

Urban Youth Programs in America



A STUDY OF YOUTH, COMMUNITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
CONDUCTED FOR THE FORD FOUNDATION

Sharon E. Sutton in collaboration with
Susan P. Kemp, Lorraine Gutiérrez, and Susan Saegert

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Mission Statement

CEEDS is a culturally diverse, interdisciplinary group of faculty at the University of Washington's College of Architecture and Urban Planning that seeks to enhance learning and community well-being through participatory research and design processes. Drawing upon faculty from the university's professional, social science, and humanities programs, we strive to engage in transformative partnerships with K-12 schools, industry, and grassroots community organizations. We are especially interested in partnerships that see the need for creating physical space as an opportunity to envision organizational change. Our overarching goal is to use participative processes to establish democratic learning communities—in the university and beyond—while also sparking theory-building and policy-making nationally on this topic. Through

collaborative teaching, research, and service, we aspire to bring about systemic change in communities, especially those serving children and families with limited access and untapped talents.

Our work reflects a belief that:

- Respectful relationships among people and with nature can enhance the human spirit, imagination, and intellect;
- Engagement with cultural and esthetic artifacts and activities are fundamental to individual and community development;
- All individuals and communities have the ability—and responsibility—to shape their own surroundings;
- Joy is a vital component of learning and community well-being.

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208P Gould Hall, Box 355720
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Executive Summary

This country urgently needs social institutions that view urban youth not as problem-laden clients, but as individuals capable of struggling to eradicate the inequities in their lives and communities. Our study examined programs that explicitly seek to address that need, and which thus represent a small slice of the vast array of drop-in and structured out-of-school programs for youth. It serves low-income and minority youth, ages 12 to 28, who live in oppressive urban conditions and often assume adult responsibilities as teens. Despite these circumstances, the program directors in our study reported that, given appropriate opportunities, the young people they work with succeed in shaping their own development and that of their communities. Our purpose was to identify the characteristics that account for the success of these programs. In so doing, we hope to inspire many more such initiatives, and to help transform the negative stereotypes of urban youth within the dominant theoretical frameworks that guide youth programming.

To identify programs with outstanding track records in justice work, we accepted programs only by referral, specifying that they be community-based, serve low-income or minority communities, be at least one year old, include a community service component, and describe themselves as committed to social justice. These criteria placed the programs surveyed

toward the forward-looking side of the youth development continuum, eliminating sports organizations and short-term activities such as summer camps. Because we wanted to have somewhat comparable geographic contexts, we also limited our research to programs located in metropolitan areas with a population of at least 1 million for densely, and 500,000 for sparsely, settled states. The resulting study population encompassed 88 programs, 90% of them grassroots organizations.

Conducted over a 29-month period by a four-site team of 24 junior and senior scholars, along with support staff, our research encompassed three studies: (1) a set of exploratory focus groups with constituents from 2 programs (paid and volunteer staff, youth, parents or guardians, and adult community members); (2) telephone surveys with the directors of all 88 programs; and (3) open-ended telephone and face-to-face interviews with constituents from 6 programs. In all, 198 youth and adults participated in the study. A mixed-methods research design included qualitative and quantitative analyses of open-ended focus group responses, closed- and open-ended survey responses, and open-ended interview responses. The quantitative survey analyses constitute the centerpiece of our report, with open-ended data illustrating our results.

Investigating Program Characteristics

Rather than evaluate the programs or attempt to assess their best practices, we used aggregate data to chart their defining characteristics onto a conceptual map. These characteristics fall into four categories: the *context* in which programs operate, the *principles* that guide their work, the *content* of their curricula, and their *self-reported outcomes*. Our report provides empirical evidence of a pattern of relationships among these characteristics that yield more *transformative programs*, defined as those that seek to engage low-income and minority youth in understanding and redressing the unjust conditions that hinder their development.

The first category of variables that we investigated—*program context*—includes organizational structure and external urban context. The structure of the programs we surveyed reflects characteristics that the literature identifies as essential to effective youth-centered grassroots organizations: longevity, proven success in attracting older youth, sustained social interactions, a sense of group solidarity, deep roots in local communities, and committed—even if not formally trained—staff and volunteers. Even though most grassroots organizations rate their funding as insufficient, most program directors in our study describe their own resources as adequate or good, and also mention strong relationships with other organizations and social networks. They consider young people themselves an asset—as individuals who bring such attributes as assertiveness, determination, compassion, intelligence, humor, self-awareness, and open-mindedness to their programs, fundamentally sustaining both the mission of organizations and staff commitment.

Nevertheless, our investigation revealed the challenging external contexts in which these programs operate. Most are located in either larger or smaller metropolitan areas, rather than in mid-sized ones—areas with greater poverty and unemployment, higher school dropout rates, fewer owner-occupied homes, older housing, and fewer Caucasians. When asked to rate safety, physical infrastructure, social relations, and neighborhood attachment in their communities on a 0–2 scale, program directors rated safety the lowest, noting as problems street crime, gang activity, assault with weapons, and police misconduct; they ranked physical infrastructure somewhat higher, referring to the poor condition of buildings and schools, displacement, and lack of transporta-

tion and convenience stores; they rated social relations and neighborhood attachment most favorably.

The second category of variables we investigated—*program principles*—includes definitions of social justice, youth development philosophies, and approaches to youth participation. In their social justice definitions, program directors placed greatest emphasis upon having equal opportunities and a say in decision-making, while assigning less importance to developing skills, preventing risks, and strengthening individual identities. Thus, for program directors, social justice means, first and foremost, creating a society where young people have equal opportunities and a voice in decision-making, a process that provides the context for positive youth development. In portraying their youth development philosophies through mission statements and survey responses, program directors positioned their organizations at the far end of a continuum ranging from prevention to transformation. At the same time, they described approaches to youth participation that promote a variety of youth/adult relationships.

The third category—*program content*—includes the pedagogies, activities, and opportunities these programs offer. An analysis of their pedagogies revealed that, although they do not score very high on social critique, those that do engage in social critique were significantly more likely to embody transformative youth development philosophies. Civic activism was the most prevalent program activity—a not surprising finding given the study population’s social justice orientation. Finally, an analysis of the justice-oriented opportunities considered for this research revealed that one larger group of context-centered programs was likelier to provide in a fairly even-handed way all of the opportunities, while another smaller group of person-centered programs was likelier to offer more opportunities for developing identities and fewer for understanding and participating in the neighborhood. Still, all the programs provide youth with an impressive array of opportunities.

The fourth category—*self-reported outcomes*—commonly understood as the benchmarks youth should attain to reach a healthy adulthood, required a redefinition of the concept “outcome.” We propose a radically different notion that acknowledges the oppressive conditions in low-income urban communities and the fact that many youth in these communities already assume adult responsibilities. We assert that youth program activities are not simply

a *means* to youth development, but that they generate results—products—that are *ends* in themselves. We therefore considered as program outcomes the immediate individual and collective successes, no matter how transitory, that youth participants experience. In a country lacking the social will to address low-income urban conditions, we contend that the potential for change lies within the community through coalitions, alliances, and collaborative projects undertaken by adults and youth alike. From this perspective, the notion of outcomes shifts from a conventional youth-only paradigm to one that inseparably links youth development with community development. An analysis of outcomes reported by program constituents who participated in the open-ended interviews revealed the richness of programs' contributions to youth and community development, with active participation and social contribution topping the list.

Assessing Significant Relationships among Program Characteristics

In investigating the relationships among these four sets of variables, we found two significant clusters that derive from transformative youth development philosophies and funding sources. The strongest cluster of relationships centers around transformative philosophies and involves 19 variables. A transformative philosophy was most likely to apply in programs with either 50–100 or more than 300 participants—those more often located in deteriorated neighborhoods that still offer a sense of safety. Even though all the programs surveyed exist within a network of organizational relationships, those with transformative philosophies were significantly more likely to have developed such relationships themselves. They also embodied specific principles: their visions of social justice were likelier to emphasize equal opportunities but less likely to emphasize identity awareness, and their visions of youth participation were likelier to encompass multiple adult/youth interactions. Their program contents not only proved significantly more likely to emphasize social critique but also to provide opportunities that help youth understand and participate in their communities, acquire communal behaviors, and become agents of change. Not surprisingly, these more transformative programs were significantly likelier to produce social contribution outcomes, albeit not the community-building outcomes we initially hoped for, which would have indicated a stronger community change

focus than that associated with social contribution. Perhaps even these more transformative programs are likelier to engage youth in activism and leadership *within* programs than *outside* them, in the community at large.

The second cluster of relationships centers around primary sources of funding and involves 14 variables. Foundation-funded programs were likelier to be located in smaller metropolitan areas with all the census data indicators of poverty; they not only provide opportunities for youth to understand and participate in their communities, but also engage young people in making a social contribution as activists and leaders. Such programs were also more likely to be newer and larger, but do not necessarily operate on larger budgets or with more staff. They do, however, report more adult leadership in comparison to that found in programs clustering around transformative philosophies, perhaps because many serve large groups of young people with fewer resources and therefore lack time for the process work involved in nurturing youth leadership. It is worth noting that the cluster around foundation grants intersects to some degree with the cluster around transformative philosophy, because foundations were significantly likelier to support programs with such philosophies. Governments were significantly less likely to support programs with transformative philosophies and, along with individuals, were likelier to support older programs in larger metropolitan areas with fewer symptoms of poverty.

Thus, our analysis revealed two partially overlapping clusters of variables around transformative youth development philosophies and primary source of funding, which together affect practically all the significant relationships we found within each of the four components of the conceptual map. Although the characteristics of transformative programs do not entirely align with those of foundation-funded programs, foundations emerged as the primary enablers of the most forward-looking programs surveyed.

A Conceptual Map of Transformative Youth Development Programs

At the outset of our study, we located program principles (social justice definitions, youth development philosophies, and approaches to youth participation) at the center of a conceptual map, as the component that we expected would most affect program content, context, and outcomes. The significant

relationships that emerged from the analyses, however, led us to locate transformative philosophies and source of funding at the center, as defining factors in program operation. These two factors affect all the significant relationships we discovered within categories, with the exception of neighborhood attachment, which relates to program directors' residence and not to one of our central features.

The most transformative programs in our study clearly have a vital role to play in connecting youth to their communities. Besides advancing youth development, such connectedness can enable young people and their adult allies to improve challenging urban conditions. To multiply these programs, a sea-change is required in the way youth program designers, evaluators, and funders think about low-income and minority youth, and thus in how they think about the programs that can effectively support their development. Such a change would allow for a more fruitful deployment of resources currently invested in programs that fail to engage low-income and minority youth, especially older youth.

Reflecting upon how to catalyze this new approach we asked ourselves: (1) How can justice-oriented youth development advocates—researchers, practitioners, philanthropists, parents, young people—organize to change prevailing popular and scholarly notions of low-income and minority youth? (2) How can this community of advocates mobilize the media to publicize the accomplishments of low-income and minority youth? (3) How can more foundations be convinced to fund community-based, justice-oriented youth programs? (4) What would make local and national governments less conservative in their funding parameters? (5) How can the corporate community be convinced to fund community-based, justice-oriented youth programs? (6) Finally, how can the programs themselves more intentionally frame guiding principles that reflect their everyday practices and vice versa?

Recommendations

We propose that:

- Youth justice advocates organize to change public opinion.** Coalitions of advocates—including youth—might speak in a collective voice to articulate a transformative youth agenda; influence public policy; influence media depictions of youth; and lobby to shift public funds away

from treatment-oriented youth programming, so as to free up more—and more locally responsive—funding for transformative youth programming.

- Funders engage in a dialogue with grantees.** So that program constituents are not simply reacting to predetermined guidelines handed down by the philanthropic community, but proactively helping to shape them, funders might sponsor community forums and panels to encourage dialogue on funding guidelines; organize community events to recognize the accomplishments of youth unrelated to any specific funding initiatives; invite youth justice advocates—including youth—to collaborate on writing RFPs; and include support for program staff capacity-building and for formative program evaluations.
- Youth programs create more compelling narratives.** A stronger narrative of an alternative model for youth development, with a coherent vision of their organizations, would clarify to funders what programs believe in and practice, and also what youth accomplish in the here-and-now to improve themselves and the deplorable conditions in their communities. A coherent message would clarify to the business community—now missing-in-action as funders—how these programs can contribute to their bottom line by preparing independent, culturally diverse critical thinkers and doers for the workforce.
- Researchers conduct large studies of justice-oriented programs that build and test theory.** Such research might employ youth as ethnographers in the programs and communities under study. This strategy would be a cost-effective way not only to access a youth perspective through participant observation, face-to-face interviews, and other *in situ* methods, but also to create a national team of young low-income and minority scholars. Needless to say, longitudinal studies are needed—a major challenge because: (a) even short-term research and evaluation of grassroots justice-oriented programs lack funding, (b) funders would need to accept creative research methods for assessing program outcomes, especially community achievements, and (c) high-end development is rapidly displacing and dispersing low-income urban populations.

We see these recommendations—youth justice advocates changing public opinion, funders engaging in a dialogue with grantees, programs creating more compelling narratives, and researchers conducting

large studies that build and test theory—as entirely interdependent, each necessary to the accomplishment of the others. By presenting empirical evidence drawn from the beliefs, practices, and accomplish-

ments of a select group of youth programs, we hope to inspire a multi-faceted approach that will pave the way toward greater acceptance of a context-centered approach to youth development.



Introduction

Too many youth programs in urban communities treat adolescents as clients who require services or interventions to overcome problematic behaviors. This population, especially older youth keenly aware of their cultural identities, may even perceive as unwelcoming programs that emphasize healthy development. Such programs not only tend to alienate young people due to their race, ethnicity, family income, gender, or sexual orientation, but also fail to recognize the structural inequities these youth encounter and their boundless capacity for taking on injustice. The paucity of welcoming, justice-oriented programs leaves low-income and minority¹ youth underserved and more vulnerable to the drug abuse, school absenteeism, and violent behaviors that, in turn, cycle them toward increased social control and incarceration. Our study sought to identify programs that intentionally embrace urban youth of diverse backgrounds and view them not as problem-laden clients, but as individuals capable of struggling to eradicate the inequities they face.

Most of the programs we examined target low-income and minority youth who face an array of barriers to healthy development—confined to under-resourced

neighborhoods, they live in substandard housing, and are sometimes forced to move from place to place due to economic crises; they attend overcrowded, understaffed, and underfunded schools; they lack opportunities to envision alternatives to the low rates of high school graduation and high rates of unemployment and incarceration that plague their peers. At the same time, these young people experience multiple forms of oppression, from police misconduct to racial profiling and gay-bashing to relentless military recruitment. They find themselves stereotyped as the source of problems in their communities—their voices unheard, their talents unrecognized.

Despite these circumstances, the directors of the programs we studied report that, when given appropriate opportunities, the youth they serve have proven successful in shaping their own development and that of their communities. They claim that their programs:

- Support youth in developing their identities so they have the courage to resist discrimination;
- Promote critical thinking and set high expectations for academic performance;

¹ We use the term “minority” to encompass populations that experience discrimination within mainstream American society due to racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other exclusionary attitudes.

- Provide safe spaces in which youth exercise ownership over their own lives and also organize their communities to demand equality;
- Help youth project their voices and become equal partners in community development processes;
- Engage youth both in serving their communities and in educating them about social and environmental issues.

Our study aimed to develop a conceptual framework for understanding how these community-based, justice-oriented programs work and what makes them effective. In this report, we draw from aggregate data to reveal their defining characteristics and self-reported outcomes. We then provide empirical evidence of a pattern of relationships that result in more *transformative programs*, defined as those that engage young people in understanding and redressing the unjust conditions that hinder the development of low-income and minority youth. We offer a conceptual map of these relationships, calling attention to how transformative youth development philosophies shape the nature of programs, what they do, and how they view their accomplishments. We hope this map enables youth program designers, evaluators, and funders to develop more transformative approaches to an underserved group of young people.

Study Methods

Our study set out to identify the characteristics of community-based, justice-oriented programs that successfully engage low-income and minority youth in urban communities throughout the United States. To address this goal, we assembled a four-site, deliberately diverse team of 24 junior and senior scholars, as well as support staff, including 13 people from the University of Washington (UW), 4 from the University of Michigan (UM), 6 from the City University of New York (CUNY), and 1 from the Girl Scouts of the USA. In addition, 7 other graduate students, faculty, and community practitioners joined the UW researchers in a reflection seminar that met monthly during the introductory phase of the project. Together, primary researchers and reflection team represent the fields of art, architecture, anthropology, education, geography, landscape architecture, psychology, social work, urban design and planning, and women's studies. In total, our group consisted of 21 women and 10 men—both US- and foreign-born—ranging in

age from twenty-something to sixty-something, and consisting of African Americans, Asian Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics, and a Native American.

Throughout an introductory phase, we reviewed literature in a variety of disciplines and used wide-ranging academic and community practice networks to identify 164 potential participants in our study, including types of organizations not typically represented in foundation-supported surveys of youth programs. Rather than randomly searching the Internet, we considered only those programs referred by our network of social justice colleagues as organizations worthy of inclusion in our research. Of those, 88 met the criteria and were willing to participate.

Relevance of the Study Population

The study population represents a small slice of the vast array of drop-in and structured out-of-school programs for youth, which range from more punitive schemes (social control or incarceration) to prevention of problems to more forward-looking approaches. The latter include positive youth development that encourages normal socialization (Quinn 1999), community youth development that establishes supportive relationships with adults (Perkins et al. 2003), and social justice youth development that promotes critical awareness and collective action within youth-led organizations (Ginwright & James 2002). The major providers of this vast array of youth programs include national organizations (by far the largest single provider) such as the Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, YMCA, and YWCA; public agencies such as public libraries or parks and recreation systems; sports organizations offering formal and informal activities; private entities such as religious organizations and adult clubs; community institutions (e.g., museums); and grassroots organizations that house either autonomous youth groups or ones attached to parent larger organizations (Quinn 1999).

Thus, the universe of youth development programs encompasses a continuum of more or less progressive youth development approaches offered by a variety of providers. As an indication of this vastness, in 1990 positive youth development programs alone numbered at least 17,000 (National Center for Charitable Statistics 1990). Yet, “in-depth studies of specific communities reveal that low-income neighborhoods, both urban and rural, are the least likely to offer consistent support and a wide array of developmental opportunities to adolescents” (Quinn 1999, 105, citing Ianni 1989). Because poor families cannot

TABLE 0.1 Study Population within the Universe of Youth Development Programs

	Social Control	Prevention	Pos Youth Dev	Com Youth Dev	SJ Youth Dev
National Organizations					
Public Agencies					
Sports Organizations					
Private Organizations					
Community Institutions					
Grassroots Organizations			79 of 88 Programs		

afford fee-for-service programs, they rely upon community programs that offer free activities. However, these programs—especially grassroots ones—often lack adequate funding (Quinn 1999). At the same time, young people in poor communities tend not to participate. For example, a national survey revealed that white eighth graders were much more likely to participate in out-of-school activities than their peers of color, and that low-income eighth graders were the least likely to participate (Quinn 1999, citing the National Center for Education Statistics 1990).

Our study sought to address this underserved population. It focused upon urban community programs that not only successfully engage the participation of low-income and minority youth, but that also help young people contribute to the livability of their communities. We wanted to identify the characteristics that account for the success of these programs, hoping not only to inspire many more programs of this type but also to expand the dominant theoretical frameworks that shape youth programs. Accordingly, our inclusion criteria specified that programs be community-based, serve low-income or minority communities, be at least one year old, include a community service component, and describe themselves as committed to social justice.

These criteria placed the programs surveyed toward the forward-looking side of the youth development continuum, eliminating sports organizations and short-term activities such as summer camps. Our study population encompassed 88 programs, most offered by grassroots organizations (79), with a handful offered by other providers, including a national organization (3), religious organizations (5),

and a museum (1). Only 35 were autonomous youth programs; the remaining 53 were offered within the context of larger organizations.² Table 0.1 positions the study population within the universe of youth development programs.

Description of the Study Population

The study population consisted of the directors and constituents (paid and volunteer staff, youth, parents or guardians, and adult community members) of 88 programs. Together these programs serve between 12,000 and 20,000 young people in metropolitan areas throughout the United States, affecting a much larger group through outreach activities. Constituents of 2 programs participated in exploratory focus groups; the directors of all 88 programs took part in structured telephone surveys; and constituents of 6 programs participated in open-ended telephone and face-to-face interviews. In all, 198 youth and adults participated in about 230 hours of telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Because we wanted to have somewhat comparable geographic contexts, we limited this research to programs located in large metropolitan areas, defined as Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with a population of at least 1 million for densely, and 500,000 for sparsely, settled states. Recognizing that many previous studies have tended to survey East Coast and West Coast programs, we went to great lengths to obtain referrals from every qualified MSA in the United States. We succeeded in surveying programs located in 64% of the qualified MSAs.³

² For a brief description of each program in the study population, see Appendix C.

³ See Appendix D for the location of the programs in the study population.

A Reiterative Approach to Theory Building

Our research team began by spelling out a social justice framework through which to view youth programs. Initially formulated during a research roundtable at the Ford Foundation (attended by ourselves and the grantees of another Ford-funded project), the framework became further refined through a face-to-face conference at CUNY, monthly teleconferences, and the monthly reflection seminars at the UW.

Introductory activities occurred during the first 5 months of our 29-month reiterative research process, and resulted in the conceptual map shown in Figure 0.1. That map guided the design of the data collection protocols that we administered over a 12-month period. Qualitative analyses were ongoing throughout data collection, whereas the quantitative analyses took place at the end of data collection, over a 5-month period during which we continued refining the conceptual map. During the last 7 months, we produced a draft report and distributed it electronically to a peer review group consisting of selected programs, the primary grant makers for the study population, and social justice scholars. To gather their feedback on the draft, we maintained a 2-month electronic discussion board where we posted detailed syntheses of and responses to the comments we received. To the degree possible, this final report incorporates peer reviewers' extensive and thoughtful suggestions.

The Conceptual Map

At the outset of the study, we hypothesized that the more forward-looking youth programs would somehow be distinctive with respect to the nature of their organization, what they believed in, and what they actually accomplished in practice. To explore this uniqueness, we reiteratively constructed a conceptual map of the defining characteristics of the study population, including the *context* in which programs operate, the *principles* that guide their work, and the *content* of their curricula. We expected to identify distinctions among program principles that would,

in turn, inform the nature of those programs and their *self-reported outcomes* for youth and communities. Figure 0.1 depicts the initial conceptual map.

Research Design

Our research encompassed three studies.⁴ The first consisted of a single set of exploratory focus groups that researchers from the UW and CUNY facilitated in person, in New York City, bringing together constituents from 2 programs. The protocol contained four open-ended questions that engaged participants in describing their programs and neighborhoods to each other. The second study consisted of a structured telephone survey of all 88 programs that researchers from the three universities (UW, UM, and CUNY) administered to organizations located in their respective regions. The survey protocol contained 68 questions dealing with program philosophy, structure, resources, and activities; youth participation; neighborhood context; and definition and operationalization of social justice principles.⁵ This survey protocol yielded the aggregate data that constitute the centerpiece of our report. The third study consisted of 82 open-ended telephone and face-to-face interviews with constituents of 6 programs selected from among the first 50 surveys.⁶ Researchers from the three universities administered those interviews, with a protocol consisting of 26 open-ended questions, adapted for each constituency, in six categories that closely mirrored those of the survey: demographics, program activities, participation of parents and adult community members, neighborhood characteristics, program resources, and program outcomes.⁷

Mixed-method Data Analyses

The research design encompassed a sequential layering of both qualitative and quantitative data analyses from all three studies, which yielded the empirical survey findings reported here. This layering included analyses of open-ended focus group responses, closed- and open-ended survey responses, and open-end-

4 See Appendix A for more information on research methods. Our research team conducted all phases of the study, including procurement of photographic materials contained in this report, in accordance with protocols reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Review Boards of each of the three participating academic institutions.

5 See Appendix B for the survey protocol.

6 We began administering the interviews while the surveys were still in progress, so that both data collection processes ended simultaneously. This time-line meant that we could not select from among the later surveys.

7 We added this last category—program outcomes—in the interview protocol (even though it was not included in the survey) after realizing the rich outcome data embedded in survey responses.

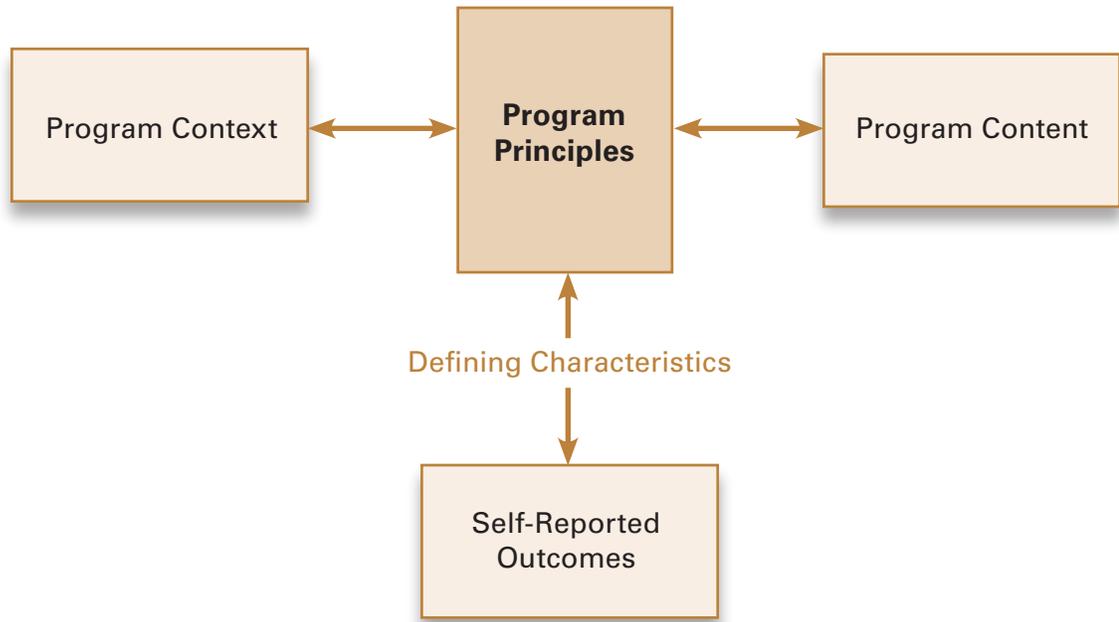


FIGURE 0.1 Initial Conceptual Map

ed interview responses, based upon the following steps:

- Theory-driven thematic analysis (see e.g., Boyatis 1998) of the 126-page open-ended focus group transcript, which in turn informed the 68-question survey protocol.
- Scoring of selected open-ended survey responses in preparation for quantitative analyses.
- Data-driven thematic analysis of an open-ended interview response to develop definitions for program outcomes.
- Application of those program outcome definitions to open-ended survey data.⁸
- Recording of data from the 2002 American Community Service Profiles, published by the US Census Bureau.

This process resulted in a total data set of 237 variables (49 closed-ended responses, 181 created through thematic analyses and scoring, 7 taken from the census), which we subjected to frequency, cross tab, correlation, ANOVA, and latent class analyses. To conduct the thematic analyses, teams of two or three people worked together, coordinated by the

principal investigator. Individuals worked separately, and then teams developed consensus on their assigned data, continually refining categories as the analyses proceeded. Although quantitative analyses of the survey data constitute the centerpiece of our report, we draw from open-ended data to illustrate these findings.

Limitations of the Study

Some of the strengths of our study also entail its limitations. One such limitation relates to the composition of our study population and the selection criteria we used for recruiting programs. By drawing upon programs already well-known by social justice scholars, we were guaranteed a group of forward-looking programs, a number of which had already been showcased in other foundation-funded studies and projects. However, we suspect that another universe of less well-known programs exists that we did not reach through this recruitment process. For example, we received very few referrals for programs in the central part of the United States; we therefore lack representation from this part of the country.⁹

⁸ See Chapter 4 for an explanation on why and how we came to use the open-ended interview data to develop categories for scoring for the survey data.

⁹ Map D-1 in Appendix D clearly illustrates the lack of programs in the central part of the country.

Another limitation relates to the survey itself. Although we did some minor piloting of the survey protocol, this instrument is not field-tested, but rather exploratory; in a second round, we would make many changes to it so that the entire survey essentially represents a pilot for a larger study. In addition, we administered the survey only to senior staff, who have a particular view of programs not necessarily shared by other constituents, as we learned from the open-ended interviews. Finally, we administered the surveys by telephone, without a site visit, which clearly limited our first-hand understanding of these programs.

A third limitation relates to data analysis. Due to its exploratory nature, our study relies upon a considerable amount of scored open-ended data and also generalizes from a relatively small sample. To address this limitation, we rigorously employed inter-rater reliability processes within a diverse team of researchers; besides, our statistician limited the analyses in consideration of the scored data and small sample size. In addition, we checked the external validity of our results by engaging a peer review group in a feedback loop. Although the reviewers had many concerns about the structure of our draft report, program participants, funders, and scholars alike verified that our results match their on-the-ground experiences.

Finally, we acknowledge that the analyses presented here represent a first pass through the data. Despite the limitations just described, we have accumulated a very rich set of data that will support mining by faculty and doctoral students well into the future.

The Report

This illustrated report contains six chapters and five appendices. The first four chapters sequentially explore components of the conceptual map: *context*, *principles*, *content*, and *outcomes*, in that order. Each chapter briefly summarizes the literature to characterize the relevant variables within a particular component, and then presents data from the program survey related to those variables. Chapter 5, the core of our report, identifies the distinctive relationships we found among the components of the programs, and concludes with a refined conceptual map of those programs. This chapter also contains selected open-ended responses from six surveys to give readers a first-hand understanding of how programs work on the ground. Chapter 6 summarizes the defining

characteristics and achievements of the programs in our study, and makes recommendations as to how youth justice advocates, funders, programs, and researchers can multiply the types of programs described here. In addition, we have included a mail-in post card that readers can return indicating how useful the conceptual map and definitions of variables that comprise it are in helping them reflect upon their work—a feedback loop suggested by one of the peer reviewers.

The audience for our report includes people involved in the design, evaluation, and funding of youth programs, and who are interested in youth development approaches that tap the potential of teenagers and young adults—aged 12 to twenty-something—to improve themselves and their communities.

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Photo by Greig Canna

Community-based Programs in Toxic Urban Contexts

Youth development occurs within a constellation of settings, from those offered by families, schools, and religious organizations to those of local and national youth programs and organizations. Community-based programs serve as a setting of choice for many teenagers who experience discrimination due to racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other exclusionary attitudes. These programs frequently serve areas where youth and their families lack access to education, employment, health care, social capital, and a safe, wholesome environment. They have special appeal to older youth who may have found other structured out-of-school activities irrelevant, inhospitable, or even demeaning and punitive (McLaughlin et al. 2001). In this chapter, we examine the context in which the community-based, justice-oriented programs in our study operate, revealing an organizational structure deeply rooted in local communities, one which appears to favor program survival under toxic urban conditions.

Program Internal Characteristics

As previously noted, 79 of 88 programs in the study population (90%) are grassroots organizations, a not surprising finding given the selection criteria. Grassroots organizations provide the bedrock of democratic

society. Locally based and largely autonomous, they build community, develop leadership, and educate for social justice, relying upon volunteers, a small paid staff, or some combination of the two. They target participants within a geographical boundary, though some operate city-wide, state-wide, or even nationally, while others organize around identity and interests (Bothwell 2002). These organizations “generate and focus individual members’ sociopolitical activation and influence, especially in the local political arena, but also as the grassroots base of national or international sociopolitical movements” (Smith 1999a, 443). They range from self-help groups to college sororities and fraternities, religious groups, and youth organizations (Smith 1999a). When community-based, they typically serve lower-status populations, helping them organize to advocate for better local services or institutional change (Smith 1999b). Simply staying afloat with a cadre of participants comprises a fundamental measure of the effectiveness of these organizations.

Grassroots Organizations as Contexts for Youth Development

Along with religious groups and parks departments, grassroots organizations serve as the major provider of community-based positive youth development

programs (i.e., programs that do not provide interventions to categorized populations) (Quern et al. 2000). Whether organized as dance troupes, advocacy groups, social centers, or gardening clubs, such programs “arise out of communities and draw their definition and energy from the neighborhoods they serve” (McLaughlin et al. 2001, 9). Most of these programs target older low-income adolescents (Weber 1992) who typically do not participate in out-of-school activities, whether due to such impediments as lack of programs, inadequate transportation to activity sites, parents who are unaware of programs or unable to connect with them (Connell & Gambone 2002), or simply because youth find prevention and remediation programs unattractive (McLaughlin et al. 2001). Thus, our selection criteria—which specified community-based programs, at least one year old, that engage low-income or minority youth in community service, and describe themselves as committed to social justice—roughly outlined the characteristics of a grassroots youth organization. Given our community service requirement, we assumed a lower age limit of about 12, but left the upper limit open for survey respondents to define.

Research indicates that effective programs for youth development have good adult/youth ratios within safe, accessible spaces; engage in staff and organizational development; offer supportive relationships with adults and peers (Connell & Gambone 2002); recruit new members through existing ones; provide frequent opportunities for interaction (Smith 1999a); and employ staff familiar with the community where the young people live (McLaughlin et al. 2001). Forward-looking programs emphasize areas of strength, while tapping into the resources of individuals, organizations, and communities outside their own with a common interest in promoting innovations for youth development (Wheeler 2000). In general, effective grassroots organizations require a certain degree of homogeneity so as to promote a sense of group solidarity, possess sufficient material resources, develop inter-organizational relationships, pursue sociopolitical advocacy or service goals, and persist over a period of years. These organizations tend to be small, so as to maintain an intimate family-like quality (Smith 1999a; Smith 1999b).¹

Inadequacy of Resources in Grassroots Organizations

The overwhelming majority of grassroots organizations believe they receive inadequate support, noting as problems the time, energy, and skill required to apply for a bewildering array of funding sources (Bothwell 2002). Application guidelines often favor mature organizations that have paid staff with expertise in grant seeking, or that have received previous grants (see e.g., Lowry 1999; Cordes 2001; Magnus 2001). These guidelines also tend to privilege larger grants or offer short-term, project-based funding that does not cover operational costs (see e.g., Lowry 1999; Magnus 2001). Further, guidelines can, in direct and subtle ways, influence and perhaps redirect program goals and emphases (see e.g., Marquez 2003; Nownes 1995; O’Regan & Oster 2002). In addition, the gap in social class and culture between foundation officials and grassroots leaders who challenge the *status quo* can be uncomfortable for those officials (Bothwell 2002). Together, these barriers add up to a pervasive lack of support for justice-oriented programs, especially unconventional or new ones (see e.g., Carson 1999; Cortes 1999; Lowry 1999; Magnus 2001). In pursuing their goals for inclusion and participation, many youth programs intentionally involve program participants in preparing applications, which makes them even likelier to diverge from grant-making norms.

Youth programs that do not target their intervention to categorized populations, such as those surveyed, face particular challenges in seeking funding. Even though public funding for services directed toward at-risk teenagers and younger children has surged over the last 35 years, non-deficit-oriented youth development activities have not experienced comparable growth. And while private funding has remained relatively constant, foundations and other philanthropic organizations are not only requiring greater accountability in demonstrating program outcomes, but they are increasingly directing funds toward services aimed at categorized populations. This has led programs to limit enrollment to young people with special needs or shift their missions entirely (Quern et al. 2000). “General youth programs that were once readily funded by local foundations are now repackaged and presented as intervention efforts, targeting such social ills as gangs and domestic violence” (Quern et al. 2000, 12). In addition,

¹ Later in this chapter, we show how the programs in our study measure up on these indicators of effective grassroots organizations.

these programs have become more expensive to operate as licensing and accreditation requirements result in more highly credentialed personnel in lieu of the core of committed volunteers or staff with little formal training that once anchored grassroots organizations. Most youth-centered programs do as much as they can with relatively limited resources, competing for funding within a philanthropic environment in which only a very small percentage of funds goes toward social justice work (less than 2%, according to a 2003 Ford Foundation report), and where significant mismatches exist between program realities and the policies, procedures, and protocols of funders.

