—both youth and adults.

But this was only the beginning. In 1998, young board member Amy Weisenbach appealed to the board to add more young people to the Council. She showed them a video featuring interviews with trustees of other boards that shared power with youth. As a result, National 4-H Council’s board voted to expand to include 10 young people ranging in age from 12 to 22.

At 4-H, youth took a stand, and the organization has benefited from their unique insights. National 4-H Council is now fulfilling its own mission—involving youth in decision making at every level of its organization.

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³ From “14 Points: Successfully Involving Youth in Decision-Making.” Published in 1999 by Youth on Board in Somerville, MA.
The movement is extending from Capitol offices, where leaders like Senator Murray from the state of Washington have youth advisors to assist in decision making, to numerous governors and mayors in cities and states around the country who are establishing youth commissions and involving young people on citizen advisory committees. National events such as the National Community Service Conference have featured numerous presentations on youth in decision making. Youth are making decisions as grant makers through organizations like the United Way, and are acting as major sources of support for non-profit organizations through their fundraising abilities. Young people who are respected, listened to, and mentored, and who fully participate with adults, are ready and willing to be decision makers for their community.

Research
As in many emerging fields, practice is often ahead of research. While much research exists that tells us about the impact of youth in decision making on young people, we know very little about the impact on adults and organizations. In an effort to bring research up to speed, Shepherd Zeldin and his associates from the University of Wisconsin-Madison recently studied the impact of youth involvement in decision making. The study, part of the At the Table initiative, was funded by Surdna Foundation. The results from the research include a full report of the findings, as well as a shorter advocacy piece for practitioners. Both reports are available from At the Table (see the Resource List that follows).

In addition, in October of 2000, a group of researchers and practitioners gathered to develop a longer-term plan for research around youth in decision making. The participants shared their ongoing research that will contribute to the knowledge base around this issue. Together they worked to develop a research agenda for youth in decision making. A report summarizing this agenda was published in March, 2002.4

For the field to continue to grow and mature, it will need more opportunities to convene around other issues. Some of the issues the field will likely consider include examining how young people can be better engaged in school governance and decision making, identifying ways to bring youth in decision making into the mainstream, and ensuring that these issues are relevant to all young people.

Information Sharing
Our biggest challenge in building this movement is neither capacity building, nor research, nor partnership building. It is spreading the word about this idea, and helping adults and youth alike to understand why young people should be involved, and how to do it successfully.

There are several ways that the field is working to spread the word. For instance, eight of the leading organizations in the movement recently released the At the Table Resource Catalog, a booklet that documents curriculum, tools, and resources for youth involvement.

The Internet is also increasingly being used as a way for the movement to grow. In the last few years, new websites have sprung up that document what is happening and how to involve young people. These include:

- Activism 2000 Project (www.youthactivism.com)
- At the Table (www.atthetable.org)
- Community Partnerships with Youth Inc. (www.cpyinc.org)
- Freechild Project (www.freechild.org)
- Youth on Board (www.youthonboard.org)

Your Role in the Movement
As with all movements, believers and advocates are the backbone. Each of us, as proponents of the CYD philosophy, has a role in ensuring that young people (and all people, for that matter) have a place at the table. There are many ways that you can contribute to this movement. Perhaps the best way is by starting in our own organizations and communities. What can each of us do to ensure that young people are invited to and included at the tables where key decisions are made? The resources that follow can help answer this and many other questions regarding youth in decision making.

References


4. Matthew Calvert and Shepard Zeldin, "Youth Involvement for Community, Organizational and Youth Development: Directions for Research, Evaluation and Practice." This report was a joint effort of the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development.

**Anne B. Hoover** is the former executive director of Community Partnerships with Youth, Inc., a national training and development center for youth, youth professionals, educators, and the clergy. Anne has co-authored all the CPY curricula, written for Trustee Leadership Development and the Robert K. Greenleaf Center, and served as a consultant and trainer to BoardSource, the Community Leadership Association, the National Crime Prevention Council, and the National Assembly of Health and Human Service Organizations. She has received Indiana's highest honor, the Sagamore of the Wabash award, for her work on behalf of youth.

Adam Kendall is an independent consultant from Minneapolis, Minnesota. A nationally recognized expert on youth in decision making, he has worked with Community Partnerships with Youth, Inc., National 4-H Council, the Minnesota Alliance with Youth, United Way of America, and numerous other organizations. Adam served on over 20 governing boards and community initiatives as a young person. He has written and co-authored several pieces on the topics of youth in decision making and Community Youth Development, and has led numerous workshops and trainings on those issues.

Amy Weisenbach coordinates the At the Table initiative at the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. A long-time advocate for youth voice and involvement, Amy is working to ensure that the youth in decision-making movement continues to grow. Amy is a graduate of DePauw University, where she received the Truman Scholarship for graduate study in public service. She recently returned to graduate school to pursue her studies.

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### Resource List

**Activism 2000 Project**
P.O. Box E  
Kensington, MD 20895  
Contact: Wendy Schaezel Lesko  
Phone: 1-800-KIDPOWER  
Email: info@youthactivism.com  
Web: http://www.youthactivism.com

**Community Partnerships with Youth, Inc.**
550 East Jefferson Street, Suite 306  
Franklin, IN 46131  
Contact: Brian Lucas  
Phone: (317) 736-7947  
Email: cpync@aol.com  
Web: http://www.cpyinc.org

**At the Table**
Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development  
7100 Connecticut Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Contact: Amy Weisenbach

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**Phone:** (301) 961-2972  
Email: aweisenbach@theinnovationcenter.org  
Web: http://www.atthetable.org

**Youth Leadership Institute**
246 First Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Contact: Maureen Sedonaen  
Phone: (415) 836-9160  
Email: MSedonaen@yli.org  
Web: http://www.yli.org

**Youth On Board**
58 Day Street, 3rd Floor  
P.O. Box 440322  
Somerville, MA 02144  
Contact: Jenny Sazama or Karen Young  
Phone: (617) 623-9900  
Email: youthonboard@aol.com  
Web: http://www.youthonboard.org
At an early age I began to understand the importance of patience. I remember desperately wanting to ride a two-wheel bicycle like the older kids in my neighborhood. The thought of training wheels was an insult to my determination and abilities. I thought that if I were eager, interested, and willing to take a risk I would be able to ride that bicycle without any problem. After struggling to keep my feet on the pedals and taking a few tumbles onto the driveway, I thought that maybe my dad did have something with the training-wheel strategy.

Of course, I was embarrassed to ride a bike with training wheels where the older kids could see, so I had to practice on the back patio just around dusk. After several evenings of learning to balance, maintain momentum, find a comfortable speed, and learn all of the workings of the bike, I was ready to ride without the “crutch” of the training wheels.

I set out one Saturday afternoon to become the newest member of the two-wheel bike club. I chose the drive in front of our house as the testing ground, with my dad guiding me from behind. It took several attempts, but I finally got the hang of it, with my friends cheering from across the street. I thought to myself, “Why, this is easy! Why couldn’t I do this from the beginning?”

Since that experience, I have often been reminded that when something looks easy and I want to jump in, I need to think through my approach and become acquainted with all of the variables involved. This was particularly important when I was interested in involving youth as peer counselors in a summer job program I ran in the early 1980s.

I could clearly see the benefits of involving youth to help me reach my program goals, and it gave them jobs too. How could it be any more complicated than that? Well, I soon discovered that there were many benefits to the venture, but also many challenges that I had not anticipated. It took years of work in the field for me to begin understanding that our approach to a situation significantly often influences the outcomes we can expect.

Twenty years later I find myself working with a variety of youth-serving organizations and communities that share my enthusiasm for youth participation but continue to stumble over some of the unforeseen obstacles. I am reminded of my father’s attempts to guide me through the process of learning to ride that two-wheel bicycle, and of my enthusiasm and impatience that clouded the voice of reason.

Community Youth Development (CYD) is an approach that has been around in some agencies and communities for years. It entails practices that are familiar to many communities, such as youth volunteering, youth leadership opportunities, and youth-driven initiatives. CYD is also a concept that seems to be contrary to how some agencies and communities have worked with youth for years.

Sometimes we worry about whether we know enough, have enough experience, or “get it” before we think of ourselves as an expert at something. I have always found that the CYD approach is more about having the capacity to listen, learn, and grow than to having experiences intended to make one an expert. As with anything, how we approach something says more about our success than many other factors involved.

In my work with youth, some key elements have surfaced through my efforts to implement agency and community change. Some of these elements are as simple as ABC.
Attitude is everything. Attitude shapes how we approach our work with youth. It also impacts the outcomes of interactions with youth and adults alike. Approach people with the attitude that they have something to contribute. Reflect an attitude of valuing the contributions of others, particularly youth. Have an attitude that is encouraging, not discouraging. Have an attitude that supports rather than undermines. Have an attitude of hope, not negative expectations. So much is influenced by our attitude, particularly how we approach our work with youth.

Be open. Be open to change, to differences, to conflict, to emotions, to all of the lessons along the way. Be open to looking at things differently, be open to learning from everyone, be open to the possibilities that CYD can bring.

Celebrate accomplishments—even the smallest ones. Progress is moving forward, regardless of how far. Celebrate people that support youth and their development. Celebrate youth and adults for their growth and contributions. Celebrate the diversity and capacity of all involved. Celebrate that taking risks, feeling frustrated, and being tired reflects our passion and determination in making a difference for youth. Celebrate the potential of each human spirit.

Develop your ability to listen and hear. Work to understand the messages of feedback, which come in so many forms. Listen with the intent to hear what is behind the words—ideas, desires, enthusiasm, dissent, discomfort. Watch the body language and actions of youth and adults around you to understand how to best support them in their work. Recognize that some individuals communicate much through their behavior. Develop an understanding that these behaviors sometimes are a reaction to your approach. Resistance, defiance, rejection, passivity can all be reactions to being controlled, disrespected, and objectified—regardless of age. CYD is an approach that respects differing opinions and recognizes that youth must be a part of their own development. Developing your ability to listen and really hear will best support youth development.

Engage others through your excitement, enthusiasm, and energy toward youth development. Engage them through examples, dialogue, writings, and advocacy work. The process becomes more profound as more individuals become involved. Promote successes as community accomplishments. It does take a community to raise a child and to continue teaching them as an adult. Engage others into CYD projects through volunteerism, employment, financial support, advocacy—they will all receive the benefits while being part of the solution. Engage others to work alongside youth.

Facilitate opportunities for youth and adults to explore. Facilitate interactions that promote partnerships, collaborations, and even something as simple as dialogue. Create opportunities, no matter how small, that will draw adults and youth closer together—work to solve a problem, to build a fence, or to advocate for a cause. Recognize that balanced interactions can lead to stronger relationships and better understanding. Facilitate the development of youth and adult relationships that embrace mutual respect, trust, honesty, and partnership.

Guide others and allow them to guide you. CYD can take many forms. Working together—youth and adults—will guide the process in the direction of inclusion, creativity, and positive support. Keep the momentum of positive direction by putting energy into creating solutions, not tearing down ideas. Guide discussions toward possibilities and away from recounting fears. Be guided by your intuitive instincts and spiritual voice.

Humor. Laughter is food for the soul. Humor allows us to not take life too seriously. It relieves tension, strengthens relationships, opens doors, and introduces positive energy. Laughing together through trying moments and productive times creates the common bond necessary to support CYD. Have a sense of humor about situations and, most importantly, be able to laugh at yourself.

Involve youth in meaningful experiences. Don’t assume that what we consider as a meaningful experience will be perceived the same way by a youth. We know something is meaningful when it evokes strong emotions, such as excitement, anxiety, enthusiasm, intensity, sadness, fear, exhilaration, challenge, conflict, and love. Youth, just like adults, need these experiences for personal growth and development. They teach us confidence, competence, self-worth, patience, friendship, compassion, empathy, understanding, and many other virtues that enrich our lives and our communities. Involve youth in their development.

Jog the memory of adults. Ask adults to recall how they felt as a youth when an adult recognized their contribution. When an adult valued their opinion. When they taught an adult something. Invite them to talk about the most significant adult they knew in their youth and what made that person special. Question adults about where they learned how to
ride a bike, fly a kite, or skip a stone on the water. Support youth today as our significant adults supported us. This may clarify our role in Community Youth Development.

**Knowledge.** Provide knowledge that empowers others to understand CYD and the benefits of the approach. Help others attain knowledge that will free them to think outside the box and take risks to try different approaches. Promote information at the community level that will increase comfort, understanding, and basic knowledge of what youth are searching for and how to best support them in their personal journey of development. Share examples and best practices of CYD. Increase knowledge in the field of youth work by networking, dialoguing, and advocating. Knowledge is what we know as well as what we will discover. Be open to both.

**Listening systems** have to be recognized to be effective. At times, a youth’s behavior is dismissed as something about “them” versus something about us. It is easier to blame someone for not accepting a program or service rather than consider that our approach may not be respectful, meaningful, or engaging. Listening systems can help people and communities communicate about how to improve our products. For example, suggestion boxes, customer satisfaction surveys, exit interviews, and election day results are all listening systems that provide valuable feedback. Listening systems can also be something as informal as the number of runaways from a program, the decline in attendance at the home football team, the number of standing ova-tions a rock band receives. We just need to recognize feedback when it presents and not blame the consumer for not taking advantage of something that you value.

**Maintain caring environments.** Everyone needs a place to feel comfortable, safe, secure, and wanted. So often we forget that all humans have the same needs, regardless of age, gender, or other differences. Keep a check on the “temperature” of the environment by how people are reacting and interacting. Maintain caring environments by identifying common values, promoting respect, and injecting laughter. A caring environment will nurture and promote CYD efforts and individual growth.

**Nourish the spirit** of youth and adults to give them hope and a spirit of adventure, to help them take risks and build healthy relationships. To nourish the soul opens many windows, through which a person may come to see life differently. So many youth and adults have not been nourished enough to trust others or rely upon others for their own personal development. Without nourishment, the human spirit dries up and may shut down. CYD is about nourishing youth, adults, and communities so they can work together toward solutions that offer better lives for everyone.

Open minds, hearts, ears, and eyes to the importance of working in partnership with youth. Advocate for opportunities that bring youth to the table. Share stories of success and promise. Open others to the possibilities of working together differently. CYD is a different approach for some. Being open to new possibilities is the first step.

**Patience, patience, patience.** Be patient with the process and see the wealth of opportunities and learning along the way. Living in a world that looks to the bottom line and expects immediate results often causes us to be in a hurry to get there. Work to teach patience to others. Take time to understand what works and doesn’t work. Be patient with the process, with other people, with strategies—and most important, be patient with yourself. Remember: patience is your friend!

**Question the status quo** and traditional youth approaches that are not working. Challenge attitudes and beliefs that talk about helping youth but seem to tear down their spirit, shatter their confidence, and take away their individual control and influence. Question the patterns of behavior that seem inconsistent with the talk. Question your own fears and emotions to better understand how to proceed in supporting youth toward inclusion and being heard.

**Role models** teach what it means to be a partner. Be a role model with the ability to listen, to be supportive, to learn, to influence, to make a difference. Show others that their contributions are valuable and can move communities. Model the many attributes listed in this article to support CYD practices and strategies. Stand out as an advocate for youth through your role in supporting a youth to develop themself and their future world.

**Simplicity.** Keep it simple. CYD is any effort that respects youth and brings them into meaningful experiences. That may be something as simple as asking a youth to share in the care of a pet, or planning a family outing or birthday party. As simple as naming a program or speaking in front of a group of adults. CYD does not need to be complicated or involved to be meaningful. Sitting across the table from a youth and listening to their ideas is simple. CYD can be simple.
Trust the process of working together. Trust the words and actions of others. Trust yourself to have the capacity to learn, to share, and to make a difference. Trust those around you to teach you about others. Trust those who are involved with CYD to speak truth through their experiences. Trust the notion that there are many ways to approach community issues and that there will be varying results. Trust your intentions and intuitions and you will move toward a better understanding of CYD.

Understand that CYD is an approach to working with youth. Understand that it is an attitude that becomes contagious with positive experiences. Understand that each community member plays a role in supporting youth. Understand that change is hard, especially when it is around something you love. Understand CYD as an expression of love. Understand that CYD works.

Value people as resources, especially youth. Value their energy, their thoughts, their contributions, their support, their ability to be part of the solution. Value others by inviting them to solve problems, to teach others, to create opportunities, to give of themselves to improve their community. Often our own ego and need for power and control become barriers that prevent individuals from becoming the resource they have the potential to be—both youth and adults. See beyond age, gender, color, size, background, religion, sexual orientation, ability, and life experiences to recognize the available energy and talent to move youth and communities forward. Value the resources available to all of us.

Walk the talk. Your actions will speak louder than your words. Live CYD through your actions. Be a partner with youth by seeking out their opinions (improving a service), incorporating their ideas (changing program approach), and elevating their voice (community education). Walk side by side with youth toward improved communities.

X-ray vision. Look toward the future and the bright possibilities of CYD. Visualize the richness, the wonder, and the progress possible when youth and adults share common values and mission. Those with vision can lead others to where they might be afraid to go. Gently pull them into your vision through understanding, experience, support, and patience. The vision can become contagious, which then influences action. The vision can lead us to where we want to go.

Youth as partners. Involve youth in decision making, involve youth in problem solving. Involve youth in creating. Involve youth in leadership. Support healthy partnerships that facilitate growth and progress. Encourage efforts that are collaborative and honest. It is essential that youth not only be invited to sit at the table, but that their distinct contributions and roles are equally valued. The future is theirs, so why not let them help build it?

Zap—before you know it, you are there! Participate in communities in a way that supports youth and adults in their development. Enjoy the process because it could be one of the richest journeys of your life!

Gary Sanford has twenty years' experience working with adolescents and youth agencies. His professional experiences include independent living services for foster youth; outreach and community-based services for street youth; residential services for runaway youth; collaborative art projects for disenfranchised adolescents; support services for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth; as well as a range of training and curriculum development targeting youth practitioners.
LESSONS FROM THE FIELD: TAKING A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPING CHARACTER THROUGH SPORTS

JEFFREY PRATT BEEY, TOM ZIERK

While sports can build character, positive character growth comes only from a proactive educational approach. The authors argue that properly designed and implemented youth sports programs contribute to building community values and provide an outstanding medium for CYD.

With more than 25 million young adults and children participating in organized sports we can begin to appreciate why scholars suggest that sport is second only to religion in our country in terms of cultural scope and significance. This intense national interest in sports plays a powerful part in molding the character of the nation and especially the character of millions of our nation’s youth that participate in organized sports and physical education programs.

—Guidelines for Effective Character Education Through Sports, Character Education Partnership, 2000

A author and journalist Haywood Hale Broun is credited with the quote, “Sports do not build character, they reveal it.” While not knowing exactly what Broun was referring to when he made this statement, we can imagine that visions of a professional basketball player strangling his coach may have had some influence. Or Broun might have read about the parent, in an upper-income town in Massachusetts, who ran onto a soccer field to punch a 12-year-old player who had knocked his son down during a rough play. Or maybe Broun heard about the kids in a youth basketball league who, on their own, voted that all players on their team would get equal playing time in all games, even during the end-of-the-year tournament.

Regardless of what led to his thinking, we can assume that Haywood Broun was questioning the validity of the notion that sports build character. And while we agree that sports certainly do reveal character (which, in a passive sports program, is all that is likely to happen) we disagree that sports do not build character. A proactive approach to sports can indeed teach and develop character. As a counterpoint to Broun’s quote, we offer an alternative, which accepts the premise of the opening passage: “Sports can build character . . . but positive character growth comes only from a proactive, educational approach.”

Background

While the notion that sports build character is deeply rooted in American culture, the idea was around long before organized sports became popular in the United States. In fact, it was accepted in the British public schools (which were actually private secondary schools) during the mid-19th century as a vehicle for promoting important social values. The students in these athletic games played an active role in organizing and governing their own contests, a component often missing in adult-run youth sports programs in the United States. And equally important, the social norm of the time supported values such as camaraderie, fair play, and winning or losing gracefully. Sports were seen as a medium for promoting these qualities, and there was a clear and logical connection between cultural philosophy and game practice.
Sports have recently moved to center stage in our national debate on character, community, and children. With tens of millions of children and youth actively playing some form of organized sport each year in the United States, combined with the high visibility of collegiate and professional sports, the debate is difficult to ignore. Two questions emerge as a result of this debate:

1. Just how valid is the claim that sports build (good) character?

2. Is it possible that organized youth sports are a negative influence on our children’s development?

Regardless of how we answer these questions, the fact remains that sports represent one of the most powerful learning environments for our children and youth. In their book Character Development and Physical Activity, David Shields and Brenda Brede- meier make this point (1995, p. 2):

Despite the problems associated with contemporary competitive sport, sport is replete with opportunities to encounter, learn, transform, and enact moral values. The moral tension that participants often experience, for example, between the norms of fair play and the desire to win, parallels tension in almost any conflictive moral situation. The main difference between sport and everyday life is that moral experience is condensed and exposed in sport. We believe this makes it a valuable context for moral education.

Connecting with CYD

Perhaps a more relevant question to ask at this point is not whether sports build character (or, as some suggest, “characters”), but, rather, how we can shape the early sports experiences of our children and youth to promote, reinforce, and develop good values. In other words, how do we develop good people as well as good athletes? Since sports reinforce and provide opportunities to practice behavioral goals that are promoted by other community programs, the holistic and broad-based approach of the Community Youth Development (CYD) vision offers a starting point from which to begin constructing such programs. The playing fields and gyms also act as a medium through which rich and vivid metaphors come alive: youth learn life lessons that naturally transfer to their home, school, and neighborhood environments. The community-wide efforts of a CYD approach in turn support sports programs in which the positive development of youth is the primary focus.

Any community committed to CYD must recognize sports as an important piece of the larger puzzle and provide young people with positive lessons that are consistent with the community’s stated values and goals. But positive learning does not occur by chance. If we want sports to teach positive values, we must invest in the idea of sports as an educational medium. One way to achieve this is to demand the same expectations from our children’s coaches and sports programs as we do from their teachers and schools.

The challenge lies in the structure of most youth sport programs and the lack of good models and training for coaches (who are usually parent volunteers with little or no teaching background or training in child development). Although there is a great deal of training material aimed at this market, it focuses primarily on skill development rather than moral, social, and psychological development—areas clearly affected by the sports experience. Though a large amount of research exists that describes the effect of sports on children’s development, there has, unfortunately, been little connection between this research and the practice of youth sports.

Connecting Research to Practice

Sports research indicates that participation alone does not guarantee productive learning and personal growth. We can no longer simply state that “sports are good for children” or that “sports build character.” Our schools are held accountable for the social and moral development of their students; if we want to hold sports to the same expectations, we must begin to treat the sports arena with the same respect and accountability. We need to look to current educational theory—specifically, how children develop—and create positive learning environments that actively teach the values and skills we want our children to learn.

At Sports PLUS, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the positive learning potential of sports, we have developed a model for tapping into the character building and human development potential of sports. Easily replicated and adaptable to a variety of settings, the PLUS model is an attempt to bring sports experiences in line with other character and youth development efforts in our schools and communities. It includes the medium of sports, with its natural attraction for children and youth, within the larger offerings of community-driven efforts to help in the development of young people.

The Sports PLUS Model: Creating a New Paradigm

The Sports PLUS model integrates theories of human development, educational psychology, and a number of principles from experiential education. Developed over the past ten years, the model is designed to
actively utilize the natural life lessons that so consistently occur in sports—from developing and reinforcing good character values to understanding group processing skills. The structure of the model along with its emphasis on defining team values and creation of a culture make it easily adaptable across age groups and sports.

Although the emphasis placed on particular areas of the PLUS model will likely vary from program to program, each of the components of the model must be present to some degree. As with any model, the components operate in concert with one another, and areas described under one component of the model will frequently operate across several components concurrently. Regardless of the desired learning outcomes, the operating principles and philosophies of the PLUS model remain intact.

The Sports PLUS model is comprised of the following five components, described in the sections that follow:

- **Sports: Medium**
- **PLUS Cycle: Structure**
- **PLUS Values: Focus**
- **Learning Principles: Methods**
- **PLUS Learning Climate: Culture**

**Sports: The medium.** The teaching medium of any program using the PLUS model is comprised of sports and sports-related activities. From the earliest experience with recreational soccer and t-ball, through PE classes and into competitive high school and college athletics, sports provide a continuous stream of lessons. The readily observable behaviors that occur in sport situations become metaphors that illuminate abstract concepts in real and meaningful ways. The PLUS model provides systematic and practical ways to utilize these lessons.