Programs as Effective Community-engaged Organizations

We asked program directors² to provide factual information on their organizations, including program age and size, demographics of the youth served and their average length of stay, schedule of activities, amount and sources of funding, staffing and training requirements, and relationships with other organizations, including a parent organization. We learned that the programs surveyed excel at the indicators of effective grassroots organizations noted in the literature.

Programs Survive and Retain the Interest of Older Youth

The programs in our study have proven longevity: 76% are over five years old—including 38% that reach over ten—; only 24% have existed between one and five years. These programs have also proven attractive to older, harder-to-reach youth: 73% include young adults over 18 in their programming. The oldest age served is 28, with 22 being the average age above 18; in contrast, just 33% limit their programming to adolescents 12 to 18 years old. Further, youth remain connected over time: 78% of the programs engage participants for more than a year; of these, 45% retain them for more than two. In some cases, program directors report that youth continue to participate as staff or alumni. As one program director explained: “You can’t educate kids over a weekend. It has to be for longer periods—much more intensive.” Further, 45% of the programs rely upon a

more involved core group of youth who reach out to less involved peers, sometimes as their elected representatives, sometimes through special activities and projects. Another program director put it this way: “We have a ripple effect that begins with a core group of youth in an innermost ring. They then reach out to a much larger group.”

Programs Promote Sustained Interaction across Cultural Divides

The programs surveyed provide ample opportunities for interaction among youth and adults. Practically all of them (85%) offer opportunities for young people to participate year-round; 9% operate only during the school year; and 5% during the summer alone. Many (43%) are small, with fewer than 150 participants—fewer than 50 in 19% of the cases; however, a good number (36%) serve more than 300 (a few noted up to 1,700 individuals in special programs), and the remainder (19%) accommodate between 150 and 300 (2% of program directors were unsure of how many participants their programs serve).

Whereas adult grassroots organizations thrive on homogeneity, these youth organizations embrace diversity (except when targeting specific identity groups such as Asian youth, young women, or GLBTQ youth³). Most programs (60%) have participants from multiple racial and ethnic groups, and 39% target specific populations (including 13% that target African Americans, 5% that target Asians, 2% that target Hispanics, 2% that target Native youth, and 17% that target both African Americans and Hispanics); race/ethnicity data on the remaining 1% of the programs were unclear. Further, a majority (68%) has both male and female participants, with just 11% targeting females and 21% targeting multi-gender youth. Thus, it would seem that solidarity within these programs derives from a shared youth culture, rather than from cultural homogeneity, except in identity-based ones where homogeneity is primary. In some instances, programs noted a specific intention to bring together youth from diverse backgrounds; for example, one program director explained: “We are looking for ways . . . to bring together isolated groups of kids. This city is very geographically segregated. We bring together lots of people from lots of backgrounds to work on those invisible barriers.”

2 We interviewed executive directors, program directors, or other senior staff members who had knowledge of program operations and budget. Throughout this document, we refer to these individuals as “program directors.”

3 GLBTQ stands for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer.

Program Staff Know the Communities Where Youth Live

The programs in our study have deep roots in local communities. Over half target specific localities, with 42% drawing youth from specific neighborhoods and 9% drawing participants from particular high schools; 38% have more diffuse geographic boundaries (22% draw youth city wide, 9% county wide, and 7% from several neighborhoods, boroughs, or cities); while geographic data on the remaining 11% were unclear. In addition, staff members usually have first-hand knowledge of the local communities they serve. Over half the program directors reside in the neighborhoods where programs are held, and in 50% of the programs, most of the staff reside in the same neighborhood, while 25% have some staff who reside in the same neighborhood, and only 16% have no staff who reside in the same neighborhood.

Programs Have a Web of Inter-Organizational Relationships

Most of the programs surveyed (60%) are not autonomous but rather belong to a larger parent organization;⁴ in fact, the smallest programs (fewer than 50 youth) were significantly more likely to be associated with parent organizations ($p > .01$).⁵ Programs rely extensively upon partnerships with other organizations and, to a lesser degree, upon staff social networks: 75% rely heavily upon partnerships, 23% rely upon them some of the time, and just 1% rely upon them hardly at all, with programs serving over 300 youth being significantly more likely than smaller ones to do so ($p > .02$). In comparison, 39% of the programs rely heavily upon social networks, 43% rely upon them some of the time, and only 16% do so hardly at all. One program director explained the importance of building relationships with other like-minded programs: “We definitely believe that it’s going to take a community effort to move our youth agenda forward. Part of that means building partnerships with other organizations where youth have decision-making roles.”

Programs Succeed in Securing Funds

The budgets for the programs varied dramatically, ranging from less than fifty thousand (50K) to over

1 million dollars, with an average of 250K. Just over half of the programs (53%) listed foundations as their primary source of funding, while 30% listed governments, and 10% individuals. No programs referred to corporations as their primary source of funding, and only 14% mentioned them as their second largest source of support. Also, just over half of the programs (53%) had both local/regional and national/global sources of support, with 25% relying upon local and regional sources and 13% relying upon national and global funding; the remaining 9% provided unclear responses. The relatively low percentage of locally funded programs, in combination with their longevity and rather substantial budgets, suggests that the study population is comprised of a group of sophisticated, mature entities that fare better than many grassroots youth organizations in securing funds.

Programs Maintain a Cadre of Paid and Volunteer Staff

Although the data we obtained did not allow us to calculate adult/youth ratios, programs seem to spread their resources among a large number of paid adult and youth staff who work alongside a substantial group of volunteers. The programs in our study serve an average of roughly 270 participants, with an average of 7 paid adults (including 5 full-time staff), 8 paid youth, 9 adult volunteers, and 11 youth volunteers. Fewer than one-tenth of the programs have no paid adult (5%) or full-time staff (8%), and only about one-third have no paid youth (27%), volunteer adults (35%), or volunteer youth (33%). As might be expected, the largest programs were significantly more likely to have more full-time staff ($p > .00$) and more volunteer youth ($p > .03$), and the programs with more paid adults and more paid youth were significantly more likely to have more full-time staff ($p > .00$ and $p > .01$, respectively). However, the smallest programs were also significantly more likely to have more paid adults and more full-time staff ($p > .01$ and $p > .03$, respectively), probably because program directors were reporting the staff available to them through parent organizations.

In general, the programs appear to offer a good adult/youth ratio while also involving young people in day-to-day operations, frequently providing

4. We found that programs were located within three types of parent organizations: youth service agencies, agencies serving youth and families, and adult organizations, especially community development associations.

5. We report as p-values, strong positive or negative relationships between two variables, or the probability that such relationships exist. P-values reported as significant range from .00 to .05, the smaller values indicating stronger relationships. We also report values between .06 and .09 as relationships that tended toward significance.

employment opportunities for both youth and adult community members. One program director framed the situation this way: “We’re hustlers over here. If we had the budget to match the activities, compensate people, and give us enough facilities, that would be \$400,000. We’re a \$400,000 organization that works with a \$190,000 budget. . . . We bring in staff to help *them*, not necessarily because we need to be a productive organization. We could work more productively with fewer people, but we hire more people, maybe with fewer hours, to keep them at the center of our activities.”

Program Structure Reflects Budget Size and Source

Most programs (80%) require some form of staff training,⁶ with over 50% relying upon experience, and 39% providing training on-site. Only 7% ask for a graduate degree, 33% require an undergraduate degree, and 11% require a certificate. In general, budget size related to program age, staffing, and training requirements. Although this did not affect the number of youth hired, programs with larger budgets were significantly more likely to have more paid adults ($p < .00$) and more full-time staff ($p < .00$). These programs were also significantly likelier to require some form of training ($p < .05$) in the form of a certificate ($p < .01$) or experience ($p < .01$), and to have been serving youth for a longer period of time ($p < .00$).

For its part, the primary source of support related not only to age, staffing, and training, but also to autonomy. When the primary source came from foundations, programs were significantly more likely to be newer ($p > .00$) and to serve more than 300 youth ($p > .01$). At the same time, they were significantly less likely to require a graduate degree ($p > .05$), a certificate ($p > .02$), or prior experience ($p > .02$) (requiring an undergraduate degree also showed a negative relationship, though not at a level of significance). In contrast, when governments were the primary source, programs were significantly more likely to be older—in the sense of greater longevity—($p > .05$), to be housed within parent organizations ($p > .04$), to operate with more paid ($p > .05$) and full-time ($p > .00$) staff, and to require somewhat more trained staff than foundation-funded programs (certificate, $p > .00$; experience, $p > .01$; no

requirement, $p > .04$). Quite naturally, when the primary source of support came from individuals, programs were significantly likelier to have more adult volunteers ($p > .05$) who were more involved in program activities ($p > .01$), and to rely more on social networks ($p > .01$). They were also significantly more likely to be larger and older ($p > .05$ and $p > .01$), and to be more autonomous (not a part of a parent organization) ($p > .01$).

Thus, while the programs surveyed have a demonstrated capacity to maintain funding over time, both budget size and source greatly affect the age and size of programs, their staff size and training, as well as their autonomy.

Director Views of Program Resources

In the survey, we also asked program directors to provide their opinions on the adequacy of their resources, the needs and strengths of youth participants, and what parents wanted from and brought to the program.

Programs Have Good or Adequate Resources

We asked program directors whether their financial resources, number of paid and volunteer staff, and physical facilities and equipment were good, adequate, or inadequate. In general, physical facilities ranked the highest and financial resources the lowest, but notably well over half of the programs report having either good or adequate resources. For financial resources, 61% indicated either good or adequate, and 37% answered poor. For paid staff, 74% indicated either good or adequate, while 25% answered poor. For volunteer staff, 71% indicated either good or adequate, and 17% poor. The smallest programs were significantly more likely to perceive that they had an adequate number of volunteer staff members ($p > .01$), perhaps because of the paid staff provided by the parent organization in relation to the small number of youth they serve. As for physical facilities and equipment, 83% indicated either good or adequate, with 15% indicating poor. In short, although over one third of the programs surveyed have poor financial resources, they seem adept at finding the space and staff support to run

6 We asked the program directors to specify what special training or experience their organization required, and then coded the responses as: graduate degree (or enrollment in graduate program), undergraduate degree (or enrollment in undergraduate program), certificate (e.g., teacher’s license, driver’s license, CPR-certified, prevention-certified), experience, in-house (mandatory participation in training offered by the program or other organizations), and none.

TABLE 1.1 Resource Adequacy

	Financial Resources	Number of Paid Staff	Number of Volunteer Staff	Facilities and Equipment
Good	18%	34%	37%	35%
Adequate	43%	40%	34%	48%
Poor	37%	25%	17%	15%
No Response	2%	1%	12%*	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Includes programs that do not have volunteer staff

their programs, even if other data suggest that most staff members are relatively uncredentialed. Table 1.1 summarizes all the responses.

Youth Participants Need Opportunities for Positive Development

In re-examining the closed-ended survey questions concerning youth needs and parent wishes, we realized that our formulations boxed the justice-oriented programs in our study into providing stereotypical descriptions of problem teenagers and young adults. For example, when asked whether youth need specific supports, program directors answered “yes” to the following categories: social skills (84%), job skills (81%), prevention of risky behaviors (74%), basic resources (72%), and help with school work (53%). However, 69% indicated “other” needs (e.g., “they need to be involved in activism” or “they need consciousness raising”). When asked what help parents want from the program, 64% referred to help with preventing their children from engaging in risky behavior, while 54% indicated “other” (e.g., “they want their children to practice leadership” or “they want a college plan for their children”). On the other hand, the open-ended interview questions yielded a more socially conscious perspective on youth needs and parent wants. An initial analysis of these data suggests that young people need such support as respect, consistency, and acceptance from adults; to have a sense of belonging and being part of a family; as well as to be free of abuse, censorship, and poverty. They also need to have exposure to cultural difference and to gain a better understanding of their world. The analysis further suggests that parents want the programs to provide such amenities as safe spaces where their children

can be creative, develop their full potential, learn to work with others, and be part of something meaningful. Parents want to see their children not only excited and engaged in helping others, but also involved in their community.

Youth Participants Have the Strengths Associated with Positive Development

The closed-ended question concerning youth and parent strengths also constrained program directors in characterizing the wealth of their constituency’s aptitudes, but to a lesser degree. For example, when asked whether youth have specific strengths, they answered “yes” to the following: creativity (91%), a commitment to improving themselves (86%), a commitment to improving their community (77%), leadership skills (77%), and the ability to collaborate (70%), while 52% indicated “other” strengths (e.g., “knowledge, skills, experiences, and resiliency”). When asked whether parents have specific strengths, 77% responded commitment to other children and 67% indicated commitment to the program, whereas 49% answered “other.” An initial interview analysis suggest that youth strengths also include such attributes as assertiveness, determination, compassion, intelligence, humor, self-awareness, and open-mindedness. Moreover, it suggests that parents contribute such strengths as cultural knowledge, experience, community connections, capacity to listen and get involved, and generosity.

Program Internal Characteristics in Summary

As demonstrated here, the programs surveyed reflect the characteristics that the literature identifies as es-

sential to effective grassroots organizations in general, and to youth-centered grassroots organizations in particular. They have longevity and demonstrate success in attracting older youth. They operate year-round, often using a core group of youth to reach out to a broader constituency. Unlike adult groups, they embrace cultural diversity (except when focused upon a specific identity group), deriving internal solidarity from a shared youth culture. Even though the survey fell short in allowing program directors to place the needs of youth within a sociopolitical perspective, open-ended Interview data suggest that programs recognize the structural inequities youth face and also appreciate their strengths.

These programs are deeply rooted in local communities and often have staff with first-hand knowledge of those communities. Many, especially the smaller programs, are part of parent organizations, and most have relationships with other organizations. Also, these programs have a cadre of committed—even if not formally trained—staff and volunteers, who engage parents and other adults in an array of support roles. It is worth noting that, although most program directors perceived their funding and staff support as adequate or good, programs with larger budgets have significantly more staff, significantly higher training requirements, and significantly more inter-organizational relationships. Further, the source of funding significantly shapes the organizational structure of the programs.

Program External Contexts

The [places] in which, and often over which, power struggles are manifest are largely overlooked. Although grassroots activism is implicitly place-bound, the physical setting of grassroots activism is presumed to be a background to the political struggle (Feldman & Stall 1994, 192).

The inner life of youth programs reflects a wider geographic locale (Alvarez 1994) that shapes young people's lives, including their perceived degree of safety, the presence of social networks, their sense of neighborhood attachment, and their perceptions of their physical surroundings. The places where youth live not only sustain them in a tangible way, constraining or enabling activities, but also tacitly communicate a way of life, transmitting the values, attitudes, and norms of dominant social groups (Sutton 1996). Place serves, not as a background for inequalities, but rather as a foreground in which different social

groups assume vastly unequal locations (Matthews & Limb 1999) and access the disparate social capital associated with those locations (Stanton-Salazar 1997). Often, place provides the focus of grassroots activism, especially for youth who tend to be place-bound due to lack of transportation. Engaging teenagers and young adults in activism—whether in improving their own surroundings or demanding that others provide basic amenities—entails an opportunity to help them develop, in concrete terms, a critical awareness of their world. As one program director explained, place offers a meaningful lens that can help low-income and minority youth “understand that they're part of a group that has experienced larger injustices. . . . It is not until youth have a critical consciousness that they really learn not to blame themselves, so they can move through and find constructive ways to relate to injustice.”

As with language, place represents and conveys both personal and group identity (Matthews & Limb 1999). Across varied international locales, youth recognize safety, beauty, variety, landscape, social integration, and a tradition of local activism as positive qualities within their communities. In contrast, they name social exclusion, boredom, fear of crime, racial tensions, heavy traffic, environmental degradation, and political powerlessness as negative qualities (Chawla 2002; Lynch 1977). While adults might assess their surroundings in a similar manner, their socialization binds them to more realistic, practical solutions. Youth—who have a physical, tactile understanding of their surroundings (Rasmussen & Smidt 2003) but little knowledge of real-world constraints—make good partners in helping adults find imaginative solutions to place-related problems.

A growing body of interdisciplinary, cross-national research reflects a heightened interest among policy makers and planners in understanding the effects of deteriorated environments upon poor youth and youth of color (see e.g., Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn 2000; Evans 2004; Tienda & Wilson 2002). Yet, although neighborhood conditions often predict developmental outcomes, family characteristics have also proven important in mitigating those effects (Brooks-Gunn et al. 1997). Institutional resources and social capital also counter neighborhood conditions by helping parents and other adults provide good experiences for youth (Connell & Gambone 2002). “Neighborhoods where ‘informal social control’ is strong, where adults other than parents are also active in monitoring the activities of youth, have lower rates of delinquent behaviors by youth than

neighborhoods where this type of involvement is not present” (Connell & Gambone 2002, 17).

Rising socioeconomic inequality, uneven spatial development, workforce and capital mobility, along with the erosion of collective traditions and norms (Marcuse & van Kempen 2000), present challenging conditions for today’s youth. Affluent youth experience risks in the form of increasing individualism, competitiveness, and an overblown consumption of material goods; poor youth experience risks in the form of inadequate familial support, poor educational access, and the toxins found in dangerous, crowded, noisy, and polluted neighborhoods (Evans 2004). Furthermore, widespread displacement currently affects many low-income and minority youth, as both public and private investments underwrite inner-city redevelopment, pushing out the populations that historically occupied these communities.

Toxic Urban Conditions

As explained earlier, our selection criteria required that programs be located in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with a population of at least 1 million for densely, and 500,000 for sparsely, settled states. According to data from the 2000 Census (US Census Bureau 2003), 42% of the programs surveyed were located in MSAs with a population of over 4,000,000; 24% corresponded to MSAs of between 4,000,000 and 2,000,000 inhabitants, and 34% to MSAs with a population between 2,000,000 and 500,000. The metropolitan areas ranked in population size from 1 to 55, with one from a small state ranking 91.⁷

To better understand the urban context, we used a statistical method called Latent Class Analysis (LCA),⁸ which allowed us to go beyond such obvious classifications as “communities with large populations” or “communities with high rates of poverty” and identify sub-groups of programs based on underlying (i.e., latent) patterns in the census data. Entering selected census data known to predict the quality of life in communities,⁹ this analysis revealed that programs were significantly more likely to fall

into one of three groups ($p > .04$). The largest group (47% of the programs) was significantly more likely to be located in areas with larger populations (an average rank of 6.2), more poverty and unemployment, and fewer Caucasians. These areas also had a higher school dropout rate, fewer owner-occupied homes, and older housing. A second group (32% of the programs) was significantly more likely to be located in areas with smaller populations (an average rank of 37.8), with fewer families in poverty, lower unemployment, and more Caucasians. These areas had a school dropout rate similar to that of group one, but more owner-occupied homes and far less older housing. A third, even smaller, group (21% of the programs) was significantly more likely to be located in areas with medium-sized populations (an average rank of 15.7) that have less poverty, a lower school dropout rate, older housing, and more Caucasians than the other two groups, but with an unemployment rate similar to group two. Thus, the majority of the programs are located in major metropolitan areas with the fewest resources; many of them are located in smaller metropolitan areas that also lack resources, and a minority in medium-sized metropolitan areas with greater resources. Figure 1.1 illustrates the census data characteristics of these three groups of programs.

Program Director Views of Toxic Urban Conditions

We asked program directors to rate the safety, physical infrastructure, social relations, and neighborhood attachment of their localities, using a scale of 0–2. They rated safety the lowest (.64), noting as problems street crime, gang activity, assault with weapons, and police misconduct. They ranked physical infrastructure somewhat higher (.76), referring to the poor condition of buildings and schools, displacement, and lack of transportation and convenience stores. Social relations and neighborhood attachment were rated the highest (1.14 and 1.15, respectively). On social relations, program directors noted parents’ willingness to help one another access resources,

⁷ See Appendix D for a list of the metropolitan areas and a map of their location.

⁸ LCA is a multivariate technique that can be applied to categorical data for cluster, factor, or regression analyses. Latent profile analysis is a variant of LCA for use with continuous data, such as census data. Latent class and latent profile analyses assume that the relationships among measured variables (termed *indicators*) can be “explained” by an unobserved categorical latent construct. Utilizing mixture modeling, they divide the study population into latent sub-groups that show distinct and interpretable patterns of responses, and then examine the resulting classes relative to other background variables, e.g., perceptions of urban conditions (for a detailed discussion of latent class and latent profile analyses, see e.g., Land 2001; Meier & Ohrt 1996; McCutcheon 1987).

⁹ These census data indicators include MSA rank, % of families in poverty, civilian unemployment rate, % of Caucasians, high school dropout rate, % of owner-occupied homes, and % of housing built by 1939 or earlier.

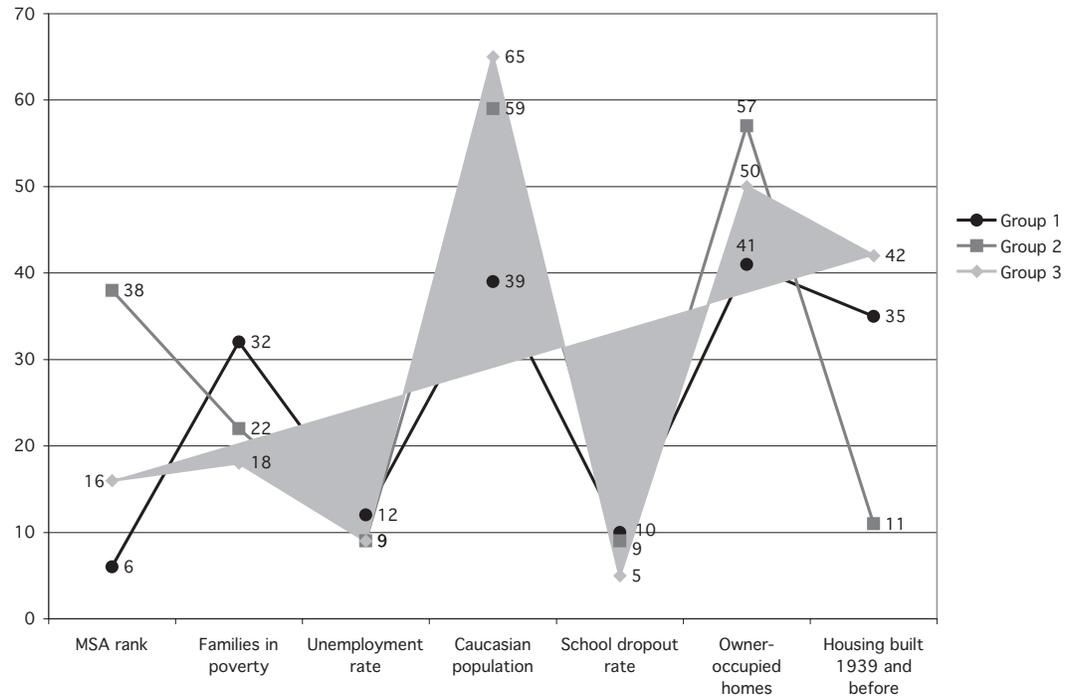


FIGURE 1.1 Census Data Characteristics: Three Groups of Programs

do favors for each other, connect with each other's children, and, to a lesser degree, have friendships. However, between 32% and 44% of them indicated "unsure" for this set of questions. On neighborhood attachment, program directors mentioned that both youth and parents value their neighborhood and feel it is a good place to grow up, but 26% and 29% of them indicated "unsure" for the two questions relating to parents in this set. These responses suggest that program directors are fairly unaware of the social relations and support systems that, according to the literature, can mitigate poor neighborhood conditions.

In addition, we looked at the relationship between the three groups revealed by the latent class analysis of census data and the program directors' assessment of the following urban conditions: safety, physical infrastructure, and neighborhood attachment (we did not consider social relations due to the high number of unsure responses). Program directors were significantly more likely to rate the physical infrastructure of the second group—metropolitan areas with mid-sized populations and the most resources—more favorably ($p > .00$), while characterizing less favorably groups one and three—metropolitan areas that have larger and smaller populations,

as well as fewer resources. Thus, program directors' descriptions of physical infrastructure in their external context were significantly more likely to match the actual character of those contexts as documented in census data. Figure 1.2 illustrates how program directors characterized urban conditions for each of the three groups.

Program directors, moreover, were significantly more likely to describe safe neighborhoods as places people are attached to ($p > .01$) and to rank neighborhood attachment higher than safety, most likely due to the prevalence of police misconduct. Perceptions of safety and neighborhood attachment were not tied to the latent census groups—as was the case with perceptions of physical infrastructure—but rather to the respondents' familiarity with the neighborhood. Program directors who live in the community they serve were significantly more likely to describe the area as being unsafe ($p > .04$) and as having youth and adults who were not attached to it ($p > .04$) than those who enter a neighborhood only to work. In addition, when programs targeted a specific neighborhood, directors described their physical surroundings significantly less favorably ($p > .00$) than in cases where programs targeted a broader geographic area. Thus, program directors

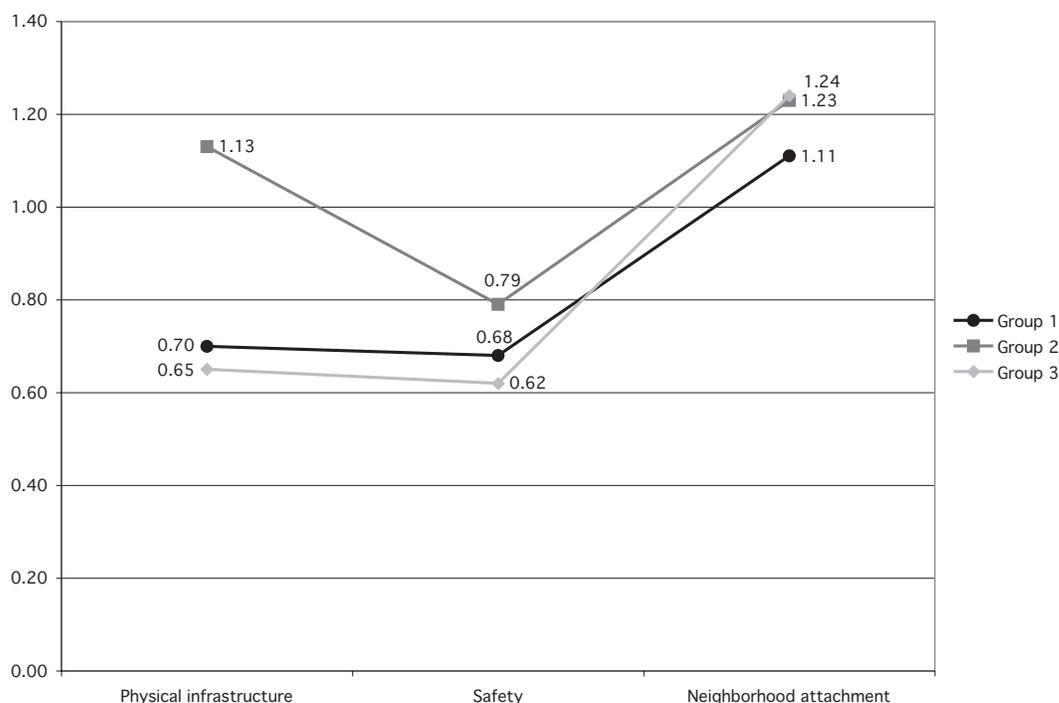


FIGURE 1.2 Characterization of Urban Conditions for the Three Groups

seemed to have a more realistic view of a neighborhood if they were more familiar with it, whether due to their own first-hand experiences or because challenging neighborhood conditions became a topic of discussion within the program when all participants lived in the same area.

Program External Context in Summary

Though the programs surveyed are all located in densely-populated metropolitan areas, the majority was significantly more likely to be in metropolitan areas with either larger or smaller populations, rather than in mid-sized ones. Almost half the programs operate in areas with more poverty and unemployment, higher school dropout rate, fewer owner-occupied homes, older housing, and fewer Caucasians. Program directors rated the safety and physical infrastructure of these areas less favorably than social relations, characterizing as safer neighborhoods those with stronger social ties. However, when program directors lived nearby or had acquired a close knowledge of the neighborhood through local youth, they perceived the area significantly more negatively. We refer to such local knowledge as “situated” knowledge.

Mapping Context Variables onto the Conceptual Map

In this chapter, we set out to understand the organizational structure of the programs surveyed, including internal and external characteristics. An analysis of their internal context reveals significant relationships between a number of objective characteristics, such as longevity, amount and source of funding, program size, staffing, training requirements, autonomy, and inter-organizational relationships. An analysis of the external context reveals significant relationships between objective characteristics, as provided by census data, and the perceptions of program directors regarding safety, physical infrastructure, and neighborhood attachment—perceptions that in turn reflect their situated knowledge of specific communities. Figure 1.3 illustrates the context variables documented in our study, including those that proved significant.

INTERNAL CONTEXT	EXTERNAL CONTEXT
<p>Program Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of the program* Demographic makeup Duration of involvement Schedule of activities Size of the program* Amount of funding* Source of funding* Funding type (local/non-local) Paid and volunteer staffing* Training requirements* Adult volunteer roles Program director residence* Program target area* Social networks* Autonomy* Inter-organizational relationships <p>Perceived Program Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequacy of financial resources Adequacy of paid staff Adequacy of volunteer staff* Adequacy of facilities and equipment Youth needs / Parent wants Youth strengths / Parent strengths 	<p>Census Data Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSA rank* % Families in poverty* Unemployment rate* % Caucasian population* School dropout rate* % Owner-occupied homes* % Housing built 1939 and before* <p>Perceived Neighborhood Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety* Physical infrastructure* Social relations (no analysis) Neighborhood attachment* <p><i>* Indicates a significant variable</i></p>

FIGURE 1.3 Variables of Program Internal and External Contexts



Guiding Principles of Program Practice

As enumerated in our criteria for inclusion, all the programs surveyed have a professed commitment to social justice. We anticipated that this orientation would lead to program approaches that attract harder-to-reach older youth. In this chapter, we review prevailing theories of social justice, especially as they apply to movements for environmental justice and children's rights. We juxtapose these perspectives with the definitions of social justice provided by the program directors, revealing a significant overlap between the two. We then examine the issue of childhood as a socially constructed phenomenon, summarizing the evolving conceptions of childhood that, in turn, influence approaches to youth development and youth participation. Finally, we show how the programs in our study conceive youth development and youth participation.

Principles Framed by Social Change Rather than by Personal Change

When we discuss questions of social justice, the probability is that we are concerned with the redistribution of goods that have already been “distributed” once, and this should remind us that questions about social justice are likely to be questions about who has what rights against whom (Nelson 1974, 410-11).

Distributive justice, along with its corollary, procedural justice, lies at the heart of liberal theories of social justice. According to this perspective, social justice principles are those that members of a society would unanimously define as mutually beneficial. These self-interested members of society would choose principles of fairness behind a veil of ignorance, that is, unaware of how the outcome would affect each personally (Nelson 1974, referring to Rawls 1958 & 1971). “Without knowing your station in life, goes the argument, you would come up with a particularly fair notion of justice that everyone could agree with: everyone would have the same political rights as everyone else, and the distribution of economic and social inequality in a society would benefit everyone, including the least well off” (Schlosberg 2004, 518). Given this unanimity, what remains is agreement upon the rules of distributive justice, or procedural justice (Miller 1999). However, since individuals have different abilities, they cannot take equal advantage of these benefits; therefore, individual and community capacity-building becomes an important pre-condition to achieving distributive justice (Sen 1992).

Feminist scholars of social justice have provided a strong critique of these liberal theories, noting that they fail to examine the root causes of inequities—to probe the institutional reasons that advantage

some groups and disadvantage others. These scholars argue that failure to respect the unique cultural identities of oppressed groups results in their marginalization, harming them both individually and collectively, and diminishing their capacity to participate as full-fledged members of mainstream society (see e.g., Young 2000; Fraser 1997). Liberal theorists articulate hypothetical ideals, taking an enlightenment view that equates liberty with transcending the cast and class differences that once determined social status. Feminist theorists, instead, emphasize the practical impediments to realizing societal ideals, proposing that cultural differences lie at the heart of injustice. They argue that “a positive self-definition of group difference is in fact more liberatory” than assimilation (Young 1990, 157), which aligns their approach with recent social and environmental justice movements.

For example, the black power movement, the gay pride movement, and the women’s movement, among many others, reject an assimilationist, distributive paradigm of justice, and instead advocate for emphasizing cultural identity as a means to achieving power and inclusion within the dominant society (Young 1990). The thousands of non-governmental and grassroots organizations that make up the environmental justice movement also emphasize culture and inclusion as essential to achieving distributive and procedural justice. These organizations “call for recognition and preservation of diverse cultures, identities, economies, and ways of knowing” (Schlosberg 2004, 524). Thus, both scholars and activists with a practical approach to achieving equity advocate for redistribution and recognition as essential conditions to participatory parity (Fraser 1997).¹

Although social justice advocates seldom include children as a special concern, child welfare advocates have organized over the years to develop international norms to protect children’s rights, beginning with the 1924 League of Nations’ Declaration of Geneva. By the 1980s, concepts of children’s rights had advanced to encompass not only protection and material welfare, but also the right to influence their surroundings and take part in decision-making (Hammarberg 1990). The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child intentionally singled out children as a group in need of special rights due to their vulnerability, reflecting the recognition of cultural

difference emphasized by social justice advocates. This legally binding document broke new ground in giving children equal value to their guardians while, at the same time, acknowledging their unique status as children (Hammarberg 1990). The Convention specifies children’s right to *provision* (i.e., the fulfillment of such basic needs as food, health care, education, recreation, and play), to *protection* (i.e., from commercial or sexual exploitation, physical or mental abuse, or engagement in warfare), and to *participation* (i.e., having a say in decisions that affect them). Nevertheless, reflecting prevailing adultist notions of youth as dependent beings, rather than as citizens in their own right (Fraser & Gordon 1994), “the Convention is stronger on the first two aspects—provision for basic needs and protection—than on rights related to participation” (Hammarberg 1990, 100).

In sum, no single definition of social justice emerges from the various philosophical traditions and movements that have considered the issue of fairness. In general, however, the concept has broadened over time to include multi-tiered strategies that promote redistribution of goods, recognition of cultural differences, participation, and capacity-building among individuals and groups. In the next section, we look at how the program directors defined social justice.

Program Directors Emphasize Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

To understand how the study population defined social justice, we asked program directors what “social justice” meant in their organization. Rather than fit their responses into the categories found in the social justice literature, we allowed categories to emerge from a data-driven thematic analysis. This analysis yielded the following eight themes and sub-themes, listed in descending order according to the percentage of program directors who referred to each. Figure 2.1 illustrates the dimensions of social justice, as defined by the programs.

1. **Having equal opportunities** (21%). Youth having the rights inherent in a democratic society; accessing the opportunities that make those rights possible; experiencing an absence of barriers.
2. **Having a say in decision-making** (21%). Youth being involved in decision-making at the personal, organizational, community, and political

¹ That is, equitable participation in decision-making requires both a redistribution of goods (especially economic resources), along with a recognition of unique cultural identities.

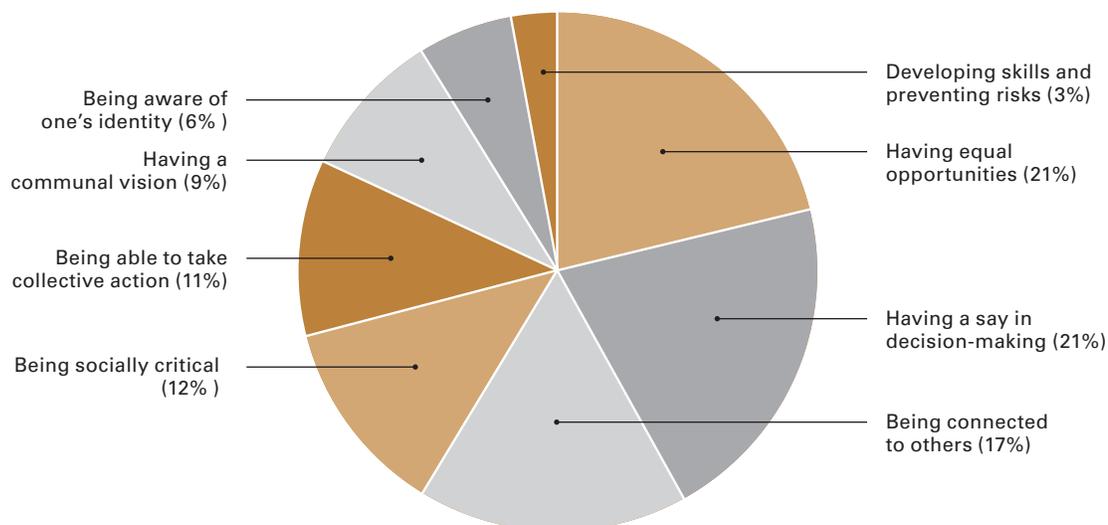


FIGURE 2.1 Dimensions of Social Justice as Defined by the Programs

levels (more specific than simply “being inclusive”); adults helping young people get the information or skills to participate in decision-making.

3. **Being connected to others** (17%). Youth are inclusive, sharing, and compassionate; they see their connection to other people or nature, and engage in social networks.
4. **Being socially critical** (12%). Youth developing critical awareness of themselves, their history, and their community; understanding the multiple oppressions and barriers they face; believing in their own capacity to create change.
5. **Being able to take collective action** (11%). Youth developing the skills to take action; working to meet community goals; actively joining with others to end social and environmental injustice.
6. **Having a communal vision** (9%). Youth envisioning a better, more just world; sharing resources to achieve that world in their community.
7. **Being aware of one's identity** (6%). Youth expressing themselves/voicing their ideas (distinct from having a voice in decision-making); youth being respected and respecting themselves as members of a cultural group; becoming self-aware.
8. **Developing skills and preventing risks** (3%).

Youth understanding themselves; setting their own goals; changing negative behaviors.

These themes roughly fall into the four categories identified in the literature— redistribution of goods, recognition of cultural difference, participation, and capacity-building—but with a slant that reflects organizations’ youth development missions. Organizing the themes according to these categories, we find that redistribution would consist of having equal opportunities and having a communal vision, constituting 30% of the mentions; capacity-building would consist of being socially critical, being able to take collective action, and developing skills and preventing risks, accounting for 26%; cultural recognition would consist of being aware of one's identity and being connected to others, making up 23% of the mentions; and participation would consist of having a say in decision-making, accounting for 21%. Notably, program directors gave distributive justice the highest priority, which suggests that they share prevailing views of social justice that likewise emphasize this dimension. Also, they gave the lowest priority to participative parity, which aligns them with the framers of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, departing from the literature, they place a strong emphasis upon capacity-building, especially in relation to critical awareness and collective action, reflecting their commitment to youth development within a socially critical framework.

A Transformative Approach to Youth and Adults

At a minimum, contemporary beliefs and narratives about adolescents convey the implicit message of youth as a source of worry, not potential. At worst, they contribute to a fear of adolescents, especially racial and ethnic minorities (Zelden 2002, 331-332, citing Gilliam & Bales 2001, and Loader et al. 1998).

Both popular and scholarly conceptions of youth view children and teenagers as developing organisms in need of socialization and subject to the influences of their environment, but limited in their capacity to influence the world due to their incompleteness. This perspective developed as early as the sixteenth century when, according to various historians, notions of children's innocence provided the rationale for excluding them from the worlds of work, sexuality, and politics (Matthews et al. 1998, citing Franklin 1995). Consigned to the classroom, "childhood became codified as a period of training and discipline in preparation for adult life, where a lack of autonomy was seen as natural and children became constructed as human beings in the making" (Matthews et al. 1998, 137, citing Cox 1996). Such notions inform much of today's prevailing societal attitudes and action, formal governmental policies, and scholarly literature.

Conceptions of youth also reflect stereotypes of different demographic groups. For example, many adults believe that while younger children need opportunities for play and *protection from harm*, adolescents, especially low-income minority teenagers, require constraint so they do not *cause harm* (Valentine 1996). Service providers variously characterize youth as threatening (to others and to social order) or abnormal (compared with adults) and in need of intervention to assume normative social roles. The overwhelming tendency to see young people as victims or as villains who require corrective services (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster 2003) makes their care primarily a matter of both professional and—perhaps not incidentally—for-profit concern (Finn & Nybell 2001; Nybell 2001). Policies that seek to control, punish, and contain adolescents, while limiting public expenditures to improve their life circumstances, entail particularly negative consequences for poor youth, youth of color, immigrant youth, and urban youth (Ginwright & Cammarota 2002).

Scholars increasingly acknowledge childhood as a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by eco-

nomic, political, and sociocultural forces that determine the extent to which young people can be assertive (have a sense of agency) and influence the adult world (Finn & Nybell 2001; Ruddick 2003; Stephens 1998). This emergent view constructs youth as evolving, but "capable of holding and exercising rights without the need for adult oversight" (Simpson 1997, 907). Older conceptions of youth as merely *acted upon* in the world have given way to analyses that acknowledge young people as *social actors* with citizen rights (Jans 2004).

Thus, youth programming reflects a range of attitudes from more conventional notions of children and adolescents as developing organisms to those that view young people as social actors and citizens. Now we turn from these general notions of childhood to the practices that help youth mature, presenting a brief synopsis of evolving approaches to youth development—including identity development—and also to youth participation.

Evolving Approaches to Youth Development

Many conventional youth development approaches—especially those funded by the federal government—have sought to prevent or treat problem behaviors such as teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, or academic failure (Dryfoos 1990). Referred to as *prevention*, this approach targets so-called "at-risk youth," categorizing them according to their deficits (Hamilton et al. 2004). Although they create the potential for negative stereotyping, successful interventions deter young people from further engagement in the same or other risky behavior (Perkins et al. 2003), primarily through the use of rewards and sanctions. A prevention approach to youth development focuses upon reducing reckless, antisocial behavior and achieving compliance with norms specified in adult-designed interventions. Youth participate by merely completing these interventions.

In the 1980s and 1990s, an assets-based youth development approach emerged from resilience studies and studies of community-based youth work (see e.g., Connell et al. 2000; Hughes & Curnan 2000; Pittman & Zelden 1995). Referred to as *positive youth development*, this approach emphasizes developmental processes that help youth acquire an active, confident, and healthy sense of self, which in turn allows them to take full advantage of normative life opportunities, including education and the transition from adolescent student to adult worker (Bessant 2004).

Positive youth development focuses upon engaging young people in skill-enhancing opportunities that prepare them to face a variety of challenges now and in the future (Perkins et al. 2003). This approach calls for meaningful youth participation in adult-developed programs and activities with consistent expectations.

The last decade has seen increasing interest in going beyond positive youth development to embrace an approach that helps youth influence decisions and take action to address issues they care about (O'Donoghue et al. 2002). Referred to as *community youth development*, this approach derives in part from the UN Convention's mandate that children participate in decisions that affect them. It sees adults as collaborators with youth in advancing both personal and community development. A belief in the reciprocity of youth and community development drives this approach, which centers around providing an array of skill-building opportunities within a context of sustained, supportive relationships with adults and peers (Perkins et al. 2003). Its advocates point to the mutual benefits of investing in youth and communities, asserting that individuals contribute—both as youth and later as adults—not only economic but also human capital resources to the social fabric of their communities (Huber et al. 2003).

An approach referred to as *social justice youth development* continues the shift away from a unitary spotlight upon youth to a more comprehensive view of the sociopolitical barriers to youth development, especially for urban youth of color. Believing that “racism, mass unemployment, pervasive violence, and police brutality pose serious threats to youth and their families” (Ginwright & James 2002, 28), this approach emphasizes social transformation and envisions youth as central actors in the struggle for an inclusive democracy. It focuses upon engaging young people and their adult allies in conscientization and collective action within youth-led organizations that celebrate their culture (Ginwright & James 2002).

Identity as an Aspect of Youth Development

Youth development scholars call attention to the central importance of identity development as a component of youth development, but differ in how they define identity within different developmental models. One view, contained in the positive youth development literature and in asset-based models (see e.g., Search Institute 2003), sees identity development primarily in

individual terms, as a set of developmental processes that ideally result in an active and healthy sense of self—a self that can take full advantage of normative life opportunities such as education and employment, and become an agent of change. A second approach—typical of the youth justice literature—conceives identity development as both sociopolitical and personal, a formulation with particular implications for youth who experience marginality and oppression (see e.g., Ginwright & Cammarota 2002). In these terms, attaining identity entails crucial elements such as pride in one's identity, awareness of how sociopolitical forces affect identity, and connections to others and to activities that can create change in inequitable conditions (Ginwright & James 2002). The middle ground between these two positions (see e.g., Halpern 2005) tends to emphasize the necessary interplay between individual development and the developmental supports that may, or may not, be available to youth. However, only the youth justice literature and recent scholarship on developmental trajectories of low-income youth of color (see e.g., Burton 2001) share a sustained concern as to how different cultural and sociopolitical contexts affect identity development.

Evolving Approaches to Youth Participation

Just as approaches to youth development have grown more inclusive and socially critical, so has the nature of participation. Early approaches to youth participation emerging after the Second World War focused upon integrating young people into society by helping them internalize dominant social norms (Kovacheva 2002, citing Parsons 1952). Over time, a view of youth as agents of their own development supplanted this passive perspective on social integration (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Perkins et al. 2003). Yet another notion of youth participation sees youth as active citizens within their social environment (Kovacheva 2002, citing CDEJ 1997), taking part in decision-making, organizing, and social change (Ginwright & James 2002). In addition, the literature documents the concept of youth participation in community improvement and service activities.

Participation as Social Integration

Positive development is not something adults do to young people, but rather something that young people do for themselves with a lot of help from parents and others. They are agents of their own development (Villarruel et al. 2003, 397).

Participation as social integration draws from positive youth development and from certain aspects of community youth development. It begins with the assumption that young people can contribute to their own development if they are not only problem-free but also fully prepared to make good choices in their lives (Pittman 1992). To enable such preparedness, youth engage in various skill-enhancing opportunities that help them develop positive relationships and attitudes (Perkins et al. 2003). Some scholars emphasize the importance of having youth participate in the design of these opportunities, noting that adults often undertake initiatives without consulting young people about their priorities or getting their opinions on implementation strategies (Hart 1992). Through such participation, teens can acquire competencies that prepare them for their transition into adult life, while also strengthening their interpersonal relationships and sense of self.

Participation as Civic Activism

Young people's work that focuses on individual learning and development, rather than on changing their surroundings, is not real participation. . . . Participation should not only give young people more control over their own lives and experiences but should also grant them real influence over issues that are crucial to the quality of life and justice in their communities (Mullahey et al. 1999, 4).

Participation as civic activism draws from community youth development and social justice youth development. It has proven effective for older, harder-to-reach youth, probably due to its emphasis upon culture, problem-solving, and work-related skills (Lewis-Charp et al. 2003). This approach downplays individual achievement in favor of helping young people learn “to participate in group processes, build consensus, and subsume personal interests and ideas to those of the collective” (Lewis-Charp et al. 2003, 202). Believing that “effective decision-making in organizations requires the complementary skills, experience, and contributions of both youth and adults” (Huber et al. 2003, 303, citing Zelden et al. 2000), collaborative processes on the whole link adolescents and adults as partners in mutually beneficial relationships (see e.g., Hughes & Curnan 2000).

Civic activism within a social justice framework involves youth in analyzing the root causes of problems, developing pride in their identity, exploring the sociopolitical forces that affect identity, and then

taking collective action to bring about systemic change (Ginwright & James 2002). Young people sometimes form identity-based relationships with adult allies to counter the effects of discrimination and work towards a more equitable, inclusive society (Ginwright 2000; Ginwright & James 2002). Activities under this approach often incorporate art forms such as hip-hop, street theater, and graffiti “as mediums for discussion, critique, expression, and to help create a shared sense of identity” (Lewis-Charp et al. 2003, 211), which in turn provide venues for communicating with the public and provoking debate about community issues.

Participation as Community Improvement and Service

Only by engaging in society—and working to make it better—can youth come to terms with who they are, what they believe, and how they relate to others and to society as a whole (Winter 2003, 11).

Two main ways for young people to participate hands-on in improving their communities have been recorded. One body of interdisciplinary, cross-national literature documents youth participation in community planning, design, and construction (see e.g., Chawla 2002; Hart 1997; Sutton 1992). Another substantial body of research traces youth participation in rendering assistance within their own or other communities, primarily through school-sponsored, mandatory service. In addition, teenagers participate in a variety of community art activities, expressing a collective vision, but also stimulating dialogue between young artists and their audiences (Assaf et al. 2004).



Much of the youth participation literature refers to young people's evolving maturity as a decisive factor in the nature of their involvement (Simpson 1997; Mullahey et al. 1999), noting that youth do not necessarily reap greater benefit from higher levels of participation, but rather from having adult support appropriate to both the context and their own developmental capacities. Advocates of greater youth involvement often refer to a *ladder of participation*, first conceptualized in relation to the process of bringing disenfranchised adults into the decision-making process during the struggle for local control in the 1960s (Arnstein 1969). While participation on the lower rungs of this ladder amounts to token

involvement, participation on the upper ones brings about increasing self-determination, until autonomy is achieved (Arnstein 1969). The idea of progressive empowerment aptly applies to children of all income levels, since they form a marginalized group within adult society (Mathews et al. 1998). Thus, participation advocates typically rank youth-initiated projects higher than those initiated by adults.

To all forms of participation, youth bring special qualities that, along with the activities themselves, contribute to the rejuvenation of their communities. Many of the program directors we interviewed expressed an appreciation of young people's energy, idealism, and playfulness; moreover, they stressed that these qualities sustain the social justice mission of the organization and their personal commitment to it.

Transformative, Intergenerational Connectivity

By analyzing survey data, we were able to assess the program directors' characterization of youth development philosophies and approaches to participation as follows:

Programs Have More Transformative Youth Development Philosophies

To assess the philosophy implicit in program directors' references to youth, we conducted an analysis of published mission statements and two open-ended survey questions ("What are the primary reasons for offering the program activities?" and "Why do youth need programs like yours?"). Drawing from theoretical frameworks in the literature, we developed definitions for six measures—connection, socialization, creativity, contribution, competence, and change—, each falling along a continuum from *prevention* (or risk reduction) to *promotion* (or positive youth development) to *transformation* (or social justice youth development).² Programs received scores for each measure, with the total score being an average of the number of measures addressed.³

Given the nature of the selection criteria, it should come as no surprise that, taken as a whole, the programs surveyed scored at the upper end of the scale—an aggregate of 4.08 out of a possible score of 5. They scored as follows on each of the six measures.

1. **Connection** (mentioned by 69% of the programs; average score = 4.30). Includes three categories: *safety* (ranging in scale from protecting youth from risky influences = 1, to providing them with a refuge from oppression = 5); *support* (ranging from adult containment and control of youth = 1, to nurturing supportive relationships among peers and adults = 5); and *belonging* (ranging from involvement in program activities = 1, to experiencing cultural recognition and respect = 5).
2. **Socialization** (mentioned by 78% of the programs; average score = 4.28). Includes three categories: *norms* (ranging in scale from the prevention of reckless behavior = 1, to using critical analysis as the basis for collective action = 5); *structure* (ranging from programming that produces a desired behavior = 1, to programming that responds to youth needs = 5); and *autonomy* (ranging from conformity with adult expectations = 1, to nurturing youth assertiveness, resistance, and leadership = 5).
3. **Creativity** (mentioned by 24% of the programs; average score = 4.14). A single category that ranges in scale from providing structured alternatives to risky behaviors = 1, to using creative activities as vehicles for personal and social change = 5.
4. **Contribution** (mentioned by 50% of the programs; average score = 4.01). Includes two categories: *service* (ranging in scale from sporadic volunteerism = 1, to civic engagement and movement building = 5) and *involvement* (ranging from participation in adult-designed services = 1, to youth leadership in program governance = 5).
5. **Competence** (mentioned by 76% of the programs; average score = 3.86). A single category that ranges in scale from developing coping skills = 1, to developing skills for social mobility and activism = 5.
6. **Change** (mentioned by 97% of the programs; average score = 3.39). A single category that ranges in scale from changing problematic youth behaviors = 1, to a dual focus upon youth and community change = 5.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the six youth development philosophy measures (average score), in relation to the percentage of programs that addressed each.

² We derived the scale from research by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (2002), Ginwright and James (2002), related literature, and our own ongoing discussions. Susan P. Kemp, co-investigator in the research team, is the principal author of the scale.

³ See Appendix E for the matrix with the definitions for these measures.

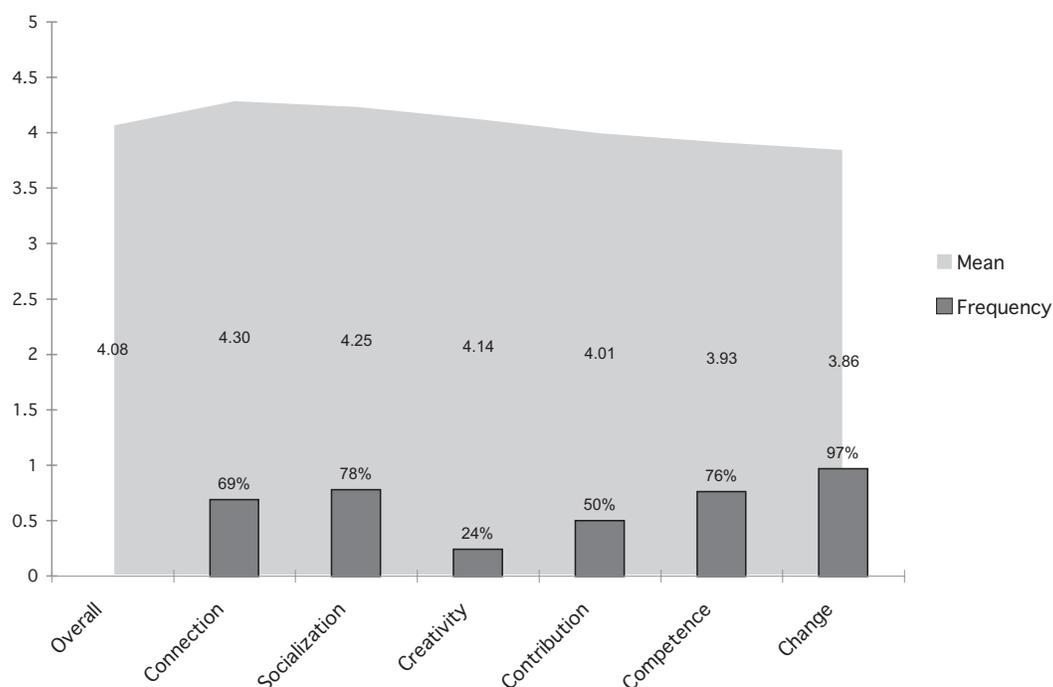


FIGURE 2.2 Youth Development Philosophy Measures

Programs Promote Intergenerational Connectivity

To assess youth participation, we asked program directors—through a closed-ended question—whether they believed strongly in adult leadership, youth leadership, or a combination of adult/youth leadership. Their responses revealed that 3% believe in adult leadership, 20% in youth leadership, and 76% in a combination of both. A finer grain picture emerged, however, when we asked an open-ended question calling for an example of the approach chosen.⁴ Responses indicated an almost twofold increase in adult leadership (to 5%), as well as a drop by about half in adult/youth leadership (to 36%) and by about three quarters in youth leadership (to 4%). At the same time, two new categories emerged: adult leadership with youth input (10% of the responses) and youth leadership with adult support (44% of the responses). Figure 2.3 shows a comparison of the closed- and open-ended responses.

Program Size Shapes Program Governance

To assess the degree of inclusiveness in day-to-day operations, we asked program directors about youth and adult participation (parental as well as that of other adult community members) in program governance. Their answers reveal that in 55% of the programs youth are involved in the board of directors; in 89% they serve as staff, interns, or volunteers; and in almost all cases (97%) they participate in planning. At the same time, when asked an open-ended question about how programs involve parents and adult community members, directors described a variety of supporting roles. Most programs (78%) involve this group in administrative roles (e.g., as members of the board of directors, staff or advisors to staff, chaperones and “taxi drivers,” or planners and evaluators of program activities). A majority (53%) also involves this group in program activities (e.g., as mentors or facilitators, to collaborate on projects or attend workshops, or as recipients of services). A large number (41%) relies on parents and other adults as

⁴ We requested program directors to provide an example of adult or youth leadership of program activities. We then coded the responses along a continuum as: *adult leadership* (adults decide and organize most of the activities for youth); *adult leadership with youth input* (adults set up a framework, youth make decisions within it); *adult/youth co-leadership* (adults and youth collaborate in planning and implementing activities); *youth leadership with adult support* (youth bring in ideas, adults provide support in planning and implementation); and *youth leadership* (youth decide and organize most of the activities for themselves). A response could have more than one code.

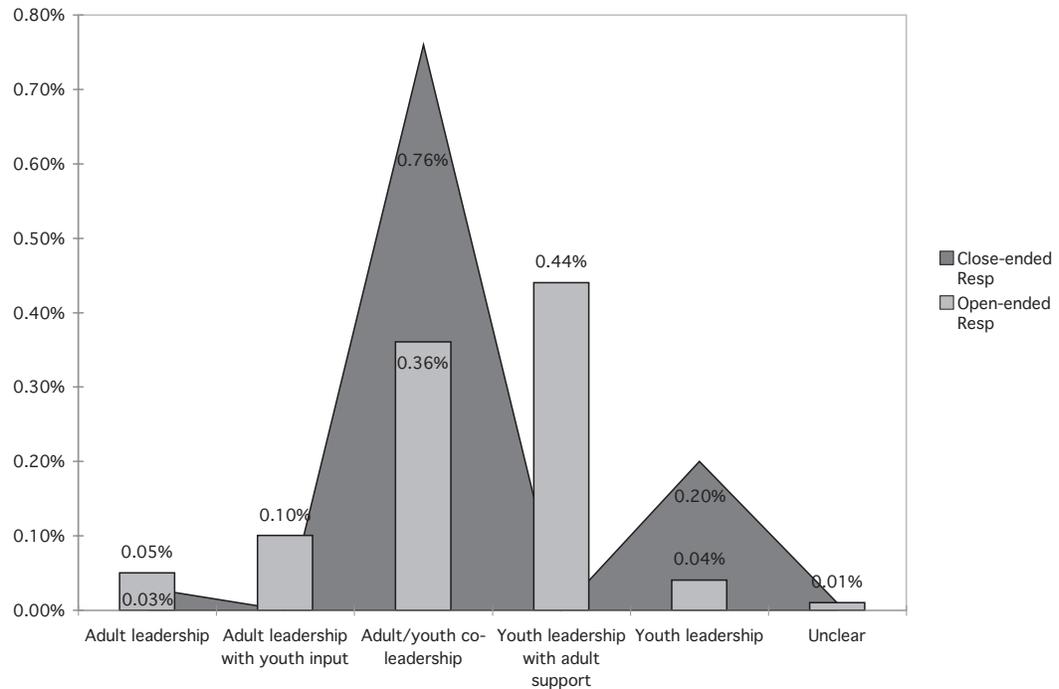


FIGURE 2.3 Closed- and Open-ended Responses Related to Youth Participation Approaches

allies (e.g., for fundraising, contributions, support in recruiting youth, providing testimonials or advocacy). And many (34%) also involve parents and adult community members as an extended family (e.g., by including them in social events and special celebrations). Only 8% did not involve parents and other adults at all, either due to language barriers or parent unavailability (in the case of parents who work long hours), or because they had reason to believe that parents did not support their mission.

It is worth noting that program size plays an important role in shaping how parents and other adults participate. Programs that serve fewer than fifty youth were significantly more likely to involve parents and other adults informally, in a variety of miscellaneous roles ($p > .02$), while slightly larger programs (50-100 youth) were significantly likelier to involve them in the program itself ($p > .05$). However, the largest programs seemed to involve parents and other adults more in central operational roles and were significantly less likely to involve them in social activities ($p > .04$) or likelier to not involve them at all ($p > .04$).

On the other hand, program directors expressed a range of opinions about parents, as shown in the following quotes:

We are not a crazy organization—we pretty much play by the rules—but some parents don't agree with our politics. Some don't want to see changes, or they want to see different kinds of changes. Most parents we work with have been extremely supportive, but some kids are gang-affiliated, some are into drug abuse, some are abused by parents.

We only engage parents marginally, because they are difficult to engage. We invite them to come to art exhibits and performances. We will call them a couple of times throughout the program, so they know what their kids are doing and how they can help them or encourage them.

Part of our success is that we are intergenerational. Parents are here as students just as their children are. Young parents are involved. Parents and adults participate on our governing board. We are an extended family.

In sum, in slightly more than half of the programs, youth participate in the board of directors, and in almost all they are involved as staff or volunteers, as well as in planning activities. Practically all the programs entail some form of adult participation—by parents and other community members—in administration, in program activities, as allies, or as members of an extended family. However, program

directors provide fewer characterizations of youth leadership and more of adult leadership and more varied youth/adult interactions in their open-ended responses than in their closed-ended ones.

Justice-oriented Program Principles in Summary

In their social justice definitions, program directors placed greatest emphasis upon having equal opportunities and a say in decision-making, while assigning less importance to developing skills, preventing risks, and strengthening individual identities. Thus, for program directors, social justice means, first and foremost, creating a society where young people have equal opportunities and a voice in decision-making, a process that provides the context for positive youth development. Examining such definitions in relation to the four strategic approaches to social justice that appear in the literature, it would seem that program directors are aware of ongoing discussions among scholars and movement organizers. For example, they accorded the highest priority to redistribution, the most prevalent theme in the literature, and the lowest to participation, consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the same time, they underscored socially critical capacity-building—an area with little emphasis in the literature—which reflects their position as justice-oriented programs concerned with youth development.

In portraying their youth development philosophies through mission statements and survey responses, program directors position their organizations at the far end of a continuum ranging from prevention to transformation. They often refer to engaging young people in transforming the root causes of youth and community marginality. Further, they see youth as change agents and pay attention to prevailing differences due to class, culture, or access to opportunities. Survey data on participation do not so clearly reflect the youth-led approach prescribed by youth participation advocates. More akin to community youth development, programs promote a variety of

youth/adult relationships, given the task at hand. As the director of one of just three intergenerational programs in our study—with a population that ranges from eight-year-olds to the elderly—noted in her open-ended response:

Our program is youth-centered, but the kids have mentors to make sure that the program retains its shape and forward momentum. They need the support of the adults. Two years ago, they decided to address the issue of growing violence between young males and females in high school. Once they've determined the topic, it goes to the adults to contact community agencies to provide support on that topic and bring in resources for the youth. Then the youth act as the final judge and use their eye to determine how to proceed. It's very synergistic, going back and forth between the youth and the adults. It has a kind of ebb and flow that leads to a final product shaped by both partners. The younger the child, the more guidance the adult may provide.

Justice-oriented Program Principles: Mapping the Variables

In this chapter, we positioned the programs surveyed in relation to the literature on social justice, youth development, and participation. We analyzed the definitions of social justice provided by program directors, which significantly reflect concepts found in current scholarly and activist literature. Likewise, we examined data related to youth development philosophies, which confirm the more forward-looking nature of these justice-oriented programs. Finally, we included an analysis of data related to participation, which suggest more varied youth/adult interconnectivity in comparison with the progressive empowerment model advocated by proponents of the ladder of participation.⁵ Figure 2.4 summarizes the guiding principles of the programs studied—principles that we expected would significantly affect their content and outcomes.

⁵ We fully recognize the Eurocentric bias in mainstream theories of youth participation, which not only shapes the ladder-of-participation concept but our scoring of this variable. These theories reflect a notion of adult/youth relationships that may not be appropriate in other cultures and thus in some of the programs in our study.

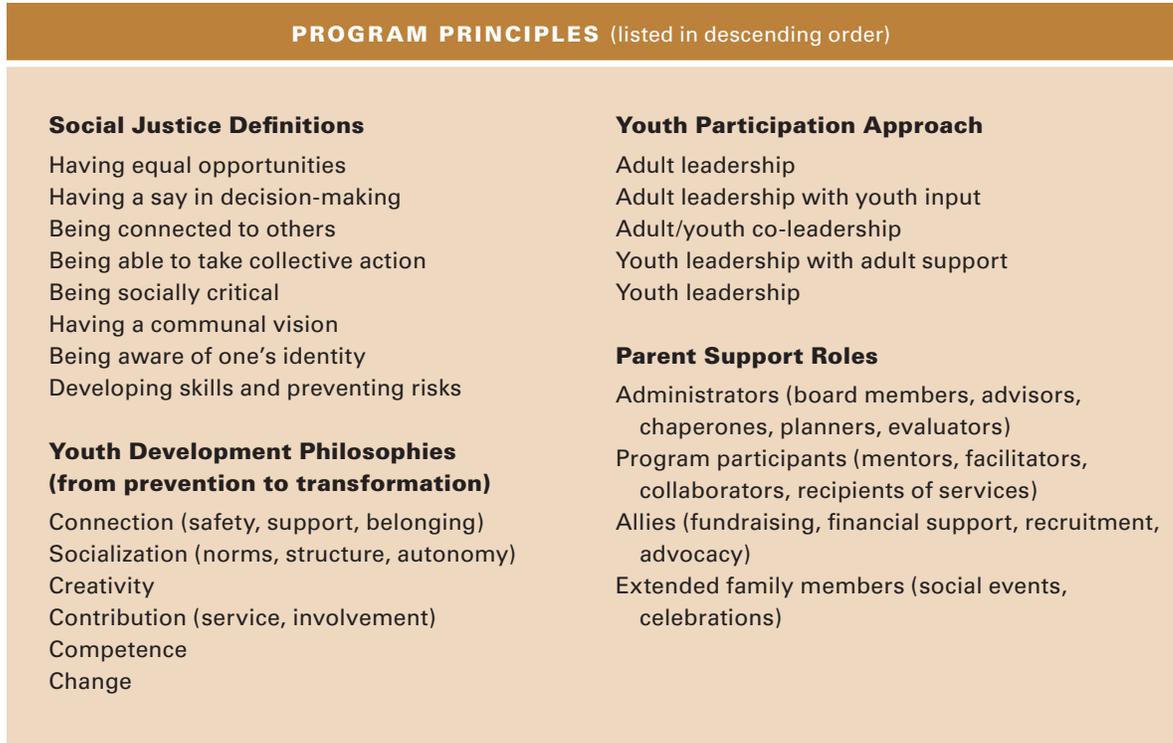


FIGURE 2.4 Variables of Program Practice Guiding Principles

3

Justice-oriented Program Content

Given the programs' professed commitment to social justice, we speculated that these principles would result in socially critical pedagogies—methods of engaging youth in critical reflection and action—as well as activities that connect young people with their communities and, at the same time, provide them with meaningful opportunities for personal growth. In this chapter, we look at three dimensions of program content: the pedagogies that involve youth in social change, the activities that allow them to play active roles in their communities, and the opportunities they need to enrich their lives. We review literature related to each dimension and then present our findings on that dimension.

Engagement in Socially Critical Pedagogies

Many of the program directors expressed concern with the multiple forms of oppression that pervade their communities. “Oppression is a situation or dynamic in which certain ways of being (e.g., having certain identities) are privileged in society while others are marginalized” (Kumashiro 2000, 25). To address the racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and other forms of oppression that urban adolescents encounter, they need learning opportunities that empower them to understand, question, and then seek to change

oppressive social conditions. Critical theories of education examined in this section serve as a framework for assessing the programs' approach to involving youth in socially critical reflection-in-action.

The Pedagogy of Social Change

Collective reflection by subordinate groups leads to recognition not only of the roles of dominant groups in constructing established beliefs and practices, but also of their own roles in that process and of their own potential power to reconstruct such beliefs and practices (Livingstone 1987, 8).

Critical pedagogy encourages reflective examination of both the historical and cultural roots of injustice and of the identities that result from living within particular sociopolitical and economic contexts (Yokley 1999). It helps young people understand how social structures and beliefs marginalize, denigrate, and violate some identities, while also favoring, normalizing, and privileging others. Using this double-edged sword, dominant social institutions maintain hegemony, framing it as normalcy, and then transmit the beliefs that reproduce it (Kumashiro 2000, citing Althusser 1971, and Gramsci 1971). Youth who want to work toward social change need to engage in a persistent critique of hegemonic structures and

beliefs, so they can unravel the socially constructed standards of behavior (Apple 1995) that either privilege and normalize or denigrate and marginalize particular groups (Kumashiro 2000).

Critical pedagogy also encourages a healthy skepticism and reflection about how social institutions—schools, churches, corporations, governments—maintain power and powerlessness by assigning social roles to certain identities. “In every society, certain traits such as age, sex, ethnic origin, physical appearance, kinship, division of labor, and control of wealth influence the allocation of roles among individuals,” and these roles almost always depend upon antecedent conditions of custom and class (Parenti 1978, 115). When young people take a critical look at social institutions, they “discover historically why things are the way they are and how they came to be that way” (Yokley 1999, citing Simon 1988). A conscious commitment to social critique can empower subordinate groups by helping them develop a “shared understanding of the social construction of reality” (Livingstone 1987, 8). Social critique not only allows these groups to view society as unjust but also as amenable to intervention; additionally, it helps them examine and reflect upon the very notions of justice and equality (Tripp 1990).

Yet, social critique by itself cannot transform structural oppression. Understanding the root causes of injustice is but the first step in developing the critical thinking skills required to formulate effective plans of action (Kumashiro 2000). Consciousness raising, or conscientization, means not only having a critical awareness of one’s immediate surroundings and the structural forces that create them, but also the capacity to take action within those surroundings (Freire 1985); it enables young people “to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire 1995, 17). Nevertheless, youth and adults have very different generational understandings of such issues as racism, poverty, homophobia, and food scarcity. For example, civil rights generation adults may feel unsympathetic, or even antagonistic, toward the challenges facing today’s hip hop generation due to the disappearance of unskilled jobs, increased requirements for specialized education, and unprecedented rates of incarceration (Ginwright 2005). When youth and adults work together, they must negotiate their differing perspectives. Intergenerational conscientization can thus foster

empathic listening between both groups, which can lead to more informed and lifelong agendas of self- and social transformation (Ginwright 2005).

Finally, critical pedagogy poses an affective (as in emotional) dimension that combines social change with playfulness (Shor 1992). It uses artistic expression—literature, visual arts, theatre, music, folk art—to heighten critical consciousness and inspire activism (Freire 1985). Critical pedagogy encourages serious, rigorous, and methodical learning experiences that, while accomplishing important social change, also have the potential for creating happiness—learning experiences through which people can sing, act, dance, laugh, tell stories; where they can use all their senses (Horton & Freire 1990).

Programs Seldom Engage in Social Critique and Reflection-in-action

In order to explore the pedagogies employed by the study population, we asked program directors how seven different activity types contributed to their social justice agenda. We then analyzed their responses to see whether programs promoted social critique and reflection-in-action. We assessed social critique by assigning a “0” to a description that did not mention a critique and a “1” to a description that specifically referred to a critique. Here are examples of the scoring:

- (0) “We have a dialogue about community events, current events, and we offer more structured community workshops.”
- (1) “We did trainings around the rates of incarceration and connecting that to the race element, class element, social justice aspects.”

Referring to a critique when describing each of the seven activity types would have yielded a perfect average score of 10.¹ The average scores of the study population ranged from 0 to 9, with a mean of 2.79, or about one-third of a perfect score. Notably, programs that engage in social critique were significantly more likely to have transformative youth development philosophies ($p > .00$).

We assessed reflection-in-action by assigning scores from 1 to 4, as follows:

- (1) **Passive learning.** Youth and their immediate allies engage in dialogue through support groups, conversations, one-on-one sessions, and so forth.