**PLUS cycle: The structure.** The PLUS Learning Cycle provides the basic structural component to the program. Consisting of three phases—the warm-up, the activity, and the cool-down, or pre/during/after activity segments—this natural and predictable pattern creates an organized atmosphere within which real learning can take place. All too often, youth sports have a chaotic quality—players are running around, the coaches are yelling for attention, and equipment is strewn everywhere. Would any teacher run a classroom this way? Using the PLUS Cycle in a consistent manner quiets the chaos, helps children and youth focus on the task at hand, and creates the atmosphere of a sports classroom. Within this safe environment, where all participants know they are respected and listened to, sports lessons become transferable metaphors illustrating life’s broad lessons.

**Warm-Up.** The five- to ten-minute pregame or prepractice team meeting is the time to outline goals, discuss game strategies, and engage in interactive dialogue. It offers a quiet time for youth to make the transition from what they have been doing to focusing on the upcoming activity. It also offers a setting in which team members can discuss important issues.

**Activity.** This is the phase in which coaches look for teachable moments. The dilemmas and conflicts that occur during practices and games mirror similar situations that occur elsewhere in our lives. It is during the activity phase that coaches watch for behavioral examples that can be used as metaphors for life beyond the playing field.

**Cool-Down.** The cool-down provides an opportunity to discuss the teachable moments observed during the activity phase. For example, a negative comment from one player to another during a practice can be discussed as an illustration of disrespectful behavior.

The initial discussion might focus on how and why respect is an important value, and then broaden out to explore what respect looks and sounds like in school or in the neighborhood. The reflective nature of the cool-down also provides an opportunity to revisit goals set during the warm-up, discuss how the team performed during the activity phase, and set new goals for the next activity, thereby creating a circular pattern to the cycle.

This three-phase cycle provides the basic structure within which to mine the lessons contained in sport situations. Similar to the experiential learning cycle used in adventure education, the PLUS Cycle provides time for teachable moments to be recognized and discussed, and the learning to be transferred to new situations.

**PLUS universal values: Focus.** In an effort to give focus to a sports program and to help children and youth recognize and strengthen positive character values, the PLUS model uses five universal, positive character values: teamwork, respect, responsibility, perseverance, and fair play. Communities with broad youth development efforts should align the stated values of their sports programs with the values of other programs. Regardless of the chosen values, they must be publicly shared and embraced by all members of a sports program—coaches, players, officials, and parents alike.

One of the difficulties of teaching positive values can be the abstract nature of an idea such as “respect.” Sports provide a constant stream of values
brought to life. The PLUS model works to operationalize values by moving beyond the abstract to concrete understanding. An idea like respect, then, is quickly brought to life on the playing field in very real ways. For example, “trash talking” to opponents in a basketball game is an example of disrespectful behavior, while organizing the sports equipment is an example of taking responsibility and teamwork.

Using the PLUS Cycle provides opportunities to discuss real and observed examples of these values as they occur in game and practice. Once the values are presented in developmentally understandable ways—how they look, sound, and feel—children and youth begin to see how the same values operate in other areas of their lives.

**Learning principles: The method.** In order to ensure that effective learning takes place, the PLUS model incorporates three ways in which educational psychology tells us people learn—through modeling, rewards and consequences, and dialogue. These ways of learning are connected to the following educational theories of development:

- **The social learning theory** states that people learn through interacting and observing others. Research shows that the behavior of a coach can have a greater impact on the psychological development of children than the sport itself. Young children look up to their coach, who may be one of their earliest role models outside of family members and teachers.

- **The behavioral learning theory** suggests that people learn through rules and consequences. Just as sports generally have rules and consequences for infractions, sport teams also need specific rules of conduct and behavior that show the players the values the team promotes and embraces.

- **The cognitive/developmental learning theory** states that people learn through active dialogue about important issues, such as how playing time is distributed on a team or why people treat each other the way they do. The PLUS Learning Cycle provides a structure and safe environment in which meaningful dialogue can take place.

The PLUS model provides opportunities to use all three learning practices in a holistic approach. Similar to a family, the sports experience provides a natural arena in which children can develop through these three ways of learning. Understanding how children and youth learn within a sports environment allows adults involved with the programs to better control the environment and create a positive experience.

**PLUS learning climate: The culture.** In order to achieve the PLUS goals of positively influencing the physical, social, and moral development of children and youth, it is critical to create a learning climate within which all participants, regardless of their abilities, feel both emotionally and physically safe and free from negative criticism and ridicule. Creating such a climate is the first step in developing a culture in which values such as respect and responsibility are lived on a daily basis, and where “put-ups” are the norm. One goal of the PLUS model is to provide a structure for creating such a climate and the tools with which to shape it.

Developing a youth sports philosophy is one of the first steps in creating a positive climate. Without a strong philosophical foundation to guide a youth sports program, the weaknesses will become apparent when difficult decisions arise. For example, if a youth soccer team has a philosophy of equal playing time for all players, then in a close game or at tournament time the dilemma of whether to play the best players has already been solved. On the other hand, a team may decide that in big games or in tournaments certain stronger players will stay in the game longer. The critical point is that this policy is a shared team decision and becomes part of its publicly embraced philosophy.

Coaches must also understand the developmental capabilities of their young athletes. A six-year-old’s understanding of teamwork will be soundly different than that of a ten-year-old. Knowing what children are capable of, physically and cognitively, and how they interpret our instructions and teaching makes all the difference in creating a positive sports experience. Coaches who understand age-appropriate lessons and skill development, combined with an understanding of each individual athlete, will develop safe, positive learning environments in which all their players will thrive.

The relationship of the coach to the players also changes as children mature. Research shows that young children want a coach who is nice and who does things for them. Adolescents look to their coaches as someone they can talk to and discuss sometimes-difficult issues or problems in their lives. The PLUS model stresses that coaches at all levels understand and accept the responsibility and opportunities presented to them. The importance of being a positive role model is confirmed through research that shows how athletes will respond to situations based upon their perceptions of their coaches’ expectations. Coaches who fully accept their position as a role model and take the time to develop personal
relationships with their young athletes become one more positive way that adults can connect with youth.

The PLUS model reaches its maximum potential when all the components are present, working together in the creation and support of a climate in which real learning takes place. The model is not reliant on the particular sport, the age of the athletes, or even the level of competitiveness. Utilizing the PLUS model builds a culture that embraces positive values, recognizes the contributions of all its members, builds and supports strong relationships among athletes and coaches, and helps turn the sports experience into one more way to make positive connections with our children and youth.

The PLUS Model in Action
One of the great strengths of the PLUS model is its ability to be adapted to a range of programs. Youth sports programs, from the earliest instructional and recreation leagues up through competitive high school athletic teams, use the model to shape a positive learning experience and consciously create desired cultures. The PLUS summer camp incorporates the model into a two-week camp experience for children ages seven through fifteen. Sports PLUS has also developed a unique after-school program that combines sports with reading and character development.

Coaching. Many programs begin using pieces of the model (usually the PLUS Cycle), then gradually build in the other components. Coaches are often reluctant to fully utilize the model, fearing that it will take too much time. But those that stick with it find that organizing practices around the basic structure actually saves time once the model is in place, especially those working with young athletes. Coaches of older youth and adolescents involved with more competitive programs find that the model creates and supports a pos-

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A Snapshot of the Model in Action

At the end of a recent soccer match, two players from Coach Goodspor’s second-grade team showed more interest in being first in the congratulating line than in participating in the cheer for their opponents. As the two boys raced away from the huddle, Coach Goodspor called the boys over and quietly asked them to go to the end of the line. Surprised, the boys moved to the back.

At the team’s post-game cool-down meeting, Coach Goodspor congratulated her team on a game well played. “I’m proud of the way you worked hard together and kept pushing the ball up the field, even after we missed a couple of shots. You showed a lot of teamwork and perseverance. And you all did better on defense and clearing the ball from our end of the field. Remember, that was our team goal for this game.”

She allowed some enthusiastic response from the players before bringing up a new topic.

“Can anyone tell me what the word appreciate means?” A few children attempted to explain. “Well, it means that, you know, that you appreciate somebody.” “You like what they did.” “It’s like you’re thanking them.”

Coach Goodspor recognized that while they couldn’t articulate it, they knew what it means to appreciate somebody. She then asked why they give the cheer—Two, four, six, eight! Who do we appreciate! While the children struggled to answer, Coach Goodspor helped out. “Would the game be much fun if the other team didn’t show up?” “NO!” shouted the team. “Would it be much fun if the other team didn’t try very hard?” “NO!” “How about if the other team played really rough or cheated?” “NO!”

She saw that the children understood her point and let them comment. “We are telling the team that we appreciate them for playing a good game and for being good sports... and we appreciate them because without them we wouldn’t have had any fun! ’cause we wouldn’t have even played the game.”

Coach Goodspor went on for another moment, reminding her players that the purpose of the cheer was to let the opposing players know that their effort was appreciated. She then pointed out that by not participating in the cheer, players were not respecting their opponents or their teammates, and reminded them that respect was one of the values their team had agreed was important. She went on to say that they all should participate in the cheer and not worry about being first in the congratulating line.

The whole cool-down took seven minutes.

From Sports PLUS: Developing Youth Sports Programs that Teach Positive Values
itive culture that helps teams deal with the pressures and stress involved with high levels of competition.

The Sports PLUS coaches trainings are designed for school coaches, parent volunteer coaches, program administrators, recreation departments, and anyone else who wants to positively influence their school or community sports efforts. The one-day training follows the outline of the PLUS model and uses experiential activities that are designed to simulate the model within the context of coaching. Participants come away from the training with an understanding and the tools with which to use the model to begin reshaping their sports programs.

The adaptability of the model proves itself in approaching the varied levels of competitive play. Used in the earliest sports experiences of children, the model helps coaches create a sports classroom and encourages them to think of themselves as teachers. The vast number of parent volunteers coaching young children first entering the world of organized sports often have little or no experience in teaching or child development. The PLUS model helps these coaches by providing a structure for practices and games and also with creating a positive learning climate by operationalizing abstract notions where teamwork, respect, and responsibility begin to come alive.

The PLUS model and philosophies can also guide sports programs where competition plays a prominent role. While the philosophy of a highly competitive team may differ from a recreational and instructional league, the basic foundation of the model remains intact. For example, in a sports program for young children first learning a sport, equal playing time and the chance to play a variety of positions should be a priority. On a competitive high school basketball team, while equal playing time may not be part of the team's philosophy, developing good values, learning how personal effort translates to success, and understanding a true sense of teamwork can still take place.

Sports PLUS is currently taking part in a research project with the Mendleson Center for Sports Character and Culture at Notre Dame University to study the effects of using the PLUS model in a highly competitive atmosphere. Through this study we hope to learn more about the particular ways in which sports teams operating at the highest levels of competition can also function as moral and just communities.

The PLUS Summer Camps
Operated during the month of July, the PLUS camps are designed to provide a unique experience to children and adolescents with a general interest in and love of sports. Campers in the lower camp play a variety of sports each day and also spend time in an educational component reading and discussing sports books and stories and keeping journals. The camp follows the PLUS model in philosophy and in the desire both to teach general sports skills and develop good character values and group skills. Each day begins with a warm-up and ends with a cool-down, while each sport module also follows the PLUS Cycle and focuses on goal setting and recognizing and discussing the PLUS values.

The senior camp focuses on the development of an interest in leading an active and healthy lifestyle. Leadership skills, group processing, and personal reflection are stressed, and the senior campers have opportunities to participate in outdoor activities like hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, and rock climbing. Throughout the senior camp, as in the lower camp, the PLUS philosophy guides each day and the development and strengthening of good values is evident in all aspects of camp life.

GoodSport After School
Perhaps the most unique adaptation of the model is the GoodSport After School program, currently being piloted by Sports PLUS at sites in Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. Designed as a broad literacy enhancement and character development effort, GoodSport is offered to fourth, fifth, and sixth graders to improve reading, comprehension, writing, and group discussion skills. The program follows the PLUS model, focusing on the five PLUS values and using sports literature—from short stories and problem-solving scenarios to age-appropriate chapter books—to provide the same lessons offered by sports programs. GoodSport includes activity time in which students have opportunities to play a variety of sports and practice the lessons gleaned from the literature.

Conclusion
Recognizing that sports have value as an educational medium is a first step toward creating models that tap into the learning potential of sports. Rather than debating whether youth sports programs are teaching "good" or "bad" lessons to our children and youth, we should be focusing on how to create programs that turn the random lessons that exist within most programs into active, positive learning. The PLUS model offers one proven and effective way to create such programs. The model offers structure, focus, and sound teaching methods, as well as a culture in which children and youth develop good character values and gain self-confidence. In this setting, practitioners gain a greater understanding of the developmental needs of the participants and learn practical, useable tools that can turn a sports experience into a learning experience that will last a lifetime.
References


Over the past 30 years, Jeffrey Pratt Beedy, Ed.D., has strung together a list of accomplishments in athletics and education. After skiing professionally in the early 1970s, he received a doctorate in 1988 from Harvard University. He founded Sports PLUS in 1990 to promote and develop the use of sport as an education medium, and launched GoodSports After School (formerly Sports PLUS After School) in 1995. Dr. Beedy is currently headmaster at New Hampton School, in New Hampton, NH.

Tom Zierk turned an early career as a charter boat captain into director of publishing at Project Adventure, Inc. He became involved in working with youth and sports while serving as the editor of Jeff Beedy’s book Sports PLUS: Developing Youth Sport Programs that Teach Positive Values. He graduated from U. Mass. Boston in 1985 and did post-graduate work at Radcliffe College. Tom became managing director of Sports PLUS in 1999.
For 13 years, Roca, Inc. staff members have been on an incredible journey of discovery and practice, learning and growing with the young people and families we serve. Our journey is guided by our mission to promote social justice through the creation of opportunities with young people and families so that they can lead healthy and happy lives. Our practices are formed by experience and knowledge gained, as well as with the resources of best practices in youth development, to which we are contributing.

Notice that we say journey “with” young people and families. They join with us as partners and fellow journeyers and help us, as much as we do them, to learn and to find our way in a complex and challenging multicultural world.

Roca, Inc. is a multicultural youth, family, and human development organization based in Chelsea, Massachusetts, with a second site in the nearby city of Revere. The name “Roca” is a Spanish word meaning rock or foundation, and it is more than an allusion to what we have come to mean for youth and families. Roca is about community and self-empowerment, which are not easy concepts to convey and develop in a world that often doesn’t recognize the capacity and value of young people to comprehend and acquire those concepts. At Roca we encourage strength and stability among youth and families who all too often believe that they have neither of these characteristics.

Chelsea and Revere are two neighboring communities located just north of Boston. Each is riddled with a host of similar social, economic, and public health challenges. Both cities have undergone significant demographic changes within the past two decades—changes that have brought a great richness of diversity for each community, but also greater challenges, including the need for multicultural sensitivities, outreach and inclusion, and for the fullest level of participation possible from every segment of the community in order to address the sometimes staggering social and civic issues threatening to overwhelm these communities.

Roca’s 13th birthday, in February 2001, was cause for celebration and reflection. We celebrated our ability to live our mission and to meet our goals and to be a vital part of the community. We also celebrated the diversity of the young people and their families who join with us each day to meet their own goals. We continually strive to live our vision of young people and families thriving and leading change.

Roca has become a nationally recognized model for developing young leaders through the promotion of social justice, opportunity, and community change. Our vision and goals are clear:

- Encourage and promote individual development
- Transform the peer context through youth development and leadership
- Transform the community context through organizing and family involvement

As an open institution, Roca’s buildings and programs are open to all. Our work involves many activities and approaches, including street work and peacemaking circles. As an open institution, there is an incredible level of freedom with equal levels of responsibility and expectations. As an open institution, Roca is culturally dynamic. We embrace cultural differences and embody a collective and optimal mechanism for positive change.
We have high expectations of ourselves and of the youth and families who come to Roca. Within this open institution, we strive to create and maintain a multicultural democracy. This is not an easy task, however. Just what is a “multicultural democracy”? According to executive director Molly Baldwin,

Multicultural democracy . . . is the practice of self-governance by all people who live together. It is the effort for a just world. I find myself continually astounded at the richness of Roca—all that is different, all that is one. It is powerful and engaging. It is challenging and daring. It is both our privilege and responsibility to share what we have learned and carry on for the future. It is our humanity that brings us together; it is our differences that bring us depth and brilliance.

Roca works with youth and families of Puerto Rican, Haitian, Dominican, Central and South American, Cambodian, African-American, Afro-Caribbean, Cape Verdean, Moroccan, and Caucasian heritage; as well as recent newcomers from the war-torn countries of Bosnia, Croatia, and Somalia. According to Malika Bey, the leader of Roca’s newcomer’s programming,

Staff [at Roca] are diverse. Each person brings a different culture. Roca respects everyone’s culture. We have the freedom to celebrate our own cultures. We allow other people to celebrate their cultures. The Cambodian women went to the Somali women’s aerobics. Then one of the Cambodian women spoke French, and one of the Somali women spoke French and they started talking to one another.

Our programs not only celebrate diversity, but also find ways to use the strength and richness of diversity in our daily activities, such as:

• Offer culture-specific and multicultural celebrations and classes

• Reach out and partner with many different groups of people, both within our staff and volunteer populations and in the larger community

• Learn about and deal with the effects of trauma from war, religious persecution, and the impact of acculturation

• Hold peacemaking circles to discuss difficult community issues in an open and supportive environment

• Promote and support youth leadership

Peacemaking Circles
Earlier we referred our use of peacemaking circles. Inherent in most cultures, the peacemaking circles process has been used and kept alive by aboriginal peoples across the world. In practice today, the peacemaking circles process is a method used in relationship development, healing, community building, and restorative justice efforts. The premise of the circles process is to bring people together in an alternative process of communication.

It is our understanding that the most powerful opportunity of the peacemaking circles process is the capacity to promote democracy. The circles are founded on specific values and the goal of inclusion. There are four key aspects of the circle that allow the circles process to literally make democracy work through the empowerment of participation by all people:

1. Circles help people and communities build effective participatory skills of listening, speaking, and decision making with which to address conflict and differences.

2. Circles include the historically disenfranchised—young people, parents, those with little or no education, those from poor communities, and others. In the circles, all people are equal.

3. The circle process itself provides a safe place for people to address and overcome their anger, pain, harm, and/or hopelessness in ways that allow the full benefits of participation, thus ensuring the inclusion of people who have been unable to participate in the past.

4. Participants who come together in community establish their own rules, expectations, and values of participation, which increases both individual and collective commitment.

There is mounting evidence that the exclusion of democratic participation can and does result in violence, a sense of helplessness, and lack of diverse leadership. The circles process provides a powerful alternative, thus allowing the promise of community building and the commitment of participation to become real. Peacemaking circles are increasingly becoming one of Roca’s critical strategies for living a multicultural democracy.
We use the circles as a management tool at Roca. Each of our management team meetings is conducted in the circle. Human resource issues are dealt with in circle. Our board of directors meets in the circle. It is a time-consuming process because everyone has a say; everyone is equal in the process and the simple fact that no one can speak when someone else is speaking makes us listen more closely and not rush forward with our own agendas. This is a powerful process to bring to young people, and the messages are even more powerful: youth have a place to be and to speak; each one is equal; they all can contribute and lead.

The use of circles allows for a sense of self-determination in the community, as the peacemaking circles empower the community with a sense that they are able to effect positive change. This creates significant opportunities for hope and optimism within the individuals and the community by establishing a collective transformational relationship process that promotes belonging (a sense of connection for people) and generosity (a sense of purpose of life and generosity of spirit).

Peacemaking circles, as a restorative justice tool, help individuals and communities think together about crime and our response to crime, violence, and other vital community issues in a different way. Lack of a sense of belonging and a sense of community may well be at the core of many of society’s problems, and we believe that we have a realistic alternative way to address those problems while involving all segments of the community—especially the young and the disenfranchised.

Roca: A Productive Environment

I see Roca as a second home. I think about what it is to be a young person, today, and a parent, and a staff member in a safe place. Imagine what you can do knowing that you are safe and supported.

—Sandra Ramirez, Street Outreach Worker

Roca’s highly successful history of community organizing has culminated in the creation and ongoing operation of five unique, innovative programs and one overarching coalition. Programming consists of a powerful combination of interdisciplinary arts, recreational activities, health promotion and disease prevention, educational/vocational programs, parenting education, street outreach, leadership skills training, and community organizing. Roca intensively serves 700 youth and 300 parents each year, and provides outreach and education to an additional 5,000 youth and 10,000 parents and adult community members. With street work, community organizing, and peacemaking circles used in each of the five core programs and the coalition, Roca demonstrates coherent and unique approaches to serving youth, families, and community.

The framework for all of our work is based on our core values of belonging, generosity, competence, and independence.

We believe that when an individual and a community have a sense of belonging, values such as multiculturalism, diversity, respect, love, safety, and inclusion will be visible.

Similarly, when an individual and a community have a sense of generosity, values such as peacemaking, faith, hope, integrity, and empathy will be visible.

Competence and independence are reflected when an individual and a community have a sense of belonging and generosity.

As a vision- and value-led organization, Roca’s programming is based on our central values and mission, and the programs are the vehicles for delivering our vision, values, intentions, and actions. The transformational relationships with youth that we strive to cultivate become the place to unite values and actions.

Roca Chelsea Leadership Program

For a long time the kids wanted to belong to something. Roca gives them a place and they know that the people of Roca will be there for them. You get that from talking to the kids.

—Officer Kenny Pires, Chelsea Police Department

The Chelsea Leadership Program’s (CLP) mission is to build relationships with young people so that they have the opportunity to develop and change themselves and their community in positive ways. CLP operates after school and in the evenings to promote a variety of programming, including street outreach, arts and culture classes, sports activities, education enrichment, and health and leadership development for youth ages 12 to 24.

Programs are designed to support and challenge youth from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and competencies. Primary strategies include raising the next generation of leaders, supporting youth leadership programming, and involving youth in all aspects of community development. One Roca youth member remembers:

It was the first time I was asked: "What do you think?" I was 15 years old! You were
told, here is the challenge, and you can deal with it.

Three of Roca's seven senior managers are former youth leaders, with seven more former Roca youth members holding leadership and supervisory positions, along with two board members. They are models for the youth with whom we engage. Much is expected of all of these young people, and they can and have met the challenges—not always easily, not always the first time, but they step up and accept responsibility and accountability.

All of CLP's activities are youth led. For example, a 14-year-old leads the break-dancing class. Project Victory has 45 youth working in collaboration with the schools. These youth operate an after-school program and work to keep youth in school. Young people who have little support or encouragement from schools or in their families come to Roca, where they plan and organize events, teach classes, tutor their peers. As the youth are treated with respect, they act with respect. We see this every day and we want the world to see this.

**Roca Revere Leadership Program**

*How do you find yourself belonging to something and belonging to the world? It is a process, belonging. How you fit in with yourself, I am Cambodian, who am I? Somewhere we have to identify ourselves, and then look at the multicultural world.*

——Saroeurn Phong, Director Street Outreach

The Roca Revere Leadership Program (RLP) was established in 1991, in response to a young Cambodian's cry for help with the increased gang activity among Cambodian refugee youth living in Revere. Since the early 1990s, RLP has become increasingly characterized by its strong Asian (primarily Cambodian) youth leadership, and by its extensive community partnerships with numerous hospitals, schools, city governments, and police organizations.

In addition to their concerns about gang violence, the young leaders of RLP had also been concerned about increasing risk behaviors, and the lack of knowledge about political and civic issues in their community. Ongoing efforts to address these problems brought another important issue to light: the need, in this predominately Cambodian community, to address historical and cultural contexts. Challenged by cultural barriers, the generation gap, and resistance within the community, RLP's young leaders broadened their outreach and focus to include cultural awareness, Asian-American leadership, addressing and remembering the history of the "killing fields" of Cambodia, immigration and deportation issues, voter registration, and city governance issues. Training was expanded to reflect these changing needs. Youth leaders participate in a variety of Roca's community events, citywide advisory committees, and task force activities. RLP has been a model for dynamic, evolving, and responsive programming.

RLP's goals are to build bridges between young people and the community, between the Cambodian community and the City of Revere, and between the Cambodian community and the larger Asian-American community.

Ongoing meetings are held with the mayor and other city officials. There is now a willingness to communicate; when there wasn't this willingness, we were dedicated to getting as many people to the table as possible to keep a dialogue going. The mayor has spoken at Roca's annual Cambodian New Year's celebration, and the Cambodian community has become more deeply involved in the larger community through participation in various civic activities, through voter registration, through the public school system, and through the interactions with the Community Building Team for Chelsea and Revere.

These steps have been incremental and much slower than we want them to be, but our work is also about relationship building and trust, and knowing that different cultures approach the process in different ways and choose to participate in different ways, and we have to respect that. The steps and the trust take time, and in a society in which instant gratification is the norm, this is a very different way to be.

**Roca Youth STAR Program**

*To me, Roca is a starting point. It's a catalyst that just pushes you to take the first step. At Roca, you are welcome regardless of who you are or what you believe. It is a place of belonging and this is important to me because I never experienced that before. I got involved with Roca because I liked what I saw. I came back to Roca as an adult because I wanted to be a better person.*

——Thai Taing, Director of Youth STAR Crew

Roca's Youth STAR Program is an AmeriCorps-funded program that brings together 30 young people, ages 16 to 24. Serving on one of three teams, these young people develop, plan, implement, and evaluate community service projects in the cities of Chelsea and Revere, in the areas of human services and the environment. The teams run an on-site youth
health clinic at Roca in collaboration with a major local hospital; distribute HIV/AIDS information and harm reduction materials; promote citizen recycling efforts and wetlands protection; and operate a food pantry. Youth STAR members also focus on their own education and develop skills during their year of service.

Begun in 1992, Youth STAR was founded on a model of gang and street intervention, and continues to work with at-risk young people. Members are from diverse backgrounds and have had a wide range of challenges and life experiences. Historically, more than 30 percent of the members have been gang- or street-involved, and 25 percent are young parents. Team members often have a history of substance abuse, and come from circumstances in which families and/or friends are engaged in high-risk behaviors.

One example of the work and impact of Youth STAR is the Peer Action AIDS sessions. Youth STAR members are educated about HIV/AIDS and provide accurate information to their peers—young people who come to Roca or who are out on the streets—and talk with them about assessing and reducing personal risk levels. The youth with clinical staff from Massachusetts General Hospital, Chelsea and Partners Healthcare, and the AIDS Action Committee—the premier AIDS/HIV education, service and advocacy agency in Greater Boston—to gain the information and resources they need to reach out to their peers and talk confidentially and accurately. In doing so, the Youth STAR members are developing skills of their own: communication, leadership, responsibility, follow-through, and a sense of community.

Roca Healthy Families Program

When I found out I was pregnant, I found out about the Healthy Families Program. My home visitor, Stephanie, came over every week. She drove me to the hospital the day I had my baby. It was like having a close friend who would do anything for you. Now I am a member of Youth STAR and I see the people that I'm helping. Last weekend when I was working at the food pantry, a woman said to me, "I really appreciate what you've done, you've helped me out a lot." That made me feel really good.

—Angel Plunkett, young mother and Youth STAR Member

Children's Trust Fund, is designed to give young parents support and educational opportunities. Program goals are to reduce the rates of child abuse and neglect, improve infant and toddler health, and increase the educational attainment and economic self-sufficiency of young parents. The Family Education Program is an integrated education program for parents and their children.

Healthy Families has begun a Young Father's Group. It is part support, part informational, and part sharing. These young men want to be good fathers and too often they haven't had a role model to follow, or they have been so overwhelmed with all of the things going on in their life that they haven't had a place and a space to become what they want to be. This group typifies Roca's mission in so many ways; promoting justice through opportunities with young families to lead healthy and happy lives.

Community Building Team:
Coalition for Youth and Families

Roca is important for my kids. It is the closest thing that they are going to get at such a young age, to experience the world. Because of the rich diversity, the constant visitors from all the different parts of the country and the world, they can't help but have a wealth of experience and exposure.

—Danille Calvo, former Roca youth leader

The Coalition for Youth and Families is a two-city coalition uniting the community into action around the issues of teen pregnancy prevention, school-linked services and youth development. The Coalition funds direct service programs, provides public education campaigns, hosts educational events, and provides resources and materials. It also facilitates a two-city process to bring together diverse community coalitions to provide quality services, to leverage additional resources, and to promote systemic changes in support of children, youth, and families.

Launched in 1988 in Chelsea, the Coalition for Youth and Families was created to implement a community-wide teen pregnancy prevention strategy. The Coalition combined community organizing with a powerful center-based model for direct programming. Expanded to include the City of Revere, it grew and evolved into the Roca, Inc. of today. The Coalition still exists and has increased strategies used to address teen pregnancy and continues to be a model of community organizing.

The Education Organizing Campaign is part of the Coalition's work, bringing together a diverse
group of parents to help them understand and work on school issues. Education is an important issue at any time for parents, but in Massachusetts, it is at a critical crossroad. The state initiated a standardized testing system known as MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System), and students who fail the benchmark tests will not be promoted and will not graduate. For immigrants and newcomers to Massachusetts who have not participated in the state’s education system in the past, there is a tremendous sense of confusion and exclusion. They send their children to school to learn, not to fail. So, Roca’s Education Organizing Campaign brings together parents, school officials—including the school superintendents of both cities—and youth, to help everyone understand why young people are feeling so disconnected from school and how parents can and must play an important role in helping young people succeed in school and in life.

**Thirteen Years of Demonstrated Success and Ongoing Challenges**

In 13 years, Roca has grown tremendously, as evidenced by the increase in programming, a growing budget, our renovated building in Chelsea, and the addition of our community center in Revere. Recognized by local community, national, and international leaders, Roca has had the honor of hosting a variety of leaders, including U.S. Senator John Kerry and Sister Helen Prejean, Samech Mahagho sananda—an internationally renowned Buddhist monk, state Senator Thomas Birmingham, other state and local officials, and national and international leaders in the restorative justice movement. But our work remains rooted in the community and in the impact that we can have on each young person and each family that we have the privilege to know.

Roca’s work is far from being done, but we believe that in sharing the lessons learned each day as we work with young people, we can extend the impact of our work. We are living lives made richer and more challenging by working together as a diverse, multicultural community of youth, families, staff, and community partners.

The work is hard and the challenges are many. Right outside our doors we see acts of bigotry and prejudice. We struggle to present our work in such a light as to generate the support and funding needed to continue that work, knowing that the very things that make Roca unique and innovative are often cited as those things that make Roca “too different and radical.” We are committed to evaluating our work, and through our partnerships with the Surdna Foundation and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation we are developing the tools and the capacity to evaluate and share the lessons learned. This is time- consuming, soul-searching, and demanding, but we strongly believe that what we are learning must be shared because it works. And, finally, the community work that we are doing is so important. We must convey the ideas that including others doesn’t mean excluding some, and that in diversity there is richness and strength, not dilution and weakness.

If there is one overarching lesson that we have learned, it is that there is another way to be in the world—there is a way to live, work, and thrive that is based in a sense of belonging and sharing and building community. It is a way of social justice, of respect for young people, families, and community; it is about recognizing and celebrating differences, yet having a sense of belonging. We invite others to join with us in this journey of discovery and to bring their own lessons and experiences.

This article was written by Sandra L. Tacke, Roca’s director of development, with contributions by other Roca staff, board members, and Roca supporters.
Youth Communication in Atlanta

Richard D. Lakes, Beth M. Weiss

VOX is a youth-driven newspaper that covers pressing community problems and provides exciting opportunities for young people to become meaningful partners in civic life and to speak out on issues that concern them.

The popular press and television media frequently portray young adults in dysfunctional roles as criminals, thugs, and delinquents. In fact, urban teens are portrayed as a "fear and seemingly incurable stereotype... pregnant, drug-addicted, violent, fatherless, welfare dependent, poor, black, and uneducated" (Way, 1998, p. 1). Many practitioners involved in the research and practice of Community Youth Development, however, know that young people can effect healthy community development through face-to-face communication and the free-flowing exchange of information. In partnerships with adults, young people contribute to proactive strategies and decision-making approaches that lead to improvements in the quality of their lives.

This article profiles a youth development project that involves teenagers as active citizens in the Atlanta community. By circulating their ideas through the monthly newspaper, VOX, young people learn the functional skills of writing and speaking and a deeper critical approach to voicing their concerns through issues of consequence to them, such as the problem of homeless and runaway youth. According to 16-year-old founding member Rachel Hall:

VOX doesn't just mean speaking out; it means beings listened to. It means having your feelings legitimized. It means beings part of a community movement with other teens, and learning with each other about the city and its needs (YC Brochure, n.d.).

The newspaper uses about 60 teen writers and artists and publishes over 28,000 copies per month, distributed free to schools, health centers, youth centers, and libraries.

Background
Rachel Alterman Wallack was interning for New York publisher Scholastic, Inc., when she learned about Youth Communication (YC), a nationwide, informal network of youth development organizations serving teenagers. A YC teen paper called New Youth Connections caught her attention, and she said (Weiss with Wallack, Personal Interview, October 3, 2000):

It just struck a chord with me. The opportunity to work as part of a group that helps teenagers speak out and treats young people as valued citizens was really important to me personally. I knew there wasn't anything like that here. So I was part of a group of teens and volunteers who launched VOX in 1993.

Thirteen teenagers and ten adults incorporated Youth Communication in Atlanta. Among their first tasks was a peer survey to find out what young people wanted in a citywide teen newspaper. The result of feedback from 500 teens was VOX—Latin for "voice." Based on survey input, the program responds to the "sense of powerlessness that youth, especially minority and disadvantaged youth, feel everyday" (YC Survey, 1993).

It is typical, in looking at similar agencies in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, to see a strong, single-minded, founding director whose commitment and personal devotion will move the program forward. Rachel's leadership and passion drove the project:

Once we had the results of the youth needs assessment, I was driven by the interests...
and needs articulated by Atlanta's teens. The needs they identified became my passion.

Like other similar projects around the country, one challenge for YC was to create an agency that could be sustained through probable staff changes. Wallack believes that the answer rests in board development and a secure, diversified funding strategy (Weiss with Wallack, Personal Interview, May 3, 2001);

While it is typical for any new nonprofit to be driven by a charismatic leader, YC has demonstrated planned growth from the beginning. Early funding focused on programming priority and we had only one staff person. More recently full-time staff has been added as part of the strategic plan, anticipating eventual administrative change. From the outset, the program administration has involved teens, requiring a kind of decentralized vision of leadership.

At the beginning our most immediate challenge was locating and funding a new space. This was not a small task: the office location is crucial to YC's continuing ability to attract teens. Space must be central, safe, and convenient to mass transit. In Atlanta, that real estate is geographically limited and expensive. A search committee of board volunteers and teens viewed potential sites and, eventually, negotiated "the deal." By April 2001, and against many odds, a new space was secured. Proximity to food and the freedom to express themselves in the building through decoration and décor were priorities added by the teens.

A Youth-Driven Mission

Youth leadership is core to YC's mission. Discussing this with Rachel, she is impatient with the suggestion that involving youth is some great feat. Asked why other agencies talk about "bringing youth to the table" but never seem to achieve it, Rachel shrugged, "You have to meet when they can meet. Our board works after school and during weekend hours." For Rachel, the matter is not rocket science. Board member, mother, and former high school counselor Andy Sarvady remarks (Weiss to Sarvady, October 25, 2000):

I have never been in a situation where the concern and the ideas of teens were of paramount importance in the running of an organization. Our teen board members [are] vital links between those we are serving and those we're enlisting in service. Youth voice is not only our mission; it is essential to every aspect of our success.

Youth involvement has paid dividends in terms of successful program development. VOX has been operational since the agency's founding and Youth Communication has been continually youth driven. Young people are the decision makers; young people write the project plans. In 1998, youth staff looked for an avenue into their community. Their interest in "doing more" became the new community action program component. The original mission was strengthened.

Wallack continues to be adamant that the organization remains youth-based and youth-run. "VOX gives kids the chance for expression and a place to be heard and validated," she says. "They founded it and adults facilitate it."

Youth engagement has drawbacks, however. While accommodating youth, the board may be missing the involvement of influential community and business leaders. YC's board challenge is to add needed adult members and working committee opportunities. Youth staff and adult volunteers must create a plan and infrastructure if Youth Communication is to meet its goal of agency sustainability. Adults are partners in the project and provide financial viability, managerial savvy, and a long-term vision. Even the most committed youth staffers are involved for only a few years, moving on to college and work after high school. The adult volunteers must take responsibility for carrying out the board's strategic plans.

This sentiment was well stated by Sheppard Barbash, former board member and current supporter (Barbash, 1998):

The teens' and adults' roles are neither tokens nor void of contextual support. When the teens and adults both play their roles, magic happens. It's about tapping into the best of their ideas; their role is to come up with the ideas and we adults challenge them to pursue their best.

The Programs

Youth Communications programs are conducted by young people, ages 13-19, after school and on Saturdays, with support from trained adults. The YC experience includes peer training, research, self-expression, youth-designed workshops, and community service and organizing. The goal of all programs and activities is to develop teenagers as citizens.
Through Community Action: Organizing and Service youth involved in YC projects put ideas of youth voice into practice. Current initiatives include a “Know Your Rights” campaign and the “Street Action” project, which provides outreach and training to homeless and runaway youth. The community service projects and diversity training encourages teens to reflect on their role as citizens, addresses prejudice, and builds tolerance, understanding, and self-esteem.

The Peer-to-Peer Writing Workshops and Self Expression Workshops are programs that serve 300 youth in schools, health facilities, foster care group homes, and other settings. Giving voice to participants, teens delivering workshops receive training and coaching in communication, leadership, and facilitation skills.

Peer Support Groups deepen the relationships among program participants. The Junior/Senior Peer Group, for example, helps youth set and achieve goals through collegiate planning.

Epiphany, a girls’ group, offers monthly meetings that help inspire and empower young women through discussion of cultural issues and personal experiences. The Guys Group was created and facilitated by three current members and is already attracting new male members.

Two new groups were formed in 2000 – 2001 responding to the teens’ ongoing program evaluation, “Wishes and Appreciations.” The Alphabet Soup Group addresses needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning teens and their allies.

Other programming includes:

- Summer Journalism and Community Action Workshop, a four-week, internship-style series that teaches journalism skills and engagement in community action. Participants have the opportunity to write freelance for professional media and are encouraged to stay on as VOX staff for the school year.

- Mentor Program and Vocational Development gives adults an opportunity to volunteer as coaches and to form meaningful relationships with teens. Through the summer teens and mentors share field trips and may work on freelance writing efforts. During the school year, mentors coach teens through the reporting and revision process. Teens are also encouraged to shadow a mentor at work.

- Social Services Support, Referral, and Crisis Intervention is provided as needed for YC participants by the executive director.

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Programming that Serves the Community

The power of YC programming is peer-to-peer communication. YC fills an information void for youth and serves the Atlanta community in many ways. For instance:

- YC teaches more than 100 teenagers to communicate effectively with peers and adults each year. Teens practice teamwork and leadership and learn important skills, which help them make effective life decisions.

- YC provides free, easy access to information for 80,000 readers each month. More than 200 high schools, health centers, youth centers, libraries, and the Department of Juvenile Justice use VOX in their classes and programs.

- YC projects youth voices in the community through other media, community organizing, the arts, and other leadership activities. VOX members are encouraged to communicate their opinions and thoughts to the mainstream press. Youth writers are frequent contributors to the “New Attitudes” youth column in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution.

- YC’s recent effort, www.youthcommunication-vox.org, represents the agency’s theory and methodology in practice. Teens worked together to plan and implement this project, forming a team to define, design, and code the site with the help of adult alumni. They not only trained each other to create a skill base for the project; these teens helped peers outside the program raise their voices. The price: the project took longer to complete than anticipated as the group explored its expanding and changing interests. The payoff: a site that reflects the work, the commitment, and, true to its mission, the voice of YC’s teen participants.
Youth Communication reaches out and embraces rarely heard voices, encouraging self-expression, leadership, and participation. “They come,” Wallack explains, “because they own this place. Everybody gets heard. Every voice is equally important.” Once in the program, 80 percent continue through their senior year of high school—a retention rate that substantiates the success of YC’s theory and methods.

Building Self and Community:
The Power of the Written Word

Community Youth Development (CYD) denotes a movement away from the deficit model toward a holistic/ecological approach to building healthy lives and neighborhoods. What this means is that the words of youth—their voices—are taken seriously and embraced wholeheartedly in development work. Young people’s contributions to community through service projects have been noted widely in the literature, yet adults in general (youth workers included) fail to recognize that skill-based activities have a heuristic. Doing community gardening, for instance, children and teens not only beautify the environment; they learn valuable social lessons grafted onto the landscape of human struggle. Seedlings require nurturing and guidance, patience and care—as do young people.

When integrated into the leadership structures of community-based organizations, young people use their skills and insights in decision-making and capacity-building processes that are devoted to social change. Still, an initial step in healthy development means releasing the fears and failures that keep humans locked into despair. Volunteer organizations like YC offer safe spaces where young people are encouraged to speak their minds and pen narratives of self that are valued as statements of participatory praxis.

In *A City Year*, for example, author and participant-observer Suzanne Goldsmith (1993) reflected upon the loss of Boston-based City Year team member Tyrone, age 21, shot to death outside his apartment building after returning from a party. She writes (p. xi):

> We had all shared something with Tyrone: sore muscles and sweat, a few jokes, lunchtime banter, satisfaction with work completed, frustration with tasks more challenging than they appeared. Tyrone was real to us. We knew the sound of his laughter, the timbre of his voice, the way he walked, and what he ate for lunch. When Tyrone died, we cared.

Interestingly, Tyrone’s journal surfaced several weeks after his funeral, on loan from his mother, and
was read aloud by Tony, the team coordinator. Tyrone writes about the joy of working on a vacant lot revitalization project, a run-down pocket park, and the pride of belonging to a group of a dozen peers who perform “rapidly with the energy of 12 mustangs moving through the garden and playground” (p. 103). Goldsmith notes the boy’s upbeat tenor: “We are not the perfect team nor are we the worst team but at least we accomplish the goals.” A simple journal entry, a window into one’s private thoughts, these words compel the listener to revisit interpersonal relationships of harmony or discord.

Youth Communication staffers in Atlanta similarly build an esprit de corps, where social affiliations are reflected in the pages of their newspaper. However, rather than penning thoughts in dark, private places—in secretive journal entries—VOX teens use dialogue to build self and wholeness, agency, and empowerment. It takes courage to shed inhibitions as critical viewpoints are held up to the light of day, scrutinized by peers and the reading public alike. But Community Youth Development projects such as YC empower kids with ownership of knowledge. In these settings, young people move from empty thoughts and inane conversation into a forum for social analysis and democratic action (Peterson, 1991).

Larson (2000, p. 170) suggests that initiative is a “core quality of positive youth development,” which means that personal agency and capacity-building activities are enhanced through projects like VOX. In other words, teen participants at Youth Communication are immersed in a rich environment leading to self-empowerment and growth. Despite its chal-

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**Literary Practices and the Role of Girls**

Gender scholars point to the development of voice through acts of writing whereby girls make meaning of family and friendships at school and at home (Belenky et al. 1986; Finders 1997). For instance, adolescent female readers use literacy practices to resist and contest—or accept and accommodate—images of femininity presented in popular magazines and romance novels (Carrington & Bennett 1996; Christian-Smith 1993). As females learn when to modulate or silence the exploration of their voices they produce “separate voices depending on the context, audience, purpose, and theme for both speaking and writing” (Blake 1997, p. 26).

Key-ke Woodyard (1996), VOX staff writer and high school junior, presents the exciting concept of multiple voices in a narrative of self, incorporating three distinct yet interrelated personalities. Keyta, the “good girl,” is filled with respect for family who excels at school with ambitions to attend college. Keyta “follows a straight line” and is a role model for academic success among the younger siblings. Derange is the “bad girl, always chilling and being herself,” street-smart and worldly who is tough and troublesome. Derange hangs with her crew, smokes and drinks, and gets into fights. Keyke, the writer, “likes to dance, play games, and loves being around people,” has high energy, and is more free-spirited than Keyta. Interestingly, each identity surfaces at times to rule her life, exhibiting the storms-and-stresses associated with adolescent development. Key-ke notes,

> All sides of me like to be heard, but they can’t. It seems like no matter who I’m around, one or the other one is not accepted. So I’m always in a tug of war. No one really wins, but it’s a constant struggle.

During one difficult time in her life, Key-ke became Derange, started cutting school, stopped going to church, and did not write for VOX. She threw up walls, cut herself off from family and real friends, and “got used to playing the hard roll. I mean taking no sht and running with the wrong crowd.” After a series of confrontations within the gang, arrests, court appearances, and a brief time in jail, Key-ke began to reevaluate her life, her relationships, and the positive aspects of each identity. From Derange, Key-ke learned to value to strongest of selves, draw upon leadership skills, and honor “the way she never gives up.” From Keyta, Key-ke learned to value school and educational advancement—particularly reading and writing—because the ability to communicate was essential for her chosen profession, journalism. Key-ke realized that putting pen to paper about the things Derange experienced in the streets may “stop other teens from going through what she has been through”:

> Although I have three different sides of my world, they interact with each other. You can say that they cross into each other’s lives to help out.
lenges, YC continues to give young adults the tools to build community while exploring issues of identity and belonging. In this sense, YC offers a democratic encounter: one that fully humanizes the soul, gives meaning to teamwork, and provides space for dreams, hopes, and possibilities.

References


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Making an ImpACT: The Power of Community-Based Service Learning

CURTIS OGDEN

Community service learning is recognized by many teachers, students, policymakers, youth workers, and community activists to be one of the most exciting educational and social initiatives sweeping this country. This chapter describes ImpACT, a community-based service learning program, and how it may inform school-based programs.

For anyone who has had their ears tuned to recent discussions about school and social reform in this country, it should be no news that community and service are buzzwords. Fewer people may know about the growing service learning movement, which has engaged millions of K–12 and college students in service activity tied to their education.

Service Learning Overview

The antecedents to the current service learning movement in this country are many and go back perhaps as far as the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s. The last 40 years in particular have witnessed the birth of numerous local, national, and international volunteer initiatives, such as VISTA and the Peace Corps. More recently, the National and Community Service Acts of 1990 and 1993 have sought to create a nationwide service system to engage Americans of all ages as volunteers in their communities. Such legislation was intended to renew the ethic of civic responsibility, create more service opportunities, and remove barriers for citizens to involve themselves in increased volunteer activity (Sogawa & Halperin, 1993, p. 1). An integral part of this was a push for service learning.

Service learning has been defined and implemented in numerous ways. In general, however, it refers to both a kind of education and a philosophy. With respect to education, it is experiential in nature, and includes both action (community service) and reflection (writing or thinking about the service performed or provided). The pioneers of the service learning movement emphasized the need for the practical application of academic skills in real-life situations and in meeting actual community needs (Alliance for Service Learning, 1995, p. 2). Service learning as a philosophy promotes the notion that community service as civic engagement is key to both practicing effective citizenship skills and to understanding and addressing the roots of social problems.

In a school-based setting, many teachers and administrators look at service learning as a means of revitalizing stagnant curricula and engaging young minds and bodies. According to Carol Kinsley, in her article “Community Service Learning as Pedagogy” (1993, p. 53):

Many educators have noted that American youth are isolated and alienated from society and they recommend community service learning as part of their schooling as a way to reconnect youth and help them gain a sense of community.

Community-based service learning is most often implemented by community agencies and organizations and shares many of the same goals as school-based initiatives. As increasing numbers of schools and agencies embrace service learning, some practitioners (including myself) worry that it might lose its potential as a tool for social change. In this article, along with presenting the community-based model I helped to develop, I will also discuss how a youth-centered and holistic approach to service learning is effective in achieving profound individual and social transformation.
The Roots of ImPACT

In 1994, I returned to the United States after having spent 18 months in southern Africa doing community and youth development work. While doing research on and advocacy for youth living in and working on the streets of Harare, Zimbabwe, I was introduced to a rather extraordinary and empowering approach to education. This approach sought to build upon the preexisting knowledge and strengths of individuals and aimed to develop their consciousness of the world around them. Typically used with adult learners, these techniques were being implemented with children and adolescents by my colleagues at Streets Ahead, a nonprofit organization supporting marginalized youth and their families. Over time, I learned that many of the so-called “street children” in Harare had remarkable street smarts and were, in fact, quite skilled, rather than the helpless objects of charity that many people made them out to be. This is not to say that street life was enjoyable or preferable. Rather, it was an indication that it was necessary to start where the young people were by both respecting and tapping into their hard-earned experiences.