1 We multiplied average scores by 10 so as to avoid fractions.

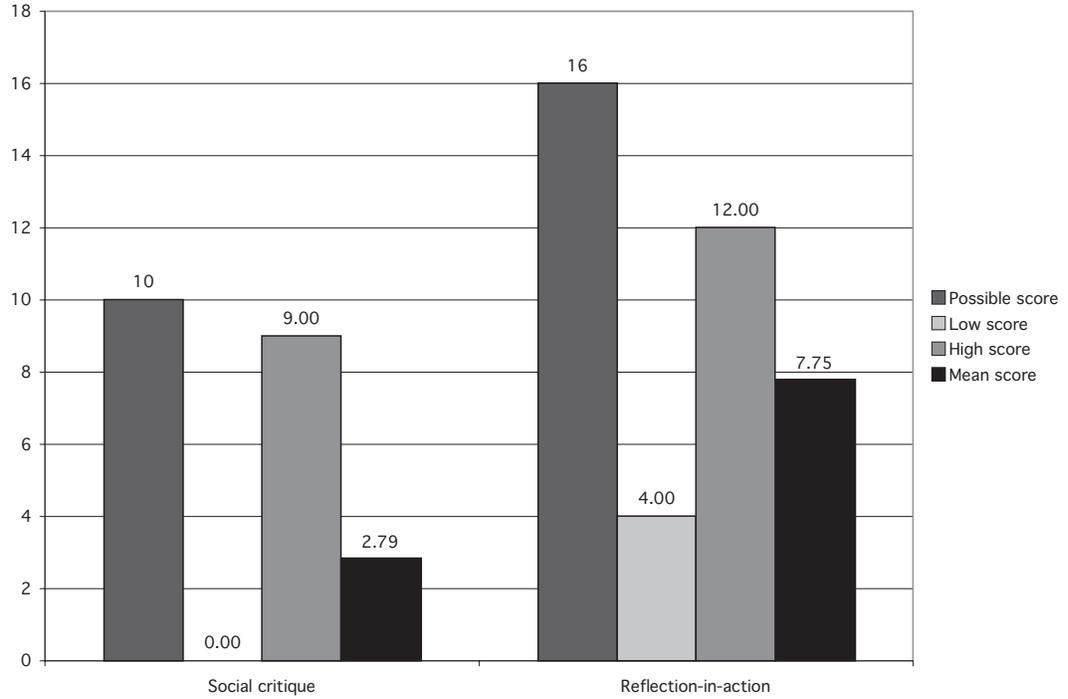


FIGURE 3.1 Program Pedagogies

- (2) **Hands-on learning.** Youth and their immediate allies engage in activities such as trainings, workshops, field trips, board meetings, mapping, recycling, planting, researching, and so forth.
- (3) **Applied learning.** Youth interact with community members through performances, publications, presentations, oral histories, campaigns, community markets, and so forth.
- (4) **Reflective applied learning.** Youth and their adult allies reflect upon lessons learned or critically evaluate fieldwork or other activities; youth interact with community members to engage them in consciousness-raising or critical assessment through performances, workshops, conferences, and so forth.

Referring to reflective applied learning when describing each of the seven activity types would have yielded a perfect average score of 16.² The study population scores ranged from 4-12, with a mean of 7.75, or about half of a perfect score. Figure 3.1 illustrates the fact that the programs surveyed underutilize socially critical pedagogies. Interestingly, the program directors’ definitions of social justice emphasized critical awareness and collective action, but their descriptions of what happens in practice did not reflect this emphasis.

Youth Engagement in Program Activities

In the 1970s and 1980s, youth programming involved little more than hanging out indoors (Halpern 1990). Today, a variety of organized activities and experiences for teenagers and young adults have come to the fore, as the nation becomes more concerned with how youth spend their considerable out-of-school time (Kohm et al. 2001). This section outlines the types of activities that can serve as a backdrop for socially critical reflection-in-action. Drawing from youth development and community development literature, we first describe and define six activity types germane to our study, and then characterize the programs by activity types.

Types of Youth Activities Germane to This Study

Drawing from the extensive literature on youth programming, we identified four types of organized activities of primary relevance to our study: youth development, community service, civic activism, and community art. In addition, we categorized two other types of activities that we consider relevant to our

2 We multiplied average scores by 4 to avoid fractions.

community-based approach, namely: placemaking and community development. We define these six activity types and summarize their benefits below.

1. **Youth development activities.** These can include both drop-in activities (e.g., gym, homework, lectures, or fieldtrips) and structured activities (e.g., classes in art, cooking, theater, or technology; leadership development training; academic mentoring; or sports leagues). They promote prosocial development but do not necessarily engage youth in their communities.

Outcomes. Large-scale quantitative and qualitative studies indicate that youth development activities can help reduce risky behaviors (Flaxman & Orr 1996) such as alcohol and tobacco use, depression, weapon-carrying, and violence (Eccles & Gootman 2002). They foster social mobility by improving academic skills (Ianni 1989; Larson 1994; Otto 1976; Spady 1970), including problem-solving abilities, and by helping youth access careers in growth industries (Flaxman & Orr 1996). Also, they help young people develop the skills of adult life (Kahne et al. 2001), which results in such benefits as heightened identity development, motivation, self-esteem, positive health decisions, interpersonal skills, and better parent-child relationships (Ianni 1989; Larson 1994; Otto 1976; Spady 1970). However, even if providing a safe, alternative place to hang out, some community-based programming may fail to challenge youth to grow or become engaged in purposeful, long-term activities (Halpern et al. 2000).

2. **Community service activities.** Also called youth service or civic service, these activities primarily engage young people in charitable assistance to disenfranchised groups; less frequently they help youth tackle the root causes of community problems. Youth perform service as volunteers or as part of a requirement for service.

Outcomes. These activities can promote compassion, civic duty, and responsibility (Kahne & Westheimer 1999); civic engagement (Youniss et al. 2001); identity development (Atkins & Hart 2003; Hart et al. 1997); prosocial behavior and mental health (Bartko & Eccles 2003; McNamara 2000); academic motivation and achievement (Johnson et al. 1998); respect for cultural differences (Atkins & Hart 2003; Metz et al. 2003); and future openness to service. This latter outcome stands out as a consistent finding in most research—namely, that participation in service fosters the

intent to continue participating in service (Johnson et al. 1998; Metz et al. 2003). Community service also exposes youth to “an ideology that puts effort and achievement in the service of positive social aims,” even if these endeavors show different degrees of commitment and thoughtfulness in the process (Halpern 2006, 184).

3. **Civic activism activities.** Also called civic engagement, environmental activism, and youth organizing, these activities engage young people in their communities through critical reflection, collective action, creative problem-solving, and leadership. Some activities have a broad political focus, while others possess a specific school reform or environmental focus.

Outcomes. Through civic activism, young people demonstrate their capacity to bring about change. They “have mobilized for civil rights at the national level, for educational reform and youth services at the state level, and for affordable housing and environmental justice at the local level” (Checkoway et al. 2005, 1150, citing Branch 1998, Moses & Cobb 2001, and Ross & Coleman 2000). When youth engage in active meaning-making through activism, they demonstrate political and moral understanding and reasoning (Roche 1999; Coles 1986), the capacity to name their desires and needs (Hill et al. 2004; Horelli 2001), as well as the ability to delineate (with surprising cross-national agreement) the positive and negative aspects of their world (Chawla 2002; Von Andel 1990). When they occupy the public spaces of their neighborhoods, young people express feelings of belonging and being part of a community as they celebrate their emerging identities (Matthews 2003).

4. **Community art activities.** These activities provide youth with a professional, community-based exposure to an art form. Community art activities can include the performing arts (theater, hip hop, rap, the spoken word), visual arts (videos and documentaries, photography, graphic design, mural making), journalism, or digital media. They emphasize collective artistic expression and engagement with an audience.

Outcomes. Though scarcely studied by youth development researchers, according to a seven-year national qualitative study, art activities offer more flexibility, creativity, and sense of family than other types of out-of-school activities (Brice-Heath & Soep 1996). A qualitative study of Chicago art programs found similar positive

results, concluding that art activities develop life skills, creative expression, art-related skills, and positive identity; give more opportunities to make friends, feel a sense of joy, and have meaningful, multicultural learning experiences than school activities; and provide safe alternatives to risky behavior (Kohm et al. 2000).

5. **Placemaking activities.** These activities engage youth in intentionally transforming their neighborhoods. They include hands-on activities that bring about tangible improvements (e.g., by planning, designing, building, or managing places), as well as applied research or evaluation activities that can inform policy-making and design guidelines (e.g., by surveying, mapping, or photographing places).

Outcomes. Though scant empirical evidence exists, both researchers and practitioners speculate that the active involvement of youth in creating their surroundings assures that those surroundings respond to their needs; raises environmental awareness; encourages a sense of ownership; results in cost savings (Sanoff 2000); provides a stage for celebrating, having fun, and getting physical (Sutton 1996); and helps youth make tangible contributions to significant others (Sutton 1985). Participatory community planning, design, and applied research amplify the voices of youth, helping them understand the significance of the places they inhabit and the inequities embedded within them (Ciofalo-Lagos 1996; Ross 2002).

6. **Community development activities.** These activities bring youth and adults together to improve the socioeconomic and physical infrastructure of their communities. Whether as efforts to ameliorate social services or as brick-and-mortar improvements, such activities promote synergy among the varied social, human, political, and economic resources within a community.

Outcomes. Though sparse in empirical findings, scholarship on youth-centered community development activities describes their contribution to identity development, social cooperation, and sense of competence among youth (Hart et al. 1997), along with more concrete benefits such as job skills (Henry 1997) and delaying pregnancy (Butler & Wharton-Fields 1999). Anecdotal evidence has proven useful in

highlighting the knowledge and skills that young people gain through community development activities (Henry 1997). When teenagers of color participate in community development activities, they can—and do—challenge the socially constructed and racialized meanings of place (Gregory 1993), enhancing their perceptions of the neighborhood and also deepening their understanding of its social ecology and their role as agents of change (Ross 2002). In addition, these teens’ participation influences adult perceptions of them (Butler & Wharton-Fields 1999; Tonucci & Rissotto 2001).

Programs Promote Seven Primary Activity Types

To better understand how youth spend their time in each program, we provided program directors with a definition of each of the six types of activities described above and then asked them to what degree their organization was involved in each type of activity—“very involved, somewhat involved, or not at all involved.” We followed each closed-ended question with an open-ended request for an example of each activity. The first set of answers proved of little use since, across the six questions, program directors responded “very involved” between 34% and 91% of the time, often using the same example over and over to illustrate activity types. So we looked at the open-ended responses in relation to mission statements, discovering that, except in 2% of the cases where we could not discern a primary focus, we were able to identify a *primary* activity type. In all, we found seven activity types, listed below in descending order of importance:³

1. **Civic activism** (29% of the programs)
2. **Youth development** (21% of the programs)
3. **Community art** (16% of the programs)
4. **Community development** (15% of the programs)
5. **Identity support** (9% of the programs)
6. **Community service** (5% of the programs)
7. **Placemaking** (3% of the programs)

The new category that emerged—identity support—includes activities organized around a specific cultural group such as African American girls, African American and Hispanic youth, or GLBTQ

3 Appendix C organizes the programs according to these activity types.

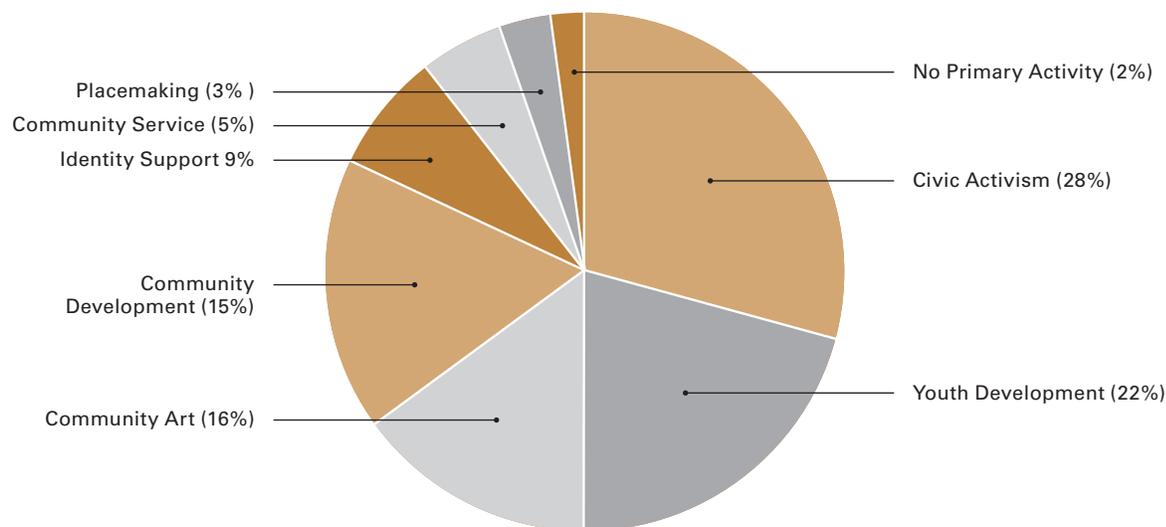


FIGURE 3.2 Program Primary Activity Types

youth. Though identity support falls within other activity types, we felt that this group of programs had a distinguishing characteristic that needed recognition. Figure 3.2 illustrates program primary activity types.

Programs Provide Justice-oriented Youth Development Opportunities

Finally, we look at the opportunities youth need to mature, as described in positive youth development literature, amending them where appropriate to reflect our perspective on social justice. We end by looking at the opportunities that program activities provide.

Advancing Positive Youth Development

Opportunities should be available to all. Opportunities—to learn, explore, play, express oneself—are, by definition, taken up voluntarily by a young person once they have been made available. This makes them both universal and individualized. The young person selects from among possibilities (Hamilton et al. 2004, 11).

As youth programs moved from emphasizing welfare and relief toward such missions as development, promotion, and empowerment, they evolved into learning communities characterized by the altruism, love, and care found in ideal family relationships (Alvarez 1994). Models of positive youth development, which

emerged from resilience studies (see e.g., Connell et al. 2000; Hughes & Curnan 2000; Pittman & Zelden 1995), attempt to characterize the family-like ingredients of these learning communities. Though terminology varies from author to author, such models list numerous strengths and assets that, given a particular cultural context, link to future well-being, namely: sense of safety, social connectedness, curiosity, and social identity (Granger 2002). The models also list the supports and opportunities that young people need for healthy development, suggesting a reciprocal relationship between the characteristics of youth and their surrounding environment (Granger 2002). This person-environment transaction occurs within a variety of contexts—micro and macro—becoming ever more complex over a lifetime (Bronfenbrenner 1979). In general, most researchers underscore that positive developmental contexts provide opportunities for: *caring relationships* that provide guidance, mentoring, help with practical problems, and emotional support; *safe places* that provide protection from physical and psychological harm; *challenging learning experiences* that build skills and promote growth; and *meaningful involvement* in contributing to community life (Gambone et al. 2004; Kahne et al. 2001).

Through a data-driven thematic analysis of the focus group transcript, alongside extended debate among our research team, we placed these generally accepted opportunities within a framework that reflects the mainstays of socially critical pedagogy: understanding the historical and cultural roots of injustice

in one's community, taking action to address that injustice, and having fun in the process. Accordingly, we propose that *justice-oriented* developmental opportunities include:

Caring relationships that help

1. *Youth develop their identities* so they appreciate themselves for who they are, improve their self-image, and enhance the negative images people have of youth culture; and
2. *Adults work in partnership* with youth in non-authoritarian ways.

Safe places that help

3. *Youth engage in creative play* by encouraging them to enjoy themselves in environments that are not controlled and organized by adults.

Challenging learning experiences that help

4. *Youth understand their neighborhood*, for example, by exposing them to its social history and its current sociopolitical issues, or by encouraging them to explore their own experiences of their surroundings; and
5. *Youth develop communal behaviors*, for example, by learning to share resources such as food and air, or power and ideas, or by learning to live in less individualistic ways.

Meaningful involvement that helps

6. *Youth participate in neighborhood life*, for example, by being part of decision-making in their neighborhood, organizing their own social movements, participating in local social action, or having a physical presence in the neighborhood; and
7. *Youth become agents of change* by understanding the causes of problems in their community and then taking action to transform unjust conditions, addressing both the causes and the problems themselves.

Programs Emphasize Identity Development over Creative Play

To explore the opportunities that our study popula-

tion provides, we asked program directors: “To what degree does your organization work on [X opportunity listed above]?” We followed each of the seven closed-ended questions with an open-ended one asking how each opportunity contributed to the organization’s social justice agenda.

As with the census data analysis, we employed a latent class analysis to identify sub-groups of programs based on underlying (i.e., latent) patterns in the open-ended data.⁴ This analysis revealed that one group (56% of the programs) was significantly more likely to promote all seven opportunities than the other; this group gives similar emphasis to all the opportunities except for creative play, upon which much less importance is placed; we refer to this group as “context-centered” because it encompasses a balance of individual and community development. The second group (44% of the programs) provides fewer opportunities; it gives the most attention to developing identities and the least to understanding and participating in the neighborhood—two opportunities that resurface in Chapter 5 as significant in foundation-funded transformative programs. We refer to these programs as “person-centered” because of the emphasis upon individual development. Still, all the programs provide youth with a variety of justice-oriented opportunities. Figure 3.3 illustrates program opportunities offered by the two groups.

Program Content in Summary

An analysis of the pedagogies employed by the programs in our study revealed that, although they do not score very high on social critique or reflection-in-action, those that do engage in social critique were significantly more likely to have a transformative youth development philosophy. In looking at the activities described in mission statements, we decided to distinguish a seventh activity type—identity support—not originally included in the survey protocol. Civic activism emerged as the most prevalent activity type (accounting for almost one-third of the programs), followed by youth development. Finally, one larger group of context-centered programs was significantly likelier to offer a balance of six of the seven justice-oriented opportunities considered for this study than person-centered programs that favor identity development over neighborhood engagement. Yet, the programs on the whole provide

4 Recall that LCA allowed us to divide the study population into latent sub-groups that show distinct and interpretable patterns of responses, and then to examine the resulting sub-groups relative to other background variables.

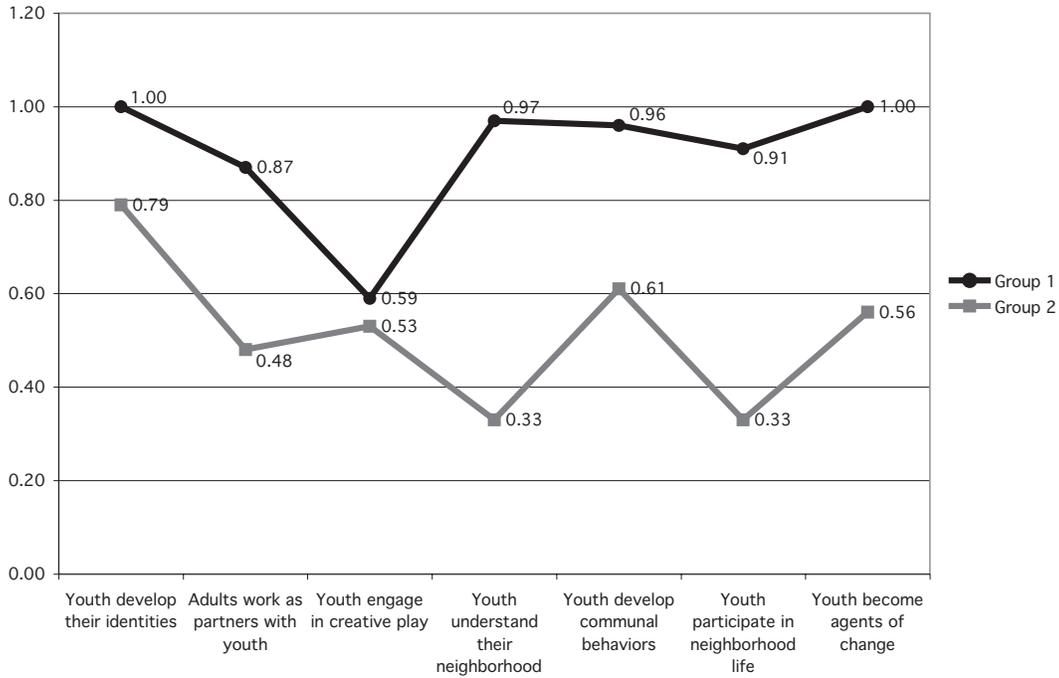


FIGURE 3.3 Opportunities Provided by Two Groups of Programs

youth with an impressive array of opportunities.

Mapping the Content Variables

In this chapter, we explored the content of the programs in our study, including pedagogy, activity type, and opportunities. We showed that, although these programs seldom engage in pedagogies of social change, they can be grouped according to sev-

en primary activity types, with civic activism emerging as the most prevalent. Finally, through a latent class analysis of justice-oriented opportunities, we confirmed that the programs on the whole provide outstanding developmental contexts, with 56% offering a balance of six of seven individual and community development opportunities. Figure 3.4 summarizes programs' content, indicating that, thus far, social critique has shown a significant relationship with the youth development philosophies described in Chapter 2. Later, in Chapter 5, we describe many other significant relationships.

PROGRAM CONTENT

Pedagogies

Social critique*
Reflection-in-action

Primary Activity Types (listed in descending order)

Civic activism
Youth development
Community art
Community development
Identity support
Community service
Placemaking

Opportunities

(listed in descending order)

Youth developing their identities
Youth developing communal behaviors
Youth learning to be active agents
Adults learning to work with youth
Youth understanding the neighborhood
Youth participating in neighborhood life
Youth engaging in creative play

** Indicates a significant variable*

FIGURE 3.4 Content Variables



Photo by Greig Canna

4

Social Change Outcomes for Youth and Communities

In what will probably be the most controversial chapter of our report, we assert that youth program activities are not simply a *means* to youth development, but that they generate results—products—that are *ends* in themselves. That is, when young people successfully campaign for new schools, restore tree canopies and waterways, conduct community workshops, or stage drama performances—as the youth in our study do—they are not simply engaging in the *processes* of youth development en route to becoming productive adults; they are creating the *products* of youth and community development. If programs establish community partnerships, distribute sensitivity training materials to probation officers, implement courses in colleges of education, or provide technical assistance to other organizations—as the programs surveyed do—they are not simply providing the supports and opportunities that will ultimately lead youth to healthy adult lives; their results constitute the *products* of youth and community development.

Program Activity Outcomes as Ends

Numerous international initiatives express an awakening hope that families, communities, and institutions can improve young people's potential to contribute to both society and their own destinies.

Some efforts aim to increase workforce productivity through educational programs; others endeavor to reduce wasted human potential due to violence, antisocial behavior, and social inequities; still others seek to improve health, education, and employment prospects for young people (Alvarez 1994). An emerging body of research documents how these initiatives promote adolescent physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social development. Nevertheless, few comprehensive evaluations have adequately assessed the benefits of community-based programs in helping teens reach a productive adulthood (National Research Council & the Institute of Medicine 2002).

In this section, after summarizing the approaches researchers have taken to evaluating youth program outcomes and their life-changing effects upon young people, we offer a perspective on youth development that shifts conventional focus from solely improving individuals to one that also encompasses the betterment of society.

Short-term Benchmarks to Long-term Adult Success

Historically, the long-term goal of reducing the number of young adults on welfare, addicted to drugs, or committing crimes justified investment in youth

programs. Addressing such problems gave governments and organizations alike the authority to intervene in what had been the purview of families. Initially, funding targeted so-called “at-risk teenagers” with programs designed to change their behaviors. However, success was minimal, so investment began to be redirected toward younger at-risk youth. Again, programs showed little success. Realizing the error of focusing upon negative behaviors rather than on the benchmarks that, over time, lead to healthy adulthood, decision-makers began to shift their support toward interventions that would promote positive developmental outcomes (Connell & Gambone 2002).

However, while most youth programs report successful outcomes, few provide empirical evidence of long-term results. “When available, evaluations tend to respond primarily to the needs of the particular programs and secondarily to the creation of a body of knowledge concerning the relationships between the institutional environments and human development” (Alvarez 1994, 260). For example, a review of experimental evaluations of individual positive youth development programs in the United States documents such short-term outcomes as positive attitudes toward school, the future, older people, and community service; improved academic performance, self-esteem, self-efficacy, social acceptance, and parental trust; enhanced parent/youth communications; and healthier use of community resources (National Research Council & the Institute of Medicine 2002).

Similarly, international evaluative studies of youth programs rarely attempt to assess their long-term benefits and tend to focus upon individual initiatives rather than large social units or clusters of social institutions. Evaluations typically measure benefits at the organizational, social, and individual levels, considering: (1) factors intrinsic to the programs themselves (e.g., their structure, role of volunteers, influence on a youth culture, and incentives); (2) factors extrinsic to the programs (ranging from family values to national policies and cultural values); and (3) characteristics of the participants. The conceptualization of these dimensions—especially participant characteristics (which vary according to the cumulative developmental experiences of individuals)—tends to be ambiguous, detracting from the credibility of the research. Nevertheless, the available literature suggests that youth programs can, in the short-term, complement, and even supplement, other organized social settings (Alvarez 1994).

One recent proposal for creating an ecology of community supports for youth development begins by exploring the short-term outcomes that lead to specific long-term outcomes, including economic self-sufficiency, healthy family and social relationships, and community involvement. The framers of this ambitious proposal recognized the difficulty of trying to influence young people’s *future* temperament and behavior within the context of time-limited programs (Connell & Gambone 2002). Since comparative studies indicate that the most successful programs consider young people within the context of families and communities (Alvarez 1994), this framework calls for intervening in all the settings where youth spend their time, including schools and other public institutions, and also providing youth with adequate housing, health care, and nutrition (Connell & Gambone 2002). In essence, the authors call for nothing less than the eradication of poverty, underscoring the limits of a notion of youth development that puts the onus upon marginalized individuals to excel within the norms of dominant society. Although their framework lacks a social critique, these authors imply the need for a revolution in American society.

Certainly, the reality of oppressive social and environmental conditions in the low-income urban communities where most of our programs are located—conditions unlikely to change from without—cries out for a radically different approach that recognizes the insidious persistence of injustice in this country. Such an approach would acknowledge that, in these communities, the distinctions between youth and adults often blur as welfare reform shifts traditional adult responsibilities to young people. Due to mandated work requirements for low-income parents, their children must assume such responsibilities as raising siblings, earning money to pay for household expenses, and even finding housing (Ginwright 2005, citing Brooks et al. 2001). “These responsibilities, traditionally held by adults, complicate rigid notions of the developmental process that conceptualize adulthood as an ‘achievement’ or ‘final product’ of adolescence” (Ginwright 2005, 102). In a country lacking the social will to address low-income urban conditions, the potential for change lies within the community—through coalitions, alliances, and collaborative projects undertaken by adults and youth alike. From this perspective, the notion of outcomes would shift from a linear trajectory of individual development to a reiterative struggle for social justice. A process through which adults and youth converge around a common agenda “requires a shift from viewing

adulthood as the final product of adolescence where the responsibility for development is placed entirely on young people” (Ginwright 2005, 105). By turning the concept of youth development on its head, we can begin to consider how youth can join with adults to change their communities from within, while developing their own capacities in the process.

Program Outcomes Contribute to Individual and Collective Destinies

When we first began receiving completed surveys in the summer of 2004, we were quite struck—inspired—by the range of accomplishments we found embedded in the program directors’ responses to other questions. Since the survey did not contain a specific question about outcomes, we needed another means to surface these hidden accomplishments. We turned to the open-ended interviews, where we had asked staff, youth, parents, and community members: “What comes out of program activities in terms of improving things for youth and the community? How have these activities helped the youth who attend the program? How have your program activities helped the community?” A data-driven analysis of their often detailed open-ended responses resulted in 25 themes that fall into 7 categories. With these themes in hand, we returned to those parts of the survey that characterized the programs’ work, that is, the six descriptions of activity types and the seven descriptions of opportunities that contribute to social justice.

Interestingly, we found that, by applying the definitions derived from the interview analysis, we could bring forward the accomplishments that we had intuitively perceived a year earlier in the survey responses. Using this approach, we identified the following outcomes, listed in descending order according to the percentage of cases in which they were mentioned.¹

1. **Being an active participant** (21%)
 - (a) *Democratic governance.* Engaging in decision-making, consensus building, power sharing, voting, developing agendas or activities; adults learning to share power.
 - (b) *Enrichment experiences.* Having access to opportunities not provided in school; living new experiences; traveling; developing new interests; growing; learning.
 - (c) *Hands-on experiences.* Engaging in hands-on activities; for example, writing, speaking, brainstorming, planting.
2. **Making a social contribution** (19%)
 - (a) *Activism.* Speaking out, lobbying, campaigning; engaging in environmental activism; engaging in public dialogue.
 - (b) *Critical awareness.* Developing social and environmental consciousness, reflective capacity, concern for human rights, and cultural awareness.
 - (c) *Youth leadership.* Assuming public roles; taking the initiative; guiding or facilitating; representing the organization.
 - (d) *Assertiveness.* Having a sense of agency, a sense of power, and influence.
 - (e) *Responsibility.* Being disciplined and independent; undertaking projects on one’s own; having personal integrity.
3. **Being empowered** (18%)
 - (a) *Identity development.* Experiencing personal development; promoting positive conceptions of youth and youth-in-place; countering negative media images of youth and other cultural groups; engaging in self-expression; developing self-knowledge.
 - (b) *Recognition.* Gaining the respect of others; receiving positive feedback; getting media coverage; gaining respect for cultural diversity; being visible; displaying or publishing youth work.
 - (c) *Support.* Obtaining resources, guidance, safe space; having staff and other adults as confidants.
 - (d) *Self-confidence.* Gaining self-esteem, self-worth, pride, a sense of ownership; experiencing individual empowerment.
4. **Being competent** (16%)
 - (a) *Skill development.* Acquiring skills; for example, language literacy, media literacy, job readiness, journalism, entrepreneurship, decision-making, cooking, gardening, farming.
 - (b) *Social interaction.* Interacting; communicating; listening; presenting; empathizing; engaging in teamwork; cooperating; role playing.

¹ It is important to note that we developed the description of each type of outcome from the open-ended interview data.

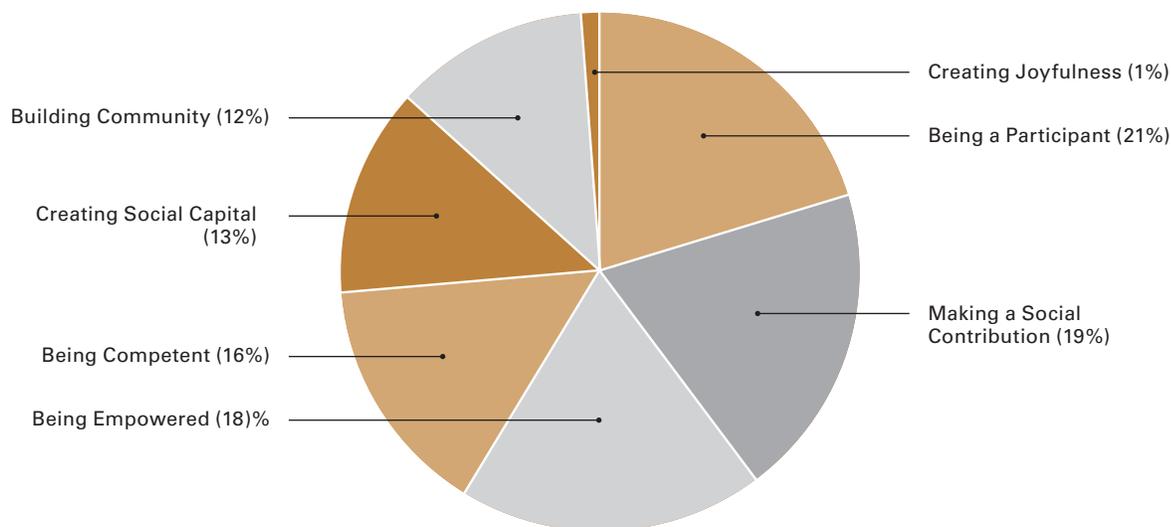


FIGURE 4.1 Personal and Social Change Program Outcomes

(c) *Critical thinking.* Evaluating; goal-setting; fact-weighting; conducting research.

(d) *Behavior management.* Promoting or developing positive behavior and attitudes; preventing or avoiding risky behavior; managing conflict.

5. Creating social capital (13%)

(a) *Connectivity.* Mentoring; role modeling; continuing involvement with the program; having peer, intergenerational, and ecological relationships; collecting oral histories; developing cross-cultural relationships.

(b) *Social mobility.* Generating assets; building a resume; preparing for college; gaining access to college or employment; experiencing success; achieving higher aspirations; networking; nurturing lifelong commitments; receiving job training.

6. Building community (12%)

(a) *Community participation.* Youth or adults from the community participating in the program; engaging in outreach activities or public relations; brokering support for the program; partnering with other organizations locally and globally.

(b) *Community education.* Staff, parents, or children and adults in the community growing or developing greater insights through program activities; staff receiving training; program participants engaging in policy advocacy.

(c) *Community service.* Engaging in outreach or volunteerism; addressing needs.

(d) *Community development.* Conducting needs assessments; engaging in placemaking; generating resources; investing in or improving the community; marketing goods; improving food security.

7. Creating joyfulness (1%)

(a) *Creative expression.* Engaging in the arts, design, community planning, visioning; using or developing innate talents; experiencing passion or joy; discovering.

(b) *Playfulness.* Having fun; engaging in recreational activities; hanging out; inspiring “the child” in adults.

(c) *Idealism.* Helping, caring, improving, conserving resources; being committed to the common good; supporting others; giving back.

Figure 4.1 illustrates program outcomes that promote personal and social change.

Personal and Social Change Outcomes in Summary

By framing outcomes as the real-time results of youth and adults struggling to improve the egregious circumstances in their communities, we shifted the focus from a conventional youth-only paradigm to

one that inseparably links youth development with community development. An analysis of outcomes reported by constituents who participated in the open-ended interviews allowed us to document the richness of program accomplishments. Being an active participant and making a social contribution topped the list, followed closely by being empowered and being competent.

Mapping Personal and Social Change Outcomes

In this chapter, we reviewed the literature on short-term developmental outcomes that lead to long-term adult well being, arguing for a different perspective that considers the real-time contributions of youth and adults toward changing themselves and their communities. An analysis based upon this perspective revealed that the programs surveyed produce a rich array of outcomes, as shown in Figure 4.2.



FIGURE 4.2 Personal and social Change Outcome Variables



5

Effect of Funding and Philosophy on Program Characteristics

In this chapter, we explore how the four components of the conceptual map interact, and report the strong relationships that emerged among clusters of variables. In particular, we show how funding sources, youth development philosophies, and youth participation approaches shape other aspects of the programs. Earlier, we examined significant relationships within a given component; we now consider relationships that occur within larger, cross-component clusters.¹

This chapter builds upon the definitions of seven variables presented in earlier chapters: staff training requirements, census data indicators, social justice definitions, youth development philosophies, youth participation approaches, program opportunities, and self-reported outcomes. To assist the reader, these definitions are summarized in Inset 5.7 at the very end of the chapter. We would also like the reader to gain a first-hand appreciation for the integrity we observed when comparing program principles with actual program accomplishments. Accordingly, Insets 5.1 through 5.6 present selected open-ended

responses from the surveys completed by the directors of six programs,² including their descriptions of program rationale, youth participation approach, and outcomes, along with each program's formal mission statement and a youth perspective from an open-ended interview.³

Foundation Funding Affects Program Characteristics the Most

Recall that when context variables were discussed in Chapter 1, we reported strong linkages between the primary funding sources—foundations, governments, and individuals—and the internal and external characteristics of the program context. In this section, we add to this list by identifying linkages between the primary funding sources and program content, principles, and outcomes. As noted earlier, corporate grants do not provide the primary source of funding for any of the programs, so we do not discuss the effect of corporate funding.

1 To reiterate, we report as *significant* those p-values that range from .00 to .05—the smaller values indicate stronger relationships—and as *tending toward significance* those p-values ranging between .06 and .09.