My colleagues and I worked with these youth and members of their communities (often high-density suburbs or townships) to identify and articulate specific challenges in their lives and help them to come up with their own solutions. The empowering techniques I learned were inspired by the writings of the Brazilian popular educator, Paulo Freire, whose work validated the knowledge of disenfranchised people and helped them to take control of their own lives. One result of our efforts in Harare was a community-based school, which used local resources and designed its own curriculum so that its students could develop appropriate skills to meet real-life needs.

Through these experiences I began to look critically at my own education in the United States. Like many of my generational peers, I felt alienated from my ability to be self-directed, or to analyze and act upon my world. I remember, not long after returning from Harare, coming across the following passage written by the social activist Jane Addams (1910, p. 1):

*We have in America a fast-growing number of cultivated young people who have no recognized outlet for their active faculties. They hear constantly of the great social maladjustment, but no way is provided for them to change it, and their uselessness hangs about them heavily.*

Despite the fact that Addams was writing in the early 1900s, her words struck a chord in me and, along with the lessons I learned in Harare, inspired me to apply my experiences to youth work here in the United States. When I discovered the Learning Web in Ithaca, New York, in the spring of 1994, it was clear that I had found the right place to build on my vision.

The Learning Web was founded in 1972 as a project of the Center for Religion, Ethics, and Social Policy (CRESP) at Cornell University. Now independent, its mission is to provide young people, many of whom are disengaged from school and society, with experiential learning opportunities. The Learning Web apprenticeship program was designed to connect young people with adult mentors in the community for the purpose of learning about and interacting with the world around them. Through a guided process of vocational and avocational exploration, young people not only learn work skills, but also are empowered to be more self-directed and confident in their learning and lives. Essentially, it is the young participants who define each experience by expressing their interests to staff, who then find an appropriate placement. This youth-centered approach carried over into the development of a service learning program in 1992. From 1994 to 1998 I was coordinator of this program, which came to be known as ImPACT (or the Importance of Participating, Acting, and Coming Together).

ImPACT Essentials

The Learning Web's philosophy meshed well with my idea of building a program that would empower young people to contribute to and change their community. However, as I plunged into local high schools to muster enthusiasm and participation, I discovered a potential source of student resistance. Many young people were turned off by both school and participation in their community because they lacked a voice in either setting. Furthermore, I repeatedly heard negative comments about community service, which was identified as boring and often mandatory work, and even a form of punishment. When I asked the young people what might be done to change their feelings, many raised the issue of choice. They had little say in what went on around them and did not feel very connected to their community. Very rarely were they asked for their thoughts and opinions and many felt they were treated as if they had nothing to offer.

This is where ImPACT began, with voice and choice. Our first goal was to redefine and broaden “participation” to include discussing feelings, thoughts, and experiences before carrying out any service project, thus making service work relevant to the experiences of the participants. In my first recruitment sessions, I started off with two ques-
tions: “What does community service mean to you?” and “What is your ideal form of service?” There were always very different responses to these questions. It became clear that students were interested in ImPACT for a variety of reasons: they wanted to make a difference, to be part of a group, to do something for others, or simply to have something to do. As we discussed the reasons for the differences in people’s perspectives about ideal forms of service, the youth raised issues of impact, intimacy, immediacy, and sustainability. They also identified emotional, cultural, moral, intellectual, and physical considerations in the choice of and reaction to different service opportunities. I attempted to acknowledge all points of view and experiences, hoping to increase student investment and set the stage for a youth-driven approach to service learning.

ImPACT began to run as an extracurricular after-school program, which met twice a week for three hours over a five-month period. Students participated in the program as volunteers and, though they did not get course credit for their involvement, many used the experience to complete assignments for their classes or get extra credit. Part of my role was to keep participants’ teachers informed of our activities in the event that an academic connection might be made. Each group numbered between 10 and 12 students. Overall, the program included the following five stages, which I will discuss in greater detail in the sections that follow:

- Recruitment and introduction to service
- Group building
- Conducting community research
- Selection and implementation of project(s)
- Evaluation and celebration

Recruitment and introduction to service. Recruitment usually entailed classroom presentations or student assemblies and was followed by an informational meeting for interested students. During this meeting I showed a video about young people throughout the United States taking action in their communities. Because the video was produced by, for, and with teens, it appealed to most of the youth who saw it. Afterward, discussion often led to comparisons between the communities and issues portrayed in the video and those of the viewers. This process helped students to identify issues that might be addressed by the new group in their school, and began to make the program relevant to their lives.

Group building. Once a small team was formed, we proceeded with group building exercises, including activities focusing on personal interests and talents. These were done in order to both build relationships and to validate the skills and knowledge that individuals brought to the group. We explored such questions as: “What do you do well and how can you apply your talents to service work?” “What are you interested in and how can we channel these interests into service to the community?” These discussions were open-ended, and expanded the realm of possibilities for action.

Early on in the team-building process, I organized a project to give everyone “a taste of service,” usually in the area of low-income housing renovations. A local volunteer agency provided college student facilitators who introduced each new group to painting or basic maintenance work in local housing units. This experience became a fruitful opportunity for reflection when we later discussed reactions to the project. Many youth enjoyed the experience because they liked working as a group, or they enjoyed painting or doing demolition work. Others were less enthusiastic, claiming that it was only “busy work,” or that working for a couple of hours was not much of a contribution. In one case, a young woman raised the question of whether we might be doing free work for a deadbeat landlord. These discussions raised participants’ awareness of the complexity of service work, as well as considerations to be made in the selection of future projects.

Conducting community research. The next step, community investigation, allowed participants to develop a meaningful context for their work and appreciation of the issues at play in their community. Various techniques, including observation exercises, walking tours, attending public events, skimming local newspapers, conducting “on the street” interviews, handing out surveys, talking to local historians and elders, and studying maps, contributed to the research portion of each project. Participants also became familiar with “asset mapping”—i.e., identifying resources in the community such as social service agencies. Together, these initiatives helped to deepen our knowledge of the community and focus our efforts.

Selection and implementation of project(s). After two or three weeks of research, the time arrived for the group to decide which project(s) it wished to pursue. Our goal was to achieve consensus, and the decision-making process focused on factors such as time, resources, impact, and feasibility. The number and nature of projects varied from group to group and from community to community. Some included joining ongoing initiatives that were organized by other community groups; others were original undertakings. They ran the gamut from the more political to the more “warm and fuzzy.” The list included:
• Lobbying for and establishing a youth chair on a local town board

• Convening a panel of community leaders to discuss issues affecting youth

• Organizing a benefit concert for family social services

• Producing a magazine on ways youth can contribute to their community

• Restoring historic cemeteries and monuments

• Planting and cultivating a garden for a local soup kitchen

• Doing trail work for nearby state parks

• Removing graffiti from and sprucing up a playground

• Spending time with community elders and taking down oral histories

• Leading workshops with younger children about community service

The process of selection and implementation of projects also included ongoing reflection on the part of both students and staff. As has been widely noted in the literature on service learning, reflection is key to growth and learning through service experiences. IMPACT students thought, talked, and wrote about their experiences throughout the program, often guided by reflection questions presented before, during, and after service activity. For example, before engaging in a given project I asked them to consider goals, expectations, and possible outcomes of their work. What might the short- and long-term effects be? What are you looking forward to? Do you have any fears or doubts? Depending on the nature of the project, we might take a break and discuss our progress thus far. How is it going? Do we need to change our approach at all? With most projects we ended our time together with a closing discussion circle. These sessions generally began with each participant summarizing the experience, or their feelings about it, in a word or a phrase. Then we got into deeper discussion about the project, as I invited each member of the circle to consider any of the following: Did we accomplish our goal? If not, what is there left to do? What was the best part of this experience? What was the worst part? Was there anything surprising and/or challenging? What skills did you use or learn? What could be done better the next time? What did you discover about yourself, others, the community, or the world in general? How can you apply these lessons to other situations? What is the most important “take-away” from this experience? This was also a time for participants to give feedback to one another about their work and contributions, in a critical but constructive manner.

In addition to these discussion circles, participants reflected on their experiences in a number of different ways:

• Keeping journals of their experiences

• Discussing or writing about a quote relevant to the focus of their work

• Watching movies and discussing or writing about the relevance to their experiences

• Speaking with invited journalists about their experiences

• Writing newspaper or newsletter articles

• Presenting their experiences to community leaders and civic groups

• Sharing ideas with other high school or college service groups

• Doing a school project (oral report, written essay, collage) based on their experiences

While planning reflective activities before, after, or between projects was certainly important for learning, in many ways the most meaningful reflection was spontaneous. These moments often occurred during car rides or walks to and from projects. The random fashion in which these dialogues developed contributed to the wide-ranging connections made between our work and the lives of the young participants. Through this process the youth were encouraged to invest their full selves in the program and to look at service and those with whom they worked (or served) in a holistic light.

Evaluation and celebration. By the end of the program cycle, each group developed many insights into the needs of their community, which they were unable to address in our time together. In an effort to capture these insights, I used an evaluative process to not only rate and review our accomplishments, but also make recommendations for future work and projects in the community. Written and verbal evaluations also focused on ways in which the overall program could be improved. Some participants actually
helped plan and give presentations for recruitment at other schools, which brought the process full circle.

I also worked with each group to plan a celebration of our accomplishments. Ultimately, each group planned its own celebration, though I asked that it relate in some way to their service work. One group decided to hold a potluck dinner at an elementary school where it had done a project. We invited local community leaders, family, and friends, and presented a videotape of our efforts and handed out achievement awards to the participants. We also presented a list of recommended community changes to local school and government officials.

The Fruits of Our Labor
I was always struck by the transformations that occurred in the participants and the community with each ImPACT project, and I tried to reflect these back to the group members in our discussions and feedback sessions. Many adults were impressed by the accomplishments of the groups and their desire to take action. City and town officials began to call on group members to offer their insights on community issues, a process that created new roles and confidence for many of the youth (see sidebar below). One young man commented that he “didn’t realize how many people want change and want groups like ImPACT in their neighborhoods.” Through reflections that continued beyond our time together, sometimes at reunions and retreats with other groups and in preparation for various conference presentations, youth discovered that they had grown in many ways. As Hedin and Conrad note, “Learning from service is, like any real learning, highly personal and idiosyncratic, reflecting the potentialities in the learning environment and in the learners themselves” (1987, p. 14). Nonetheless, by and large, ImPACT participants found some common ground for personal development, including:

- A greater ability to analyze problems and assess resources
- The experience of seeing a project through from beginning to end
- An expanded sense of their own potential to be change makers

Reflections on the Learn and Service America Conference

As I sat in front of 50-some pairs of unresponsive eyes, I began to question my initial decision to speak. I’d been a member of a group called ImPACT for two years, and when Curtis invited me to speak at the Learn and Service America Conference in Binghamton, New York, I was honored. I joined ImPACT because I was interested in meeting new people and in doing something for the Ithaca community. At the first meeting we were asked to give our own definitions of community service. This is what I intended to talk about at the conference.

Tentatively, I listed several of my projects at ImPACT, including work with the SPCA, preparing food at a local soup kitchen, restoring trails at a nature preserve, and renovating a house for the Economic Opportunities Commission. My list was received with blank stares and a handful of approving nods. In an effort to involve my audience, I asked them to answer a question: “What do you think of when you hear the words ‘community service’?” At first the room was silent, then, very slowly, people began to speak up. Some associated the words with punishment—the hours of community service that must be served by minors for breaking the law. Others chimed in with things like “picking up trash” and “working in a soup kitchen.”

Their responses were what I had expected. With growing confidence and a now steady voice I encouraged them to explore other possibilities. “What would you say if I said that talking to a friend is a form of community service?” The answers were varied, but people’s initial response was, “No, it isn’t.” I convinced them otherwise, explaining that talking brings people together and forms the bonds that make a strong community. You provide a service every time you console a friend or share your ideas with other people. Community service does not have to feel like an obligation.

As the discussion continued, I could almost feel a wave of understanding pass through the audience. People began speaking up and sharing their own ideas of service, and within minutes we had formed our own sense of community in the conference room. I had accomplished what I had come to do. I had shown people that community service is what you make it, and given the audience and myself new ideas to put to future use.

—Amy Chapman, Ithaca High School, Class of 1998
• The development of new skills (construction, gardening, interviewing, speaking, etc.)

• Exposure to new settings and new people

• The ability to work and make decisions cooperatively

• A new understanding of citizenship and civic participation

• The experience of examining community issues firsthand

• A greater awareness of their community and its interconnectedness

Perhaps more than anything else, however, ImPACT left participants with a sense of new possibilities. Community service was no longer drudgery or duty, but a deeply personal and meaningful undertaking to which they remained committed.

Challenges in Facilitating ImPACT
One of the mixed blessings of ImPACT was that participants often wanted to continue their service work beyond our five months together. In fact, part of my vision in developing the program was to give youth the tools and motivation to organize projects on their own. But this process was not without its challenges. For example:

• Lack of leverage on the part of youth. In some instances I was able to work with the group to recruit a teacher, parent, or youth worker to serve as an advocate. Other groups attempted to go it alone, but without an adult representative, they inevitably ran into obstacles such as lack of meeting space, transportation, and resources.

• Lack of time. The grant I received to run the program stipulated that I move around the county’s six school districts in five-month periods. This truncated the time we had for developing skills and building momentum for independence.

• Lack of sustainable funds. Throughout each year I organized a number of retreats and reunions, which brought current and older groups together to undertake big projects and share experiences. These were often powerful gatherings and seemed to provide some sense of continuity for old participants, but they did not replace weekly meetings and ongoing projects. Obviously, this speaks to the challenge of limited funding for community-based projects.

Community-Based Versus School-Based Service Learning Models
Because of unfortunate funding priorities, the ImPACT program is now defunct. Over the years, emphasis from the program’s funder was placed on academic connections and ultimately on moving toward a school-based program. The last year of the program, we obliged by teaching ImPACT as a class in an alternative school setting. Though the program functioned well, it was only a step toward locating the model more firmly within a school structure that would squash much of its community-based vitality. The funder viewed integration into the school curriculum as a more legitimate and effective educational enterprise. In my opinion, however, this attitude devalues the capacity of community-based organizations (CBOs) like the Learning Web to provide powerful learning and development opportunities for young people.

The act of absorbing ImPACT (and other programs like it) into school structures is risky business. Problems include serious limitations posed by accountability structures, state curriculum mandates, insurance regulations, scheduling, and faculty time. In addition, the introduction of service learning in many schools has become a carrot to make classroom learning more interesting, rather than a tool for real social change. As Heath and McLaughlin have pointed out, CBOs often occupy positions in their communities that give them a unique ability to guide young people in a more holistic manner (1994, p. 4). This is not to invalidate school-based learning, but simply to point out the value of maintaining community-based models and opportunities for action. As one of my students said in response to the suggestion that ImPACT become part of school, “You should keep it separate because the community creates a wider spectrum to work in. I like the freedom we have.”

Final Thoughts
The psychologist Jerome Bruner (1996, p. 119) once wrote,

> Education must . . . be not only a process that transmits culture but also one that provides alternate views of the world and strengthens the will to explore them.

This, in my mind, is what truly transformational education is all about. The power of ImPACT was that it provided an outlet for the active faculties of its participants, encouraging them to invest themselves creatively in the community. Students often criticize schools and communities because they believe there is no place for their thoughts, ideas, and opinions.
They do not feel whole or inspired to learn or participate. This is a potential limitation for overly prescribed approaches to service learning.

If nothing else, I hope that this article has indicated the importance of maintaining more holistic community-based service learning programs for youth in this country. Certainly there is room for both schools and CBOs to carry out the vision of the service learning pioneers. As the movement continues to grow, I also hope that across all learning environments there will be a stronger push to make service learning relevant to the lives and experiences of youth of all backgrounds, to encourage young people to ask and consider difficult questions about their communities and society, and to maintain an awareness of life beyond the classroom as the ultimate teacher and testing ground.

References


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A PERSPECTIVE ON YOUTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
IN SOUTH AFRICA

STEPHEN MOKWENA

As South Africans work to rebuild a just and caring society in the post-Apartheid era, their most important challenge is creating a world where young people can develop to their fullest potential. The author describes how young people, families, and communities are working to reclaim the future of South Africa.

People must not give up to the hardship of life, people must develop a hope, [they must] come together to look at their problems, and in this way build their humanity.

— Steve Biko, Leader of South Africa’s Black Consciousness Movement

The quest to build a free, equal, peaceful, and democratic society was the foundation of South Africa's struggle against Apartheid. It also undergirds our determined search for lasting solutions today. Once Apartheid was formally removed from the statute books, we found ourselves confronted by the daunting task of addressing its ghastly legacy. Without a doubt, the most important challenge that confronts us today is to create a society in which all children and young people can develop to their fullest potential while playing a central role in rebuilding a new society.

A Glimpse at the Past
South Africa’s contemporary reality is framed by a history of political oppression and economic exclusion. The story begins in earnest with the colonial conquest, land dispossession, and the systematic subjugation of blacks into servile positions.

The 20th century witnessed the evolution of a carefully crafted system that denied black people access to political participation and economic mobility. This also led to the separation of people on the basis of race and ethnicity and the creation of impoverished townships—sprawling, overcrowded ghettos like Soweto and Alexander. Motivated by the need for cheap labor, white people in power created the migrant labor system, which depended on controlling the movement of people through influx control legislation. This separated families and condemned many to a bleak existence in “tribal homelands”—rural reserves set aside for blacks based on their tribal affiliation.

The effects on families and children were horrendous. Generations of black children grew up with the barge of oppression and discrimination, carrying its burden from one generation to the next. For the vast majority of black people, life was nasty and brutish. As Steve Biko put it in 1975, “Township life alone makes it a miracle for anyone to live up to adulthood.”

Among the more grotesque innovations of the Apartheid government was the creation of Bantu education, a system of education developed with the expressed aim of making sure that black people remain subservient. H.F. Verwoerd, one of the key architects of the system, proclaimed:

There is no place for [the black person] beyond certain forms of labor; for that reason there is no reason to avail him a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community.

This story explains how Apartheid affected every aspect of life for young people, their families, and their communities, and how it continues to affect many today. It also explains the ferocity of black resistance.
As with all oppressed peoples, black communities are never hapless victims of a ubiquitous system. South Africa is also a story of resistance. From the outset, Apartheid was met with vigorous opposition and resistance. Many of the early attempts to find an amicable solution fell on deaf ears. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Nationalist Government responded swiftly and violently to anything that seemed like a threat to white power, banning all forms of legitimate political opposition, incarcerating leaders like Nelson Mandela and Robert Sobukwe, and forcing many others into exile.

After a decade of silence, young people rose to challenge the system. The rise of the black consciousness movement ushered in a new phase of resistance. It was not until the 1976 student revolt that South Africa was set on an irreversible path toward change. Young people, mainly students, rose to challenge the Bantu education system, generating a resistance movement that went well beyond the schoolyard. The decade between 1976 and 1986 was to be the most decisive and the most violent in the long struggle against Apartheid, as young people took to the streets in unprecedented numbers. Although young people were affected by these sweeping developments in different ways and to a different extent, hardly anyone growing up in the black townships in this period was not touched by the climate of heightened political conflict.

The black youth came to be known around the world as South Africa's "young lions." Their protests, while courageous, were met with vicious government suppression and exposed young people to deeply traumatic and damaging situations. Observing this in 1986, Percy Qoboza, a journalist from Soweto, spoke of South Africa as a nation at war with its future:

*If it is true that a people’s wealth is its children, then South Africa is bitterly and tragically poor; if it is true that a nation’s future is its children, we have no future, and deserve none; we are a nation at war with its future. For we have turned our children into battle hardened soldiers who will never know the carefree joy of childhood. What we are witnessing is the growth of a generation which has the courage to reject the cowardice of its parents; there is a dark and terrible beauty in that courage. It is also a source of great pride—pride that we who lived under Apartheid can produce children who refuse to do so."

A high price to pay for freedom. Once democratic forces triumphed, we were left combing through the debris, with the full realization that the road to a new society would be long and hard. What is happening to children and youth today? What are the prospects for social justice?

**Who Are the Youth?**

In South Africa, "youth" is defined as a group of people between 14 and 35 years of age. This definition is informed by the fact that this generational cohort of young people, who grew up in the heady days of the struggle, now need assistance in becoming productive citizens. Even when they reach the legal age of majority at 18, this transition is often blocked. This situation is further heightened by sheer numbers: 39 percent of people living in South Africa today fall within this group—about 16.2 million people, according to the October Household Survey of 1995. In fact, people 35 years of age and under comprise 75 percent of all people living in South Africa.

South Africans are acutely aware that this broad definition of youth poses a number of challenges. The social experiences and needs of people who fall within this age group are varied and complex; for example, the experiences of a 14-year-old young person in 2002, are remarkably different from a 20-year-old single mother's or those of a 30-year-old professional's with a family. Developing policies and programs for this varied and complex group of people is no small feat, and the impact of Apartheid policies is made more daunting by the sheer numbers involved.

**Growing Up in the 1990s**

Although the political struggle against Apartheid has been won, young people continue to face enormous burdens on their path toward adulthood. Political enfranchisement has not translated into economic and social opportunities. Many young people (particularly black youth) are marginalized or excluded from power, resources, and opportunities. They carry a disproportionate share of the burden of a system that has distorted access to opportunity by race and class, as well as gender.

The plight of young women. Although young men and young women have common challenges, young women are subjected to further exclusion by cultural and social expectations. The research shows some disturbing trends:

- Young boys are more likely than girls to attend school.
- Of the young women who do go to school, many drop out early due to pregnancy.
• Young women contend with violence and harassment on a daily basis.

• As a result—not surprisingly—there are lower numbers of young women in education and in the work force.

Class struggles. Overall access to proper education, skills, and economic opportunities are the trajectories of the middle- and upper-class groups—mostly male and white—and recently a small but growing black middle and upper class. Poverty and exclusion have their most vivid manifestations in the realm of the individual, the family, and community life. Regrettably, growing up in a stable and caring family—with access to health care and other basic services, the ability to acquire education and training for employment, and establishing a sustainable livelihood—is a path open only to a few. It is still a privilege and not a right.

Marginalization of the black community. The situation of young people is a barometer of a society struggling with a history of political oppression and economic exclusion. Comparing the situation of black youth to that of African-American communities in the United States, Dr. Mamphela pointed out that what was happening to youth was “a symptom of a deeper malaise, the rapid downward spiral toward the disintegration of the fabric of the black community.”

It is with this understanding that advocates for youth development under the leadership of Sheila Sisulu—South Africa’s current Ambassador to the United States and a leading advocate for young people in South Africa—insisted from the outset that “marginalization, if not a necessary condition of youth, is a problem of society and society must address it.”

The challenge to build a more caring and just society is as urgent today as it was in 1994, when the first democratic government came to power.

Reclaiming the Future: Toward a Just and Caring Society

The creation of a democratic society in which all people have the right to vote and participate in governing the country is a significant victory and a powerful milestone on the road to a new society.

The new government has made major strides by promulgating new laws. These laws are aimed at protecting children from abuse and neglect, providing equitable and appropriate access to education and training, and access to economic opportunities, as well as facilitating the representation of young people in policymaking and governance.

While some of these policies have had the desired impact, others are yet to have a full effect—and several have to be reconsidered and redrawn. One thing, however, is clear: the government has prioritized the participation of young people in policy and governance.

The Youth Act of 1995, for example, led to the establishment of the National Youth Commission (NYC), a broad-based structure comprised of young people whose primary purpose is to ensure that the concerns and needs of young people become integral to all major government policies and strategies. The NYC now has developed a comprehensive Youth Policy Document and has proposed major legislation for a National Youth Service Program.

Although the NYC represents a positive political statement from the new government, it faces major challenges in the years ahead, particularly in remaining connected and accountable to young people. South Africans are keenly aware of these challenges and the difficulty in translating policy into action. Major hurdles include limited financial resources, limited human resources, lack of expertise within government to implement new policies, and the formidable task of transforming a bureaucracy that was designed to control blacks and uphold white interests. Not surprisingly, the process of change has been marked by fits and starts.

The Challenge of Youth Organizing in the Post-Apartheid Era

Young people are the country’s greatest resource; without them, there can be no future.