2 These are the six programs whose constituents participated in open-ended interviews.

3 These descriptions are close to verbatim as our team of student assistants typed very complete responses as they conducted surveys and interviews. However, we modified both the mission statements and descriptions to remove identifiers.

Characteristics of Foundation-funded Programs

Foundation grants provide the primary source of funding for more than half of the programs surveyed (53%). We have already noted that foundation funding significantly affected numerous aspects of program structure. Foundation-funded programs were significantly more likely to be newer ($p > .00$) and to serve more than 300 youth ($p > .01$). At the same time, they were significantly less likely to require a graduate degree ($p > .05$), a certificate ($p > .02$), or prior experience ($p > .02$) (requiring an undergraduate degree also showed a negative correlation, though not at a level of significance). Foundation funding also affected the external context: these programs were significantly more likely to be located in smaller metropolitan areas ($p > .00$) with higher rates of poverty ($p > .00$), fewer Caucasians ($p > .00$), more elevated high school dropout rates ($p > .03$), and fewer owner-occupied homes ($p > .02$). They also tended toward significance on having older housing ($p > .07$).

Moreover, we discovered that foundation funding was related to youth development philosophies, youth participation approaches, program opportunities, and self-reported outcomes. Specifically, foundation-funded programs were significantly more likely to embody a transformative philosophy ($p > .00$), entail more adult-directed youth participation (i.e., adult leadership, $p > .04$; adult and youth co-leadership, $p > .02$), promote understanding of the neighborhood ($p > .02$), and produce social contribution outcomes ($p > .03$). They also tended toward significance on providing opportunities for participating in neighborhood life ($p > .07$).

In sum, foundation grants provide significantly more support for large, transformative start-up programs located in smaller metropolitan areas with all census data indicators of poverty. Such programs not only offer significantly more opportunities for young people to understand and participate in their communities; they also engage youth in making more significant social contributions within those communities—through conscientization and activism, as well as by being assertive, taking responsibility, and demonstrating leadership. These larger programs do not necessarily operate on larger budgets or with more full-time staff, or even more staff. They do, however, report more adult leadership, perhaps because many are serving large groups of young people with fewer resources and therefore lack time for the process work required to nurture youth leadership.

Characteristics of Government-funded Programs

Government grants provide the primary funding source for 30% of the programs. We have already reported that these programs were significantly more likely to be older—in the sense of greater longevity—($p > .05$), to be housed within parent organizations ($p > .04$), to include more paid ($p > .05$) and full-time ($p > .00$) staff, and to require somewhat more trained staff than foundation-funded programs (certificate, $p > .00$; experience, $p > .01$; no requirement, $p > .04$). They were also significantly likelier to be located in larger metropolitan areas ($p > .05$), albeit ones with higher proportions of Caucasians ($p > .04$) and no other significant indicators of impoverishment; and their directors were less likely to live in the neighborhood ($p > .03$). In examining variables in other components, we found that government-funded programs were significantly less likely to embody transformative philosophies ($p > .00$); we did not, however, identify any relationships with the opportunities provided or the outcomes produced, as we did with the more transformative foundation-funded programs. On the other hand, we found a similar pattern of adult-directed youth participation: these programs were also significantly more likely to encompass adult leadership ($p > .04$) or adult and youth co-leadership ($p > .05$).

Thus, even if government grants do have a significant effect upon other program characteristics, their overall influence is more reduced than that of foundation funding. Government-funded programs are significantly less transformative and older initiatives, located in larger metropolitan areas that lack the factors associated with poverty. They do not reveal the same type of community engagement that foundation-funded programs reflect (in opportunities provided or outcomes produced), most likely because program directors do not live in the community. At the same time, they are programs with better staff resources, probably because they draw upon their larger parent organizations. As with foundation-funded initiatives, government-funded programs entail a low level of youth leadership, but in this case the greater degree of adult direction may respond to their less transformative philosophies.

Characteristics of Programs Funded by Individual Contributions

Individual contributions provide the primary source of funding for just 10% of the programs surveyed.

As reported earlier, these programs were significantly more likely to be larger and older organizations ($p > .05$ and $p > .01$), to include more adult volunteers ($p > .05$) who are more involved in program activities ($p > .01$), to rely more on social networks ($p > .01$), and to be more autonomous (not part of a parent organization) ($p > .01$). In addition, they were significantly likelier to be located in larger metropolitan areas ($p > .01$) with less poverty ($p > .02$) and no other significant indicators of instability, and their directors were significantly more likely to live in the neighborhood ($p > .01$).

Thus, programs funded by individual contributions were significantly older, more autonomous, and more reliant upon volunteers and social networks than on paid staff, involving volunteers significantly more often in program activities. They are more often located in larger, less impoverished metropolitan areas, where program directors are likelier to live in the neighborhood. Notably, we did not find any relationships between this funding source and programs' underlying philosophies, opportunities provided, or outcomes produced. In other words, relying upon individual donors as the primary source of funding has the least effect upon program characteristics.



Considering primary funding source, foundation grants clearly have the greatest influence upon program characteristics. Foundations direct their support toward maverick organizations that serve smaller, more impoverished metropolitan areas. Their grantees take a transformative approach to youth, providing opportunities for community engagement that result in more social contributions. At the same time, these transformative foundation-funded programs have more uncredentialed staff and serve many youth, possibly with limited resources, which may account for their lower levels of youth participation. In contrast, governments and individuals direct their support toward older programs in larger, more socioeconomically stable urban areas where they demonstrate no significant community engagement. Government-funded programs, in particular, take a less transformative approach to youth, which may explain their reliance upon higher levels of adult leadership, and operate with more staff probably drawn from a parent organization. Figure 5.1 summarizes how the source of funding affects other program characteristics.

Philosophy Shapes Program Characteristics More than Funding

Recall that we constructed a scale to assess youth development philosophy on a continuum ranging from prevention = 1 to transformation = 5. In this section, we explore how scoring high on this measure—that is, having a transformative philosophy—shapes other aspects of a program, including its context, principles, content, and outcomes.

Our analysis revealed that programs with more transformative youth philosophies have particular organizational contexts. Such programs were significantly more likely to serve between 50-100 participants ($p > .04$) or more than 300 ($p > .00$), and to rely upon inter-organizational relationships ($p > .04$). Further, they tended toward significance on being located in deteriorated ($p > .08$) but safe neighborhoods ($p > .09$). They also evidenced specific program principles by promoting a vision of social justice that emphasizes equal opportunities ($p > .05$), and by relying upon multiple youth participation approaches (adult leadership, $p > .00$; adult/youth co-leadership, $p > .02$; youth leadership with adult support, $p > .01$). Yet, they were significantly less likely to promote definitions of social justice that emphasize identity ($p > .03$). They demonstrated specific program contents by proving significantly more likely to employ pedagogies that engage youth in social critique ($p > .00$), and to provide opportunities that help youth understand ($p > .01$) and participate in ($p > .01$) their neighborhoods, learn communal behaviors ($p > .04$), and become agents of change ($p > .01$). Finally, they showed specific outcomes, being significantly more likely to engage youth in making a social contribution within their communities ($p > .01$).

Transformative philosophies generate a number of significant relationships, including a few that intersect with the funding source cluster. Transformative programs are not the smallest, but rather somewhat bigger or definitely large initiatives. They tend to be located in deteriorated neighborhoods that still afford a sense of safety—neighborhoods where these programs have established strong inter-organizational relationships. Their program principles significantly reflect their transformative approach to youth: their definitions of social justice emphasize equal opportunity, they employ pedagogies that require social critique, and they allow for a fluid approach to youth participation. In light of such principles, their outcomes not surprisingly emphasize

PRIMARY SOURCE OF FUNDING (Significant relationships/Tended toward significance*)		
FOUNDATION GRANTS	GOVERNMENT GRANTS	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS
Context	Context	Context
Newer programs	Older programs	Older programs
Bigger programs		Bigger programs
	Programs are part of parent organizations	Programs are not part of parent organizations
	More paid staff	
	More full-time staff	
		More volunteer adults
		Volunteers involved in program activities
	Director doesn't live in neighborhood	Director does live in neighborhood
		Relies on social networks
No certificate/No experience	Certificate/Experience/None	
Smaller cities	Bigger cities	Bigger cities
More poverty		Less poverty
Fewer Caucasians	More Caucasians	
Higher rates of HS dropout		
Fewer owner-occupied homes		
Older housing stock		
Principles	Principles	Principles
More transformative	Less transformative	
Adult leadership	Adult leadership	
Adult/youth co-leadership	Adult/youth co-leadership	
Content (Opportunities)	Content (Opportunities)	Content (Opportunities)
Understand the neighborhood		
Participate in neighborhood* Outcomes		

FIGURE 5.1 Effect of Primary Funding Sources on Program Characteristics

social contribution. These programs are significantly more likely to promote collaborative community work that helps youth understand the root causes of problems and develop effective solutions. They assert that young people can, and do, make social contributions in their communities—through conscientization and activism, as well as by being assertive, taking responsibility, and demonstrating leadership. Figure 5.2 summarizes how a transformative philosophy affects other program characteristics.

We had hoped that transformative programs would also emphasize community-building outcomes—including community participation, community education, community service, and community development—since these outcomes would have indicated a stronger community-change focus than those associated with mere social contribution (which include acquiring the mindset and skills to bring about community change, along with activism within the program). Nevertheless, the relationship between transformative philosophy and community-building outcomes proved not to be significant, a fact that deserves some speculation. Perhaps even these more transformative programs are more prone to engaging youth as activists among their immediate allies than in interaction with the community at large.⁴

In addition to this finding, we also discovered that transformative programs emphasize neither a pure model of youth leadership nor identity awareness, a fact that counters views expressed by advocates of youth participation and social justice youth development. We suspect that it does not imply that our transformative programs have no interest in identity or youth voice, but simply that they see identity developing within a more communal, inter-generational context. One of the program directors we interviewed describes how inter-generational awareness enhances both individual and collective destinies:

A growing edge for us is helping young people look at the root causes of problems and take action based on their analysis. Our youth philanthropy board identifies priority issues they want to deal with. In the process of looking at these problems, they consider all the causes surrounding lack of access to higher education and lack of opportunity for youth to be involved in the community. We go through experiential processes to help them see those root causes and what they can do to take action. Then we train other youth to do

that kind of analysis and give grants to those participants who want to take action on an issue. . . . We do these kind of things because they really make a difference in the lives of young people—they support their development. Also, it makes a difference to the agency—youth bring a lot to the agency in terms of the day-to-day work that needs to get done and living out our mission. Finally, this program really has the potential to make a difference in our community.

Outcomes Do Not Systematically Shape Youth Participation

We assumed that programs' approach to youth participation would depend upon whether they focused solely upon youth development or considered youth development within communities. In particular, we expected that outcomes more related to such areas as being empowered or being competent would allow for higher degrees of youth leadership, because they would entail activities that nurture youth development separate from the need for engaging in community problem-solving. In contrast, we anticipated that outcomes more related to areas such as making a social contribution or building community would require more adult leadership, because they would foster youth development in relation to solving real problems within communities. Our hypotheses, at least in part, turned out to be correct.

The analysis revealed that programs with a high number of outcomes across all seven categories—both those more youth-focused and those that place a greater focus upon community problem-solving—were significantly more likely to have adults and youth who co-participate in leading program activities ($p > .02$), and youth who lead with adult support ($p > .04$). In other words, such programs tilted slightly toward the youth-leadership end of the youth participation continuum. Moreover, programs that produced social contribution outcomes tilted toward the adult-leadership end of the continuum, being significantly more likely to encompass adult leadership ($p > .05$), adult/youth co-leadership ($p > .00$), and youth leadership with adult support ($p > .05$). Nevertheless, we found no correlation between other outcomes and youth participation, leaving this relationship somewhat ambiguous, probably because

⁴ Our finding on programs' infrequent employment of reflection-in-action pedagogies would support this assumption about the lack of community-building outcomes.

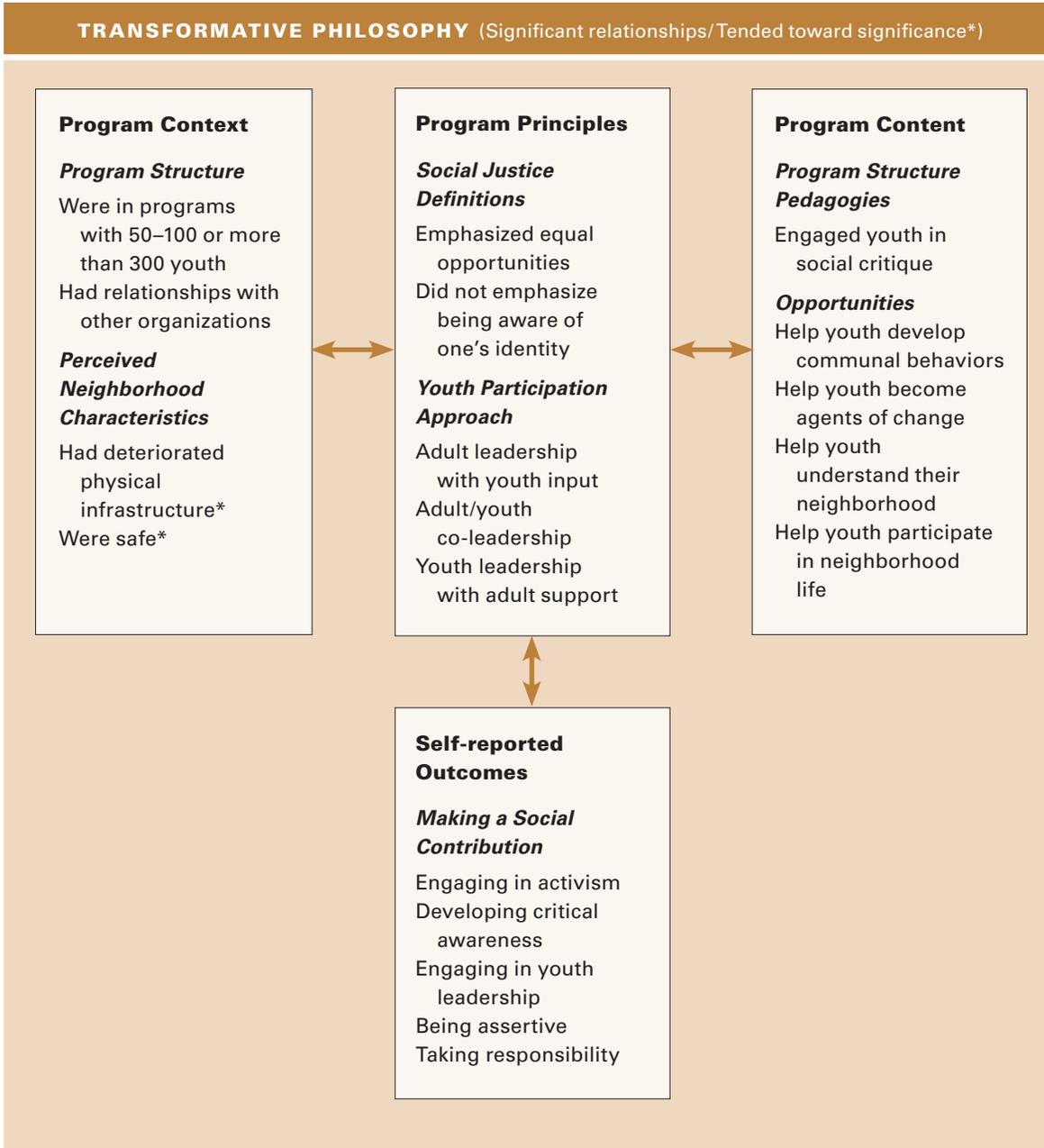


FIGURE 5.2 Effect of a Transformative Philosophy on Program Characteristics

outcome categories do not neatly split along a youth development/community development dichotomy.

Yet this program director's response would seem to sum up how youth leadership fits within a community change agenda:

We definitely believe that it's going to take a community effort to move a social justice agenda forward. That means, in part, to build these partnerships where youth have decision-making roles. It's transformative for adults and important for youth to see that they can have impact, but it's impossible for youth to push agendas forward without having adults around to support them.

The Effect of Funding and Philosophy in Summary

In analyzing how an organization's primary source of funding shapes its other characteristics, we discovered that foundation funding accounts for the biggest effect upon the study population, while individual contributions have the least effect upon program characteristics. Foundation grants support the larger, maverick, upstart programs that are located in smaller, more impoverished metropolitan areas. These programs have more transformative philosophies; they provide opportunities that help youth understand and participate in their communities, and that result in youth making a social contribution as young activists and leaders. Government grants and individual donations support the older programs in larger metropolitan areas with fewer indicators of poverty; these programs do not significantly engage youth in their communities. Notably, government-funded programs have significantly less transformative philosophies.

As for how a transformative philosophy affects other aspects of an organization, we found that this variable has a profound effect upon many other characteristics of our study population. A transformative philosophy was most likely to occur in medium-small or large programs, probably located in deteriorated neighborhoods that still offer a sense of safety—neighborhoods where programs have established strong inter-organizational relationships. These programs are significantly likelier to emphasize equal opportunity, but not identity awareness, in their definitions of social justice; their content is significantly likelier to entail pedagogies that require social critique, as well as opportunities that help youth understand and participate in their communities, learn communal behaviors, and become agents of change. All these efforts are significantly likelier to result in outcomes that emphasize social contribution, but unfortunately not community building, which would have indicated an even greater degree of hands-on community engagement.

Finally, examining the ways in which outcomes shape a program's approach to youth participation,

we found some evidence that nurturing youth development in the abstract, as compared to fostering it relative to community problem-solving, allows greater latitude in assigning leadership roles. However, this relationship proved ambiguous, probably because our outcome measures do not neatly split along a youth/community dichotomy (nor should they).

An Empirically-derived Conceptual Map

In this chapter, we looked at the significant relationships that exist across the four components of the conceptual map. Specifically, we examined a cluster of relationships that derive from programs' primary sources of funding, transformative philosophies, and, to a lesser degree, youth participation approaches. The significant relationships that emerged allowed us to refine the conceptual map presented in the introduction. Instead of showing program principles at the center—the component that most affects the other three—we have located transformative philosophies and primary source of funding at the center, as defining factors in how programs operate.⁵

Significant relationships emerged between transformative philosophy combined with source of funding and a program's context, both internal (age, size, staffing, training requirements, volunteer roles, director residence, social networks, autonomy in relation to parent organizations, and inter-organizational relationships) and external (census data indicators and perceived urban conditions). We were able to chart similar relationships between these two features and a program's principles (including its social justice definition and approach to youth participation), content (including its pedagogies and opportunities), and outcomes (related to social contribution). Figure 5.3 depicts our empirically-derived conceptual map. In Chapter 6, we summarize the findings of our study in relation to current scholarly literature and then make recommendations that we hope can contribute to the advancement of foundation-funded transformative programs such as those described above.

⁵ These two factors affect all the significant relationships discussed in previous chapters, with the exception of neighborhood attachment, which relates to program directors' residence and not to one of our central features.

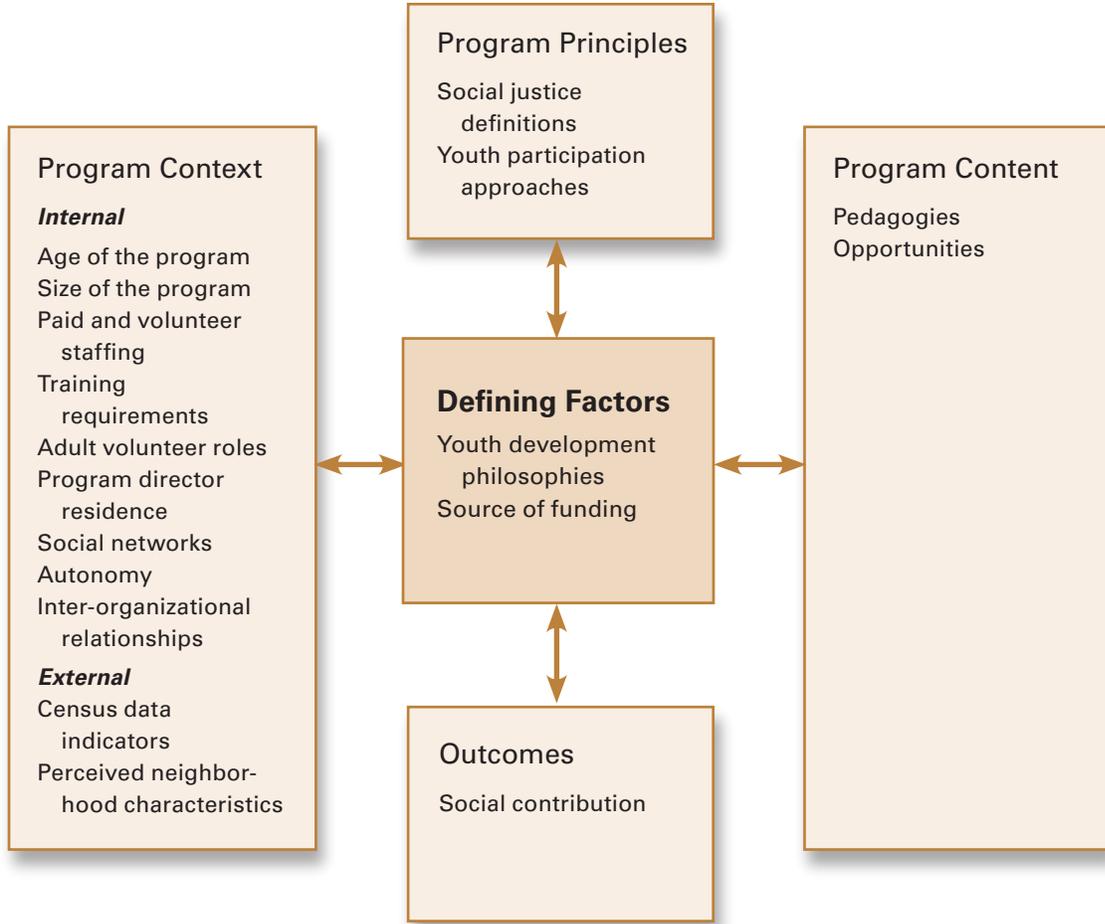


FIGURE 5.3 Empirically-derived Conceptual Map

A First-hand Look at Six Programs

Program 1

An East Coast neighborhood-based youth development organization targeted to African American youth.

Program 2

An East Coast city-wide community art organization that seeks to develop youth leadership skills through journalism.

Program 3

A Midwestern county-wide community service organization that includes youth in a philanthropic board of directors.

Program 4

A Midwestern neighborhood-based community art organization that engages youth in creating plays about the local area.

Program 5

A West Coast neighborhood-based community development organization that offers internships in organic farming and marketing.

Program 6

A West Coast school-based civic activism organization that engages youth in school reform advocacy.

Inset 5.1

East Coast Program 1

PHILOSOPHY SCORE MAXIMUM	5.0
PHILOSOPHY SCORE MEAN	4.08
PHILOSOPHY SCORE PROGRAM 1	4.25

Mission Statement

This program was created to address the dire need to support black and Latino youth who are surrounded by the poverty, drugs, violence, racism, and mis-education that plague America's cities. It provides these youth with the knowledge, resources, opportunities, and love necessary to understand and overcome these negative pressures, as well as the skills to combat them. The program is not simply an organization; it is more accurately a way of life. We offer a natural method of promoting positive development into adulthood, providing youth, ages 12 to 21, with an opportunity to explore their ideas, identity, and future among peers, combined with the support and guidance of their immediate elders.

Selected Director Responses*

Program Rationale

There is a need that has not been filled for black and Latino youth—having knowledge of self, having immediate elders available to discuss the source of knowledge, and to provide the love to help them develop into critical thinkers. We offer five main activities including (1) youth development in the Rites of Passage program, (2) after-school programs for elementary and teens (Lyrical Circle), (3) a summer program that includes internships, job training, month-long trips to Africa and South America, (4) the liberation program, and (5) the leadership program.

Youth Participation Approach

In the youth development program, each chapter has paired youth with adult staff based on the issue. The liberation program is youth-led. Youth make surveys and then work on their own to address issues; the liberation program in the summer liberation school is where we train a new group of young people.

Program Outcomes

Being an active participant

Enrichment experiences: All of our programs address youth development in some scope. One program is not more important than others, and youth are often involved in more than one program. . . . We go on trips like to the liberty science center, amusement parks, free concert series, unity day, even though the trips are somewhat structured.

Making a social contribution

Activism: That's what the whole liberation program is about—providing the opportunity and space for youth to develop long-lasting social change for their community. . . . We provide opportunities for youth to become direct agents of change for their community and for one another by participating in political rallies.

Critical awareness: Something that we want each of them to have is a critical knowledge of self, of the immediate neighborhood, and of their world. We have a dialogue about community events, current events, or we offer more structured workshops about community events. . . . Two of our ten curricula focus on political education, and citizenship, and social responsibility.

Assertiveness: How youth become agents of change happens through constant dialogue.

* All texts in the next section have been extracted from the survey and interview transcript, and are therefore verbatim except that identifiers have been removed.

Being empowered

Identity development: Across the board for all members, in one-on-one discussions, small group settings, or in different chapters and different programs, each member has an opportunity to discover and understand and define for themselves what it means to be a sister, woman, brother, man.

Recognition: When you come in the brownstone, most of the work you see is by youth.

Support: It's evident in all of our programs that adults are leading and supporting youth, co-leading them or, in some way, providing support.

Self-confidence: Both adults and young people feel like they own the brownstone—young people feel like they own the organization.

Being competent

Social interaction: We also offer forums for youth to come together at the annual retreat.

Behavior management: In every component, particularly, we work on prosocial behaviors—in one-on-one discussions, in small groups, and in chapters.

Building community

Community education: We have a mentoring program for youth who are 7 to 12. We have six mentors who work with the elementary school program.

Community service: Community service work is done by the chapters of the liberation program. . . . We built a gazebo and a shed in the local

community garden. . . . We do community garden clean-ups and beautification. Plus the work that the liberation program does.

Community development: In the liberation program, adult facilitators and youth come together to improve our neighborhood—the physical, political, social, cultural, and economic infrastructure.

Creating joyfulness

Creative expression: We encourage youth to use their talents—drawing, painting, graphic arts, fashion design. . . . We also offer forums to share their art work and performing art. . . . The lyrical circle is a group of ten 15- to 21-year-olds who use spoken word to address social justice issues. . . . Youth have participated in a mural project which created ten murals that went into parks all over the city. Plus the work that the liberation program does.

Playfulness: We're always playing!

Youth Perspective

I think the program helps us grow and become more responsible. Like we are learning everything first hand. It helps the community because we live here and we are trying to help make it better, for example our project on trying to build a community center. We are trying to give the community productive things to do. The community is basically everyone who lives in the neighborhood. We are the only ones around here who are responsible for us. We have to do it on our own (Open-ended interview with 17-year-old female, 20 December 2004).

Inset 5.2

East Coast Program 2

PHILOSOPHY SCORE MAXIMUM	5.0
PHILOSOPHY SCORE MEAN	4.08
PHILOSOPHY SCORE PROGRAM 2	5.0

Mission Statement

We are a ten-year-old nonprofit youth development organization dedicated to raising youth voice. Through a teen newspaper and website, teenagers from around the city work together, share information, develop many skills, and express themselves. We serve youth, ages 12 to 19.

Selected Director Responses*

Program Rationale

Youth generally don't engage in forums for public dialogue that are formed by adults. Legally, a student press *can* be censored. In response, independent youth media have sprung up to provide space for youth to speak up responsibly. Here in the south, there remains the sense that youth should be seen and not heard. There are topics the youth should not speak on; there is fear around hearing what youth have to say about their community, especially when they are making a criticism or generating new ideas. We have high rates of functional illiteracy and low rates of high school graduation—our state ranks 50th in SAT and 49th in high school graduation. The need for practical literacy is something we respond to in a way that tutorial programs do not. Youth are motivated and creative because they are writing about their own lives and experiences. The youth we serve plan the rationale for our program. We use a youth-in-governance model, i.e., youth work in partnership to plan programs. . . . We are looking for ways to use pencils as weapons of change—to “fight with

pencils”—to counter the abysmal literacy rates, to counter teen-to-teen violence, to provide an alternative for expression and engagement, and to offer a way to bring together isolated groups of kids. This city is very geographically segregated; we bring together lots of people from lots of backgrounds on a task-based perspective to work on those invisible barriers.

Youth Participation Approach

Youth create all of our programs with some support from adults. They set the agenda for programming and create all the content for the newspaper and website. Also a majority of the community workshops are planned and facilitated by youth.

Program Outcomes

Being an active participant

Democratic governance: Youth work together with adults on the board. The board goes through training on youth and adult governance. . . . The agendas for all meetings and teen-building activities are created by youth. . . . Youth decide from year to year what kind of community engagement projects they want to be involved in. . . . The only adult-driven activity in the program is that, in the summer, there is a community immersion program.

Making a social contribution

Critical awareness: We have a summer program workshop that is on community and world economics. It uses popular education techniques to explore poverty and the distribution of wealth. . . . All of this service work is in conjunction with writing about underlying issues like poverty and homelessness in the city.

* All texts in the next section have been extracted from the survey and interview transcript, and are therefore verbatim except that identifiers have been removed.

Activism: Last year, a girls group created a year-long campaign against sexual harassment.

Being empowered

Identity development: The identity-based writing and self-expression workshops and everything else are all about these indicators of youth development. . . . The expressive buffet in our summer program is when youth share what's special about their identities through a food item. We have teen-building days that are based on identity appreciation.

Being competent

Social interaction: We have peer writing groups. . . . All the programs are based on a youth development model centered on peer education and leadership.

Critical thinking: Youth from the previous community immersion programs identify issues, and then we send them to other organizations in order to better understand them.

Creating social capital

Connectivity: When youth want to write articles about certain subjects, we introduce them to various resources in the community that might be able to inform their writing.

Building community

Community education : We think our work has provided tools for other groups to develop their own activism. . . . Sometimes we provide consulting to other organizations on hearing from their youth constituents or working with youth on their boards. . . . Teens in our programs create an article series called "know your rights" where they write about the rights of youth, and they go to different schools and organizations to teach youth their rights. . . . We provide a newspaper and website as a forum for readers to reflect on their experiences in community life. We disseminate opportunities for youth to get involved in

their community. By providing our newspaper as a forum for understanding how youth can be agents of change, the readers better understand causes and resources for problem solving.

Community service: Past projects have included an AIDS walk, puppetry in nursing homes, serving food at food banks.

Creating joyfulness

Creative expression: We produce a newspaper eight times a year, and different groups create zines, cultural fusion, et cetera. . . . Youth have also created a mural on our windows. . . . Youth have partnered with a puppetry center to produce a teen-written and performed show called "grab the mike." . . . Last spring students had an "open mike" poetry slam.

Playfulness: The agendas for all meetings include fun components. Every Friday is a play day in our newsroom where kids come and chill out, do karaoke, and play games.

Idealism: Youth learn behaviors that benefit society through stories they print in their newspaper.

Youth Perspective

In the workshops and classes, we learn about everything from journalism to sexual harassment and domestic violence. And I remember a friend of mine—she's in the girls group—handed out flyers about sexual harassment. Somebody came up to her and said "thank you" and said what a great impact that doing this had on her. All the journalism stuff has made me a better writer. All the editing has made me a better writer, and I take criticism better. The other workshops help me as a leader and team player, or both. I work with people better (Open-ended interview with 17-year-old female, 19 January 2005).

Inset 5.3

Midwest Program 3

PHILOSOPHY SCORE MAXIMUM	5.0
PHILOSOPHY SCORE MEAN	4.08
PHILOSOPHY SCORE PROGRAM 3	4.0

Mission Statement

We are a youth development program that provides small grants to youth groups to operate volunteer projects in their own communities. A youth/adult action board challenges applicants to identify community needs and design projects that use their skills, creativity, and energy to help others in the community. We serve youth ages 12 to 21.

Selected Director Responses*

Program Rationale

We can help alter society's view of youth as a source of problems to youth as a source of solutions, to harness the skills and energies of youth to improve communities, and to give youth a stake in the community. The rationale ties back to mission. We really strive to increase young people's confidence and their own ability to make a positive difference in the community. And we hope to increase their knowledge of community organizations and issues.

Youth Participant Approach

We strongly promote youth-adult partnerships. Youth plan and adults plan kick-off events. Youth and adults are also in partnership when doing needs assessments of the community.

Program Outcomes

Being an active participant

Democratic governance: The youth-adult partnership is a very strong component of our

program. Most young people don't have an opportunity to form relationships with adults in which power is absent from the equation. . . . We strongly promote youth voice, and youth do have a voice in what goes on around them. . . . We want to hear from the youth, and have asked adults to hold their comments. . . . Youth assume decision-making roles; we don't tell them what to do.

Making a social contribution

Critical awareness: We have cultural fairs where young people and adults look at issues between African Americans and Latinos, and we have a very diverse group of youth and adults looking at those issues.

Youth leadership: We had young people making presentations at the legislature when they were trying to promote community service as mandatory punishment; we had a strong group of young people who said community service shouldn't be mandatory or used as punishment.

Assertiveness: They have some power in things that directly affect and benefit them.

Responsibility: Our board is about half teens and half adults, so the teens are very involved in grant decision-making, facilitating grant workshops.

Being empowered

Recognition: We are very, very high on reward and recognition for what they do. As part of the grants we make, we include dollars for the youth to have a celebration because we think celebration is so important. . . . We really do promote looking at self in a positive way and rewarding oneself.

* All texts in the next section have been extracted from the survey and interview transcript, and are therefore verbatim except that identifiers have been removed.

Being competent

Skill development: Youth board members are able to develop an enormous amount of skills; they are also involved in a lot of planning.

Social interaction: The philanthropy board comes to consensus on which community development projects to fund.

Critical thinking: The youth philanthropy board evaluates and funds a whole array of community service projects. . . . We evaluate and fund a whole array of community art projects. . . . The board asks applicants to identify community problems and what are the action steps, and then the board makes decisions based on their assessment.

Creating social capital

Connectivity: The drive and institutional knowledge that adults have can transform young people's ideas into action. I think the youth-adult partnerships help create opportunities for that kind of reciprocal mentoring.

Social mobility: We get lots of calls for young people to be on certain committees, like at the mayor's office.

Building community

Community education: In the tobacco initiative, kids are out there educating other kids and community members about the harms and dangers of second-hand smoke. Youth campaigned for healthy babies at a time when the state was known for having a high mortality rate, educating teens about the importance of prenatal care and prevention of teen pregnancy.

Community development: The board requires youth groups to do a needs assessment before applying to us for grant dollars e.g., a neighborhood survey or walkabout to document what they see as needs.

Community service: Just recently, we had art projects where kids will paint over graffiti on a building or wall over an underpass. . . . We also had young people put new roofs on low-income housing, and we have neighborhood clean-up projects. . . . In one of the recently funded projects—we have all kinds of kids involved in our

projects—young women from the juvenile correctional facilities cosmetology class from the correctional facility went to retirement home and provided shampoos, et cetera, to residents. They spent time with residents and getting know them and just having fun. We also have kids involved in mentoring projects where they are helping peers and younger kids with reading skills—we have hundreds of projects. . . . Probably why I have been here for so long is because it is for all kids; you don't have to be a straight-A student. You can be a kid who's incarcerated and be involved with giving something to your community.

Creating Joyfulness

Creative expression: We funded a project where kids at a children's museum collaborate with community kids on arts activities, because a lot of arts program funding has been cut. So neighborhood kids would come to the museum and do art activities. We just approved funding for it because kids talked about funding being cut and the kids wanted to have access to art projects. So we definitely support and promote arts projects.

Playfulness: Something we strongly encourage and promote is just having fun! That's something we promote and encourage in young people doing our projects. We tell the adults to be quiet!

Idealism: We believe that young people's energy, and enthusiasm, and optimism can be assets for social change.