—President Nelson Mandela

Since 1994, there has been a steady decline in the numbers of young people seeking organized change. Some of the reasons are outlined below.

Changing nature of politics. As politics have become more “normal” and formalized, there is less momentum for grassroots organizing. Because political youth organizations are now subject to party policy and formal party structures, the sense of immediacy that was present before the transition to democracy has been lost. It is quite telling that the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) reported that the majority of young people are not expected to turn up at the polls in the next election, as many of them have not bothered to register. The extent of young people’s participation in the national election is going to be a real indicator of their faith in the formal political process.
Changing demographics. Many young people who were engaged and active in the 1980s have either "grown up" or do not see themselves as youth activists—or activists of any kind. The younger generation—those who were born in the 1980s and grew up in the 1990s—do not share the experience of heightened resistance and political mobilization.

Creation of formal channels. Bodies such as the NYC, which represent young people’s voice in government, introduced a new culture of political engagement that does not easily lend itself to galvanizing popular action. As such, bodies become appendages of the state and are not naturally inclined to confront the state over issues; nor are they positioned to generate grassroots mobilizations for issues that affect young people.

In spite of this, there are signs that some groups are focusing on localized struggles and continue to raise their issues. For instance, youth-led and membership-based organizations of young people have come together to establish the South African Youth Council (SAYC), a civil society counterpart to the National Youth Commission. This has the potential for a vigorous engagement of government by youth-based organizations. In addition, since 1994, student organizations such as the South African Students’ Congress (SASCO) have consistently challenged university authorities, as well as the government to provide wider access to higher education for black students.

The nature of youth organizing has changed in fundamental ways; it is up to young people today to find creative ways to raise their concerns and continue to agitate for change.

Building a Strong Youth Development Sector
South Africa has witnessed the slow birth of a youth development sector, comprised mainly of formal Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that lobby for policy and provide services for young people. While they have often acted in collaboration with mass-based youth organizations, they are different from them and as such face distinct challenges (see sidebar below).

Conclusion: The Road Ahead
Change and development do not depend solely on government and organized strategies. As we look to the future, we must acknowledge the ordinary people who have developed a range of survival strategies and positive coping mechanisms. These policies, though invisible, facilitate the delicate and intricate networks through which ordinary people help the children in their communities and each other. These people—the invisible weavers of the social fabric—are ordinary men and women, young and old, who continue doing what has to be done, regardless of who is in power and what policy is or is not. They stand between hope and despair and lead the way to the road ahead.

Thankfully, South Africa has had a successful second democratic election, paving the way for a fundamental transformation process to take root. There is no doubt that the demand for real change will be even more urgent. More and more Community Youth Development advocates are coming to terms with the fact that the building of a just and caring society is much more than rolling out large-scale special projects to mop up an ill-fated generation. The quest for social justice is much deeper; it is about restoring the developmental foundation of society by working with young people, families, and communities.

Challenges Facing Youth-Serving NGOs
Attempts to build the youth development sector began in 1990, through the work of the Joint Enrichment Project (JEP) and under the leadership of Sheila Sisulu. JEP initiated a research and consultation process that led to the articulation of a national vision and agenda. Under a fledgling rubric of youth development, these organizations gave expression to the collective aspirations of young people and provided a coherent basis for articulating solutions.

Due to a combination of leadership and managerial problems, however, the sector suffered serious setbacks as organizations struggled to establish durable institutional frameworks. Financial problems were also a concern, particularly in youth-serving NGOs; many donors focused their attention on the new government, while others stopped their funding altogether. In their estimation, Apartheid was "dead."

Fortunately, while many have disappeared, a core of strong organizations has survived and continues to renew their mandate while seeking innovative ways to remain self-sustaining. In some cases, organizations have found ways to collaborate with some government departments.
Steve Mokwena joined the International Youth Foundation (IYF) (now the Forum for Youth Engagement) in May 1998. When this article was published, he was responsible for developing and managing IYF’s strategy for learning and exchange of knowledge on effective strategies of meeting the needs of youth. Before moving to the United States from Soweto, Steve served as the Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Commission in the Office of the Deputy President and, before that, as the director of the Joint Enrichment Project. Steve obtained his BA honors degree from the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa and a Master’s degree in Development Studies from the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom. Steve recently returned to South Africa to continue his work.
NOURISHING THE SOUL OF YOUTH IN SECULAR SOCIETY

RACHEL KESSLER

The author describes the process of "welcoming soul into the classroom" through a unique program called Passages. Like other comprehensive social and emotional learning programs, Passages deals with a broad range of issues: friendship, communication skills, stress management, diversity, study skills, problem solving, health, personal and social responsibility. But unlike most programs, it also addresses spiritual development.

How do facilitators make a place for soul in group work? What does a classroom look like in which soul is vital to the enterprise of education or youth development? What are the experiences that nourish spiritual development of adolescents without violating the deeply held beliefs of youth, families, or facilitators? And why should schools or youth development work even consider addressing this terrain?

The Passages program is a curriculum for adolescents that integrates heart, spirit, and community. This curriculum of the heart is a response to the "mysteries" of teenagers: their usually unspoken questions and concerns are at its center. It gives young people the tools for creating the safe space essential for building authentic community where personal truth and empathy can flower. The curriculum offers experiences that foster the development of a strong individual identity along with a sense of belonging. In the microcosm of the classroom community, students discover the feelings, skills, and experiences that are at the heart of a just and compassionate society.

Why Address Spiritual Development in Our Youth?
For many years it was considered dangerous for educators or leaders in public programs to address the question of spiritual development. But after decades of headlines about "a generation at risk," we dare to do so: the void of spiritual guidance for teenagers is a contributing factor in the self-destructive and violent behavior plaguing our nation. For many young people, drugs, sex, gang violence, and even suicide may reflect a search for connection, mystery, and meaning, as well as an escape from the pain of not having a genuine source of spiritual fulfillment.

Only in recent years—in response to persistent violence in our inner cities and schoolyard massacres in small towns and suburbs—are educators and social scientists beginning to acknowledge the enormity of this spiritual void. Professor James Garbarino, an expert on youth violence in Cornell University, speaks about "soul death" and the importance of kindling the "divine spark" in what he calls "lost boys." The day after the Columbine massacre, he asserted that

a very important part of all of this [is] the spiritual emptiness that so many kids feel . . . and when they feel it, when things go bad in their lives, there's nothing to fall back on and also there's no limit to their behavior. 2

The rise of violence to the self and others in our youth culture inspired the Passages program. But it also grew in response to the exquisite opening to spirit at the heart of the adolescent experience. It is during these years that the larger questions of meaning and purpose, about ultimate beginnings and endings, begin to press with urgency and loneliness.

Groups That Welcome Soul
Most high school students grapple with profound themes: loss, love, and letting go; meaning, purpose, service; self-reliance and community; choice and surrender. When students work together to become an authentic community, they can meet any challenge
with grace, with love, and with power—even the challenges of wrenching conflict, prejudice, profound gratitude, or death. This is the soul of education.

When soul is present in education, our attention shifts. We listen with great care not only to what is spoken, but also to the messages between the words—tones, gestures, and the flicker of feeling across the face. We concentrate on what has heart and meaning. Students’ yearning, wonder, wisdom, fear, and confusion become central to the curriculum; questions become as important as answers.

When soul enters the classroom, masks drop away. Students dare to share the joy and talents they have feared would provoke jealousy, even in their best friends. They risk exposing the pain or shame that might be judged as weakness. Through the process of seeing the perspective of others and accepting what once felt unworthy in themselves, students discover compassion and learn about forgiveness.

Honoring Young Voices: Principles and Practices That Invite Soul
To achieve the safety and openness required for meaningful exploration of spiritual development, I work carefully with my students for weeks and months. Collaboratively, we create ground rules—conditions that students name as essential for speaking about what matters most to them. Together we make a list, which looks remarkably similar from class to class, and from year to year:

- No interruptions
- No “putdowns” or “bagging”
- No judging
- Respect
- Honesty
- The right to be silent
- Honoring the privacy of what is spoken

I remind my students that only when each of us honors these ground rules or agreements can our classroom become a safe place.

In addition, games help students focus, relax, and become a team through laughter and cooperation. Many of these games offer a visceral experience of our interdependence as human beings. Activities that use symbols and metaphors allow students to speak indirectly about feelings and thoughts that are awkward to address head-on. And we work with a highly structured form of discourse called Council (Zimmerman & Coyle, 1997).

With everyone sitting in a circle where all can see and be seen, the Council process allows each person to speak without interruption or immediate response. Students learn to listen deeply and discover what it feels like to be truly heard. Silence becomes a comfortable ally as we pause to digest one story and wait for the other to form, when teachers call for moments of reflection or when the room fills with feeling at the end of a class.

Respect is at the essence of Council and at the heart of Passages. Respect for the speaker is conveyed when we do not interrupt with probing questions, advice or anecdotes. Respect for the listeners is conveyed by speakers who learn to speak briefly and to the essence rather than rambling on. Respect for the personal timing and solitude of young people is expressed when we encourage students to choose when they want to speak, at what level they want to share, and if they want to speak at all.

How does this process get integrated into the actual classroom? Consider the following examples:

- A health educator in Colorado provides a “transition” course for ninth graders, weaving social and emotional skills and opportunities for expression together with study skills and health issues. The academic faculty, who are awed and amazed by the hidden wisdom and pain they see in the students, explore the idea of initiating a comprehensive program to address heart, soul, and community in their school.

- An eighth-grade English teacher organizes the entire curriculum around the theme of relationship and love, selecting literature that relates to these themes. In addition to reading, analytical discussion, and writing, her students keep personal journals to express their own feelings about these themes. Once a week, they sit in Council, relating stories and feelings from their own lives that have been stirred by the required readings.

- An after-school “Senior Passage” course ad-dresses themes such as: (1) What does it feel like to know you will soon be leaving so much behind? To be making decisions about your next step? (2) To the extent that you know something about your life purpose or destiny, what do you know? What have been the clues? If you don’t know, how does that feel? (3) How can we understand intimacy—with friends, family, romantic relationships? (4) How do we set goals and boundaries to create what will really nourish us?

Since “we teach who we are,” teachers, counselors, and facilitators who invite heart and soul into their work with youth also find it essential to nurture their own spiritual development. This may mean personal practices to cultivate awareness, serenity, and compassion, as well as collaborative efforts with
other teachers around the challenges and joys of entering this terrain with their students.

Experiences That Nourish Spiritual Development

Over the years, in listening to the stories and questions of young people (a process of co-creating with students), I have developed a map of spiritual development in adolescents that comprises seven interrelated yearnings, needs, or hungers, as listed below:

- The search for meaning and purpose
- The longing for silence and solitude
- The urge for transcendence
- The hunger for joy and delight
- The creative drive
- The call for initiation
- Deep connection to self, others, and larger sources of meaning

Just as the child’s body grows when the hunger for fuel and air is fed, and the child’s emotional life grows when the hunger for love and guidance is met, nurturing these spiritual yearnings—described in the sections that follow—supports, strengthens, and fosters spiritual development and, ultimately, the development of the whole person. This theoretical framework—the core of my book, *The Soul of Education: Helping Students Find Connection, Compassion and Character at School*—emerged from years of reflection on my practice with young people and with their teachers, counselors, and group leaders. One factor I believe was crucial in allowing this book to be endorsed across the spectrum of religious and political belief is the fact that it offered a definition of nurturing the inner life that emerged directly from the voices of young people. It is their stories, their questions, and their actions that inspired and defined the following “seven gateways to the soul of students.”

The search for meaning and purpose. This domain explores the existential questions that burst forth in adolescence: Why am I here? Does my life have a purpose? How do I find out what it is? Is there a meaning to life? Why should I live? What is life for? What does my future hold? What is my destiny? Is there life after death? Is there a God? These questions appear time and again when students write anonymously about their personal “mysteries”—their wonder, worries, curiosity, fear, and excitement.

Purpose is primarily taught through goal setting and decision-making—often with strictly rational techniques. But if the spiritual dimension is omitted or if the inner life of the adolescent is not cultivated as part of the search for goals or careers, students will most likely base their decisions on external pressures—from peers, parents, teachers. One girl writes,

*So many of my friends are so clueless. They don’t know what they want to do; they know what they’re supposed to do. They don’t know how they feel; they know how they’re supposed to feel. And here I find myself in a group of people going through all my same stuff, and although I don’t have the answers to all questions, I find myself feeling like everything is perfect and right. I have this “community” that gives me a home base and a sense of security.*

This domain of meaning and purpose is crucial to motivation and learning for students. But it is also paradoxically simple yet uncomfortable for teachers to deal with. Because our profession predicates most authority on our ability to “know or to have the “right answer,” many teachers are profoundly uncomfortable with questions that appear to have no answers.

Yet, as educators, we can provide experiences that honor the questions. We can also encourage students to give their gifts to the world through school and community service, through creative expression, or academic or athletic achievement. And, in the way we teach, we can help students see and create patterns that connect learning to their personal lives (Miller, 1995).

A student explains the meaning he has discovered in service:

*When I go over to the local elementary school to tutor two Spanish-speaking children, they are so excited to see me. I guess they don’t get too much attention from a teacher and a classroom that is strictly English speaking. When I am with them, I feel special. I am an average student at my school, I don’t hold any elected positions, I am not on any varsity team. I do not stand out in any way, and that is okay with me. It is okay with me because for three hours each week, Maria and Miguel make me feel like I am the most important person in the world.*

The longing for silence and solitude. This domain can lead to identity formation and goal setting, to learning readiness and inner peace. For adolescents, this domain is often ambivalent—fraught with both fear and urgent need. As a respite from the tyranny of busyness and noise that afflicts even our young children, silence may be a realm of reflection, calm or fertile chaos—an avenue of stillness and rest for some, prayer or contemplation for others. Another student writes:
I like to take time to go within myself sometimes. And when I do that, I try to take an emptiness inside there. I think that everyone struggles to find their own way with their spirit and it's in the struggle that our spirit comes forth.

The urge for transcendence. This domain describes the desire of young people to go beyond their perceived limits. "How far can I be stretched, how much adversity can I stand?" writes one student. "Is there a greater force at work? Can humans tap into that force, and bring it into their daily lives?" writes another. Transcendence includes not only the mystical realm, but also secular experiences of the extraordinary in the arts, athletics, academics, or human relations. By naming this human need that spans all cultures, educators can help students constructively channel this urge and challenge themselves in ways that reach for this peak experience.

The hunger for joy and delight. This domain can be satisfied through experiences of great simplicity, such as play, celebration, or gratitude. "I want to move many and take joy in every person, every little thing," writes one student. Another asks, "Do all people have the same capacity to feel joy and sorrow?" Educators can also help students express the exhalation they feel when encountering beauty, power, grace, brilliance, love, or the sheer joy of being alive.

The creative drive. This is perhaps the most familiar domain for nourishing the spirit of students in secular schools. As described by this student, the act of creation is a process that is often infused with depth, meaning, and mystery:

There is something that happens to me in pottery class—I lose myself in the feeling of wet clay rolling smoothly under my hands as the wheel spins. I have it last period, so no matter how difficult the day was, pottery makes every day a good day. It’s almost magical—to feel so good, so serene.

The call for initiation. This realm refers to a hunger the ancients met by rites of passage for their young. As educators, we can create programs that guide adolescents to become conscious about the irrevocable transition from childhood to adulthood, give them tools for making transitions and separations, challenge them to discover the capacities for their next step, and create ceremonies with parents and other faculty that acknowledge and welcome them into the community of adults (Kessler, 1999; Mahdi et al., 1986, 1997). Initiation programs offer an opportunity for “youth and adults [to] learn how to take risks and fail courageously; to handle fear and express compassion” (Hughes & Curran, 2000). As we speak to both parents and educators about the importance of rites of passage, we emphasize that these programs not only benefit the development of the young, but also contribute to the vitality and renewal of the adult community.

Deep connection. As my students told stories about each of the previous domains, I heard a common thread: the experience of deep connection. Ron Miller (1995), the historian of holistic education, observes that

spirituality is nourished, not through formal rituals that students practice in school, but by the quality of relationship that is developed between person and world. We can, and must cultivate an attitude of caring, respect, and contemplation to replace the narrow modernist view that the world is a resource to be exploited.

Whether students are describing deep connection to themselves, to others, to nature, or to a higher power, this seventh domain describes a quality of relationship that is profoundly caring and resonant with meaning. It involves feelings of belonging, and of being truly seen or known.

Through deep connection to the self, students encounter a strength and richness within that is the basis for developing the autonomy central to the adolescent journey, to discovering purpose and unlocking creativity. As teachers, we can nourish this form of deep connection by giving our students time for solitary reflection. For example, a group facilitator can encourage reflection and expression through writing or art that allows a student access to the inner self while in the midst of other people. Totally engrossed in such creative activities, young people are encouraged to discover and express their own feelings, values, and beliefs.

Connecting deeply to one other person or to a meaningful group, students discover the balm of belonging that soothes the profound alienation that fractures the identity of our youth. To feel a sense of belonging, young people must be part of an authentic community in the classroom or youth group—a community in which they feel seen and heard for who they really are. Many teachers or camp counselors create this opportunity through morning meetings; other group leaders may offer weekly Councils or sharing circles offered in a context of ground rules that make it safe to be vulnerable.
As we encourage young people to connect deeply to others, it is crucial that we continue to support the autonomy and uniqueness of the individual while fostering a sense of belonging and union with the group. The more that young people are encouraged to strengthen their own boundaries and develop their own identity, the more capable they are of bonding to a group in a healthy, enduring way.

Young people who experience deep connections to something larger than the human realm and present time participate in a larger, ongoing source of meaning, a joy that provides them with perspective, wisdom, and faith. Some students connect deeply to nature. "When I get depressed," revealed Keisha to her "family group" members in a school in Manhattan, "I go to this park near my house where there is an absolutely enormous tree. I go and sit down with it because it feels so strong to me." For others, it is a relationship to their ancestors or to the land of their people that provides this larger sense of connection and continuity. And some students discover solace in their relationship to God or to a religious practice, as well as a place to explore urgent questions such as "Is there life after death?" "How did life start?" "Is there a God?" "What makes people evil?" "What is the meaning of life?"

We can provide time in school life or in after-school programs when young people may give voice to the great comfort and joy they find in their relationship to God or to nature. "I became a Christian a few years back," said one student in a Council addressed to the theme, What is really important in your life right now? "It's been the most wonderful thing in my life. I can't tell you what it feels like to know that I'm loved like that. Always loved and guided. By Jesus. And it's brought our family much closer." In the same council, another young person said, "I try to practice being present—that's what Buddhism has given to me that I really cherish. It's really the most important thing to me now."

This freedom of expression itself nourishes the soul of both those who speak and those who listen. Note that the First Amendment actually protects students' freedom of expression of religious beliefs. We must be careful in sharing our religious beliefs because, given the power of our role, students may experience a teacher's sharing as proselytizing. But in our fear and confusion about violating the law, we have actually suppressed student freedom and the rich exchange that comes when such an important part of their lives is being acknowledged and respected.

Students who feel deeply connected don't need danger to feel fully alive. They don't need guns to feel powerful. They don't want to hurt others or themselves. Out of connection grows compassion and passion—passion for people, for students' goals and dreams, for life itself.

Nurturing the Whole Student
Defining the "moral meaning" of democracy, John Dewey wrote that "the supreme task of all political institutions ... shall be the contribution they make to the all-round growth of every member of society” (1957, p. 186). If we are educating for wholeness, for citizenship, and for leadership in a democracy, spiritual development belongs in schools. But because we have concerns about separation of church and state, because we often confuse spiritual development with religion, and because we fear reprisal from "the other side" in a decade of "culture wars," educators have been reluctant to develop a methodology and curriculum to directly address this aspect of human growth.

In a pluralistic society, educators can give students a glimpse of the rich array of experiences that feed the soul. We can provide a forum that honors the ways individual students nourish their spirits. We can offer activities that allow them to experience deep connection.

Perhaps most important, as teachers we can honor the quest of each student to find what gives their life meaning and integrity, and what allows them to feel connected to what is most precious for them. In the search itself, in loving the questions, in the deep yearning they let themselves feel, young people will discover what is sacred in life, what is sacred in their own lives, and what allows them to bring their most sacred gift to nourish the world.

For further information on implementation, see www.mediatorsfoundation.org/sel. To contact the author or receive information on training, consultation, or other publications, write to selrachael@aol.com.

References
1. The Passages Program has three roots: (1) the Mysteries Program at Crossroads School for Arts and Science in Santa Monica, California, where core methods for high school seniors were expanded into a curriculum for grades 7–12 (1985–1991); (2) teacher-training programs that I have offered over the last decade through the Institute for Social and Emotional Learning; and (3) collaboration through CASEL with colleagues from a broad range of approaches to social and emotional learning.


4. See writers on recent brain research such as Sylvestor, or Caine and Caine; also see Parker Palmer, The Courage to Teach.

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Educating the Human Spirit: Schools in a Democratic Society

Joshua Sean Thomases

Young people must learn to participate in our democracy as part of their education. Using his classroom at the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice as an example, the author discusses why teaching democracy requires "a fundamental reconceptualization of the purpose" of schooling.

Democracy in its truest form is participatory. Living in a democracy demands an electorate that is knowledgeable and engaged. Therefore, I believe that young people must learn to participate in our democracy as part of their education. This belief has profound implications for teaching and learning. Democratic practice requires a fundamental reconceptualization of the purpose of school as a place that supports the full development of young people in body, mind, spirit, and community.

Concrete actions support this vision at El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice. I do not hand out a syllabus on the first day of eleventh-grade U.S. History. Nor do I review the Declaration of Independence or the structures of our government. Instead, we spend the first weeks of class creating a "Problem Tree." Based on practices I learned when studying Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, I designed this activity to engage students in a process of looking at the world.

The Problem Tree
The young people of El Puente are profoundly aware of the inequities in human rights that they face and struggle with every day. The activities associated with the Problem Tree, then, are a natural place for them to begin (see Activity 1).

From the very first day, the students know that this is a different kind of course. Their questions are part of the course, their voices and their thoughts help determine what we study, and I am one participant in the class rather than a dominant force. My job for the rest of the year will be slowly to expand the role of students as they take on the responsibility of learning and leading their class.

Students have begun to be more aware, and the class will push them to make educated judgments about what they learn and, finally, help them learn to act, as they become leaders in the struggle for human rights. At the El Puente Academy, students do more than just study. They are involved in activities that range from testifying about issues that concern them at City Hall to doing an extensive asthma survey to creating a community vendor's market for economic development. Active participation in democratic classrooms is one important way for our students to learn to become leaders for peace and justice.

Principles of a Democratic Classroom
A healthy democracy involves conflict and challenges authority; a classroom based on democratic principles does so as well. The actual practice of engaging democratic pedagogy in the classroom is therefore a complex undertaking. Nevertheless, there are still principles that guide the practice:

- **Education must engage the human spirit.** It should be relevant to young people's experience and history, address their needs, and be respectful of them. It must help students take the power that is rightfully theirs and teach them to use that power responsibly.

- **Education must be challenging.** It is not merely an interesting set of activities. It is a way of learning that provides the skills to liberate students from obstacles and to reach their full potential. It pushes students to become aware of their sociopolitical, historical, economic, and physical reality and then learn how to create change.
• Education creates democracy. Democracy can only happen with an engaged populace that understands the issues and knows how to participate in public debate. This process should begin in the classroom.

• Education must be participatory. If students are to become independent thinkers and learners, they must participate responsibly in the construction of the course of study. They must be invested in their learning. Curricula are developed in a continuous dialogue among all members of a class.

• Education must have value. What the class produces at the end of its work must be meaningful to the students themselves. If the students are to feel ownership of the class, they must have some control over how they demonstrate their learning.

• Education must have a facilitator. The role of the teacher as a transmitter of information needs to change drastically to that of a facilitator who encourages, supports, and challenges the class in their learning process. The responsibility to challenge is important. Freire often warns of the danger in failing to ask the difficult questions around issues such as race, class, and power. Process is not enough; we must push students to look deeply at the roots of what they see.

In practice, the principles of a democratic classroom help create a process of liberatory education. This process supports democracy and establishes school as a place where extensive and in-depth learning happens in all subjects. Although my experiences are in social studies classes, other facilitators have applied the model to other subjects in the Academy. A biology class, for example, was transformed into Science for Community Action. The students learned that they live in the most toxic neighborhood in New York City. They did an epidemiological survey and discovered that our community has three times the asthma rate of the nation. The class first studied the factors that may cause asthma and then proposed solutions to the crisis. In another example, a mathematics facilitator consistently engages her classes in conversations about what they want and need to know, i.e., why it is important to master math, given their socioeconomic and historical context. Issues of democracy, therefore, are as central to the study of statistics and genetics as they are to the study of the civil rights movement. To deny this fact is to deny the true power and scope of education.