Youth Perspective

Personally, the program has taught me a lot of leadership skills and social skills with people. This will help in the future when I have to go around to a business meeting. I will not be as intimidated. Probably the same thing is true for other youth. It teaches leadership skills and what needs need to be fulfilled in their community. It helps the community because there are so many different projects. Since we started, there's been more projects, so it's a big part of the county. We are more well-known as youth who want to do community service (Open-ended interview with 16-year-old male, 13 November 2004).

Inset 5.4

Midwest Program 4

PHILOSOPHY SCORE MAXIMUM	5.0
PHILOSOPHY SCORE MEAN	4.08
PHILOSOPHY SCORE PROGRAM 4	5.0

Mission Statement

Our program uses the transformative power of performance to change lives, build community, and foster social justice. It creates opportunities for intergenerational participants—especially those in isolated or challenged communities—to become creators, producers, and audiences of process-oriented plays about local needs and culture. Our program has participants from eight years old through the elderly.

Selected Director Responses*

Program Rationale

It's essential that young people learn to solve a problem from an idea through application, which includes revision. It's important that they gain a positive self-identity based on accomplishment, and that they're essential to the healthy operation of a community, and that they have a way to do that. That's particularly important to youth of color and those who live in communities of isolation or challenge. With the older teens, we look a lot at leadership development and community development. With the middle school, we focus on responsibility, positive peer development, and peer relations. With the younger children, we focus on mastery of new skills and making a positive sense of place. With the employment program, we focus on job readiness. With the puppets, we focus on creativity development, teamwork, writing and literacy, problem solving.

Youth Participation Approach

The program is youth-centered, but they have mentors to make sure that it retains its shape and forward momentum. The kids need the support of the adults. Two years ago, they decided to address the issue of growing violence between young males and females in high school. Once they've determined the topic, it goes to the adults to contact community agencies who provide support on that topic and to bring in resources for the youth. Then the youth act as final judge and use their eye to determine how to proceed. It's very synergistic, going back and forth between the youth and the adults. It has a kind of ebb and flow that leads to a final product shaped by both partners.

Program Outcomes

Making a social contribution

Critical awareness: Young people learn about why things are the way they are.

Activism: The environmental work with one initiative involves activism. Also, the youth directors programs involve young people organizing to take action in their communities on issues they've identified. We help young people identify how to make change—we teach them how to undertake social change through collective community action.

Being empowered

Identity development: Most of identity development comes with middle school students, when identity is developing. The program is one where students do a lot of journaling. . . . They identify their strengths and values, ID-ing who they are, what their strengths are, with their background and family.

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Recognition: It's important to do plays in English and Spanish, and to do bilingual plays. We also work on them being culturally specific. . . . We receive a lot of rewards for our work.

Being competent

Skill development: We give them skills to organize and take community action on things they're concerned about.

Social interaction: Staff have the youth do a lot of improvisation and role playing. It gives them a chance to try out behaviors and then talk about it in groups. . . . The last play was on bullying that happened in the schools. They take people through reorganizing social relations, so they're not the ones doing the bullying.

Critical thinking: Young people are doing research in the community, as age-appropriate.

Behavior management: The youth may explore the negative behavior, then how the relationship can be transformed, like how to respond to being called stupid.

Creating social capital

Connectivity: Young people conduct oral histories in the community, as age-appropriate.

Building community

Community participation: The work around the environment, engaging young people and involving them in the community has really changed things. . . . Last year, the play was dealing with violence in schools, with police brutality, so we linked with other organizations doing work on these issues. . . . Our teams organized a youth summit on neighborhood issues, worked up the agenda, brought others in, organized it all.

Community education: Also we work on transgender issues, multicultural issues, and cultural democracy, because it's a very diverse community, and the youth are dealing with latent or not so latent cultural divisions when they're present. Also a big issue in the neighborhood is the homophobic bias, which is really present. We don't know how to address that yet, but we're working on it. . . . We mandate training with our artists, so they don't do command-and-control teaching, but youth-centered training. That's not taught

in schools and definitely not in theater departments, so we have to teach them to do that.

Community development: We did community gardening where we created a path to the river. We made public art, put in trash cans, did an intervention in a place that was being used for negative social purposes. Now they are doing community gardening there.

Community service: The youth are doing clean-ups.

Creating joyfulness

Creative expression: The idea of young people creating art to address neighborhood issues is a very powerful and unusual model. . . . They are creating giant puppets and mobile murals. . . . The young people are creating plays—we do original theater, write original plays, and do public dance. We teach them how to undertake social change through theater. It's really strong.

Idealism: Collective reading allows youth to envision other ways of being.

Youth Perspective

It teaches us to be young directors or young actors or whatever. We also learn stuff, because I didn't really know about domestic violence. For each play that we do, we learn something about it because before we do a play we have to do research. . . . During the summer program when we had to do the puppet thing, we had to do research on the animals, because it was about metamorphosis, and we had to learn about their habitats and the different animals that we were playing—dragonflies, frogs, bears, and all that. I'm really interested in animals, because really acting is just a hobby for me, not a career that I want to plan on going into. It's really involving the environment and animals. I do a lot of community work, but I'm trying to think how it helps. Last year, . . . we went to a middle school with the play, and it was about domestic violence. A lot of those kids said they have a girlfriend or boyfriend, and it teaches them what to do in a relationship and things like that (Open-ended interview with 16-year-old male, 19 February 2005).

Inset 5.5

West Coast Program 5

PHILOSOPHY SCORE MAXIMUM	5.0
PHILOSOPHY SCORE MEAN	4.08
PHILOSOPHY SCORE PROGRAM 5	4.25

We are a movement to develop a comprehensive and living local food system, to fight hunger, to improve nutrition, to strengthen local food security, and to empower low-income youth and families to move towards self-sufficiency. We serve youth ages 17 to 25.

Selected Director Responses*

Program Rationale

In our area, demographically, we have high population of young people. We have 34 percent and 45 percent under 18 and 25 respectively—10 to 15 percent higher than the state average. There's few training opportunities and employment opportunities; the poverty level is 45 to 50 percent. We want to get the young people motivated and provide them with skills to work themselves and not only rely on others. We have lots of kids in the community who joined the military, but we want them to have another option. The leadership development program is designed to bridge them into college, get employment—but not just labor employment, but employment with training options, tools, and resources to start their own businesses if they want to. The social justice part is we're in a community with lots of land that is used for the military. So we're using the organic products to develop people's health, train youth, and have them participate in community issues, and environmental health as well. It's a paid experience; they receive a stipend every two weeks.

Youth Participation Approach

In our farm, we spend a lot of time during the 10 months to show the kids how to operate the farm, get feedback from customers. So we teach them how to do all that. I just took a vacation for the last two weeks, and the kids ran the farm themselves. Some youth take the initiative quickly if given a bit of leeway.

Program Outcomes

Being an active participant

Enrichment experiences: We facilitated the kids to do fund raising to go to New Zealand for a holiday and education. They stayed with Maori for a week for cultural and agricultural things. We also send kids to conferences in other parts of the United States. Next year there's a big indigenous conference; some kids said they want to take part in going.

Making a social contribution

Activism: Military training has been an issue for a long time. We protest against the military occupation. . . . Youth monitor legislation, registering friends to vote.

Critical awareness: We want them to understand the causes of problems, the history of agriculture, land use, look at the developing countries and state roles. We talk about colonialism. . . . Youth learn about social justice issues.

Being competent

Skill development: We give youth leadership training.

Social interaction: We bring food to other markets in the island to raise money, but also for kids to interact with other people and people to get to know them.

* All texts in the next section have been extracted from the survey and interview transcript, and are therefore verbatim except that identifiers have been removed.

Critical thinking: Youth do research on food and food quality, compare between different types of markets. . . . They do research on documentaries and newspapers.

Behavior management: Youth put on activities to encourage people not to do alcohol.

Creating social capital

Connectivity: The whole program is about adults working with youth.

Building community

Community participation: The youth hold farmers' markets to give people a space to buy healthy things. They run cultural events and interact with communities. . . . They put on poetry slam dinners and concerts in the community.

Community education: The youth work with other youth and help them learn about issues that we are involved in. . . . They held a concert and poetry slam dinner to inform people about environmental and social justice issues.

Community service: The youth work at the schools developing gardens.

Creating joyfulness

Idealism: The youth do organic farming. They recycle and compost farm products, and use less chemical and pesticides.

Playfulness: The youth joke and play music; they went to New Zealand for a holiday.

Youth Perspective

Well, a lot of the kids now don't want to go to high school, you know. They don't know how to speak properly to people. So when they come out to the farm, they see other kids a little bit older and working for this program, and they like it. It gives them influence. I talk up to the high school students, talk straight up to them, and they like that. They see all the improvements in us. When we go out and do our projects, like on Wednesday when we went out and see the legislator, we brought up some kids from the high schools, and they spoke really well. The legislator was impressed, and he was going to come out to the farm. We see big improvements a lot. You know, the kids learned a lot. I learned a lot. And we help the community big time. A lot of money goes back into the community. It's non-profit, you know, so it's all good. We get on the news and in the newspaper, so the community sees us. The reporters come visit us or when our works starts, they really come and check us out. I'm talking about big guys coming out here. They just come up to us and the families, so there's a big influence going on here. We also have our café as well. A lot of the food we make goes to the café. People from the mainland come down, because we have a lot of nice beaches and all. We have tourists from all over the world who come up to our farm pretty much every day. We just got a guy yesterday from Yale, which is a college. He came up here and he had a good time (Open-ended interview with a 20-year-old male, 09 April 2004).

Inset 5.6

West Coast Program 6

PHILOSOPHY SCORE MAXIMUM	5.0
PHILOSOPHY SCORE MEAN	4.08
PHILOSOPHY SCORE PROGRAM 6	5.0

Mission Statement

Our organization promotes safe, healthy, and non-violent communities by organizing youth and families in two historically Latino neighborhoods to work toward economic and social justice. We serve youth ages 12 to 20.

Selected Director Responses*

Program Rationale

One of the things we've identified is that young people need a space and organization to fight for the quality of life existing in the city. We see education more as an economic and social justice issue. . . . I think the most important thing is that we need to create an avenue where young people not only are involved in programs to keep kids off the street—our outcomes are not only to ensure that young folks don't get pregnant or join a gang. Our whole thing is that we need to have high expectations of young people and that gives them more of an opportunity. The majority of young people are dropping out of school. Another thing is that they're constantly being bombarded by military recruitment. For us it's always been about a need for a program, engaging youth civically and no longer seeing youth as clients, but seeing them as change-makers. Schools are not preparing youth as change-makers. We are a leadership program, and we do organizing, but also academic programming that rivals Upward Bound programs. Youth are involved for four years—we've graduated 95 percent of our students. We're highly successful in getting kids into college. We're trying

to create better citizens, but we also need to change the larger conditions. We want youth to come back to the community and be a doctor, lawyer, educator, and we are creating responsibility and civic engagement, which is rarely something other programs do.

Youth Participation Approach

We have youth guidance with adult training, allowing young people and trusting them to make good decisions, with training and guidance from adults. Youth need to be respected and honored. For our organization, the way it works is that we have adult staff. The adult staff support the young adults who on the other hand are working directly with the youth. So those youth are trained and supported by the young adults, and the young folks who are the core leadership get other youth involved. It's like a ladder of leadership, in terms of the skills everybody is generating. Ladder of leadership-building, so young people have come up through that. We have staff that were once youth members, who became youth leaders, who have moved through the ladder. . . . We are developing youth who are leaders and able to make change, but are also doing well in school. We have a holistic approach, so that when it comes to making a change, we put them in a place to trust and value where they can go for it. That's been our leadership model for a long time. There's not a glass ceiling in the organization for youth; they could go all the way up.

Program Outcomes

Being an active participant

Democratic governance: The youth take back what's talked about in the program to all the students. It's very democratic, generating community-developed and community-created data.

* All texts in the next section have been extracted from the survey and interview transcript, and are therefore verbatim except that identifiers have been removed.

Enrichment experiences: The schools don't teach them conflict resolution—only very small percentages of students are in special classes. The larger percentage do ditto sheets and busy work. Many teachers are uncredentialed. That's what staff are trying to do.

Hands-on experiences: Youth get hands-on training in skills that they'll need and be expected to have when they're 18.

Making a social contribution

Activism: Staff get young people in their peer group involved so they negotiate and advocate both with peers and on their behalf with administration and teachers.

Critical awareness: Our school academy is a three-month organizing and political education component that helps them understand the local and historical realities of the neighborhood so they have a better grasp of understanding the issues they'll be dealing with over the next three years. . . . The youth understand what the movements meant, and what they can teach us today.

Youth leadership: Young people go through a thing called the media collective and get training as media activists. They learn to act as spokespeople for the organization and to also create independent media. . . . A key part of our work is youth-centered organizing where youth are developing their own leadership. We try to create leadership among youth so they feel comfortable building a movement and also becoming key leaders in the neighborhood. . . . Youth learn to make hard decisions correctly. Staff turn youth into leaders where they will have to make difficult decisions on a regular basis.

Responsibility: Part of our social justice mission is teaching youth about putting community at the center of everything, and how they could begin to be responsible for that.

Being empowered

Identity development: A key part of all our staff's work with the media and video thing is youth developing a positive image. . . . By creating a safe space to help young folks feel better about themselves, staff prepare young people that the reality of the world will be hard and difficult.

Self-confidence: Staff also build self-esteem. . . . Youth are very proud of who they are and their legacy and begin to see they could do something like the 1968 student uprising.

Being competent

Skill development: Staff work on building the consciousness of young people to develop a capacity to do well in school and ensure they stay on track, and they don't fall behind. Staff also make sure youth don't have to go to summer school.

Critical thinking: The reality tour research project involves focus groups and a survey. Out of that come the key issues that students believe need attention. Then they take on campaigns based on that. Connected to that, every year they do surveys that either add to existing work or take us in new direction.

Creating social capital

Social mobility: Staff also make sure youth get what they need to go to the university. Some folks in other organizations provide a youth stipend, but we have decided to offer academic services (tutoring, et cetera). That's more important than getting a stipend, so that they can be successful with higher education.

Building community

Community participation: We want youth to be involved in their community not only for their four years in school, but for the rest of their lives.

Community education: The staff try to convince and show parents that young people play a key role in making changes. Parents get to see the importance of having young people involved, which is important for the community at large. . . . A key part of our work is youth-centered organizing where adults develop their own leadership. So we're trying to build the leadership capacity of parents to help them get comfortable organizing in their own language—beyond churches or other places adults feel validated, especially in high schools that don't validate parent involvement at all.

Community development: We created a new school. . . . The staff work with young people on a daily basis to change existing conditions of the neighborhood. Our organization is very involved in community development with a collaborative youth and parent component.

Creating joyfulness

Creative expression: They all develop documentaries, which are used as social change tools to get more folks involved. They have also done guerrilla theater, video production, theater, and other activities. That's how we get our messages out to the larger public.

Idealism: Kids want to be teachers, organizers, doctors, but all for the greater good of society. Whatever field they choose, they want to do it in a way that helps the larger society.

Playfulness: We do trips with them outside the regular rigor of work. Our physical space is about community organizing, but it is also conducive to young people hanging out. In addition to office space, we have art space, a computer lab, and space for young people to hang out.

Youth Perspective

We survey students to determine what activities we're going to do, like removing the tardy room. We are now able to go to class and do not miss anything instead of being stuck in a room. For the community, students are able to graduate and the community is educated and we are able to get jobs. We have a lot of say in what happens in the community. Getting a new school, for example, will benefit the community (Open-ended interview with 17-year-old female, 28 January 2005).



Definitions for Significant Variables

Staff Training Requirements

1. *Graduate degree* (or enrollment in graduate program)
2. *Undergraduate degree* (or enrollment in undergraduate program)
3. *Certificate* (e.g., teacher's license, driver's license, CPR-certified, prevention-certified)
4. *Experience*
5. *In-house* (mandatory participation in training offered by the program or other organizations)
6. *None*

Census Data Indicators

1. *MSA rank*
2. *% Families in poverty*
3. *Civilian unemployment rate*
4. *% Caucasians*
5. *High school drop out rate*
6. *% Owner-occupied homes*
7. *% Housing built 1939 or earlier*

Social Justice Definitions

1. *Having equal opportunities* (youth have the rights inherent in a democratic society; they access the opportunities that make those rights possible, and experience an absence of barriers).
2. *Having a say in decision-making* (youth are involved in decision-making; they have access to information and possibilities for active participation).
3. *Being connected to others* (youth are inclusive, sharing, and compassionate; they see their connection to other people or nature, and engage in social networks).
4. *Being socially critical* (youth develop critical awareness; they understand oppressions, and believe they can create change).
5. *Being able to take collective action* (youth develop skills to take action, meet community goals and participate actively to end injustice).

6. *Having a communal vision* (youth envision a better, more just world; they share resources to achieve that world in their community).
7. *Being aware of one's identity* (youth express and respect themselves; youth are respected; they have a sense of self-awareness).
8. *Developing skills and preventing risks* (youth understand themselves, set their own goals, and modify negative behaviors).

Youth Development Philosophies

From prevention to transformation

1. *Connection* (safety, support, and belonging).
2. *Socialization* (norms, structure, and autonomy).
3. *Creativity*.
4. *Contribution* (service and involvement).
5. *Competency*.
6. *Change*.

Youth Participation Approaches

1. *Adult leadership* (adults decide and organize most of the activities for youth).
2. *Adult leadership with youth input* (adults set up a framework; youth make decisions within it).
3. *Adult/youth co-leadership* (adults and youth collaborate on planning and implementing activities).
4. *Youth leadership with adult support* (youth bring in ideas; adults support planning and implementation).
5. *Youth leadership* (youth decide and organize most of the activities by themselves).

Program Opportunities

1. *Help youth develop their identities* so they appreciate themselves for who they are, improve their self-image, and enhance the negative images people have of youth culture.
2. *Help adults work with youth* in partnership and in non-authoritarian ways.

3. *Help youth engage in creative play* by encouraging them to enjoy themselves in environments that are not controlled and organized by adults.
4. *Help youth understand their neighborhood* by exposing them to its social history and its current sociopolitical issues, or by encouraging them to explore their own experiences of their surroundings.
5. *Help youth develop communal behaviors* by learning to share resources such as food and air, or power and ideas, or by learning to live in less individualistic ways.
6. *Help youth participate in neighborhood life* by being part of community decision-making, organizing their own social movements, participating in local social action, or having a physical presence in the neighborhood.
7. *Help youth become agents of change* by understanding the causes of problems in their community and then taking action to transform both the causes and the problems themselves.

Self-reported Outcomes

1. *Being an active participant*, e.g., by being involved in program governance, enrichment experiences, or hands-on experiences.
2. *Making a social contribution*, e.g., by engaging in activism, developing critical awareness, engaging in youth leadership, being assertive, or taking responsibility.
3. *Being empowered*, e.g., by developing one's identity, gaining recognition, having support, or being self-confident.
4. *Being competent*, e.g., by developing skills, interacting socially, thinking critically, or managing one's behavior.
5. *Creating social capital*, e.g., by connecting to mentors or role models, or experiencing social mobility.
6. *Building community*, e.g., by promoting community participation, providing education in the community, engaging in community service, or developing the infrastructure of the community.
7. *Creating joyfulness*, e.g., by promoting creative expression, engaging in playful recreational activities, or being idealistic.



6

Advancing an Agenda of Transformative Youth Programs

Their faces tight with anger, inner-city youth speak of the realities of betrayal and racism, of a society that cares little for or about them, renders them invisible, and ignores their pain. Dollars invested in inner-city youth are often justified in terms of benefits to the larger society. These dollars are said to enhance global competitiveness, reduce violence, slash the welfare rolls, and increase tax revenues. But what of the youth themselves? Where is the morality in a position that sees inner-city youth only as problems to the larger society and cannot look at them as individuals who have their own needs and their own value? Where is the soul in a society that allows so many of its youth to be without hope? The despair expressed by youth of the US inner cities bespeaks the collapse of this nation's social compact with its youth (McLaughlin et al. 1994, 215-6).

Our study examined programs that seek to meet a pressing and widespread need in this country for social institutions that value the humanity of low-income and minority youth. These programs serve young people who live under decaying, threatening urban conditions, due to which they not only lack opportunities to be visible, contributing members of society, but also endure multiple forms of oppression. As previously stated, we employed a rigorous selection process, accepting by referral only

programs that were community-based and at least one year old, that served low-income or minority youth, that included a community service component, and that described themselves as committed to social justice. In this manner, we were able to assemble a group of forward-looking youth programs that intentionally embrace young people as compassionate, creative individuals who “want a better life and will reach for it given a real chance to learn the needed skills, attitudes, and values” (McLaughlin et al. 1994, 219).

To understand the characteristics that account for the success of this group of primarily grassroots programs, we applied a sequential layering of both qualitative and quantitative analyses to data obtained from three different studies. Throughout this report, we have attempted to identify the defining characteristics of the programs we examined, and have presented the distinguishing relationships found in those that go the extra mile to meet the nation's social compact with its youth.

In this final chapter, we summarize our empirical findings. We review what we learned about the context, principles, content, and self-reported outcomes of our programs, and end with recommendations that we hope will inspire many more transformative youth programs.

Defining Characteristics of Community-based Justice-oriented Youth Programs

In this section, we recapitulate the characteristics of all the programs surveyed in the context of the current scholarly literature, and add the voices of participants in all three studies to provide their first-person perspective on the findings, especially the more controversial ones.

Bringing a Social Justice Perspective to Youth Programming

To transform the stereotypic views of urban youth as a source of trouble and violence rather than potential (Ginwright & Cammarota 2002), we sought out justice-oriented programs that not only recognize the debilitating inequities these youth face but also engage them in struggling for social change. Although no single definition of social justice emerged from the literature, we found that scholars and social movement advocates generally refer to redistribution of goods, recognition of cultural difference, participation, and capacity-building among individuals and groups. In providing their own definitions of social justice, the program directors revealed a keen awareness of such concepts of fairness. They listed in descending order of importance: having equal opportunities, having a say in decision-making, being connected to others, being socially critical, being able to take collective action, having a communal vision, being aware of one's identity, and developing skills while preventing risks. These themes roughly fall into the four categories identified in the literature, refocused to reflect organizations' youth development missions. While in their social justice definitions program directors placed greatest emphasis upon having equal opportunities and a say in decision-making, they assigned secondary importance to developing skills, preventing risks, and strengthening individual identities. For program directors, social justice therefore means, first and foremost, creating a society where young people have equal opportunities and a voice in decision-making, a process that provides the context for positive youth development.

Although the theme of identity awareness generally rises to the fore in the social justice youth development literature, it was not a consistent feature identified in the program directors' definitions. Still, the following quote from one program director provides

insight into how these programs approach identity within a social justice agenda:

Our curriculum addresses identity, but within a larger exploration of systemic inequalities and root causes. We look at identity through the lens of community, power, and social action. For us, social justice isn't just a theoretical construct; it is action-based too. It starts with young people considering their lives, and moving out from there in concentric rings. We don't want to get stuck in identity politics in the sense of losing a progressive critique. Social justice is creating an awareness through inquiry. We use this awareness to begin our investigation of the world, as well as to critique it.

With their social justice values as a guiding force, program directors described the youth they serve, not as problems, but as individuals with both needs and strengths. Young people need supports and opportunities, including respect and acceptance from adults, freedom from abuse and poverty, a sense of belonging, and exposure to cultural difference and the larger world; they bring to their programs such strengths as assertiveness, determination, compassion, intelligence, humor, self-awareness, and open-mindedness, essentially sustaining both the mission of the organizations and staff commitment. Portraying their youth development philosophies through mission statements and survey responses, program directors positioned their organizations at the far end of a continuum ranging from prevention to transformation, with an average score of 4.08 out of a possible maximum of 5 on the following six measures: connection, socialization, creativity, contribution, competence, and change. Given their more forward-looking philosophies, the programs in our study undertake a variety of approaches to youth participation. In descending order of importance, these range from youth leadership with adult support (44% of the responses), to adult/youth co-leadership, adult leadership with youth input, adult leadership, and lastly youth leadership (.04% of the responses). So while the literature on participation touts youth voice and youth leadership, the social change agendas of these programs more often result in an intergenerational partnership where youth and adults come together in a collective spirit to advance shared goals (Ginwright 2005). Here is how a staff member explained the back and forth of an intergenerational partnership in one of our open-ended interviews:

Because we engage in organizing, the work is all guided by the young people. The role of the staff is to support young people. So we provide them with political education, leadership skills, etcetera, so they can go out and organize their fellow students. When it comes to campaign decisions, recommendations are made by the staff based on research it has done.

Supporting the Community as a Central Agenda

The literature suggests a number of criteria for effective grassroots organizations in general, and for youth-centered organizations in particular. Taken together, they provide a framework for understanding the collective spirit we found among the programs surveyed. If we consider such factors as pursuing larger sociopolitical advocacy or service goals, surviving over a period of years, maintaining favorable adult/youth ratios, nurturing supportive relationships among youth and adults, and possessing sufficient material resources (Connell & Gambo 2002; Smith 1999a; Smith 1999b), the programs we surveyed not only excel but reflect a strong commitment to supporting the community as an integral part of youth development.

By definition, all the programs in our study advance larger sociopolitical or service goals, which gives them the sense of purpose so often lacking in the developmental settings urban youth experience. In these programs, young people “are challenged to apply themselves, extend their skills, and exercise their voice in ways not available in their schools, workplaces, communities, or even, often in their families” (Lewis-Charp et al. 2003, 199). Given their real-life relevance, the programs have a proven track record in attracting and retaining older, harder-to-reach youth. Most are over five years old, including quite a few that have been in place for more than a decade, and a majority includes youth over age 18. Youth stay connected for long periods: most of the programs involve youth for more than a year and many for two years or more, and sometimes alumni return as staff. Practically all the programs offer year-round activities, often using core groups of youth to reach out to a broader constituency. Unlike adult groups, most of the programs (except those that target specific identity groups) recruit participants from multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds, deriving their sense of group solidarity from their shared youth culture. The programs provide young people with an

environment conducive to sustained interactions with peers and adults, connecting them with committed staff and volunteers who serve in an array of support roles. We found that program size is important in shaping these roles, but in general programs offer a rich array of opportunities for parents and adult community members to support youth by assuming administrative duties, participating in program activities, serving as allies, or simply by being a part of a family-like environment.

Even though most grassroots organizations consider their funding insufficient, the programs surveyed seem to have achieved both the maturity and the sophistication to secure financial support. With an average budget of \$250K, just over half of them list foundations as their primary source of funding, and also just over half cited a combination of local/regional and domestic/international support. When asked to categorize the relative adequacy of their financial resources, staff, and physical facilities, program directors placed physical facilities at the top and financial resources at the bottom, but well over half of the programs reported having either good or adequate resources. Quite naturally, programs with larger budgets operate with more staff, higher training requirements, and more inter-organizational relationships. Strategically, however, programs tend to spread their resources among large numbers of adult and youth staff members, frequently providing badly needed job opportunities in their communities. In the process, they not only provide positive adult/youth ratios but also locate support for community members at the center of their operational agendas. Bucking trends toward increased licensing and accreditation requirements, as well as the resulting cost escalation from hiring credentialed personnel, these programs operate with a relatively uncredentialed staff. Most do require some form of training for staff but, in keeping with the capacity-building prescribed by their own social justice agendas, they usually provide such training on-site or accept prior work experience.

Serving Youth Who Live in Toxic Social and Environmental Conditions

Our neighborhood needs anything that you could think that it needs. It needs new streets. It needs more cops, less drug activity. Basically anything you could give, we need. And it sucks that it's like that, but . . . (Focus group interview with youth, 21 April 2004).

Most of the programs surveyed operate within urban conditions circumscribed by “intense social, political, and economic pressures that profoundly affect young people’s physical, emotional, and psychological well-being” (Ginwright & Cammarota 2002, 85). Applying a latent class analysis to identify sub-groups of programs based upon underlying patterns in the census data, we attempted to categorize these conditions. We ascertained that the programs in our study fall into one of three groups: the largest (47% of the programs), significantly more likely to be located in major metropolitan areas with the most challenging conditions; a second one (32%), likelier to be located in smaller metropolitan areas that also exhibit fairly challenging conditions; the third (21%), located in medium-sized metropolitan areas with the fewest challenges. Thus, over three-quarters of the programs are attempting not just to help youth navigate a range of daunting conditions but also to engage them in confronting that very *status quo*.

Current scholarly literature suggests that effective organizations not only include staff familiar with the community where youth live (McLaughlin et al. 1994) but also promote social networks and inter-organizational relationships that can collectively advance innovation in youth programming (Wheeler 2000). As anticipated, the programs we surveyed have deep roots in their under-resourced communities: over half target specific neighborhoods or high schools and operate not as isolated preserves of youth development but as part of distressed communities, relying heavily upon partnerships and social networks, and most often attached to larger parent organizations. This is especially true of programs serving fewer than fifty youth. Thus, the vast majority of the programs in our study function as part of a web of alliances seeking to advance common social change agendas within toxic urban conditions.

Furthermore, over half the program directors and many staff members reside in the area where their programs are held, which ensures their first-hand knowledge of the in-place experiences of the youth they serve. When asked to evaluate various physical and social conditions in their communities, program directors were significantly more likely to give favorable marks to the physical infrastructure of communities in medium-sized metropolitan areas, while characterizing less favorably that of communities

in either major metropolitan areas or smaller ones. Thus, directors’ descriptions of the physical contexts in which their programs operate were significantly more likely to match the actual character of those contexts as revealed by the latent class analysis of census data. Moreover, program directors seemed to possess a more realistic, negative view of their communities if they lived in the area or if their program targeted neighborhood youth. We suspect that local residence increases program directors’ and staff members’ empathy toward the experience of youth in their communities. Parents actively involved in one of the programs aptly characterized the collective spirit and determination young people bring to changing toxic social and environmental conditions:

One of the things that I admire most about our youth—and we all call them “our youth” because we all see them as if they’re all our children—our babies—is that they see no obstacles. They see nothing that they can’t do. . . . And I’m dazzled by that, because as an older adult, you know, I see limitations, but they don’t see anything. And I love that about them. And there is nothing that they can’t change if they set their mind to (Focus group interview with parents, 21 April 2004).

Providing the Tools for Personal and Social Change

In order to make sense of their world and begin to transform it, youth need “an awareness of how institutional, historical, and systemic forces limit and promote life opportunities for particular groups” (Ginwright & Cammarota 2002, 87). Although our analyses revealed that study programs on the whole seldom engage in either social critique or reflection-in-action, we learned that those with more transformative youth development philosophies were significantly more likely to engage in social critique.¹ Accordingly, we propose a pedagogy of social change that engages youth in social critique and reflection-in-action as a prerequisite for justice-centered youth programming.

In addition, we propose that justice-oriented programs should provide opportunities for understanding oppressive community conditions and taking action to change them, while also drawing upon the affective aspects of youth development—that is, the playfulness and artistic expression that have historically heightened the critical consciousness and

¹ Later in the chapter, we return to this subset of programs.

activism of disenfranchised groups (Freire 1985). Accordingly, we have reframed the opportunities frequently mentioned in the positive youth development literature, namely: caring relationships, safe places, challenging learning experiences, and meaningful involvement (Gambone et al. 2004; Kahne et al. 2001), to include a specific acknowledgement of the need for critical consciousness and social action.

The justice-oriented developmental opportunities we propose include:

- *Caring relationships* that (1) help youth develop their identities and (2) help adults work with, and support, youth in non-authoritarian ways.
- *Safe places* that (3) help youth engage in creative play.
- *Challenging learning experiences* that help youth (4) understand their neighborhood and (5) develop communal behaviors.
- *Meaningful involvement* that helps youth (6) participate in neighborhood life and (7) become agents of change.

A latent class analysis revealed that one context-centered group (56% of the programs) was significantly more likely to offer all seven opportunities than the other; this group gives similar emphasis to all the opportunities except for creative play, upon which much less emphasis is placed. The second person-centered group (44% of the programs) not only offers fewer opportunities, but gives the most attention to developing identities and the least to understanding and participating in the neighborhood—two opportunities we subsequently learned are significant in foundation-funded transformative programs. Still, all the programs offer a variety of justice-oriented opportunities, scoring lowest on helping youth engage in creative play and highest on helping youth develop their identities. Further, even though program directors listed identity awareness close to last when describing concepts of fairness in the abstract, in practice they place great emphasis upon helping youth develop their unique cultural identities, often positioning identity development within a larger agenda of conscientization. Here is one program director's description of how youth develop their identities as an aspect of conscientization:

A key part of all our work, from the media thing to the video thing, is youth developing a whole other image. Looking at realities—how to look at it positively. The political education we do is about them understanding their history. They

look at slavery, the experience of Asian Americans, Native people. They look at the history of Chicanos and Latinos in this country and in Latin America, and how their historical reality is part of a larger story. Many folks' parents came through immigration; they tell many stories about their communities and lives—national stories. Youth learn about the history of social movements—Chicanos and Latinos. They're very proud of who they are and their legacy, and they begin to see they could do something like that.

Here-and-Now Outcomes of Youth Programs

Drawing upon the positive youth development literature that catalogues an array of benchmarks for youth to achieve if they are to reach healthy adulthood (Connell & Gambone 2002), we propose a radically different approach that acknowledges the oppressive social and environmental conditions in low-income urban communities. In reality, many of the adolescents in these communities must already function as adults, raising siblings and often earning money to provide for family necessities; therefore, conceptualizing adulthood as the outcome of a linear developmental trajectory (Ginwright 2005) seems foolhardy. In addition, surviving such egregious social toxins as racism, homophobia, pervasive violence, and police misconduct, while dealing with a variety of environmental toxins, requires from inner-city youth an effort that deserves recognition. Given the nation's failure to redress these unjust conditions, we propose turning the traditional concept of youth development on its head to consider how young people improve their own circumstances. From our perspective, program here-and-now outcomes are primordial, because, however fleetingly, they tangibly lessen the unacceptable conditions many young people endure, providing the hope that youth can spark a larger movement to change those conditions while experiencing personal growth.

We turned to the open-ended interview data to identify what sort of outcomes program constituents see as valuable to youth and their communities. Our analysis yielded seven categories, which allowed us to extract program accomplishments from directors' responses to the survey. In descending order (according to the percentage of cases in which they were mentioned), programs engage youth as active participants, and help them make a social contribution,

experience empowerment, demonstrate competence, create social capital, build community, and generate the joyfulness historically associated with struggles for justice. Here is how one program director described the here-and-now outcomes of youth involvement in program activities:

One thing that comes out of the program is just being at the community farmer's market, and selling products at health clinics; and the way we show the community our food—you know, really high quality and highly sought out food that can be grown in their community, and grown by kids. People don't mind paying for it because they know that the products are high in quality, and they know that they are helping feed some solutions to the problems of our community.

Special Characteristics of Transformative Youth Programs

Having summarized the characteristics of all the study programs, we now turn to a synthesis of those special, more transformative, programs. In Chapter 5, we explored how the four components of the conceptual map interact, and showed how funding sources, youth development philosophies, and youth participation approaches shape other aspects of the programs. In investigating the relationships among these four sets of variables, we found two significant clusters that derive from transformative youth development philosophies and funding sources. The strongest cluster of relationships centers around transformative philosophies and involves 19 variables. A transformative philosophy was most likely to apply in programs with either 50-100 or more than 300 participants—those more often located in deteriorated neighborhoods that still offer a sense of safety. Even though all the programs in our study exist within a network of organizational relationships, those with transformative philosophies were significantly more likely to have developed such relationships themselves. They also embodied specific principles: their visions of social justice were likelier to emphasize equal opportunities but less likely to emphasize identity awareness, and their visions of youth participation were likelier to encompass multiple adult/youth interactions. Their program contents not only proved significantly more likely to emphasize social critique but also to provide opportunities that help youth understand and participate in their communities, acquire communal behaviors, and become agents of

change. Not surprisingly, these programs were significantly likelier to produce social contribution outcomes, albeit not the community-building outcomes we initially hoped for, which would have indicated a stronger community change focus than that associated with social contribution.

Another smaller cluster of relationships centers around primary sources of funding and involves 14 variables. Foundation-funded programs were likelier to be located in smaller metropolitan areas with all the census data indicators of poverty; they not only provide opportunities for youth to understand and participate in their communities, but also engage young people in making a social contribution as activists and leaders. Such programs were also more likely to be newer and larger, but do not necessarily operate on larger budgets or with more full-time staff—or even more staff. They do, however, report more adult leadership in comparison to that found in programs clustering around transformative philosophies, perhaps because many serve large groups of young people with fewer resources and therefore lack time for the process work involved in nurturing youth leadership. It is worth noting that the cluster around foundation grants intersects to some degree with the cluster around transformative philosophy, because foundations were significantly likelier to support programs with such philosophies. Governments were significantly less likely to support programs with transformative philosophies and, along with individuals, were likelier to support programs in larger metropolitan areas with fewer symptoms of poverty.

Thus, our analysis revealed two partially overlapping clusters of variables around transformative youth development philosophies and primary source of funding, which together affect practically all the significant relationships we found within each of the four components of the conceptual map. Although the characteristics of transformative programs do not entirely align with those of foundation-funded programs, foundations emerged as the primary enablers of the most forward-looking programs surveyed.

Recommendations for Advancing the Nation's Social Compact with Its Youth

Across this nation, the potential of too many low-income and minority youth remains untapped. Yet, the programs in this study have demonstrated their

success in engaging these youth as mature, determined, and inventive adversaries of the oppressive conditions in their lives. In this concluding section, we pose a series of questions that stem from the study, and then make recommendations for practice and research.

Implications of the Study

Given our summaries of the literature alongside the empirical evidence we have presented, we wonder:

1. **How can justice-oriented youth development advocates—researchers, practitioners, funders, parents, young people—organize to change prevailing popular and scholarly notions of low-income and minority youth?** These stereotypic notions influence public policy, channeling both public and private resources into deficit-oriented and even positive youth development programs that many of these teenagers and young adults find uninteresting or demeaning. Could this community of advocates shift funding away from the prevailing approaches, toward more transformative ones that use the sociopolitical realities young people live within as the basis for developmental processes?
2. **How can this community of advocates mobilize the media to publicize the accomplishments of low-income and minority youth?** Even though many people object in theory to the increasing corporate control of all forms of media, in practice these media flood public consciousness with the most aberrant images of a few youth, fueling negative images of all youth. How can a community of advocates organize nationally to educate existing media—newspapers, radio, television, Internet—about the accomplishments of youth who prevail against the odds?
3. **How can more foundations be convinced to fund community-based, justice-oriented youth programs?** One of our peer reviewers made a comment consistent with what we found in the literature on funding trends: “In my experience, foundations are often the worst culprits in terms of constructing young people as ‘at risk’ using a deficit model, and so often the programs are responding to the RFPs, and this creates a cycle—you know how it goes.” How can foundations be convinced of the relevance of justice-oriented youth programs in advancing their missions?

4. **What would make local and national governments less conservative in their funding parameters?** The fact that these stewards of public funds were significantly less likely to fund the transformative programs surveyed is perhaps our most disturbing finding, even though other research has documented the conservative nature of government funding (Dryfoos 1990; Hardina 2003). What would give governments a more innovative approach to youth development?
5. **How can the corporate community be convinced to fund community-based, justice-oriented youth programs?** As another peer reviewer noted: “Corporate funders (i.e., Target, Loews, Staples) represent, in many urban areas, one of the most prevalent source of grants to nonprofits.” How can this powerhouse of funding, now invisible in our study, come to see this type of programs much in the way they have come to regard cultural diversity—as contributing to their bottom line?
6. **Finally, how can the programs themselves more intentionally frame guiding principles that reflect their everyday practices and vice versa?** Although we discovered a great deal of integrity within the programs—especially the six that we investigated in greater detail—we are not convinced that this integrity has come about in an intentional manner. For example, many mission statements failed to capture the essence of what programs believe, do, and accomplish, and many program directors did not seem to have thought about their approaches to youth participation or social justice. How can the framing of community-based, justice-oriented youth programming be more intentional?

Recommendations for Future Steps

In order to multiply these programs, support is needed among policy-makers and leaders in the youth development fields for an alternative to the traditional person-centered youth development model. This alternative would turn youth development on its head, leading with structural analyses of the sociopolitical context within which young people grow up, and considering that youth engaged in such analyses develop competencies while helping to improve their own circumstances. In addition, program constituents must be able to shape approaches that reflect their communal, intergenerational, and generative way of working and responding to the

toxic conditions in their communities. Finally, more, and more flexible, funding must be available to support alternative models that respond to the uniqueness of local needs. Such parameters require not just a transformation in people’s conception of youth, but more powerful narratives about how these programs operate. Toward this end, we make recommendations directed toward four groups: youth advocates, funders, programs, and researchers. In all these recommendations, we consider the young people themselves as vital program constituents who must be at the table in planning and implementing changes to youth programming and to the research that supports it.

Youth Justice Advocates Should Organize to Change Public Opinion

We believe that mobilizing against deficit-oriented or even positive youth development approaches is essential to attracting more funding and also to redirecting media attention toward the accomplishments of youth. Accordingly, we propose the creation of city-, county-, or state-wide activist coalitions—including youth—that can speak in a collective voice. These coalitions might, for example:

- *Articulate a transformative youth agenda*, or a vision of what their city, county, or state should accomplish within a given time frame (see e.g., Kilpatrick & Silverman 2005) to create the opportunities and supports that low-income and minority youth require to participate in personal and social change.
- *Influence public policy*, for example, by serving as advisors to elected officials or the juvenile justice system, or by “grading” officials in public meetings on their responsiveness to a transformative youth agenda.
- *Influence media depictions of youth*, for example, by convincing newspapers to publish in-depth articles on the accomplishments of low-income and minority youth or by writing op-ed pieces and letters to the editor.²
- *Lobby to shift public funds away from treatment-oriented youth programming* (Halpern 1999), so as to free up more—and more locally responsive—funding for transformative youth programming.

Funders Should Engage in a Dialogue with Grantees

An aide to Boston’s mayor, charged with developing a new after-school initiative, described the prevailing funding situation for most community-based programs as a “travesty.” They have to beg and plead to survive; they have to go after these little pots of money from many, many different sources. And they have no sustainable funding base (Halpern 1999, 91).

The plight of justice-oriented, community-based programs can only be worse than what this public servant describes. Although we found that the programs in our study have been able to stay afloat, we wonder how many others fell through the cracks. There is no way this type of program can multiply without having substantially more funding to create many more new initiatives. Accordingly, we propose a two-way path in which program constituents are not simply reacting to guidelines handed down by the philanthropic community.

Foundations, governments, or corporations might:

- *Sponsor forums and panels* where they provide their grantees, potential grantees, and other interested parties with opportunities to proactively debate their past and future funding guidelines.
- *Organize community tours* to recognize the accomplishments of youth and their adult allies unrelated to any specific existing grant or request for proposals (RFP); in other words, take an informal, first-hand look at what a program network does to join forces and make urban life not only possible but productive.
- *Invite youth justice advocates—including young people themselves—to collaborate on writing RFPs*, so that funding guidelines do not force programs into agendas unresponsive to—or demeaning of—low-income and minority youth and their communities.
- *Include capacity-building support for youth program staff*. Clearly restrained budgets, combined with the intention to spread available resources among many youth and adults who need employment opportunities, result in low salaries and thus relatively uncredentialed staff. However, these staff have extraordinary knowledge of the

² See Lappé and Du Bois (1994) for numerous suggestions on taking ownership of the media.

³ Especially the matrix of definitions for youth development principles contained in Appendix E.

in-place experiences of youth, and their professional development should be underwritten as a vital component of youth programming.

Youth Programs Should Create More Compelling Narratives

To create a stronger narrative of what an alternative youth-development model looks like on the ground, programs can apply within their own organizations the critical skills they have developed to understand the root causes of the problems that affect their communities. We hope that the various definitions and conceptual maps presented in this report will be of use in this regard to:³

- *Articulate a coherent vision of their organizations*, one that reflects what they believe in—their youth development philosophies, social justice values, approaches to youth participation—what they do in practice—the pedagogies, activities, and opportunities they offer—and what youth accomplish in the here-and-now to improve themselves and the deplorable conditions in their communities. By aligning principles with content and self-reported outcomes, we believe that programs can create a vision so compelling that it not only serves as an effective marketing and public relations tool, but also helps them navigate the daily challenges of justice-oriented youth work.
- *Articulate a coherent message about contributing to the bottom line*. Especially if they want to attract the attention of the missing-in-action corporate funders, transformative youth programs need to frame their potential in a language similar to that used in the field of human resource management to promote cultural diversity; to assert, for example, that they can enhance workforce productivity because they prepare youth as independent critical thinkers and doers—persons less likely to engage in “group think,” more capable of evaluating situations, more creative in proposing solutions to perplexing problems, more confident in making risky decisions to implement their solutions, and more likely to bring about the spiritual renewal of their organizations.

Researchers Should Build and Test Theory through Large Studies of Justice-oriented Programs

The literature on youth programs provides a vast array of richly detailed program evaluations. Nevertheless, relatively few of these studies employ experimental designs to examine the relationships between program activities and outcomes. Some studies use quasi-experimental designs, but most are non-experimental and primarily involve case studies of a single program or a group of them (Lewis-Charp et al. 2003; Trammel 2003). For example, in a sample of 42 research studies of youth service programs, none involved experimental designs, 11 entailed comparison groups or quasi-experimental designs, and 31 were exploratory studies using convenience samples (McBride et al. 2003). The exception is the literature on prevention programs, a more mature area of inquiry with highly developed applications of experimental research. In other areas of youth programming, most of the research literature is exploratory and descriptive, and relies upon qualitative data (for example, from participant observation and face-to-face interviews) or descriptive quantitative data derived from program surveys. In large part, the limited nature of the research reflects the formative nature of the field. Many youth-serving programs consist of community-based, grass-roots efforts, often based upon idiosyncratic program designs tailored to the needs of particular local communities, and reliant upon funding sources that provide only limited support for research and evaluation purposes. Prevention programs, in contrast, frequently connect to large-scale, federally-funded academic research projects, and involve implementation and testing (via experimental designs) of intervention models designed for application across communities and populations (Coie et al. 1993).

To move from theory building to theory testing (Lewis-Charp et al. 2003), the youth development field calls for more rigorous research to test program outcomes (McBride et al. 2003). Yet, the field also requires rigorous research at the level of theory building, as studies typically rely upon qualitative data or small-scale pilot studies that do not allow for quantitative analyses. Here too, there is a need for research that goes beyond descriptive analyses and allows for more detailed examination of the relationships among program theory, constructs, activities, and contextual factors. To address the need for

4 We proposed, but did not receive funding for, involving youth in participatory action research, a future direction of great interest to us.

theory building and theory testing, especially in relation to community-based, grass-roots efforts, we social justice scholars might:

- *Employ youth as ethnographers in the communities and programs under study.* These young people will provide “access to youth perspectives, to activities, and to neighborhood respondents” (McLaughlin et al. 2002, xxvii) that would otherwise be closed to university researchers.⁴
- *Employ methods that involve participant observation and face-to-face interviews.* In our research, we chose to conduct an empirical study to expand upon the knowledge provided by existing qualitative case studies of single programs or groups of them. However, given the limited resources available, we had to rely upon the self-reports that program directors provided via telephone interviews, which greatly limited the depth of our understanding of these programs. Employing youth as ethnographers would cost-effectively create a national research team while building a cadre of diverse young people with research skills.
- *Conduct longitudinal studies.* A major challenge because: (a) even short-term research and evaluation of grassroots justice-oriented programs lack funding, (b) funders would need to accept creative research methods for assessing program outcomes, especially community achievements, and (c) high-end development is rapidly displacing and dispersing low-income urban populations.



We see these recommendations—youth justice advocates changing public opinion, funders engaging in a dialogue with grantees, programs creating more compelling narratives, and researchers conducting large studies that build and test theory—as entirely interdependent, each necessary to the accomplishment of the others. By presenting empirical evidence drawn from the beliefs, practices and accomplishments of a select group of youth programs, we hope to inspire a multi-faceted approach that will pave the way toward greater acceptance of a context-centered approach to youth development.

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Research Methods for Three Studies

Study Population

The study population consists of 88 programs located in 36 large metropolitan areas—or Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)¹—across the nation. After extensive canvassing of our social justice colleagues over an 11-month period, we developed a list of 164 by-referral potential participants in our study, including 67 on the East Coast, 41 in the Midwest, and 56 on the West Coast. Of the initial 164-program list, 20 programs proved unqualified, leaving 144 bona fide referrals. Having gone to great lengths to obtain referrals from every MSA with sufficient population to be considered a large US city, our study population is by and large representative of urban America, even if skewed toward the East and West Coasts in general and toward the New York Metropolitan and Bay areas in particular (these two places were the most represented even though we limited the number of referrals from both).²

Exploratory Focus Groups

The first study of our research encompassed three exploratory focus groups, one each for staff, youth, and parents of two New York City programs, recruited from the 144-program list. The three focus groups were conducted in April 2004. Facilitated by three researchers, each focus group lasted about 90 minutes. Although both participant programs consider themselves committed to social justice, one places greater emphasis upon civic activism and the other gives more importance to youth development. The researchers worked with program staff to recruit a total of 28 participants: 16 (6 staff, 6 youth, and 4 parents) from the civic activism program and 12 (6 staff, 3 youth, and 3 parents) from the youth development program. Each constituent received two movie tickets in exchange for their participation. The protocol included

four open-ended questions that asked the participants to (1) introduce themselves, (2) describe their program and neighborhood to peers from the other program, (3) say how well their program addresses neighborhood needs, and (4) tell the research team what information to look for in the interviews with programs all across the country. We audio-taped the sessions, transcribed the tapes, and conducted a theory-driven thematic analysis of the 126-page transcript. The resulting themes contributed to the protocol design for our program survey and telephone interviews.

Program Survey

The second study took place between July 2004 and June 2005. It consisted of telephone interviews with the executive or program directors of 88 programs recruited from the 144-program list, including the 2 that took part in the focus group. Six programs declined to participate in the survey and 50 were unreachable, which resulted in a response rate of 61%. In all, we succeeded in surveying programs located in 64% (36 of 56) of the qualified MSAs. The research team at each of our three university research sites took responsibility for administering the survey to programs in that site's region, via telephone interviews. Table A-1 provides a summary of program referrals and responses, listed by region.

Program Survey Methods

The program survey consisted of a structured interview protocol, developed by the research team, with both closed- and open-ended questions.³ The survey design included the four major categories of our conceptual map, which in turn were informed by the literature, the thematic analysis of focus group data, and also during the monthly reflection seminar.

¹ MSAs are defined as urban areas with a population of at least 1 million for densely, and 500,000 for sparsely, settled states.

² The research team conducted all phases of the research, including procurement of photographic materials contained in this report, within protocols reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Review Boards of each of the three participating academic institutions.

³ The protocol is contained in Appendix B.

TABLE A.1 Summary of Program Referrals and Response

Region (University)	Programs	Programs Qualified	Surveys Completed	Programs Declined
East Coast (CUNY)	67	62	36	1
Midwest (UM)	41	35	26	4
West Coast (UW)	56	47	26	1
Total	164	144	88	6
Response Rate	0.61			

The survey focuses upon several areas: (1) program philosophy and structure, including mission, population served, programmatic focus, and funding sources; (2) program resources (human, physical, and financial, including the extent of youth and parental involvement in program governance); (3) the roles of youth participants, including the extent to which program services are guided by adults or youth, perceptions of youth needs and strengths, and perceptions of parental wants, strengths, as well as degree of involvement in program services; (4) programs' neighborhood context, including safety, physical infrastructure, social networks, and neighborhood attachments of youth and parents; (5) key program activities related to youth development, community service, civic activism, community art, placemaking, and community development; and (6) definition and operationalization of social justice values in the program, including opportunities for youth to have: caring relationships (that help youth develop their identities and help adults work in partnership with youth); safe places (that help young people engage in creative play); challenging learning experiences (that help youth understand their neighborhood and learn communal behaviors); and meaningful involvement (that helps youth participate in neighborhood life and become agents of change). The interview protocol also contained questions requesting additional materials and to ascertain the directors' willingness to recruit constituents for the open-ended interviews.

Before undertaking the study, researchers at CUNY piloted the survey protocol with seven programs, not included in the study population, which led to refinements in about half the questions. As the study proceeded, interviewers noted that respondents objected to a question about youth feeling unsafe

due to gangs, suggesting that their lack of safety was more likely due to police misconduct. In addition, some respondents expressed their objection that our focus upon physical deterioration was inaccurate, indicating that a major problem with physical infrastructure in the community was due to gentrification. After the 22nd interview, we made revisions to address both of these concerns.

Interviewers faxed the protocol to staff prior to the interview and also suggested that the questions could be viewed on a UW web site. In every case, the interviewer started the call by verifying that the program met all the selection criteria, which eliminated another 12% of the programs. Although the survey interviews were intended to last 45 minutes, their actual length ranged from 25 minutes to 2.5 hours, with an average of 70 minutes. Interviewers recorded interviews almost verbatim, typing as respondents spoke. At the outset of the program survey, four programs self-administered the protocol; interviewers followed up with two of those programs to obtain additional information.

Open-ended Interviews

The last study began in September 2004 and overlapped with the program survey. Both concluded simultaneously in June 2005.⁴ This third study consisted of telephone and face-to-face open-ended interviews administered to constituents from six of the surveyed programs. To choose this group, interviewers developed an initial pool of candidate programs, based upon a series of criteria that included program size and annual budget, population served, activities offered, staff's willingness to participate,

⁴ Except for a group of four face-to-face interviews with parents and adult community members of one program, which were administered 25 August, 2005.

TABLE A.2 Open-ended Interviews with Constituents of Six Programs

	Staff	Youth	Parents	Adults	Total
1. East Coast (CUNY)	7	5	2	0	14
2. East Coast (CUNY)	5	4	1	5	15
3. Midwest (UM)	6	5	3	1	15
4. Midwest (UM)	4	2	2	1	9
5. West Coast (UW)	8	4	0	5	17
6. West Coast (UW)	6	3	2	1	12
Total	36	23	10	13	82

and availability. The UW team reviewed the selection to assure diversity. Selected programs were contacted by the principal investigator and all agreed to participate. Constituents from the following programs participated in the open-ended interviews:⁵

1. An East Coast neighborhood-based youth development program targeted to African American youth.
2. An East Coast city-wide community art program that seeks to develop youth leadership skills through journalism.
3. A Midwestern county-wide community service program that includes youth in a philanthropic board of directors.
4. A Midwestern neighborhood-based community art program that engages youth in creating plays about the local area.
5. A West Coast neighborhood-based community development program that offers internships in organic farming and marketing.
6. A West Coast school-based civic activism program that engages youth in school reform advocacy.

Interview Methods

Telephone and face-to-face questionnaires were administered to constituents (paid and volunteer staff, youth, and parents or adult community members) of each of the six programs. The three research teams took responsibility for conducting interviews with program constituents in their respective site's region.

In each case, researchers sent information packets to a program staff member, who in turn recruited staff, youth age 14 and over, parents (or guardians) of youth age 12 and over, and adult community members.

The questionnaire allowed respondents to expand on the information obtained from the survey. It contained 26 open-ended questions, adapted for each constituency, in six categories that closely mirrored those of the survey: demographics, program activities, participation of parents and adult community members, neighborhood characteristics, and program resources. In addition, we included a question on program outcomes. Although the interviews were intended to last 75 minutes, their actual duration ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours, with an average of 70 minutes. Constituents received, each, \$15.00 for their participation. Interviewers typed as respondents spoke, and then checked their text against the recorded audio tapes, which were later destroyed. In one of the programs, some interviews with parents and adult community members were conducted in Spanish; in another case, the interviewer for that constituency had knowledge of the local culture and language, and was also acquainted with the geography of the community. Research participants had access to the questionnaire in advance, either in the information packet sent to the program staff coordinator or on-line, through a UW website.

We completed a total of 82 interviews, including 36 with staff, 23 with youth, 10 with parents, and 13 with adults, as shown in Table A.2.

⁵ Insets 5.1–5.6 in Chapter 5 contain selected open-ended responses from the surveys completed by program directors, along with youth responses from the open-ended interviews..

Telephone Survey Protocol

Constructing a Social Justice Framework for Youth and Community Service

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Researchers:

Dr. Sharon E. Sutton, Professor
Department of Architecture
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98109
206.685.3361

Dr. Susan Saegert, Professor
Department of Environmental Psychology
City University of New York
New York, New York 10016
718.624.4535

Dr. Lorraine Gutiérrez, Professor
School of Social Work
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
734.936.1450

Position/Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Length of Interview: _____

Overview

This survey contains questions about the structure of your organization, the resources you have, the characteristics of the youth who participate, the characteristics of the neighborhood or neighborhoods you serve, and the youth programs and activities your organization offers. The survey gives you an opportunity to say what age groups your organization serves and how it defines “youth” as a social group. You should only complete this survey if your organization meets the following criteria:

- Has a commitment to social justice;
- Includes a community service component;
- Serves a low-income or minority community;
- Is located in a large city and focuses on a particular neighborhood or neighborhoods;
- Has been in operation for at least one year;
- Involves youth in programs for a period of at least three months.

The person completing the survey should have a leadership role in youth programs and activities offered by the organization, should also have knowledge of such issues as program staffing, funding, and demographics, and should be able to describe the program’s philosophy, as well as its day-to-day operations.

Program Structure

The first set of questions relate to structure of your youth program or programs.

1. How long has your youth program or programs existed?
 - Less than 5 years
 - Between 5 and 10 years
 - More than 10 years
2. What are the main categories of youth activities you offer?

3. What are the primary reasons you offer these activities?

4. Why do youth need programs like yours?

5. What roles do parents and/or other adult community members play in your program?

6. What age youth participate in your program or programs (indicate all that apply)?
 - 12 - 14 years old
 - 15 - 18 years old
 - Over 18 Up to what age? _____
 - Unable to answer
7. Approximately how many youth participate annually in all of your programs and activities?
 - Fewer than 50 50 - 100
 - 100 - 150 150 - 200
 - 201 - 300 More than 300
 - Unable to answer
8. What time of year does your youth program or programs offer activities (indicate all that apply)?
 - Summer
 - School vacations (excluding summer)
 - School year
 - Year round
 - Other; specify _____
9. About how long do most youth stay involved with your program (indicate all that apply)?
 - Less than 3 months over 2 years
 - 3 months to a year Unable to answer
 - 1 to 2 years
10. Which of the following best describes the youth who participate in the program? Indicate all that apply.
 - Caucasian (European Descendent)
 - African American
 - Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, et cetera)
 - Caribbean (Haitian, Jamaican, Trinidadian, et cetera)
 - Latino/Hispanic (Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South/Central American, et cetera)
 - Native American
 - Other; specify _____
11. What gender are the youth who participate in your program (indicate all that apply)?
 - Males
 - Females
 - Transgender
 - Two-spirit
12. Are the youth program or programs offered within a larger organization?
 - Yes; specify _____
 - No
13. What is the approximate amount of your annual budget for youth program or programs?
 - Just under \$50,000
 - \$50,000 to just under \$100,000
 - \$100,000 to just under \$250,000
 - \$250,000 to just under \$500,000
 - \$500,000 to just under \$1 million
 - More than \$1 million
 - Unable to answer

14. Rank the sources of support your youth program or programs receive, with "1" being the highest.
- _____ Government/public sector
 _____ Corporate
 _____ Foundations
 _____ Individual donations
 _____ Fundraisers
 _____ Other; specify _____
15. Name the three top funders for your youth program or programs.
- _____

Program Resources

The next questions relate to the human, physical, and financial resources your youth program or programs have for carrying out activities.

16. How many people are actively involved in staffing your youth program or programs?
- _____ Number of paid adults
 _____ Number of paid youth
 _____ Number of unpaid volunteer adults
 _____ Number of unpaid volunteer youth
 _____ Unable to answer
- How many of these people are full-time? _____
17. Does your organization require special training (certificate or diploma, et cetera) or experience for the staff of your youth program or programs?
- Yes; specify _____
 No
18. Do you live in the neighborhood?
- Yes
 No
19. Do most youth program staff live in the neighborhood?
- Most do
 Some do
 Hardly any do
20. How are *parents or adult community members* involved in the governance of the youth program or programs (indicate all that apply)?
- They serve on the board of directors.
 They serve as staff, interns, and/or volunteers.
 They participate in planning activities.
 Other; specify _____
 They are not involved in governance.
21. How are *youth* involved in the governance of the youth program or programs (indicate all that apply)?
- They serve on the board of directors.
 They serve as staff, interns, and/or volunteers.
 They participate in planning activities.
 Other; specify _____
 They are not involved in governance.
22. How adequate are the number of *paid staff* for fulfilling the program's mission?
- Good Adequate Poor
23. How adequate are the number of *volunteer staff* for fulfilling the program's mission?
- Good Adequate Poor
24. How adequate are the *program's physical facilities and equipment* for fulfilling its mission?
- Good Adequate Poor
25. How adequate are the program's *financial resources* for fulfilling its mission?
- Good Adequate Poor
26. To what degree does your program form partnerships with other organizations to carry out its youth activities?
- A lot Sometimes Hardly ever
27. To what degree does your program draw upon the social networks of staff (family, friends, personal connections, et cetera) for regular in-kind or cash contributions?
- A lot Sometimes Hardly ever

Youth Characteristics

The next questions relate to how your program thinks about the youth it serves and the support they receive from their parents or adult community members.

28. Some programs feel that youth benefit from strong adult guidance, while others feel they benefit from being able to create their own agenda of activities. Considering this continuum from adult-guided to youth-guided approaches to serving youth, where does your program fall?
- Believe strongly in adult guidance
- Believe in a combined approach
- Believe strongly in youth guidance
- Provide an example of adult or youth guidance of program activities.
-
29. Which of the following statements best describe the help most youth need from your program (indicate all that apply)?
- They need help with school work.
- They need help with job skills.
- They need help with social skills e.g., being able to manage conflict or cooperate with others.
- They need activities that prevent them from engaging in risky behavior.
- They need help accessing basic resources, like adequate schooling.
- Other; indicate _____
30. Which of the following statements best describe the strengths most youth bring to your program (indicate all that apply)?
- They bring leadership skills.
- They bring a commitment to improve themselves.
- They bring a high degree of creativity.
- They bring the ability to work collaboratively with peers.
- They bring a commitment to improve their community.
- Other; indicate _____
31. Which of the following statements best describe the help most parents or adult community members want from your program (indicate all that apply)?
- They want help with literacy skills.
- They want help with job skills.
- They want help in parenting effectively.
- They want help accessing basic resources, like housing and child care.
- They want help with preventing their children from engaging in risky behavior.
- Other; indicate _____
- Not sure what parents want.
32. Which of the following statements best describe the strengths most parents or adult community members bring to your program (indicate all that apply)?
- They bring leadership skills.
- They bring a high degree of creativity.
- They bring a commitment to improving their children's lives.
- They bring a commitment to improving the lives of other children in the community.
- They bring a commitment for improving the youth programs and activities.
- Other; indicate _____
- Not sure what strengths they bring.

Neighborhood Characteristics

The next statements are about the environments the youth in your program interact with. They concern the quality of the neighborhood environment and the possibility youth have for traveling around the city to other environments.

33. We would like to know something about the *safety issues* in the neighborhood environments the youth in your program experience.

How concerned are youth in your program with street crime?

- Very concerned
 Somewhat concerned
 Not at all concerned

How concerned are they about gang activity?

- Very concerned
 Somewhat concerned
 Not at all concerned

How concerned are they about being assaulted with a weapon?

- Very concerned
 Somewhat concerned
 Not at all concerned

How concerned are they about police misconduct?

- Very concerned
 Somewhat concerned
 Not at all concerned

Is there anything else that you have observed related to *safety issues* in this neighborhood?

34. We would like to know something about the *social relationships* that exist among the parents in your program.

How open would most parents be to helping each other access resources and services?

- Very open
 Moderately open
 Not at all open
 Not sure what parents would be willing to do

How open would most parents be to doing favors for one another?

- Very open
 Moderately open

- Not at all open
 Not sure what parents would be willing to do

How connected do most parents feel to each other's children?

- Very connected
 Moderately connected
 Not at all connected
 Not sure what parents feel

Do friendships exist between parents whose children attend the program?

- Frequently
 Sometimes
 Hardly ever
 Not sure what parents do

Is there anything else that you have observed about the *social relationships* among the parents in your program?

35. We would like to know something about the *physical infrastructure* of the neighborhood immediately surrounding your program.

To what degree are the historical residents in your neighborhood being displaced by gentrification?

- Very displaced
 Somewhat displaced
 Not at all displaced

What is the physical condition of most buildings in the neighborhood?

- Poor
 Adequate
 Good

What is the physical condition of most schools?

- Poor
 Adequate
 Good

How convenient is the public transportation system?

- Very inconvenient
- Convenient
- Very convenient

How well do convenience shops meet everyday needs?

- Poorly met
- Adequately met
- Nicely met
- Not sure what the shopping is like

Is there anything else that you have observed about the quality of the *physical infrastructure*?

36. Finally we would like to know your perspectives on the *degree of attachment* youth and their parents have to the neighborhood or neighborhoods you serve. In your opinion:

Do most youth feel this is a good place to grow up?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not sure what youth feel

Do most parents feel this is a good place to raise children?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not sure what parents feel

Do most youth value the neighborhood's positive aspects despite any deficiencies?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not sure what youth value

Do most parents value the neighborhood's positive aspects despite any deficiencies?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not sure what parents value

What else have you observed about the *degree of attachment* of youth and families to the neighborhood?

Programs and Activities

The next questions are about the different types of youth programs and activities your organization offers.

37. For the purpose of this survey, *youth development* includes any programs or activities that promote young people's positive growth (for example in the area of school performance, job readiness, and personal development) or that prevent their involvement in risky behavior. Given this definition, to what degree is your organization involved in *youth development*?

- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not at all involved

38. What is the most important *youth development* program or activity your organization offers?

39. For the purpose of this survey, *youth service* includes any programs or activities that involve groups of young people in volunteer activities, for example, volunteering in community clean-ups or gardens, literacy programs, or nursing homes. Given this definition, to what degree is your organization involved in *youth service*?

- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not at all involved

40. If your organization offers *youth service* programs or activities, describe the most successful initiative.

41. For the purpose of this survey, *community art* includes any programs or activities that involve groups of youth in community-based artistic expression, for example creating murals or other graphics in public space, putting on performances, participating in poetry slams, or producing publications. Given this definition, to what degree is your organization involved in *community art*?

- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not at all involved

42. What is the most important *community art* program or activity your organization offers?

43. For the purpose of this survey, *youth activism* includes any programs or activities that involve groups of young people as a visible presence in their community, for example political activism, environmental activism, or unstructured outdoor play. Given this definition, to what degree is your organization involved in *youth activism*?

- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not at all involved

44. If your organization offers *youth activism* programs or activities, describe the most successful initiative.

45. For the purpose of this survey, *placemaking* includes any programs or activities that involve groups of youth in intentionally transforming their surroundings through direct, hands-on intervention into the physical environment. These activities may or may not involve adults. Given this definition, to what degree is your organization involved in *placemaking*?

- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not at all involved

46. If your organization offers *placemaking* programs or activities, describe the most successful initiative.

47. For the purpose of this survey, *youth-centered community development* includes any programs or activities that bring youth together with adults to improve the physical, political, social, cultural, or economic infrastructure of the neighborhood. Given this definition, to what degree is your organization involved in *youth-centered community development*?

- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Not at all involved

48. If your organization offers *youth-centered community development* programs or activities, describe the most successful initiative.

49. Are there other youth programs or activities not listed above that your organization offers?

- Yes; specify _____
- No

50. To what degree are parents and/or adult members of the community involved in various programs?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>Youth development</i> | <i>Youth service</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very | <input type="checkbox"/> Very |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all |

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>Community art</i> | <i>Youth activism</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very | <input type="checkbox"/> Very |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all |

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>Placemaking</i> | <i>Community development</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very | <input type="checkbox"/> Very |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all |

Other Activity

- Indicate _____
- Very
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all

51. Is there some aspect of your youth programs or activities not covered by this survey that you would like to describe?

Social Justice Values

Some key social justice values that others have identified include: self-determination, fair and equitable allocation of resources, and democratic participation. The next questions are about your organization's approach to social justice.

52. What does "social justice" mean in your organization?

53. To what degree does your organization *help youth understand their neighborhood* (e.g., by understanding its social history, its current social and political issues, or their own experiences of the neighborhood)?

- Something we really work on
 Something we sometimes work on
 Not something we work on

54. If some of your activities *help youth understand their neighborhood*, please say how these activities contribute to your social justice agenda.

55. To what degree does your organization *help youth develop their identities* (e.g., by appreciating themselves for who they are, developing a better image of themselves, or improving the negative images people have of youth culture)?

- Something we really work on
 Something we sometimes work on
 Not something we work on

56. If some of your activities *help youth develop their identities*, please say how these activities contribute to your social justice agenda.

57. To what degree does your organization *help youth participate in neighborhood life* (e.g., by being part of decision-making in their neighborhood, organizing their own social movements, participating in local social action, or just having a physical presence in the neighborhood)?

- Something we really work on
 Something we sometimes work on
 Not something we work on

58. If your organization *help youth participate in neighborhood life*, please say how these activities contribute to your social justice agenda.

59. To what degree does your organization *help youth learn behaviors that benefit society as a whole* (e.g., by learning how to share resources like food and air, or power and ideas, or how to live in ways that are less individualistic)?

- Something we really work on
 Something we sometimes work on
 Not something we work on

60. If some of your activities *help youth learn behaviors that benefit society as a whole*, please say how these activities contribute to your social justice agenda.

61. To what degree does your organization *help youth become agents of change* (e.g., by understanding the causes of problems in their neighborhood and by taking action to address both the causes and the problems)?

- Something we really work on
 Something we sometimes work on
 Not something we work on

62. If some of your activities *help youth become agents of change*, please say how these activities contribute to your social justice agenda.

63. To what degree does your organization *help youth engage in creative play* (e.g., by finding opportunities for having fun and fooling around in environments that are not controlled and organized by adults)?

- Something we really work on
 Something we sometimes work on
 Not something we work on

64. If some of your activities *help youth engage in creative play*, please say how these activities contribute to your social justice agenda.

66. If some of your activities *help adults work with youth*, please say how these activities contribute to your social justice agenda.

65. To what degree does your organization *help adults work in partnership with youth* (e.g. by developing non-authoritarian ways that adults can support youth)?

- Something we really work on
- Something we sometimes work on
- Not something we work on

Closing

67. To help us learn as much as we can about the ways in which your organization provides youth programs and activities, we would welcome receiving any of the documents listed below that describe your organization's work.

- Annual Report
- Descriptions of youth programs and activities
- Mission statement for your youth programs
- Newspaper clippings, journal articles, et cetera.

68. From the 100 programs that we survey, we will be selecting six to eight programs for a participation in a more in-depth case study. Participation means that staff would need to recruit about eighteen people, including six staff, six youth, and six parents or adult community members to be take part in an open-ended phone interview. Would you be interested in being considered as a case study?

- Yes
What is your availability? _____
- Maybe
- No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Program Descriptions

In this appendix, we provide a brief description of each program in our study, grouped according to their primary activity type, each type (civic activism, youth development, community art, community development, identity support, community service, placemaking) listed in descending order of importance. The 60 programs that gave us written permission to identify them are listed by name and city; the other 28 are listed anonymously by number and city.¹

Civic Activism Twenty-nine % of the Programs

Chicago Youth United Chicago, Illinois

This coalition is comprised of two youth programs that together serve 200 to 300 African American and Hispanic youth, ages 12 to 18. It uses various media tools to organize campaigns on safety, youth programming, and school improvements. The coalition promotes positive images of youth, actively involving program participants in raising community awareness of teen issues.

Californians for Justice San Diego, California

This statewide grassroots organization works with fewer than 50 culturally diverse youth, ages 12 to 18 and beyond, helping them tackle such issues as racial justice, human rights, and inclusion. It offers political education, organizing, issue-based campaigns, and leadership development, hoping to train a new generation of civil rights leaders, while rallying public support for changing policies that negatively affect youth.