Implementing an Empowering Education and Negotiating the Curriculum

In Negotiating the Curriculum (Boomer, Lester, Onore, & Cook, 1992) the authors question the basic principles of traditional schooling and offer new ways to think about educational pedagogy and learning. They propose four central questions around which to negotiate the curriculum, based on the principles above:

1. What do we know already?
2. What do we want [and need] to find out?
3. How will we go about finding out [what we want to know]?
4. How will we know, and show, that we’ve found out when we are finished?

When I began to develop my classes around these questions, I discovered the extent to which negotiating the curriculum radically altered my conception of school and deepened my sense of what is required to create a democratic school.

**ACTIVITY 1**

1. Students fill out a brainstorming sheet, answering questions about their knowledge and experiences.

2. The class develops a list of problems in the world. We place the results as leaves on the branches of the Problem Tree.

3. In small groups, students fill in the causes of these problems. The results reflect their experiences in the United States, and how they make sense of those experiences. This includes some misconceptions that we will address during the course. For now, each idea is important and we place it on the trunk of the tree.

4. The class tries to develop historical reasons for the above. When it becomes clear that they do not have the answers, they are encouraged to develop a list of questions instead, and we write the questions in at the roots of the tree.

5. The class reviews the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I challenge them to imagine possible solutions and to develop questions about who has fought for a more just society. We write these ideas in the space around the tree.

6. The list of questions and solutions, supplemented with the teacher’s own questions, forms the basis for the curriculum.
Accessing Students’ Knowledge and Developing Their Questions

The question of how to apply these four questions in class poses a challenge for the facilitator. My process begins by developing my own answers to the first two negotiation questions. While my answers are not final, it is my responsibility to ensure that the course is a rigorous investigation of real issues. I cannot design a learning process for others if I do not know what I want. In preparing for my senior Participation in Government class I made the following note:

The goals of the course should be to understand what roles we can play in creating change to support a more just and humane society. To this end, we will explore the variety of ways in which we have been affected by government, have responded to government action, and have attempted to make change. We will study the civil rights movement and locate El Puente within the history of community organizing and social activism.

Once I have a sense of what I want in the course, I can bring my students through a similar brainstorming process, as demonstrated in the lessons in Activity 2.

As the students establish their questions, I challenge them to look deeper and explore more thoroughly the questions they raise. We work our ideas into a plan for the class. The result is a curriculum that engages, even when it cannot answer such questions as, “How does government make decisions?” and “What can we do to make our opinions count?”

As a group, we have established the central questions of the course. By any measure, these are great questions for a Participation in Government class. I am pleased with the curriculum. It reflects my ideas about what to teach, and it includes the students’ ideas about what to learn. As we study both government processes and political organizing, the course will challenge all of us to become leaders.

The Nature of the Classroom

The final two questions posed by the authors of Negotiating the Curriculum are more difficult to implement. The third, how we go about finding out what we want to know, speaks to what happens in the class itself. For example:

- How will we spend our time?
- What will homework look like?
- Where and how will we find the answers to our questions?

There are no correct answers to these questions. One U.S. History class preferred that I present the information to them. They wanted to spend their time debating and discussing rather than researching—as long as I did not make it too boring! How, you might ask, is this different from a traditional classroom? The students thought through how best to learn, and explicitly asked for my expertise. The principles of negotiating the curriculum are thriving in classes where students demand the answers to their questions.

<table>
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<th>ACTIVITY 2</th>
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| **Day 1:** Introduce and discuss the four central questions of negotiating the curriculum.  
**Homework #1:** List all the ways that government affects your life.  
Start the ones you would like to change. |
| **Day 3:** Create lists of actions. Discuss what makes a successful action. Which of these actions were the most important?  
**Homework #3:** Do you know of other people in history who acted for similar reasons? Who were they? What did they do? |
| **Day 2:** Review lists and put them on the board. Create a general list of roles the government plays. Discuss which roles are controversial.  
**Homework #2:** Discuss actions in response to government that you have participated in or witnessed. Which ones were the most powerful? |
| **Day 4:** Create a timeline of essential names and events over the last fifty years, either people in government or those taking actions in response to or in protest of government policy.  
**Homework #4:** Looking at the past week, what do you want to know more about? List your questions. |
| **Day 5:** Develop a collective list of questions. Create general sets of questions that go together. Develop class consensus on the most important questions.  
**Homework #5:** Find and bring in a resource that will help us answer at least one of the questions. |
| **Day 6:** Present a proposed curriculum based on the students’ questions. Review it, alter it, develop consensus agreement to follow it. Begin the curriculum. |
ACTIVITY 3

1. Develop a set of questions on immigration based on what the students know and what they want to find out. Questions range from “Do immigrants help or hurt the economy?” to “What type of support (if any) should immigrants receive when they arrive in the United States?”

2. Students choose one of the questions as the basis of a research paper.

3. Students working on similar questions are grouped together as they research, write, revise, and complete the papers over several weeks.

4. Classes alternate between group work time and presentations by the facilitator to fill in the history of immigration that will not be covered by student research.

5. When complete, the papers are photocopied and handed out to the class. The papers supply the content for our immigration debate.

6. Modeled after the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, we hold a full-day conference during which we try to reach answers to the students’ original questions. These answers, in the form of Resolutions, become the final documents for each student’s immigration portfolio.

Many educators, and most students, think of learning as the transmission of information. Negotiating the curriculum rejects this assumption. The challenge is to have enough time to let the class imagine and explore possible ways to learn, and to study the subject matter in depth. I have developed ways that help me find that equilibrium somewhat. Still, these practices take time. As a facilitator, I often feel the pressure of “content”; I want them to know so much! At such times, I remind myself how integral democratic processes are to creating an environment in which students can learn. I could cover a tremendous amount of material by standing at the front of the class and lecturing every day. However, this would have little to do with what students actually learned. In a month-long U.S. History project on immigration, the practices in Activity 3 helped create a balance between content and process.

What About Standards?
The final negotiation question—how we know, and how, that we’ve found out when we are finished—is a way of assessing what we have learned. What are the standards by which we will judge the quality? Engaging students in this conversation means that standards cease to be foreign measures of quality and become the students’ own measure of themselves. Definitions about grades are certainly helpful. For example, “What is an ‘A’ paper, and how is it different from a ‘B’ paper?” Still, there are other, more fundamental, questions: “How can students recognize when they have learned something?” “How do they measure the extent of that learning?” “Should we use external measures such as presentations or formal exams?” “How much does self-assessment matter?” We need to develop these measures with the students. Young people are accustomed to feeling frustrated and disempowered in the area of assessment. It is the first place they will look first to see if the facilitator is truly committed to a democratic classroom.

There is another level to the issue of standards. How do we ensure that the work students produce in class meets the expectations of state officials, colleges, and parents? The answer lies in developing public performance-based assessments that are integrated into the process of learning. When students are constantly presenting and defending their work, the quality of their work increases dramatically. These assessments can take the form of a formal portfolio presentation and defense before a committee of staff, students, and external evaluators.

Furthermore, students should participate in a discussion of what excellence looks like. As part of negotiating my classes, I asked students what skills they wanted to learn and to be assessed on this year. Together, we also looked at the formal standards so they could understand what New York State expected of all of us. Out of this conversation, we developed a rubric that lists all of the skills we wanted to learn and rated them on a scale of 1 to 10. “One” means I see in their work a new skill they are just beginning to learn. “Ten” means I believe they have demonstrated an ability to excel in college in this skill area. I use the rubric as part of their portfolio evaluation every six to eight weeks. Students get to watch their development along the scale, and the results are powerful. They no longer say, “I need to work harder to get a better grade.” Instead, I hear comments such as, “I need to learn how to develop
my evidence to prove my thesis.” The rubric helps us hold each other accountable for their progress and for meeting state standards. In addition, involving students in democratically determining their grade ensures that the evaluation means something to them.

Ultimately, assessment is most profound when it is public and given by people in real situations. My junior U.S. History class studied the electoral process. The students organized a voter outreach campaign in preparation for the 2000 election. Although I did a formal evaluation of their work, they did not need it. The real assessment occurred on the streets in their interactions with adults as they spoke to people about going to the polls. The feedback was powerful. Students were able to evaluate the extent of their knowledge (when they were asked about the candidates), their ability to speak publicly (the quality of their interactions with adults), and their success (by looking at voter turnout in the community). As we reflected on their work, I was clear: this assessment was more effective than any evaluation I have ever constructed in my class.

Taking action and seeing the results speaks to one other issue in assessment: the development of the human spirit. It cannot be weighed or measured using either testing or performance-based tools. However, the fact that we do not have the language of measurement does not mitigate the quality of that learning. The challenge lies in changing the nature and role of assessment to allow for other kinds of learning. We must find ways to acknowledge and honor the dignity of young people’s learning in this area as they develop their sense of themselves.

The Role of Facilitators
The most difficult task implicit in negotiating the curriculum is defining the role of the facilitator, a job that expands greatly in a democratic classroom. There are seven basic principles facilitators should follow:

1. Be connected to the students. Education is about the human spirit. An empowering education is possible only if our relationships with students are firmly grounded in honesty and trust. If young people are to negotiate their learning, that process must be safe and respected. We must come to know our students as individuals, and be open to supporting them in their human development. This is what encourages or inhibits their ability and interest in learning.

2. Be open to criticism. Remaining open to criticism is one of the major challenges created in a democratic classroom. If one of our jobs is to teach young people to question and challenge, it is hardly surprising that they start with school, and, more directly, with the facilitator. We must be willing to accept that challenge. We need to find the level of criticism of our practice that is acceptable. Finally, we should learn how to engage criticism in ways that emphasize the validity of the conversation and teach young people how to challenge responsibly.

3. Pose critical questions. The facilitator should establish an atmosphere in which deep, thoughtful conversations can take place. In this process, the facilitator is a guide, leader, listener, mentor, storyteller, and problem-poser. In each role, asking questions that push students to challenge themselves is of paramount importance. We must not let students relax into easy answers such as “It’s all about racism.” but instead push them toward a deeper analysis. One constant struggle for facilitators is to find the balance between pushing students in a certain direction and letting them choose their own route. When, where, and how do we use our authority?

4. Embrace different learning styles. For all students to become active participants in the class, facilitators must support different ways of learning. For instance, in my classroom, students do not sit in rows and I often have to alter lesson plans as students refocus a discussion. The resulting energy for learning is much more powerful and engaging, but looks different from traditional classrooms—that is, not as quiet. We must openly embrace this difference even as it challenges us.

5. Acknowledge limits to negotiation. It is important that facilitators make students aware of what is not negotiable in the classroom and, more importantly, why. Sometimes external forces, ranging from assistant principals to the state’s education department, determine what is negotiable. In an empowering education, however, these issues of power must be addressed openly and honestly. We must discuss what we have to do, why, and whether it is worth challenging these requirements.

6. Establish our parameters for negotiation. Facilitators also set their own structures for their classes. We surrender neither our ability to conceive and dream of what our classes should be like, nor our right and responsibility to include certain topics or exercises. What changes is our responsibility to collaborate with the students in these decisions. We must present and defend our actions.
7. Use **consistent democratic practices.** To construct a democratic society, you cannot use authoritarian methods. Facilitators cannot implement these practices in a piecemeal fashion or when it is convenient. While implementation is difficult, the commitment to a democratic classroom must always be present, ideally in all classes and across curricula. To do any less is to revert to teacher-controlled classes in which students see the few examples of democracy as evidence of teacher hypocrisy.

**The Challenge of Implementation**

As previously stated, a democratic classroom is not tidy. Since most of us grew up in very neat classrooms, we must move slowly into this process. I did not begin by negotiating everything, but started in one class, with one unit, which I expanded slowly into two classes.

Negotiating the curriculum involves intense learning. Facilitators need time to reflect on their values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in the classroom and the impact these have on their practice. We must define and practice our educational philosophy. We should implement these concepts slowly to allow time to think about and appreciate what we are trying to accomplish and the resulting implications.

In terms of the students, the issues are even more complex. What is their conception of school? How strong are students’ relationships with the facilitators? What is their sense of discipline, responsibility, and learning? The challenge of implementing democratic pedagogy is that it involves consistent reflection as we question and revise our practice. There are no final answers when it comes to the development of human beings, be they students or facilitators.

**The Future of Our Schools**

The most important action we can take as educators is to create classrooms that are grounded in the principles of an empowering education and in the practices of democracy. Our hope is that through these practices, students take responsibility for their learning, see school as relevant to them as individuals and to their lives as a whole, and master the art of demanding change. They cease to be passive receptors of knowledge and instead become proactive action-takers. With the support of their facilitators, school is the place where students develop skills and more. It also becomes a place of vibrant activity, where the development of the human being in the context of community is the essential task. Ultimately, the graduates of such institutions will enter the adult world with a keen sense of themselves. They will know how to ask questions and engage in knowledge-making activities. They will understand how to create community where their voices can be heard. These graduates will be the leaders in the struggle to create a more just society.

**Reference**


**Joshua Sean Thomases** was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. He has been with El Puente for over eight years and is currently a senior facilitator in the Academy for Peace and Justice. He received his BA from Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, and is completing his Master’s at Bank Street School of Education in New York City.
The following non-peer reviewed selections have been chosen by the publishers from the CYD Journal archives for their outstanding contributions to understanding and/or expanding the field of thought in the field of Community Youth Development. These articles offer a vision of how the world "could" be and provide insights into how peaceful change might come about. Because they are thought provoking and expansive they open a window into the possibilities for the future, thus sparking dialogue about what such a future "should" be and how we might get there. If, as was suggested in the Anthology Introduction, CYD is a prophecy waiting to be fulfilled, this dialogue can only help explicate the vision and thus provide the needed impetus and process.
RESTORING HOPE TO THE FUTURE THROUGH
CRITICAL EDUCATION OF LEADERS

MARGARET J. WHEATLEY

"Stretching back over millennia education has always been the means to change society, to create new ideas and practices and therefore new futures." This truth is elegantly applied in Meg's new initiative "From the Four Directions: People Everywhere Leading the Way"—a grassroots movement dedicated to developing leadership practices at the local level that can nourish human life and restore hope to the future.

This is a dark age, when everything must justify its existence in terms of how it benefits the economy. The economy is no longer seen as the means to create just and good societies; it has become the end in itself. Nowhere is this clearer than in the field of education. We educate students so they can get jobs; we collect statistics that demonstrate the monetary benefits of education to the individual; we increasingly focus schools and higher education on training, teaching those subjects defined as important by the workplace. As with all other aspects of modern life in the era of globalization, education has become just one sector of the economy.

But stretching back over millennia, education has always been the means to change society, to create new ideas and practices and therefore new futures. And in the 20th century, the practice and theory of critical education demonstrated how learning can lead to revolutions without excessive violence. Paulo Freire demonstrated this in his work with people who couldn't read, who allegedly were incapable of analytic thinking. People in the poorest communities in South and North America quickly became skilled thinkers once they saw how reading and analysis gave them the means to fight back against their poverty. Freire's work teaches the power of people learning in community in order to change their world.

This is my vision of a learning society—places where people, in their natural communities (geographic and/or by common interests), have the skill and means to understand the dynamics that are creating their current state, and also use that learning to act on their world to change it.

During the past year, as I've been increasingly distressed over how most human endeavor is being usurped by the economy, I've returned to the work of Paulo Freire, Cesar Chavez, and other Latin American revolutionaries. They have helped me determine what I can do to try to reverse the destructive and dehumanizing trajectory created by the New Economy. I now believe we can change the direction of the future by developing critical thinking in communities around the world. Critical thinking is a skill easily developed in all people. Wherever we live, we need to create local learning societies in which people can think together, notice what's going on, and then decide what actions they will take to change current realities. This skill needs to be developed in thousands of communities simultaneously, and then we need to weave their learnings together into a collective global intelligence.

The New Leadership
I would like to describe how my colleagues and I are working with this approach, to change the values and practices of most organizations.

When I feel brave enough to say it (which I do now), my new work is to create a grassroots revolution among local leaders everywhere. I, with many exceedingly dedicated colleagues around the world, am working to establish leadership circles in local
communities everywhere. We believe that, if leaders can meet regularly and talk about their practice, their concerns, their hopes, they will develop enough clarity and courage to stand up to the pressures of globalization and act as leaders who know how to support and nourish the human spirit and all life.

It's important for me to state at the outset that we have a rather revolutionary definition of "leader." We believe that a leader is anyone who wants to help at this time. These are not do-gooders, saviors, or those who simply write a check. These are local people, in their communities, who want to help change things. We meet these people everywhere—of all ages and in all communities and professions. It can be a mother who wants her children's school to change; a local nurse who wants clean water in the many villages she serves; a teenager who refuses to wear the clothing of a corporation that uses sweatshops; a corporate executive who wants to stop unethical practices or the day-to-day disregard of the needs of employees; a farmer who wants to preserve traditional farming methods.

These new leaders are appearing at an increasing rate in local communities around the world. They are motivated not by ego but by a desire to improve some aspect of their world. They are not motivated by self-interest or greed. They want to help others. They do not want power, they want better conditions for those they care about. They are not interested in devoted followers; they want devoted companions who work together to make change.

Barriers to Action
Although many more of these new leaders are now stepping forward, they often don't know that there are many others like them. They feel isolated and alone. Few of them realize that their concerns and generosity are shared by an increasing number of people. And it is difficult to act with courage when you feel you're the only one, or when those around you tell you you're strange.

Isolation is one barrier to courageous action. Time is a second one. In most countries, time is evaporating. Technology has played a large role in this, speeding up human interactions to the speed of light, even though we can't, as living beings, work any faster than the speed of life. In highly technological societies, leisure time and private life are quickly being eroded by the ever-invading demands of cell phones, email, and the assumption that workers should be available "24/7." In societies in which technology is not yet so invasive, the very complexity and multiplicity of problems that confront leaders are destroying their time to deal well with any one issue.

Under the relentless pressure of vanishing time, we are losing many essential capacities of being human: the time to think and reflect, the time to be in relationships, the time to develop trust and commitment. In essence, we are forfeiting our unique human qualities in exchange for speed.

There is at least one other great destructive force at work globally, and that is the American management model. Leaders everywhere, no matter what their culture or tradition, are pressured to focus on numeric measures of efficiency and narrow measures of success, that is, growth and profit making. These practices are not sufficient to create a healthy and robust workplace or planet. American businesses that focus only on these narrow goals fail as well. As these too-narrow measures roll out around the world, they create the conditions for large-scale destruction of cultures, habitats, and the human spirit. Yet few local leaders can withstand the pressure to be "modern," and so they forfeit their own experience and wisdom about what works best within their own traditions and practices. It isn't just pop culture and fast food that are creating a monoculture across the planet; it's also the spread of one management model, a model that is inherently destructive of life.

From the Four Directions
Paulo Freire said that "reality doesn't change itself."
If this is an accurate portrait of today's reality, then we—people everywhere—must be the agents of change. We need to create learning communities in which we can think, we can notice what's going on, and can develop companions for the work that is required. It is the opportunity to develop these conditions for critical education and action that energizes me now. Our initiative is called "From the Four Directions: People Everywhere Leading the Way."
And this is what we do.

In local communities everywhere, leaders are invited (by a small group of local hosts) to meet regularly to think together, to develop clarity about their practices and values that work to affirm and sustain people, and to support each other's courageous acts. Each circle is a site for critical education. People become more knowledgeable about what is going on in their world, and they develop new strategies for how to influence their world. They teach one another, relying on their experience and compassion. Over time, these local circles become good communities of practice—leaders emerge with greater skills to effect change in their world, wherever they are called to be leaders. Working locally, we act as a global leadership development effort, raising the standards of effective leadership in thousands of communities and changing the global definition of what good leadership means.
Core Values
For these circles to give birth to new ideas, new courage, and new companions for the journey, we use the simple and ancient practice of good human conversation. We provide support for how to create the conditions for meaningful and deepening conversation. We also insist that these leader circles include as diverse a mix of people (age, gender, organizational type) as is possible in that community. A core value of From the Four Directions is, "We depend on diversity." We know that people need to be talking to one another again, across all the boundaries and hurts that have been created. And we know also that new solutions are available only when new people are in the conversation. Most communities in the world struggle with diversity—be it differences in ethnicity, religion, gender, or age. In every circle, in every country, we strive to gently open the boundaries and extend a welcome to those formerly excluded. We want to help reweave the broken bonds that are a major dilemma of all societies.

Our second core value is: "We rely on human goodness." We believe that the solutions needed at this time are not at all technical, but profoundly human. We will find the answers to complex issues, and we will find the courage to push back against the destructive practices of globalism, only if we find one another. In this time when there is growing evidence of human "badness," there is also the growing need to rely on the fact that most people, no matter their culture or physical condition, have goodness in them. They, we, want to live with other people in more harmonious and humane ways. We encourage greater awareness in leaders everywhere about human potential and the positive impulses that motivate people—the search for meaning, the need for good relationships, the opportunity to grow and contribute to others.

The focus of conversation in a From the Four Directions circle is leadership—those values and practices that are life affirming rather than life destroying. We aspire to support changes in the leadership of local communities everywhere, developing leadership practices at the local level that can restore hope to the future. But we also aspire to change the direction of our global future. We want to create a global voice on behalf of those practices and values that nourish and sustain the human spirit and all life. To achieve this, we are relying on a change theory taught to us by other living systems.

Emergent Phenomena
In nature, change doesn’t happen from a top-down, strategic approach. There is never a boss in a living system. Change happens from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously. These local actions are diverse; each is free to do things in their own way. They do not need to be the same; they are linked to others by a similar issue, idea, or problem. When these local actions learn about each other, their own activity is strengthened. But much more is available: as local groups network, they can suddenly, and always surprisingly, emerge into a global power. This global force is far stronger than the sum of the parts, and it is also different from the local actions that gave birth to it. These global forces are the result of emergence, and they are known as emergent phenomena. They always possess new capacity, and they always are a surprise.

All habitats and ecosystems are a result of emergence. Before the system emerges, individual species act in isolation, each adapting in order to survive. This is a time of many local changes and few relationships. But relationships develop gradually among the different species; competition is replaced by collaboration. From this web of relationships, an ecosystem emerges. This larger system has capacities that none of the individual species possessed. The system even moderates the weather so that conditions within that ecosystem are more stable and less disruptive to individuals.

All living systems result from emergence. However, that only describes the process by which life creates systems. It says nothing about the values used to organize any particular system. Here is where man-made and other living systems diverge in ways that are essential to notice. Living systems, excluding human systems, always self-organize as collaborative networks of relation. This often shocks people, accustomed as we are to TV images of predators stalking their kill. But the biological record is exceedingly clear—it is cooperation that increases over time. Ruthless species enter a system, wreak havoc, and then either die off or learn how to be good neighbors.

We are living in a time of many emergent phenomena that are man-made and rarely based on nature’s value of collaboration. The Internet is an emergent phenomenon that has grown from values of local activities and cooperation—local inventions, freely shared, gave rise to the World Wide Web. But global warming has also emerged, a result of many local decisions based on selfishness, where no one thought their actions could possibly link with other actions to emerge as an atmospheric catastrophe.

All systems develop from the process of emergence. But when humans organize around greed, self-interest, or short-term advantage, we create systems that are distinctly unnatural. We create systems that are, because of these values, life threatening.

Globalization is an emergent phenomenon. No one planned it. It emerged from many local actions
on the part of corporations and nation states, actions based on destructive values and the absence of any useful regulatory laws and policies. And, suddenly, we live in the midst of its powerful pressures, organizing societies and organizations in ways that few people want and that only a very few are benefiting from.

Those who have lived under colonialism and imperialism for centuries may wonder why I use the word suddenly to describe the emergence of globalization. Is it any different from long-standing systems of oppression? Imperialism, colonialism, and globalization share core values: coercion, dehumanization, the domination of many by the few. But I believe that globalism is not just a continuation of the past. The sheer scale of globalization represents a break with history. Never before has any power been able to dissolve all borders, severely impede the autonomy of most nation states, and enforce only one set of laws—the rules of the economy.

Currently the world is organizing using one economic value—profit. The entire planet is organizing as a monoculture. Never have all cultures and peoples been asked to march to one drumbeat.

The other critical distinction is that the values of this monoculture are inherently destructive of life. By valuing short-term goals, unrestricted growth, and relentless accumulation of garbage, and by using the planet as an economic resource rather than a home, we face the historic possibility that we could destroy the planet, or at least the conditions that support human life.

Just these two characteristics of globalism—its global scale and the implications of its values and practices—make it more fearsome than any of the megalomaniac dreams of past conquerors.

Intentional Emergence
There is one more thing to say about all emergent phenomena, not just globalization. Once an emergent phenomenon has appeared, it can’t be changed by working backwards, by changing the local parts that gave birth to it. You can only change an emergent phenomenon by creating a countervailing force of greater strength. This means that the work of change is to start over, organize new local efforts, connect them to each other, and know that their values and practices can emerge as something even stronger.

From the Four Directions seeks to use emergence intentionally. Once many local circles are up and running, we will network them, using electronic means. When a leader circle in Montevideo, Chile, learns that they are discussing the same issue as a circle in New Delhi, or when a Zimbabwean circle talks with a Danish circle about their experience with citizen democracy, we know that such connections will have a powerful impact on personal leadership behavior.

We also believe that, as people realize that the problems they face are shared by others in different parts of the globe, they will instantly recognize these as systemic issues. There is no better way for people to become skilled systems thinkers than to realize that their problem is not unique to them, but is affecting many others in diverse parts of the global system. One outcome of From the Four Directions is to create thoughtful and practical systems thinkers around the world.

We have only just begun organizing circles. By the time you read this, there may be 50 circles operating in various parts of the globe. This is just the beginning. But enough things have occurred already to both delight and motivate those of us working on this initiative. For example, having worked in South Africa for years, I was moved to tears when a circle host from Uganda thanked us “for inviting Africa to the table first.” We did begin in Africa, partly because there was so much enthusiasm there, and we knew that most African tribal traditions use a circle or council as a common family and community practice. But we had no idea how significant it was to our African colleagues: instead of playing catch-up, they are leading the way, teaching us many things that will make this initiative successful in Africa and elsewhere.

I have also noticed that many leaders don’t know there is any way to lead except through bureaucracy and hierarchy. I watched the eyes of circle hosts from Russia, Hungary, Zimbabwe, and Colombia light up as they realized that there were simple council processes they could use to lead their organizations. It wasn’t that they liked being bureaucrats; they just hadn’t known they had a choice. Now that they are learning a participative and inclusive process for meeting and thinking together, they are more hopeful. They already see how to be more effective leaders on behalf of the issues of concern in their communities.

Our biggest intent is to create a global voice for change in the practices and values used in all types of organizations everywhere. This voice will not come from well-crafted mission statements issued from some central authority. It will emerge from thousands of local circles as they are networked together. To create such an emergent phenomenon, we will consciously connect circles to one another, publicize our efforts, host regional conferences, and engage in other means of developing good, meaningful connections. But like all emergent phenomena, the global voice of this initiative will appear suddenly, and I’m sure it will surprise us.
Using the great goodness of many, and actively
developing the critical thinking and relational skills
that make us human, we intend to astonish the world
with what becomes possible when we nourish and
sustain the human spirit.

As of this writing, From the Four Directions circles
have begun in Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Den-
mark, England, Gabon, Hungary, The Netherlands,
Norway, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden,
Uganda, the United States, the Ukraine, and Zim-
babue. Circles will begin shortly in several more
African countries, Eastern and Central Europe, Mex-
ico, Canada, the United States, and Latin America.
We are exploring relationships in India, Asia, and
Australia, and hope to begin circles there in 2002.

For more information on this initiative, and if you'd
like to join us, please go to: www.fromthefourdirec-
tions.org or phone the Berkana Institute in the
United States at (801) 377-2996.

Margaret Wheatley writes, teaches, and speaks
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Way (coauthored with Myron Kellner-Rogers,
1996), plus several videos and articles. She draws
many of her ideas from new science and life's ability
to organize in self-organizing, systemic, and cooper-
ative modes. However, her models for new organiza-
tions are increasingly drawn from her understanding
of many different cultures and spiritual traditions.
Her articles and work can be accessed at
www.berkana.org.
IN THE FACE OF HATE CRIMES

SUSAN P. CURRAN, LISA LA CAVA, KATIE LEE CRANE

In January, 2001, three youth were accused of hate crimes in a small town in Massachusetts. The incident brought out fears, bias, courage, support, and the challenge of balancing justice and compassion.

The authors describe the pain and difficulty of the event, and, in the end, how young people and adults came together to create a safe, just, and compassionate community.

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small, they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood s/he lives in, the school or college s/he attends; the factory, office where s/he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

Until recently the big story about youth leadership in Sudbury, Massachusetts, was that of a 12 year old—a girl made famous by her articulate testimony at a Town Meeting about why the town should allow ice cream trucks in her neighborhood despite the concerns of adult citizens about children’s safety and noise pollution. Skeptics said it was an easy case. Come on. Who could resist the plea from a kid for an ice cream cone? She was quoted on National Public Radio and all the local papers and news stations.

The public was amazed at the leadership and determination of this young person. She won.

The next time youth made the news beyond the boundaries of Sudbury it was not so nice, not so easy. Three local youth were accused of hate crimes.

For us it is a story that is both personal and professional. It happened in our hometown, in our very own congregation—“the place where human rights begin.” Despite the pain and difficulty of the event, in the end it is a strong example of Community Youth Development (CYD) principles in action—a story about the journey toward becoming a safe, just, and compassionate community, where young people are valued and engaged in full and healthy ways. The journey is not without its struggles. The actions that followed the hate crimes forced community members, lulled by an affluent community’s laissez-faire, nothing-bad-ever-happens-here sensibility, to ask difficult questions of themselves, their fellow citizens, and civic and public organizations. What does one do in the face of a hate crime? What would you do?

What follows is the story of recent events in Sudbury, the historic home for one of the oldest congregations in the United States—First Parish of Sudbury (Unitarian Universalist), gathered in 1640.

The Journey

On the anniversary of the day 56 years ago that Auschwitz-Birkenau was finally liberated, a person or persons painted swastikas on the rainbow symbols at First Parish. A passerby noticed the defaced signs and called the police. Several First Parish volunteers attempted to remove the offensive symbols on Saturday evening. But by Sunday morning, the signs had been defaced again and the rainbow flag that flies at the parking lot entrance to the Meetinghouse was missing.

Originally commissioned in San Francisco in 1978, the rainbow flag is a symbol of pride and support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) people. For many groups it is a symbol of
diversity. First Parish of Sudbury intentionally flies the rainbow flag and displays the symbol as a public statement that the congregation embraces diversity and welcomes all who respect its principles and goals. It also represents the congregation’s intentional commitment to encourage the presence and participation of GLBT people in all aspects of community life.

The defacement of these signs had a profound affect on the parishioners at First Parish, as well as the community at large. According to Rabbi Boaz Heilman of Sudbury’s Congregation B’nai Torah:

The world has created no symbol more vile and repulsive than a swastika. No image speaks so loudly, so clearly, and so terrifyingly. Unlike any other sign devised by the human mind and imagination, the swastika has but one meaning and purpose—to strike terror into the heart of its beholder. . . Seemingly, the ugly symbol [that appeared here in Sudbury] was not there to threaten its usual intended victim, the Jew. And yet, as Jews, it struck a chord of terror in our hearts. . . . You write it off once, it reappears the next day. You whitewash it off one wall, off one headstone, and it reappears as though by some ugly magic somewhere else, as though it has a hundred heads and cutting off one only served to sprout three more.

The following is a chronicle of what happened in the days, weeks, and months following the events of January 27 and 28, 2001. An edited version of emails and updates written by Minister Katie Lee Crane for members of the First Parish congregation, this chronicle provides a powerful sense of the emotions felt and actions taken in the face of a hate crime.

A Community Acts: The Chronicle

Saturday, January 27
Sometime before 5:30 p.m., a person or persons painted swastikas on the rainbow symbols on two First Parish signs. A passerby noticed and called the police, who alerted First Parish. Several First Parish volunteers attempted to remove symbols.

Sunday, January 28
By the time people arrived to worship, the signs had been defaced again and the rainbow flag and pole were missing. First Parish Chair of the Board of Trustees spoke again with local police.

Monday, January 29
Rev. Katie Lee Crane and Board Chair Nancy Douttie called for an emergency meeting of the congregation. With a few hours’ notice, nearly 60 First Parish people gathered in the sanctuary to support one another and draft a collective response:

This is an act of hate, a violation of us as people and of our property. We respect anyone’s right to disagree; in fact we invite dialogue, it is inherent in our values. However, we expect and deserve that any opinions be expressed with respect. This is not an acceptable way to register one’s opposition; this is a violation of the worth and dignity not only of the people targeted but of all people.

After expressing grief and outrage, the congregation came to the following conclusions:

- This is not a simple act of vandalism; this is an act of hate.
- This is not merely a First Parish problem; this is a community problem.
- We need to ask for help from our neighbors, from experts, from allies.
- We need to ensure the security and safety of our tenants, our members, our friends, and our historic building and grounds.
- We will replace our rainbow symbols again and again; we will continue to display our public commitment to the presence and participation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in all aspects of community life.
- We will grieve and support one another but we will not respond to hatred with hatred; we will reach out in love; we will continue to educate ourselves and others in a manner that is consistent with our first principle: We affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Tuesday, January 30
The story broke publicly. Rev. Crane gave interviews to local papers and many local television channels and radio stations. The Anti-Defamation League offered help. A representative from the Sudbury Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager came to personally express the town’s support. Leaders from the Sudbury Public Schools, the Sudbury clergy, the Massachusetts Bay District clergy, and the Unitarian
Universalist Association were alerted; many responded with offers of help and compassion.

Wednesday, January 31

Nancy Douillet spoke with police about the investigation and continuing security. The Sudbury Selectmen issued a strongly worded statement condemning any act of hate and supporting First Parish. Local clergy launched plans for a Sunday “Vigil Against Hate” at First Parish. Calls, email messages, and notes of support began pouring in, literally from around the world.

Thursday, February 1

Support continued to pour in. People we had never met offered to bring us their personal rainbow flags. Churches wrote to say that they had initiated efforts to be more explicitly welcoming to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people thanks to our example. In a letter to the editor published in the local paper, high school students suggested that all homes in town fly the rainbow flag in an act of solidarity. The town and the schools began organizing educational events for later in the spring.

Friday, February 2

Close to 50 high school students and several faculty members from Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School came to First Parish after school to present a statement with more than 400 signatures indicating their support. The students stood in front of First Parish with their Gay-Straight Alliance banner and with homemade signs that said, “Honk if you support First Parish!” There was a lot of honking, a great deal of commotion. Several of us were overcome with emotion at the sight of these young people standing in solidarity with us.

Late in the afternoon, the police identified three suspects—two young adults and one juvenile—who would be charged early the following week. The police credited young people and other local citizens with leading them to the suspects.

Sunday, February 4

Between 800 and 1,000 people attended a “Vigil Against Hate,” organized by the Sudbury Clergy Association. The sight of the many people overflowing the sanctuary and Meetinghouse, then streaming out, singing, and lighting candles, was something never to forget. They wore rainbow pins and ribbons, they carried banners. They were families with kids, they were young and old, they were from different faith traditions. They were from Hingham and Cohasset, Reading and Winchester, western Massachusetts and Cape Cod. They were clergy, selectmen, and local senators and representatives.

First Parish was presented with a rainbow flag on behalf of the many individuals and organizations that offered to do so. Rabbi Boaz Heilman spoke about the universal message of hate carried by the swastika symbol and reflected theologically on the choices humans make for good or evil. Chair of the Board of Selectmen Kirstin Roopenian spoke of the town’s outrage, its commitment to diversity, and the need for forgiveness. Rev. Lisa Schoenwetter, Minister of Memorial Congregational Church in Sudbury, spoke directly to the congregation: “Look around and feel the support,” she told us, “and if you need us again, we’ll be back again. And again. And again.”

Then we sang our hearts out. “Oh, I woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom...” We sang and clapped and were moved. People held candles and banners and babies. It was a most beautiful sight—it was hard not to be moved to tears.

Monday, February 5

Three youth, all students at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, were charged with defacing the signs. Two of the three counts are considered hate crimes under Massachusetts legislation: Vandalism of Houses of Worship and Damaging Property for the Purpose of Intimidation. Two youth, both 17, were charged as adults. A 16-year-old girl was also charged and will be tried in Juvenile Court. The three also have been charged with larceny for stealing the rainbow flag.

Wednesday, February 7

The Minister and Board Chair reported the events in detail to the Board of Trustees, and the Board discussed possible actions.

Thursday, February 15

At the invitation of First Parish Board of Directors, Andrew Tarsy, a civil defense lawyer from the Anti-Defamation League, and David Rudewick, from the Governor’s Task Force on Hate Crimes, facilitated a meeting at First Parish to answer questions and to address concerns regarding the recent incidents of vandalism. They talked to parishioners about ways the congregation can and may wish to be involved and ways we cannot be involved. They spoke from their experiences about incidents directed specifically at GLBT people and addressed the issues that surface when the perpetrators are youth.

Weeks and months pass with the legal process ongoing, the community reacting and responding, and the congregation recovering—slowly, very slowly. For individuals as well as the congregation as a whole, the pain was deep and insidious and destructive.
Friday, March 30
Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School held its once-
every-four-year “Gay Awareness Day.” Though a
long time in the planning, the day was brought into
high relief due to the events at First Parish earlier in
the year. During the daylong event, many local
clergy, including Rev. Crane, candidly expressed the
whole range of theological viewpoints on homosex-
uality. Two members of First Parish, a gay man and
a lesbian who are both L-S alums, spoke about their
experiences of being “in the closet” as high school
students.

Tuesday, June 9
At a worship service preceding the Boston Gay Pride
Parade, the Pride Interfaith Coalition recognized
First Parish “for their more than decade-long efforts
on behalf of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgen-
der community.” Accepting the award for First
Parish was the teen who, as a sophomore, convinced
the congregation to fly a rainbow flag. She remem-
bers:

I noticed a Protestant church with a rain-
bow sign that said everyone was welcome
to come and worship. I remember thinking
to myself, “If they are doing that, then we
should be too. I mean... looking at our
church from the outside you'd never be able
to tell. I thought it would be good if people
driving by knew that we welcomed gays
and lesbians by seeing the rainbow flag.

In her remarks that day—and many times before
and since—Rev. Crane has made this point:

Yes, it is true that three youth were accused
of these crimes. But it was a youth who
convinced us to fly a rainbow flag in the
first place. It was youth who helped identify
the perpetrators of the vandalism. It was
youth who were among the first to respond,
coming to First Parish after school with a
statement signed by more than 400, most of
them peers. And it was a youth who, seeing
history in the making before his eyes, seized
the opportunity to make a video documen-
tary of the unfolding events.

Tuesday, July 3
The first of the three criminal cases regarding the
youth charged with defacing the signs concluded.
The other two cases are still in progress. The first
defendant’s case was Continued Without Making a
Finding (CWOF) for a period of five years.

CYD Principles in Action

There is only one thing more powerful than
learning from history and that is not learning
from history.

—Archibald McLeish

This story—the story of hate crimes committed
against a house of worship—turned into a magnifi-
cent story of an American community at its best.
Political, religious, social, educational, and economic
boundaries were put aside as people from our com-

munity invested in creating a safe, just, and com-
passionate community for all its members. Young
people from the schools and churches were fully
engaged. Adult leaders facilitated open dialogue with
all parties. No federal funding or facilitation could
have accomplished what this small group of commit-
ted citizens did in the way of community building.
This is authentic community development—an
investment of human interest in humankind. You
can’t buy that or legislate it.

It is also the story about what makes justice-seeking
work so hard. When it comes right down to it, it
is not easy to balance justice and compassion. It is a
challenge to respect the accused youth in the face of
their hideous acts and it offers an insidious tempta-
tion to categorize other youth as destructive or dan-
gerous. It is not easy to level judgment against fellow

citizens, neighbors in a small town. It is not easy to
discern a fitting punishment for the damage done,
not to a couple of signs, but to a people. It is not easy
to understand and accept adult society’s role in lead-
ing youth down paths of destruction and hate. It is
not easy to forgive even young people for acts of hate.

One of our jobs as CYD professionals and polici-

makers is to determine what can be learned from
experiences such as this. How many other First
Parish communities are there out there—moving to
action rather than sitting in silence? What were the
ingredients, the elements in this community, in other

communities like it, that sparked action and embodied
CYD principles? What combination of leadership,
respect for difference, open-mindedness, critical
thinking, insight, foresight, heart does it take for
communities to come together and act for social jus-
tice?

The Tough Questions and Unfinished Business

There is power and there is difference, and
those who hold the power determine the
meaning of the difference.

—June Jordan, Social Activist
The chronicle of events and the voices of the participants paint an impressive picture of a caring community in action. A community builder’s dream: value-centered leadership, youth-adult partnerships, civic action, deliberate open dialogue.

Between the lines and in private conversations, the experience also reminds us of the distance yet to travel. Reflecting on the long road to justice, Frederick Douglas put it this way: “In the struggle for equality and justice, your only reward may be the opportunity to stay in the struggle for equality and justice.”

There are still tough questions to confront, unfinished business to take care of. For example, is it still acceptable in our nation to discriminate against and exhibit prejudice toward GLBT people? Why was it sometimes hard to be explicit about exactly who was being targeted by this hate crime? How do we reconcile the young people who perpetrated this crime with the many young people who stood up and spoke out for social justice in Sudbury? Why was it so easy for many of us to assume that this act was perpetrated by young people even before we knew this to be the case? What is the role of a community of faith in forgiveness?

This last point deserves further consideration. While some feel strongly that the community should be ready to forgive, others feel that certain conditions must be met first. Still others have attempted to clarify a distinction between the need for the youth to take responsibility for the seriousness of their action and the congregation’s desire to influence the court to consider “creative sentencing” if the youth are convicted of these hate crime charges.

It should be noted that the sentencing of the one youth whose case has concluded followed exactly the congregation’s recommendations for sentencing. Specifically:

We believe strongly that early intervention in hate crimes is essential. We further believe that the imposition of appropriate consequences designed to help the individuals become better citizens is more important than punitive actions. Only with justice and compassion can there be forgiveness and healing. We hope that in coming to understand the wrongness of their acts and the pain that they have caused, these young people will discover and respect the beauty, dignity, and worth of every human being. We also hope that this will help to heal the damage these acts have caused to the people of First Parish, Sudbury and the larger community.

—First Parish of Sudbury Victim Impact Statement

Two issues seem to be at the heart of these tough questions and concerns: the underlying prejudice against GLBT people (heterosexism/homophobia) and against young people (adultism). Both issues are evident in the subtext of the story.

Homophobia

Our youth group was in Washington, taking the tour of the Holocaust Museum. As we inched our way down the winding path leading to the depths of human depravity, surrounded by photographs and other witnesses the darkness of the age, we reached a wall where there was a list of the various groups that Hitler and his henchmen had persecuted. It was the Jews, but also others that he deemed degenerate—the mentally impaired . . . the Gypsies . . . the homosexuals . . . Two men, not from our group, stood before that wall; one read aloud the list. When he reached the homosexuals, his friend responded, “Well, that at least is one thing Hitler did right.” I froze in my tracks thinking I heard the neighing of horses and the clangor of iron chains.

—Rabbi Boaz Heilman

It has been painfully obvious to the gay and lesbian community and their allies that homophobia was at the center of this case, yet few meetings, hearings, articles, or dialogues named it as such. It was veiled in language about respecting “individual differences,” victimization, diversity. If mentioned at all, the focus was on being a “welcoming community” for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, not about the anti-gay sentiment that still pervades much of this society.

But the events reminded us that despite the recent burst of media attention nationally, the mainstreaming of gay and lesbian families and individuals has not resulted in the marginalization of the prejudice this group faces. Some claim that recent high visibility gains in civil rights have resulted in a backlash politically and behaviorally. Anti-gay prejudice is broadcast in this country daily to say nothing of the school violence and hate crime statistics. Yet policymakers have precious little evidence-based research to use in formulating policy that protects this group’s civil and human rights, and therefore, their quality of life. For example, hotly debated legislation that affects GLBT people includes hate crime legislation, adoption law, domestic partnership benefits, safe schools, employment discrimination, health care and insurance, and freedom to marry.
There is public resistance to taking a stand on discrimination based on sexual orientation as we have against intolerance based on race, ethnicity, and religion. One gets a sense that the GLBT community must “go along to get along,” or “it’s okay to disagree on this one.” Is this about making compromises for the sake of consensus building and incremental change? Or is it a strategic step in a value-centered learning community where the majority of community members do recognize prejudice and the targeting of a specific group of people when they see it up close? In either case, it reminds us that part of the CYD movement is not only about standing up, but also about standing out in the campaign for human rights and social justice for all.

A February 4, 2001 article in the local Sunday paper reminds us of a central issue: “Hate Crime Offenders Younger—Gays Among Top Targets”:

The number of reported hate crimes in Massachusetts is on the rise, but the targeted minority of groups are changing, according to State officials . . . The perpetrators are getting younger and they are increasingly targeting people because of their sexual orientation . . . In 1998, two thirds of the hate crimes in the State were committed by people under the age of 20 and sexual orientation climbed to the second most frequent target . . .

Adultism: Teenagers and Low Expectations?
The CYD Framework (Hughes & Curnan, 2000) defines Community Youth Development as “intentional social change . . . a process of youth and adults working in partnership to create just, safe and healthy communities.” One of the assumptions underlying the action plan is that “young people are bearing the brunt of our fear and unwillingness to collectively create a society that values and welcomes participation. Youth are seen as a collection of problems instead of future parents, neighbors, and workers who need maximum adult involvement, teaching, and encouragement to grow and be productive citizens.”

The First Parish case tested this assumption. Is all the fuss about these young people? What are the broader implications? Was this a prank or a hate crime? And what should happen to these youth? Many of us undoubtedly feel compassion for the youth and their families, even as we feel outrage at their hateful acts. Massachusetts law defines a hate crime as follows:

A criminal act motivated by feelings of bias and targeted toward a particular group

with the intent to intimidate. Hate crimes pose a wider threat to society because they target a particular group based on who they are and cause a ripple effect in the larger community. Although the average hate crime is not murder, but rather harassment, assault, intimidation, or desecration of property, its impact must not be underestimated. Each hate crime puts a stress on the social fabric and threatens our liberties.

And yet how easy it is for adults to assume that when something bad happens, it must be the fault of young people. Or how enticing to hold the low expectations that, of course, young people act in such ways: youth will be youth and we can’t expect much more. What responsibility must citizens take in a society that consistently and pervasively undervalues youth? And what of the many youth who stood up and spoke out? Why are they forgotten, ignored, and under-appreciated?

In the end this story is about hope and integrity. It is about the many young people and adults who came together to work in partnership to create a safe, just, and healthy community for First Parish—for their GLBT neighbors, friends, and families; for the local community; and for those of us who seek justice for all. If we aim to have a positive impact on the human condition, we need to emulate the best practitioners and act with integrity. Yale Law Professor Stephen Carter identifies three steps for acting with integrity that resonate with us:

- Discerning what is right and what is wrong
- Acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost
- Saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right from wrong

That is what motivated the members and friends of First Parish. In a March 25 worship service Rev. Crane gave voice to the congregation’s commitment:

We care. We won’t ignore the hate. And we will stand up, stand together, and say so. We will insist that everyone have basic human rights. We won’t deny the very real pain. We will reach out and share it. We will welcome people who have been spurned in the name of God. We will celebrate the presence and the participation of everyone who shares our values.

In the end, we must heed this vision:
I believe that love will prevail and peace will rule the earth only when we can bring ourselves to be fully, openly present to the pain that violence causes, when we know in the deepest, most truthful place in ourselves that each act of hatred tears at the fine web of life to which we are all attached, and must be countered by acts of healing. When we dare to feel another's pain, we shall be so deeply affected that we will not turn aside, but rush to be healers, lovers, friends.

—Rev. Elizabeth Tarbox

Reference:

2. A CWOF requires that the defendant admit to the charges against him, agree to a period of probation (in this case, five years), and, when probation has been completed satisfactorily, return to the Court for a hearing. If the defendant has met all requirements and no other infractions are noted, the defendant will have no permanent record of being convicted of this offense. If there are any infractions within the probationary period the defendant will be summoned to court, automatically considered guilty of these charges, and sentenced accordingly.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH CRAIG KIELBURGER:
THE POWER OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP

JOHN P. TERRY, DONNA WOONTZLER

Craig Kielburger's life was changed at age 12, after reading about the death of child labor activist
Iqbal Masih in Pakistan. Now 18 years old, Craig is the founder of Free the Children and an inter-
national spokesperson for children's rights. In this chapter Craig talks about youth activism and the
need for intergenerational collaboration.

The following interview took place in November, 1999. The original document was published in
CYD Journal, Volume 1, Number 1 (2000).

CYD: Why is it important for youth to be activists?

CK: Today, because of modern technology and mass
communication, young people are more aware and
more informed than any other generation. We also
face a world full of problems, ranging from the envi-
rionment to weapons of mass destruction to some-
things that are close to my heart: child labor. So many
challenges have been created by adults that it's
incredibly important for young people to get
involved. Young people have a great deal to con-
tribute. We may not have all of the answers, but we
are willing to learn; there is no shortage of energy
and enthusiasm. There is an African proverb that
says, "It takes a village to raise a child." We believe
that it also takes children to help raise a village.
Through Free the Children we would like to make it
possible for young people not only to be the leaders
of tomorrow, but to be leaders of today—in their
schools, in their communities, and on a global scale.

CYD: How is your experience as the founder of Free
the Children a metaphor for how and why youth
should be involved, and how effective they can be?

CK: Great question! Youth need to be involved for
themselves and for the greater good of society. The
perspective of young people is desperately needed if
we are to create a better and safer world for children,
for youth, for everybody. Yet, the opinions of young
people are seldom considered even when there is an
issue that affects them directly. Many adults don't
think of us as having a role to play in issues of social
justice, assuming that we have little to contribute. I
have learned, however, that with enough determina-
tion, young people can make their voices heard. And
what is required first and foremost is a sound under-
standing of the issues and the confidence to speak
openly about them. Who can better understand chil-
dren than other children?

It seems to me that one of the consequences of a
consumer-driven society is that many young people
are bored by life in the suburbs. How many games of
Super Intendo do you want to play? How many
times do you want to go to the shopping mall? Young
people are longing for something more meaningful in
their lives, something more challenging, something
that allows them to prove themselves. The death of
Iqbal Masih moved me and [other] young people to
start Free the Children—and Free the Children
answered the need for that challenge. Many impor-
tant issues locally, nationally, and internationally—
having to do with social justice and the environ-
ment—can and should be a rallying point for youth.

CYD: What is your concept of childhood, and how
might it be different than other people's definitions?
Also, can you tell us something about your own
childhood?
CK: While my view of childhood may be different from that of most people, I'm not that different from other kids. I still go to school. I love the outdoors and often go camping. I love to dance. I'm still able to get together with friends, kick back, watch a movie. But I am deeply committed to my cause. Let me tell you this story. The night before I was scheduled to come home from Southeast Asia, a radio talk show host in Toronto told the public that he thought I was "not normal." At 13, he claimed, I should be thinking about sex and girls, and not about human rights and child labor. Others have asked me whether I feel I have lost my childhood since I have become so caught up in the fight for children's rights.

What is a good and normal childhood in the world today? In my travels I have found two extremes. In many developing countries, children are often asked to work long hours at hazardous jobs with no opportunity to play or to go to school. They are not allowed to develop physically, intellectually, and emotionally as they should. They support entire families. They fight in wars. They are given too much responsibility at too young an age.

On the other hand, in many industrialized countries everything is done for children. They are segregated most of their lives with members of their own age group and given little opportunity to assume responsibility, to develop a social conscience, or to benefit through interactions with adults. Through media they learn to be consumers, to gain their self-image through the electronic toys they own and labels they wear. They, too, are exploited. They see violence and suffering in the news every day but are told they are too young to do anything about it. They are conditioned to become passive bystanders. This is the other extreme. Marian Wright Edelman, founder of Defense for Children International, once said, "Affluenza and lack of moral purpose are more dangerous viruses than influenza for millions of America's and the world's children."

I think that the concept of childhood needs to be redefined as we enter the new millennium. We have to think about how we educate children, how we raise them. It's not so much about simply providing information and facts in our schools any more; a 12-year-old can get information from the Internet. Childhood is a time of formation, of helping children to better understand themselves and the world around them, including their talents and what they have to offer to mankind. School should be focusing more on heroes, positive role models—focusing on the whole person.

CYD: I'm all for a redefinition of who children are and what they can do. I'd like to read a quote from the chapter "Childhood" in your book. You say that "it is the children I have met who are my real heroes. It is their courage and hope for a better world that ring clearest in my mind. When I get discouraged it is the memories of these young people that I return to, for faith in what I am doing." Can you tell us a little bit more about what makes these young people heroes?

CK: Of all the world leaders I have had the chance to meet, it is the natural leadership skills of the children that have most impressed me. For them, leadership isn't a question of getting reelected. It's finding food for their stomachs when they are hungry, or negotiating with drug dealers or policemen so they won't get beaten or abused. These children work together and protect one another. It is entirely another world. If you took some of these children and had them trade places with some of our politicians, the world might be a better place. On the flip side, it would be interesting to see if politicians could survive one day as street children, many of whom live in absolute poverty due to choices made by political and economic leaders.

CYD: In the same chapter you say, "To be inspired takes a belief in one's self. A belief, as Mother Theresa would say, that a single person can make a difference. People have to have faith in themselves, faith that they can change the world. Because it is true: we can change the world one person at a time. Imagine if all the students of a school came together on one issue that they believed in. Imagine the power they would have." Why do you think this is an important belief to hold as an activist?

CK: One of my favorite parts of the chapter just referred to is when I talk about dreamers. Those who believed in ending Apartheid, putting a man on the moon, or seeing the Berlin Wall fall were all dreamers. Just as those people had an ideal, we too, must have a belief in ourselves and in something better for all people of the world. I think that when each and every one of us was born we were given a special gift or talent. Some people are good with their hands; others are compassionate and understanding. There are those individuals who are mathematical or gifted in science or in sports. Others are talented in music or at making money or bringing joy through laughter. Each one of us has something special to share with others. Just imagine if we all believed in ourselves and worked together—young people, adults, seniors, all cultures and all religions—all sharing our gifts and talents. The odds of ending poverty, exploitation, child labor, and other social evils would be overwhelming. We have everything it takes. Just think what a great world this would be!
CYD: You refer to the fact that not only developing world children are suffering, but many are suffering right here at home, in North America. Can you comment on this?

CK: Among industrialized nations, the United States ranks number one for Gross Domestic Product (GDP), number one for military technology and exports, number one for the number of millionaires and billionaires, and number one for defense expenditures. But it ranks last in the gap between rich and poor children, and worst in the number of children killed by guns. In the past 20 years, over 50,000 American children have been killed by guns in their homes, schools, and neighborhood. This is more child gun deaths than all American casualties in the Viet Nam War. Even in Canada, voted the best place in the world to live, one in five children lives below the poverty line. So as you can see, there are big problems right here in North America. That is why we encourage young people to take action at a local level, in their schools and in their communities. In the United States children should be challenging the U.S. government to ratify the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, underwriting a petition campaign. We not only want to free children from poverty, from neglect, and from abuse—but perhaps most importantly, we must free children from the idea that they have no power and nothing to offer to society.

One of our mandates is to implement leadership training and youth empowerment sessions. Young people need the necessary tools to improve their lives and the lives of their peers. Some children may have all they need materially, but often they have no real direction and very little hope. A lot of youth are desperately searching for heroes. They are getting tired of people like Michael Jordan, who is willing to support and to take millions of dollars from a company that exploits workers’ rights. Children today are searching for real heroes with values and a mission in life—people who inspire them.

CYD: We believe that the act of engaging young people as active partners in their communities, with adults, will not only improve the life of the community, but improve the self esteem and life of the youth. How does your organization connect up to this approach, which we call the Community Youth Development movement?

CK: Youth want to have the opportunity to sit side by side with adults—to collaborate and to work together on social issues. I believe that this is important not only for what young people can learn but for what they can contribute. I have had the chance to work with organizations that say they involve youth in decision making, but unfortunately there is always too great an imbalance of power. The truth is that usually all of the knowledge, skills, and power lie in the hands of adults. Both adults and young people become frustrated. Sometimes adults will say to kids, “We are giving you this opportunity—why aren’t you ‘getting this right?’ “ Young people who sit on boards or committees often don’t have the tools, skills, or experience to really participate effectively.

One thing that adults and youth mentors can do is to help prepare young people for this role. This can happen in the form of training sessions in leadership, conflict resolution skills, or organizational skills. The best way, however, is through participation with an adult mentor on the team. On the other hand, adults need to see what we can bring to the table, what are our talents are. Too often adults underestimate the abilities of youth. What I find most discouraging is when adults speak on behalf of children or youth and fail to give us a voice. Or when adults feel compelled to do everything “for” children rather than “with” children. Many young people are very articulate. They are usually the best spokespersons for their peers from a local to an international level. Young people can add a lot to a team, including a certain perspective from their own experience, great enthusiasm, idealism, and an infectious desire to help humanity. By helping youth to develop the necessary skills to bring to the table, adults are giving them an opportunity to have a voice and to be leaders of today among their peers and great leaders of tomorrow. As our experiences working together develop, more intergenerational dialogues and collaboration will take place. When this happens both sides will benefit.

CYD: So the process of empowering is really very important.

CK: Exactly. It’s very important to give youth those starting tools, that know-how, the leadership skills and the opportunity to participate in finding solutions to issues that affect them.

CYD: Some people would say that the next great liberation movement is the liberation of children and youth, and that we are in the midst of it.

CK: Well, I think its time has come! What would happen if you had a conference on women’s issues and there were no women? Or a gathering to speak about the situation of minorities in our country without minority representation? But people constantly hold conferences and run think tanks about children without children’s involvement. We are the last element in society that has no real voice.
CYD: Do you have a vision or sense about how those of us who are engaged in this youth movement can collaborate more effectively?

CK: What has to be done is the development of partnerships of youth and adults working together. The hardest thing will be putting aside egos. A young lawyer in Toronto, Malini Moorthy, recently began working full-time with Free the Children to help us with our project contracts and international structure, a field that we young people do not have any expertise in. Malini graduated at the top of her class from university and law school and was working with one of Canada’s most renowned law firms. When we asked her if she would leave her job and come and work with us (at a fraction of her lawyer’s salary), she answered, “You know what? I will. This is not why I became a lawyer. I became a lawyer to help people.”

Malini always says that adults who work for Free the Children cannot have “an ego.” Her first day of work was one of the most humbling days of her life. She sat around, looking at the 12-, 13-, 14-, and 15-year-olds, and realized that they were her bosses! At that point she became very excited about the potential of building an intergenerational working team to help the children of the world.

CYD: If we could bring groups that claim to be under the same banner together, and we could leave our egos outside the door, we might indeed be able to collaborate more effectively. Is there anything else you’d like to say to young activists?

CK: We, as youth, must believe in ourselves. We should celebrate the fact that as young people we have an incredible opportunity to effect positive change in society. We are living at a time when, through the Internet and other mass communication, we can instantaneously communicate with and influence people halfway around the world. We have access to a world of information. We have the power to become global citizens. All we have to do is make the decision to become involved.

CYD: And what words would you like to pass on to adults?

CK: That would be not to underestimate what young people have to offer, and to challenge us. As much as we need to give a voice to children, we also need adults to mentor, to teach, to play a leadership role, and to help create intergenerational partnerships. Young people today are looking for heroes, for adults who inspire them to be and to do the best they can.

Craig Kielburger is the 18-year-old founder and chairman of Free the Children, an international children’s organization whose purpose is to free children from poverty and exploitation and to empower young people to become leaders in the world. Free the Children has initiated many projects all over the world, including the opening of rehabilitation centers and schools for children, the creation of alternative sources of revenue for poor families to free children from hazardous work, leadership programs for youth, and projects linking children on an international level.
The following interview took place in April, 2001. The original document was published in CYD Journal, Volume 2, Number 3 (2001).

CYD: Can you provide some historical context for the state of our educational system today?

PS: The current model of education was ushered in during the Industrial Revolution, a time of great change. One of the necessities of the industrial age was uniform public education, and one of the demands of a growing democracy was an educated public. Those two forces, the noble and the pragmatic, had separate visions and purposes for education. The noble vision—based in an older ideology in which the role of education was to create good citizens and nurture the good life—saw all children growing up in a modern democratic society with access to quality educational opportunity. The pragmatic vision advocated for uniformity in order to supply the factories and the economic engine with the labor input needed.

The pragmatic vision has prevailed to this day. The design, monitoring, and assessment of our school system throughout the industrial age basically focused on producing a uniform labor force for industry and, without a doubt, birthed one of the great historical social changes in education.

But once again the world is changing: new social, environmental, and economic stresses are starting to dominate educational dynamics. The gap in earnings, for example, now dominates the quality of education in the United States and threatens to undermine democratic values. If you have enough money you will get a good education; if you don’t, you won’t. It’s that simple. You can hardly think of a more powerful force to undermine self-governance and democracy than dramatic differences in educational opportunity. This is, of course, ironic, since the U.S. society is viewed by the world as the paragon of freedom and opportunity. Yet we are in many ways one of the most class-oriented societies in the world—and we are becoming even more so.

There is a tremendous sadness that we all should feel about the emergence of these events. There’s no way out except to fundamentally rethink the nature and purpose of education. We are not going to patch over these momentous problems by fixing a system that really has lost its historical moment. The great innovation, the factory-line school system that supplied the factory-line business organization, was a wonderful fit for 100–150 years. The problem is, our organizations are no longer factory lines.

CYD: The Bush administration and many educational pundits place much emphasis on standardized testing as a means to measure school performance. What are your views on standardized testing and assessment?

PS: Standardized testing is a classic example of the “fix-it” approach, which focuses on getting education to deliver the reliable output it used to deliver 30 or 40 years ago. Tests are standardized to force schools to produce a standard, measurable outcome. What is called for now is assessment—and there is a real difference between standardized testing and assessment. No learning can occur without assessment. But that’s very different than applying extreme degrees of uniformity to the process.
What is ironic and hopeful today is that the old ideal of citizenship—laying the foundation for a person to have a productive and happy life—may prove to be more what business needs. Business, particularly as it's evolving in this global economy, needs people who can think for themselves, work effectively with others, have a deep sense of their own personal aspirations, and are really good at learning how to learn. In effect, lifelong learners.

If we want to produce lifelong learners, however, the last thing in the world we want to do is make standardized tests the ultimate outcome measure. Standardized testing is both static and rigidly determined outside of the learner.

One of the primary outputs of an effective education system should be a student achieving relatively good skills for objective self-assessment. That really means a student must learn to be humble, to be open to evidence when they are not doing something as well as he or she thought.

The question is, are we developing a capacity for objective self-assessment? Does our education system have that as one of its primary goals? If it did, it would do a couple of things differently. First, it would help learners continually think about their own aims. This is quite essential but occurs infrequently. Usually, somebody else sets the curriculum and the objectives for success. Second, students would learn to assess how well they are doing relative to their aims. Beyond these two fundamental strategies, assessment requires asking students dynamic questions such as, What are you passionate about? What is your context? What sort of contribution do you want to make? Can you work and learn effectively with others? None of this will ever be derived from a standardized test.

This does not mean that there is no role for adults, nor does it mean that there is no role for external standards. But it would require more of a negotiation process between the kind of external standard and the learner’s aims. We could then be much more tolerant of people moving through the education process at their own speed. In our factory-line model, the kids who learn it twice as fast are smart; the kids who learn it half as fast are stupid.

The consequences of not moving beyond the factory model of education are enormous when you consider that one-half to two-thirds of the people could be lumped in the “slow” or “not capable” category. But the world economic situation today is one in which all societies that wish to obtain and maintain a competitive advantage must have the same fundamental challenge: developing the capacities of all their people. Thus, it is counterproductive for any country to delegate two-thirds of its people to a category called slow or stupid. If, instead, self-assessment were the cornerstone of learning, then everybody would be continually learning. People would establish their aims in a social context where they would have to take into account what other people are doing and everyone would be viewed as capable of contributing. This might mean some young people graduate from high school at 16 and others at 20. Does anybody really care? What does matter is that young people graduate from high school with a comparable level of capability.

**CYD:** What are the underlying structural problems associated with the industrial model?

**PS:** The deepest structural problem was the fragmentation of school into a province of professional educators separated from a child’s life, on the one hand, and their family and their family’s life on the other. Teachers know darn well that what they do in school is interdependent with the world the child lives in. Family, stability, and role models in their immediate surroundings are enormously important factors in a child’s life.

Yet, we have made education and the development of children the responsibility of a professional caste called “teachers.” If children do not achieve, we blame the teachers. Then parents come in and say, “What’s wrong? My child’s not learning. It’s your fault: you should make them learn.” It’s very difficult for a teacher, given this professional fragmentation, to say, “Well, I really think the problem here is the child comes home and there’s nobody at home until 7:00 at night.” The parent then responds, “What can I do about that? I’ve got to work and my husband’s got to work.”

This is a real dilemma. Children are being babysat by television when, in fact, to grow and develop properly, they need multiple adult relationships. We all know that. It’s been like that for tens of thousands of years. The dilemma seems completely insolvable until you ask a few key questions. Let me take you through a little scenario:

**Q:** Where are all those adults?

**A:** Those adults are at work.

**Q:** Well, what are they doing at work?

**A:** They are making money. But they are also part of an organization.

**Q:** What do those organizations do?

**A:** Those organizations try to make a profit by producing a product or service.

**Q:** Are those organizations worried about their future employees?

**A:** Of course they are. Collectively, they’re enormously worried. One of the big issues in business is maintaining a quality work force.
And now for the big question no one asks:

Q: What if you could close this circle and have the same corporations that are beating on schools to turn out a better product stop having breakfast meetings, and let their workers go home at 5:00 p.m.?
A: Well, we can’t because we won’t be globally competitive if our employees aren’t working 80 hours a week.

The chilling truth is, if you want to be globally competitive and work your employees 80 hours a week, then you should be prepared to have the next generation of workers render the work force globally not competitive. The real structural changes aren’t being addressed. There is no way that educators will fix the school system when business is busy destroying the family.

CYD: You’ve been writing about learning communities for about 20 years now. How can learning communities address some of these very important issues that you have just laid out for us?

PS: People need to start working together. Structural change cannot be the province of a small group fixing things for everybody else. Resolving this dilemma—where businesses are demanding that educators produce good output and are simultaneously unsympathetic to the plights of parents, who really should be spending more time with their children—is a challenge that will only be met when business people and educators come together to create a positive environment for young people. Such collaboration would constitute a learning community: a group of people coming out of their boxes, out from behind the walls of their respective isolated little domains of activity and saying, “We’re all living together. How do we create a healthy environment for our children to grow up?”

Some of the most exciting examples of schools that learn exist at a community level, when people realize that the school is the hour-by-hour environment in which a kid grows up. It’s not a building. It’s not a place that kids run around in from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 or 5:00 p.m., or whenever they get out of their daycare because nobody’s at home. It’s actually the totality of the environment in which our children grow up. Until we go back to thinking about school as the totality of the environment in which a child grows up, we can expect no deep changes. Change requires a community—people living and working together, assuming some common responsibility for something that’s of deep concern and interest to all of them—their children. It’s that simple.

One example is a recent collaboration sponsored by our organization [The Society for Organizational Learning (SOL)] between Hewlett Packard and the Corvallis city schools in Oregon. Teachers, kids, parents, people working at Hewlett Packard (the biggest employer of Corvallis), as well as people working in a lot of other small and medium-sized companies, collaborated to build a community of people who live and work together—to assume joint responsibility for the environment in which children grow up.

CYD: In the CYD model, young people work in partnership with adults to improve communities. Can you talk about the relationship between youth and adults in models like Corvallis?

PS: Young people will always look for adults who have expertise, who will help them learn to become competent. I don’t think we’re ever going to improve on the apprenticeship model; it is essential that there be close contact between young learners and people who know how to do something.

Every school I’ve ever been around, where children have authority in their own learning, includes positive interactions between youth and adults—students quickly find adults from whom they can learn. The idea that we need to motivate children to learn first, before they can do anything, is nonsense. Many years ago the eminent anthropologist Ed Hall said, “One of the dumbest things we’ve got going in our society is keeping kids in schoolroom settings as if they were seven years old when they’re 15, 16, 17, 18.” At that age they should be engaged in the world. They should be doing projects. They should be doing something productive. They should be seeing firsthand how to make a contribution. When adults push too hard, they start to destroy young people’s intrinsic motivation to learn and turn the social dynamic from one of learning to one of resisting.

We should make sure students have some idea of what sorts of things are useful for them to learn. Young people do not have it all figured out, but they do want to succeed—and are thus open to learning from adults. Our role is to mentor, guide, and support them. They can do the rest.

CYD: Are there current innovations that model this kind of learning?

PS: Lots of positive things are going on in different places. Everything is in the early stages, emerging and evolving into a vision of what school should look like in the future. But there’s no one program. There’s no, “Here’s the three things you need to do or the seven principles or the six elements of a new
curriculum.” All of that stuff in my opinion is part of the movement to keep alive the industrial age system.

If we’re really in the business of recreating a 21st century post-industrial system of education, there’s no formula. You can’t say, “Oh well, it worked over there so let’s do it that way here.” The process will arguably be imperfect, incomplete, full of problems. The principles of learner-connected learning and understanding interdependence or systems thinking, reflectiveness, aspiration—these have been the cornerstones of our work on organizational learning all along, and I think they can be the cornerstone here.

Bear in mind that there’s as much change needed on the part of teachers, principals, and parents as there is on the part of youth. In some sense, you might say we’re the whole problem. The young are very open to learning. A lot of the tools and methods are available that introduce students to systems thinking and foster reflectiveness for teachers and students alike. One of the leverage points for this kind of change is getting teachers to work collaboratively, and then effectively engaging parents and the larger community in their own learning.

At the school in Oregon mentioned earlier, the superintendent has the simple idea that every aspect of the school is there to contribute to students’ learning. He included the community as a resource by, for example, having farmers teach some of the biology curriculum. When students had problems learning fractions, they had the cooks teach them. Working in a kitchen, you quickly discover how fractions work and why they’re so important. All kinds of innovative opportunities were made available, which basically shifted the role of the teachers to being more designers of the students’ learning processes than the source of all knowledge.

An entire network has been set up to share developments that have emerged to enable students to approach history or literature or science from a systems perspective. It’s a website, based in Massachusetts, called the Creative Learning Exchange (see www.clexchange.org). And it’s chock-full of great examples, some of which are also captured in our field book (Senge, 2000).

**CYD**: Okay, so there are many roads to Nirvana. How do I know I’m on the right one?

**PS**: We need to start by developing some basic guidelines for fostering dialogue at a community level around how to balance the pressures to improve our schools as they are while simultaneously laying the foundation for fundamental evolution. At SOL, we have been developing a network around the country of people who are serious about this—who connect with and help one another. Fairly soon we will have a new product out there designed to be a set of tools and methods to help people get started.

The good news is that initiating this is not quite as daunting as it sounds. At SOL we have been working with a lot of business organizations for over ten years. At first we concentrated on working with business because business is a much more integrated sector of our economy than education, for reasons discussed earlier. We are now including schools. The experiment in Corvallis, which I mentioned earlier, will soon be adapted to Kansas City, Des Moines, and the state of Massachusetts.

**CYD**: Any closing thoughts?

**PS**: I see no option except to re-create the system of education. There are momentous forces telling us that this system of education has lived its time. I think it’s going to take a generation or two to really see fundamental differences in education.

In the meantime, we have to do as much as we can to keep the existing system from completely falling apart. There are two types of innovations—“fix it” and “re-create it”—that we must pursue simultaneously. In a dying industry, people do the best they can to keep the industry and the company afloat as long as possible. We have an analogous dynamic going on in education. Basic innovation will ultimately re-create the education system. At the same time, a lot of people will do good work to keep the existing factory line working as well as possible. We really have to do both. Our society faces fundamental challenges to change the way we live. The only thing that can be said with some confidence today is this: we cannot continue to live the way we are living for the next 100 years. The earth won’t support it. So we know there’s going to be a lot of turbulence and a lot of basic change. We are taking a long journey here and it’s going to take a few generations.

Reference

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