Global Action Project New York, New York

Begun in 1991, this program engages 100 to 150 African American and Hispanic youth, ages 12 to 20, helping them recognize their own potential to make change. Program activities provide young people with the knowledge, tools, and relationships

they need to create powerful, thought-provoking media on youth issues, and to use their media to bring about dialogue and social change both locally and globally.

Empowering Youth Initiative of NCCJ Charlotte, North Carolina

This program, housed within the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), serves over 300 culturally diverse youth, ages 12 to 26. NCCJ fights bias, bigotry, and racism by promoting understanding and respect for all races, religions, and cultures. To develop academic, leadership, and activism skills, it engages youth in education campaigns, advocacy, and conflict resolution.

Esperanza Peace and Justice Center San Antonio, Texas

This program—housed within an advocacy organization for low-income women, people of color, and queers—, serves culturally diverse young women, ages 11 to 24. It offers leadership development, cultural grounding, and a safe space for expressing uncensored ideas, bringing activists and artists from around the world to discuss teen issues and mentor youth in video production and performance.

FIERCE New York, New York

This program has a core group of fewer than 50 youth, ages 15 to 22, who organize projects for a larger membership of 200 to 300 transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, two spirit, queer, and questioning youth of color. The program offers leadership development, artistic activism, political education, and campaign development; it heightens public awareness of such issues as gender bias, economic injustice, and sexual discrimination.

Freedom Bound Center Sacramento, California

This program serves 50 to 100 African American, Asian, and Hispanic youth, ages 15 to 25. Staff are committed to promoting democratic participation, empowering socioeconomically disadvantaged

* As might be expected, we were only able to reach one of the three New Orleans programs.

communities, and improving the health of those communities. It offers leadership and negotiation training, engaging youth in activism around equity, cultural, and health issues.

Inner City Struggle Los Angeles, California

Housed within an advocacy organization for youth and families in Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles, this program serves over 300 Latino and Chicano high school students, ages 12 to 20. Program staff train a core group of students to engage the larger student body and community in school reform campaigns. It encourages democratic participation and youth leadership, while setting high standards of academic excellence.

Oasis Center Nashville, Tennessee

This program serves 50 to 100 culturally diverse youth, ages 12 to 19, engaging them in a youth council and various philanthropy, leadership, and civic action activities. It works in partnership with youth and their families to meet the challenges of adolescence, while making a difference in their communities.

Project South Youth Council Atlanta, Georgia

This movement-building program serves fewer than 50 African, African American, and Hispanic youth, ages 12 to 18. Through partnerships and programs in leadership development, popular education, and action research, it seeks to eliminate all forms of oppression, and bring about socioeconomic change.

Oakland Kids First Oakland, California

This program creates opportunities for 50 to 100 culturally diverse youth, ages 12 to 18, to become visionary leaders who can transform their schools and communities. It supports the inclusion of youth in decision-making processes, especially ones concerning Oakland's growing high school dropout rate. The program uses advocacy, alliance building, creative arts, and leadership training as tools for social change.

Seattle Young People's Project Seattle, Washington

This program invests in a core group of fewer than 50 culturally diverse youth, ages 12 to 19, sometimes involving up to 200 youth in special activities. It encourages youth to express themselves and take action on issues that affect their lives. The program uses a youth-led, adult-supported model of participation and decision-making to advance social change.

Young Scholars for Justice-PODER Austin, Texas

This program engages 50 to 100 African American and Hispanic young people, ages 12 to 28, in advocating for environmental justice as a basic human right. Through education, advocacy, and action, program staff hope to increase the participation of youth in corporate and government decision-making related to the environment.

Young Women's Project Washington, DC

This program engages 200 to 300 young women of color, ages 14 to 19, in leadership development, direct action, and policy making. It offers opportunities that may be lacking in young women's lives so they can improve themselves and transform their communities. Through structured activities that provide knowledge, information, and skills, staff encourage young women to realize their potential as socially critical activists.

Youth Making a Change San Francisco, California

Housed within Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, this program has a core group of fewer than 50 young paid organizers and members who outreach to 200 youth, engaging them in campaigns, policy-making, education reforms, juvenile justice, and budget advocacy. Staff hope youth can improve conditions for themselves and their families by participating in municipal politics and changing racist government policies.

Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), Student Leadership Program San Francisco, California

One of several YLI initiatives, this program serves fewer than 50 culturally diverse high school students, ages 15 to 18, who are elected representatives of student bodies in schools throughout the San Francisco School District. As advisors to the superintendent and board of education, these students have a meaningful voice in school decision-making.

Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), Youth Philanthropy Program San Francisco, California

Another YLI initiative, this program engages a handful of culturally diverse high school students, ages 15 to 23, on a philanthropic board of directors that has final decision-making authority in awarding grants to youth-led projects in San Francisco and San Mateo County. As one of the first organizations to provide significant funding for youth-led projects,

the program serves as a national model of youth philanthropy.

Youth Together Oakland, California

This program works with over 300 culturally diverse youth, ages 12 to 20. Grounded in a commitment to unity, peace, and justice, it promotes civic activism by addressing the root causes of educational inequity. This school-based program nurtures youth organizers, facilitating youth-led community collaborations that promote educational justice and positive change within schools.

Program 005 Chicago, Illinois

This media-based collective of cultural workers serves over 300 multi-ethnic young people, ages 12 to 21. It offers workshops and mentoring in web design, zine design, and public service announcements, providing youth with a multi-media platform from which to voice concerns about their community. Staff are committed to cultivating images and ideas that raise consciousness and inspire collective, transformative action.

Program 016 Brooklyn, New York

This community-based program consists of a freedom school for 50 to 100 working-class young women of color, ages 13 to 19. It offers workshops, paid employment, and opportunities to work with adult women to model a communal, self-governing society. Program staff, who are committed to socio-cultural and political change, believe in the power of young women to transform themselves and their community.

Program 022 New York, New York

This program engages fewer than 50 Korean youth, ages 15 to 18, in political education to develop skills for undertaking youth-led campaigns and youth empowerment activities. It promotes a vision of democracy, social and economic justice, and self-determination, providing recent immigrant youth with a safe space to build social support systems, and connect with same-age immigrants who have been in the United States for a longer time.

Program 025 Brooklyn, New York

Based within a Latino community, this program engages over 300 multi-ethnic youth, ages 12 to 21, in organizing, advocacy, and civic activism. Its activities include leadership development, media literacy, art activities, Spanish for natives, and youth-

led organizing campaigns. Program staff hope to develop the assertiveness and critical thinking skills that youth need to provide leadership within their community.

Program 030 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

This program works with 100 to 150 primarily African American youth, ages 12 to 20, who in turn organize over 300 members of a student union that advocates for school reform. It began as a result of growing student frustration with the poor educational opportunities offered by local schools. Currently, the program helps prepare youth as lifelong, socially critical community organizers.

Program 033 Providence, Rhode Island

This program is part of a larger multi-lingual, multi-racial institution that organizes low-income families in communities of color to demand economic, social, and political justice. The youth component works with 50 to 100 high school students, ages 15 to 18, providing the political education and leadership training they need to advocate for school reform.

Program 060 New Orleans, Louisiana

Housed within one of the foremost anti-racism organizing institutions, this program identifies and mentors young anti-racist organizers. It operates a youth-led freedom school modeled on Civil Rights era citizenship schools. In the program, 100 to 150 young Latino and Native American organizers, ages 12 to 25, collaborate with adults to explore race and racism as barriers to community self-determination.

Program 080 Bronx, New York

This neighborhood-based program is housed within a multi-issue adult membership organization. It offers leadership training to 150 to 200 low- and moderate-income African American and Hispanic teens, ages 12 to 21, engaging them in campaigns and direct action. It provides alternatives to street gang culture by equipping youth with the skills to change their schools and communities.

Program 086 Seattle, Washington

Housed within a religious society that is committed to nonviolence and justice, this program serves fewer than 50 culturally diverse teenagers, ages 15 to 24. Program staff offer anti-racist organizing, leadership development, and a freedom school, hoping to spark a national youth-led movement to transform social injustice.

Youth Development

Twenty-one % of the Programs

Brotherhood/Sister Sol **New York, New York**

This program helps 125 to 175 African American and Latino youth, ages 12 to 21, develop as critical thinkers. The curriculum for its after-school and summer programs emphasizes culturally-based youth development, academic skill-building, mandatory community service, internships, job training, and month-long study tours of Africa and South America.

Café Reconcile **New Orleans, Louisiana**

An apostolic enterprise, this program provides 50 to 100 African American young people, ages 15 to 25, with hands-on training in the hospitality industry. It helps participants, who come into the program from the juvenile justice system, develop skills, discipline, enthusiasm, and a work ethic so they can obtain permanent employment.

Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc. **Phoenix, Arizona**

This statewide community development corporation is the parent organization for a program that serves over 300 culturally diverse youth, ages 8 to 18. It provides structured activities and opportunities through a life skills curriculum, mentoring, parent education, and other activities such as youth advisory councils.

Highbridge Community Life Center **Bronx, New York**

This center offers after-school activities for African American and Hispanic youth, ages 5 to 19, as part of an array of family services and supports provided by partner organizations in the Bronx. Youth activities include conflict resolution, service learning and organizing, asset building, mentoring, counseling, academic assistance, and such enrichment activities as drumming, drama, dance, art, and poetry.

Hopeworks 'N Camden **Camden, New Jersey**

This program helps 150 to 200 African American and Hispanic youth, ages 12 to 24, stay in high school, encouraging them to learn and set personal, as well as spiritual goals. It provides year-round technical training (for example, in web design and GIS mapping), along with a variety of business development and educational opportunities.

Mi Casa Resource Center for Women **Denver, Colorado**

This program serves 600 to 800 primarily low-income Latino youth, ages 12 to 24. It seeks to advance their self-sufficiency by offering after-school activities in community leadership, tutoring, technology, recreation, art and culture, and AIDS prevention.

Metro Parks Community Schools **Louisville, Kentucky**

This organization works in conjunction with Jefferson County Public Schools to provide educational, sociocultural, and recreational activities that help students and families maximize their potential. Hundreds of youth, ages 12 and up, who speak over 300 languages, take part in such after-school activities as sports, arts and crafts, drug prevention, community service, and GED preparation.

Powerful Voices **Seattle, Washington**

This program, based in several middle schools, serves more than 300 girls, ages 12 to 18, who have been in the juvenile justice system. It offers such activities as health decision-making, job readiness, and girl advocacy. Staff hope to build leadership skills, foster critical thinking, and nurture individual potential by helping girls acquire a healthy and positive self-image.

Street Level Youth Media **Chicago, Illinois**

This program serves approximately 1,500 culturally diverse, low-income youth, age 10 through their early 20s. It uses project-based learning to inspire creativity and self-expression, making technology accessible to young people who may not otherwise have an opportunity to develop media literacy. The program offers unstructured and structured activities, in-school programs, and mobile programs the community.

The American Indian Clubhouse **Los Angeles, California**

United American Indian Involvement, Inc. provides health and social services to American Indians in Los Angeles, including after-school and weekend enrichment programs for youth. One program, the Clubhouse, offers a culturally relevant safe haven for 200 to 300 young American Indians, ages 5 to 18; it develops academic and leadership skills, and promotes healthy lifestyles, cultural awareness, and positive behaviors.

World of Opportunity Birmingham, New York

This youth program is part of a multicultural civil rights center that provides educational and vocational support to impoverished Birmingham communities. While the center serves elementary school children to senior citizens, the primary age group in the youth program is 16 to 25. The program increases the success of 200 to 300 young adults by creating opportunities for them to interact with younger children, as well as with older adults.

YouthBuild St. Louis St. Louis, Missouri

This program is sponsored by YouthBuild USA, a national organization that helps low-income young adults serve their communities by building affordable housing, while transforming their own lives. Created in response to St. Louis' elevated school dropout rate, this YouthBuild site provides education and employment to between 50 and 100 low-income youth, ages 18 to 24; it offers continued support for more than 300 graduates.

Program 004 Minneapolis, Minnesota

The program operates within a larger democratic education initiative, providing a space for fewer than 50 youth, age 12 and up, to engage in peer interaction and self-directed activities. Program staff hope to cultivate participants' talents, culture, and interests for the benefit of the community.

Program 010 Denver, Colorado

This program operates within a neighborhood center that is grounded in the Catholic ministry, which works to eliminate oppression and address the needs of individuals, families, and communities. The program operates during the school year, serving middle school students, ages 12 to 14, through a variety of academic, cultural, social, and recreational activities that promote youth leadership.

Program 011 Nashville, Tennessee

This program engages a core group of about 50 primarily African American youth, ages 15 to 24, who reach a larger group of up to 200 peers through various educational projects and activities. The program mobilizes neighborhood youth, families, and businesses to increase educational and economic opportunities for young people.

Program 050 Atlanta, Georgia

Housed within a larger refugee organization, this program helps 50 to 100 refugee youth, ages 12 to 21 and over, tackle such issues as language and cultural barriers, and unemployment. Program staff work to address the elevated school dropout rates among young refugees, helping participants find jobs while remaining in school.

Program 051 New Orleans, Louisiana

This intergenerational church-based program serves over 300 African American youth. Its central mission is to transform communities through spiritual development, Christian community development, and strategic ministry partnerships. It engages youth in Bible study, leadership development, and educational activities.

Program 061 Oakland, California

This organization provides street outreach, health and wellness information, peer education support and referrals to low-income and homeless women of color, ages of 12 to 22. It serves as many as 1,200 young women, employing a core group to run the organization and provide street outreach. In exchange, this group receives job training and learns to design initiatives that improve the lives of young women.

Program 063 Memphis, Tennessee

This program is one of many offered by an organization that promotes advancement of the Latino community through leadership development, education, and cross-cultural understanding. Offered during the school year to fewer than 50 Latino youth, ages 12 to 19, the program promotes youth development and academic achievement through mentoring and parental involvement.

Community Art Sixteen % of the Programs

Artworks Seattle, Washington

This program offers a creative outlet for the talents of 200 to 300 youth, ages 12 to 21, many of whom have been in the juvenile justice system. It provides pre-employment training, paid internships, a drop-in art studio, a youth gallery, and a youth art advisory committee. Program staff believe that

youth gain a sense of pride and self-confidence by creating public art and improving eyesores in their community.

Education CAPACITY Columbus, Ohio

Offered by the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA), this program serves a core group of about 100 mostly African American youth, ages 12-23, involving over 1,000 youth in performances. It provides a safe space, exposure to diverse art forms, high quality art programs, and entrepreneurial opportunities, connecting youth to renowned artists and art administrators who help them expand their creativity.

Creative Solutions Dallas, Texas

This program is offered by Big Thought, a school district/city partnership that unites youth and communities through art and culture. It serves multi-ethnic youth, ages 12 to 18, who are in the county juvenile justice system. The program helps teens give back to their community, encourages them to consider art as a career or recreational outlet, and educates the community about their talents.

Destiny Art Center Oakland, California

This center offers school- and community-based outreach programs for 200 to 300 low-income youth and youth of color, ages 12 to 28. It brings in professional artists to teach classes in dance, martial arts, conflict resolution, self-defense, and youth leadership. By participating in community performances and events, program staff hope that youth will become artists and leaders who can amplify the message of peace and nonviolence.

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Housed within Manchester Bidwell, an adult job training site, the Guild is a multi-disciplinary, minority-directed arts education center that serves over 300 culturally diverse youth, ages 12 to 18. Program staff hope to stimulate intercultural understanding and inspire academic achievement by providing youth with mentorship and training in the visual and performing arts.

Matrix Theater Company Detroit, Michigan

This community-based theatre uses the transformative power of the arts to bring together over 300 multi-ethnic children, youth, adults, and elders in Southwest Detroit. Program staff hope to create a positive sense of place by working with participants

on varied issues from peer development to leadership development to community development, and by helping participants create, write, act, and produce original theatre.

Scrappy's Community Youth Center Tucson, Arizona

This center is one of the programs offered by Our Town, an organization that expands and strengthens support systems for children and youth in Pima County. Centrally located in the downtown, it offers a variety of art and martial arts activities to 60 culturally diverse youth, ages 16 to 23. On occasion, the center stages tour band events that draw up to 1,700 youth from surrounding areas and as far away as Mexico.

Silicon Valley De-Bug San Jose, California

This program is a project of the Pacific News Service. It provides a platform for civic engagement and leadership for fewer than 50 of the region's marginalized young working adults, ages 14 to 24. The program engages young people in creating a bilingual magazine, a television show, and a radio show; it also offers writing and art workshops that serve as the basis for community organizing and problem-solving.

Voices 110° After School Magazine Project Tucson, Arizona

To help low-income minority teens tell their personal and community stories, this program hires 20 young journalists, ages 14-21, at the beginning of each school year. They staff the magazine from October till May, with two veterans from the previous year serving as assistant editors and peer mentors. Their stories, published in cooperation with the Arizona Daily Star, counter stereotypes of low-income minority teens.

VOX Teen Communication Atlanta, Georgia

This program helps 50 to 100 teenagers, ages 12 to 19, speak out and become active community builders. They join the program to express their ideas and work as part of a culturally diverse team. The teens have created after-school and Saturday projects that help raise youth voices, including peer writing groups, a summer program, and a career preparation project called Graduation Countdown.

Program 002 Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, Illinois

This program provides media tools to over 300 underrepresented young people—low income youth,

youth of color, queer youth, youth with disabilities, girls in the juvenile justice system—, ages 12 to 25. Program staff believe that, by having access to these tools, youth can tell their stories, organize for social justice, and later assume roles as socially critical educators, policy-makers, and community leaders.

Program 027
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

This program operates within an organization that offers arts-based projects in education, land transformation, construction, and economic development in low-income communities. It introduces fewer than 50 African American and Hispanic youth, ages 12 to 22, to digital media, music, design, and the visual arts. The program builds academic and social skills, creates a safe place for youth, and connects them to their community.

Program 071
Atlanta, Georgia

This program works with 150 to 200 primarily African American youth, ages 12 to 22, who stay in the program for up to eight years. Using modern dance as a vehicle for teaching personal responsibility, respect, and commitment, program staff hope to encourage character development, physical fitness, and community leadership. Outreach programs in the public schools serve as many as 5,000 youth.

Program 074
Indianapolis, Indiana

Based within a major art museum, this program selects and trains a small group of high school students, ages 15 to 18, who travel around the state making presentations and conducting workshops on the art and culture of various countries. These paid interns practice work-related skills, while providing children and adults with an international perspective on visual art, music, dance, cuisine, geography, and clothing.

Community Development
Fifteen % of the Programs

Youth Leaders Network
Boston, Massachusetts

Housed within the Asian Community Development Corporation, which creates affordable housing and loan programs for small businesses, this organization serves fewer than 50 Asian youth in Boston's Chinatown. To promote a sense of competency among youth, ages 15 to 22, it involves them in a variety of community building activities, including

working on redevelopment plans with architecture students, developers, and residents.

Leadership Excellence
Oakland, California

This program helps 200 to 300 African American and Hispanic youth, ages 12 to 21, become leaders who can create social change in urban communities. It offers a blend of youth development and youth organizing, combining personal and social transformation with community building and entrepreneurship. The program provides youth with meaningful roles in community problem-solving and improvement.

Ma'o Organic Farms
Honolulu, Hawaii

This program operates multiple projects out of a five-acre certified organic farm that is co-managed by Native Hawaiian interns, ages 17 to 25. Over a 10-month period, interns learn farming and entrepreneurship, and provide healthy produce to the local community through farmers' markets and a farm-operated café. They also build edible gardens and teach organic farming to over 300 students at local intermediate schools.

Shaw Eco Village Project
Washington, DC

Originated in 1998 in response to a growing demand for sustainable urban neighborhoods, this program provides 200 to 300 mostly African American youth, ages 12 to 18, with the skills to contribute to a sustainable city. Through hands-on community revitalization projects, it engages youth in cultural preservation, community design, environmental justice, equitable development, health, and local capacity building.

The Food Project
Boston, Massachusetts

This youth/adult partnership seeks to create a sustainable local food system. It works with over 300 youth, ages 12 to 18, engaging them in sustainable farming and farmers' markets, service in homeless shelters, and cross-cultural relationships. Program staff believe that, by contributing to a sustainable food system, youth can bridge differences in race, class, and age to help ensure food security for all.

United Community Centers (UCC)
Brooklyn, New York

Founded by public housing residents to advocate for a better quality of life, UCC offers after-school programming for 50 to 100 African American and Hispanic youth, sponsoring such activities as bike tours, fairs, and health campaigns. One project, the East New York Farm Project, supplies the community with fresh affordable produce, while contributing

to economic development and creating safe public spaces.

Youth Action Research Institute (YARI) Hartford, Connecticut

Formed in 1996, this program is housed within the Institute for Community Research, an organization that builds community capacity and fosters democratic community partnerships. YARI engages 50 to 100 primarily African American and Hispanic youth in action research. It nurtures individual, peer, and community development, while affording youth opportunities to demonstrate their talents to neighborhood residents.

YouthBuild Atlanta Atlanta, Georgia

This program is sponsored by YouthBuild USA, a national organization that helps unemployed low-income young adults—many who have not completed high school—serve their communities, while transforming their own lives. The Atlanta site engages fewer than 50 African American youth, ages 15 to 24, in constructing affordable housing in the city, providing not only job skills but also academic and leadership skills.

YouthBuild Hartford Hartford, Connecticut

This program is also sponsored by YouthBuild USA. The Hartford site engages 50 to 100 African American and Hispanic youth, ages 15 to 24, in home-building activities that develop their sense of self and leadership skills.

Youth in Focus Oakland, California

This social justice program provides training for underrepresented youth, ages 12 to 18, in youth-led planning, research, action, and evaluation in their communities. Program staff believe that youth can effectively partner with adults to address social and organizational challenges, and create sustainable social change.

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice Bronx, New York

This program creates a space of self-reliance for 50 to 100 African American and Hispanic youth, ages 12 to 21, engaging them in such hands-on community improvement projects as planting, river reclamation, park restoration, design and construction projects, and environmental justice campaigns. Through such projects, program staff believe that young people can define and construct the human condition.

Program 020 Bronx, New York

This program engages 325 multi-ethnic youth, ages 12 and over, in activities that celebrate the cultural vitality of their community. The program links artistic and economic revitalization, promoting local enterprise and responsible ecological practices, while emphasizing creativity and self-investment as strategies for positive change.

Program 056 Detroit, Michigan

This program, which is housed within a children's mental health organization, serves 100 to 150 youth, ages 12 to 22. It connects participants to resources and youth advocates, helping them develop their leadership skills by becoming actively involved in school and community improvement projects.

Identity Support Nine % of the Programs

JASMYN Jacksonville, Florida

This program serves over 300 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth, ages 12 to 21. It provides a safe place to meet friends and participate in educational and recreational activities that nurture health and well-being, and enhance pride and self-esteem. The program offers a drop-in center and HIV testing.

Time Out Youth Charlotte, North Carolina

This program provides support, advocacy, and education for 200 to 300 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, ages 13 to 23. It works to expose and eradicate discrimination, and is committed to preventing risk factors that affect not just LGBTQ youth, but all young people. The program promotes an atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance in Charlotte and its surrounding communities.

Youth Leadership Development of Sexual Minority Youth Austin, Texas

Formerly called Out Youth, this program serves over 300 gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth, ages 12 to 19 in Austin and Central Texas, providing them with a safe space to “fearlessly be themselves.” It offers peer support groups, counseling, education programs, social activities, and civic engagement activities.

Program 012
Boston, Massachusetts

Operating during the school year, this program serves 200 to 300 Asian American youth, ages 15 to 18. It celebrates Asian heritage and seeks to improve race relations, providing youth with opportunities to engage in dialogue and bring about positive change in their communities.

Program 019
New York, New York

This program provides a safe space for 50 to 100 African American and Hispanic young women, ages 13 to 21, encouraging them to take ownership over their lives. It provides activities that raise sociopolitical consciousness and develop leadership and organizing skills. The program helps young women of color support each other, while becoming active, socially critical members of their community.

Program 028
San Francisco, California

This program targets African American and Hispanic females, ages 16 to 23, in the juvenile justice system or the street economy. It works with a core group of 30 but reaches over 300 young women, engaging them in culturally relevant educational activities, the fine arts, and vocational and advocacy training. Through peer learning, the program nurtures the skills young women of color need improve their current and future lives.

Program 069
Portland, Maine

This program is one of ten loosely affiliated organizations that serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth throughout New England. It provides a safe and affirming environment for over 300 LGBTQ youth, ages 12 to 22. The program uses a youth-driven, adult supported model of decision-making and participation.

Community Service
Five % of the Programs

City Year San Jose
San Jose, California

This program is part of a network of sites in the United States and abroad. It has an 80-member youth corps, ages 15 to 24, who volunteer in ten elementary and middle schools, providing academic support, civic engagement, and leadership development for 4,800 students. Through these activities, corps members help increase the resiliency of their

mentees, while contributing to a more caring, stimulating school climate.

Youth as Resources
United Way of Central Indiana
Indianapolis, Indiana

This program engages a core group of teens as members of a philanthropic board that funds youth organizations to carry out youth-led community service projects throughout Marion County. It is committed to promoting a positive image of youth by harnessing their energy for community improvement efforts. The program promotes youth development through service and civic engagement in communities of need.

Program 029
San Antonio, Texas

This program is part of an international “action tank” that works to advance and improve the concept of community service. It engages a core group of youth as volunteers in the public schools, providing mentoring, leadership development, and service learning to between 600 and 800 students annually. Program staff believe that soon millions of young Americans will expect to devote one year to serving their communities.

Placemaking
Three % of the Programs

Casey Trees Endowment Fund
Washington, DC

The Fund works with local and federal government agencies, community groups, and individual citizens to restore, enhance, and protect the city’s tree canopy. It links paid high school and college interns, ages 15 to 24, with volunteer citizen foresters. The interns gain work experience and develop an environmental ethic by conducting site analyses, designing planting and management plans, and physically planting the trees.

Youth Leadership for Vital
Communities
Minneapolis, Minnesota

This program is part of the Wilder Foundation, a service agency that offers housing, elder services, and youth programming. It helps fewer than 50 youth of color, ages 15 to 18, acquire leadership skills, while working to enhance their community. The program engages teens in a range of youth-led hands-on projects that bring a youth perspective to the design and use of various spaces in the city.

Program 046 Detroit, Michigan

This program is a multicultural youth movement to rebuild and redefine Detroit. The program engages 100 to 150 youth, ages 12 to 25, in visioning workshops, dialogues, and hands-on community beautification projects. Through this work, program staff hope to develop leadership skills, and engage the energy and imagination of low-income youth.

No Primary Activity Type Two % of the Programs

The Service Board Seattle, Washington

This program, located in the city's historically African American neighborhood, works with 15

to 20 youth of color, ages 15 to 18, including four veterans from the previous year who serve as peer leaders. Founded in 1995, it engages youth in community service, adult/youth mentoring, political education, vocational training, and snowboarding. Program staff expand opportunities for healthy adolescent self-expression through leadership, creativity, and skill development.

Program 088 Miami, Florida

This county-wide program serves over 300 Caribbean and Hispanic youth, ages 12 to 18. It helps teens steer away from drugs, gangs, and violence, while motivating them to take positive action to make their communities happier, healthier, and safer.

APPENDIX D

Location of the Study Population

Not only are more programs located on the East Coast (41% of the programs, 43% of the referrals), we also had more difficulty locating programs on the West Coast (31% of the programs, 33% of the referrals) and especially in the Midwest (28% of the programs, 24% of the referrals). The majority of East Coast programs are in the northeast, especially the New York Metropolitan Area, rather than in the south, and the majority of West Coast programs are in the Bay Area. The study population does not include any programs from several states in the central and southern part of the country (Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, Virginia, Wisconsin). In addition, it lacks programs in several major metropolitan areas in upstate New York, Ohio, Florida, and Texas. Although we found no significant relationship between location and other program characteristics, the concentration of programs in the New York Metropolitan and Bay Areas, and lack of programs in the heartland deserves further investigation. Figure D-1 shows the location of the study population.

List of Program Locations

Based upon the ranking of the 2000 population in metropolitan statistical areas (US Census Bureau 2003):

- Thirty-seven programs (42%) are located in large metropolitan areas, rank 1 - 11, with an approximate population of between 18.3 million and 4.3 million.
- Twenty-one programs (24%) are located in medium sized metropolitan areas, rank 12 - 20, with an approximate population of between 4.1 million and 2.1 million.
- Thirty programs (34%) are located in small metropolitan areas (rank 22 - 55 and Portland, which ranks 91) with an approximate population of between 2.2 million and .5 million.

LOCATION OF THE STUDY POPULATION

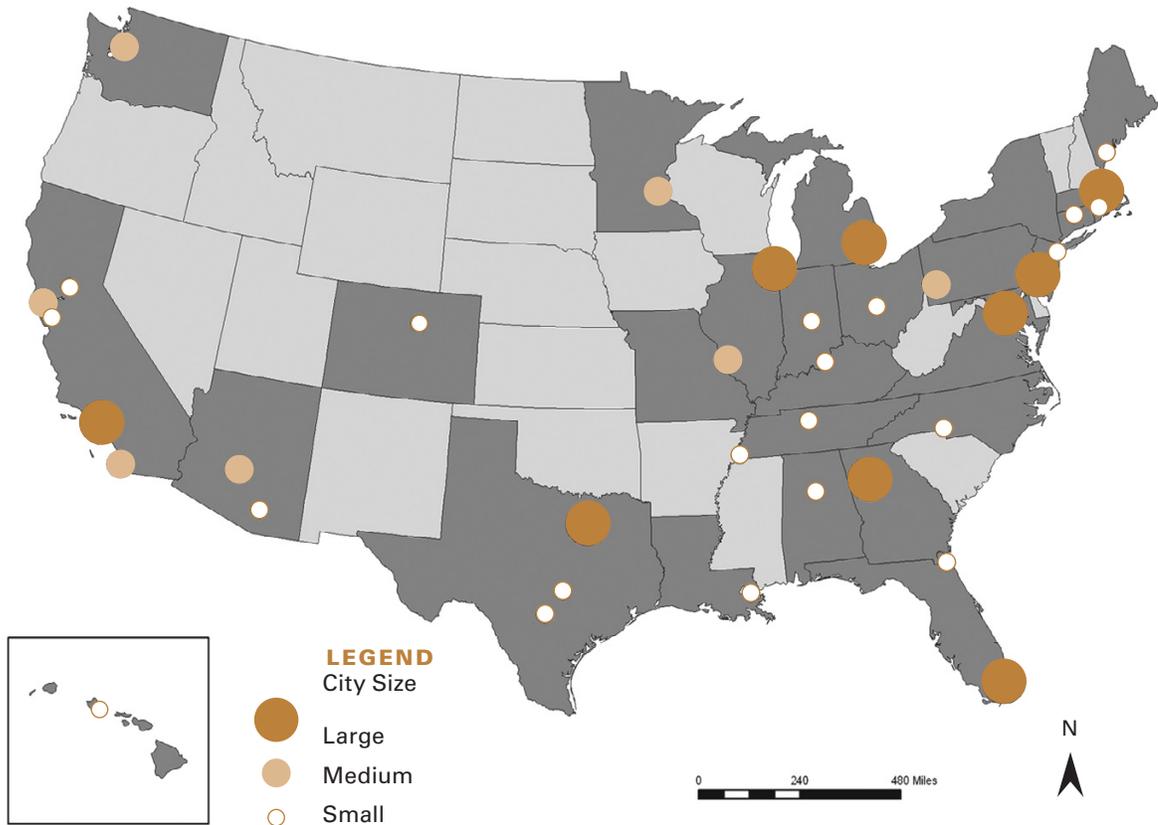


FIGURE D-1 Map Showing the Location of the Study Population

PROGRAMS IN LARGE METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS		
Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Area	# of Programs
1	New York-Wayne-White Plains, NY-NJ	12
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, CA	2
3	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL	4
4	Philadelphia, PA	3
5	Dallas-Plano-Irving, TX	1
6	Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall, FL	1
7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD	3
9	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	3
10	Boston-Quincy, MA	3
11	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	5
	Total (10 MSAs)	37

PROGRAMS IN MEDIUM-SIZED METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS

Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Area	# of Programs
12	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	10
14	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	1
15	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	5
16	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	2
17	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	1
18	St. Louis, MO-IL	1
20	Pittsburgh, PA	1
	Total (7 MSAs)	21

PROGRAMS IN SMALL-SIZED METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS

Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Area	# of Programs
22	Denver-Aurora, CO	2
27	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	1
28	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	2
29	San Antonio, TX	2
31	Columbus, OH	1
32	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	1
34	Indianapolis, IN	2
37	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	2
38	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	3
39	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN	2
40	Austin-Round Rock, TX	2
41	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	1
43	Louisville, KY-IN	1
44	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	2
45	Jacksonville, FL	1
48	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	1
52	Honolulu, HI ¹	1
55	Tucson, AZ	2
91	Portland-South Portland, ME	1
	Total (19 MSAs)	30

¹ This program is not located in the city center but rather in a town about 40 miles away that has a population of just 45,000, making it the only rural program in the study. We included the program because we wanted Native Hawaiian representation, but this population has been pushed out of the city center due to high housing costs.

APPENDIX E

Youth Development Philosophy Matrix

PREVENTION	PROMOTION ¹	TRANSFORMATION ²
<p>Focus is on risk reduction, prevention of problems and risky behaviors, resolving difficulties, and reducing risks; deficit-oriented; youth as problems. A categorical approach to program services (targeted to specific problems or issues such as substance abuse). Underlying premise: problem reduction will enhance development.</p>	<p>Focus is on positive youth development; assets and strengths-oriented; youth as resources. Minimizes differences among youth and focuses on equity and inclusion. Ecological view of youth within the context of families and communities. Underlying premise: youth development will prevent problems.</p>	<p>Focus is on engaging youth in transforming the root causes of youth and community marginality via critical analysis of youth/society relationships; youth as change agents. Attentive to differences among youth in opportunities, social location, and identity. Underlying premise: both youth and communities benefit from socially transformative action.</p>

1. CONNECTION

<p>Safety as Protection Program practices are designed to protect youth from risky external and familial influences.</p>	<p>Safety as Safety Program practices emphasize physical and psychological safety; they increase safe peer group interactions and decrease unsafe interactions.</p>	<p>Safety as Sanctuary Program practices create "a space apart" or refuge from oppression, marginality, and invisibility; a space for self and collective exploration and expression; a space for healing, meaning-making, and spirituality.</p>
<p>Support as Guidance Program relationships emphasize adult oversight, guidance, control, and containment of youth behaviors.</p>	<p>Support as Support Program emphasizes supportive relationships with caring adults and prosocial peers; relationships provide warmth, caring, support, guidance, mentoring, good communication, secure attachment, and responsiveness.</p>	<p>Support as Connectivity Program emphasizes supportive, mutually respectful, and reflexive relationships with peers and adult allies; multigenerational scaffolding, family involvement, and collectivity; long-term investment and availability.</p>

¹ Adapted from National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (2002).

² Adapted from Ginwright and James (2002), related literature, and the research team's notes.

Belonging as Involvement

Program emphasizes regular attendance, retention of material, and completion of assignments; it requires involvement in, and compliance with, planned activities.

Belonging as Belonging

Program emphasizes regular attendance, retention of material, and completion of assignments; it requires involvement in, and compliance with, planned activities.

Belonging as Recognition

Program emphasizes inclusion grounded in personal and cultural recognition and respect, sociocultural identity development, and commitment to intercultural and race relations; it offers a loving and affirming space.

2. SOCIALIZATION**Norms as Inoculation**

Program emphasizes rectifying antisocial norms, reckless behavior, and negative peer influences.

Positive Social Norms

Program emphasizes rules of behavior, expectations, injunctions, ways of doing things, values and morals, obligations for service, and pro-social attitudes and behaviors.

Norms as Critical Awareness

Program emphasizes critical awareness of the intersection between personal experiences and structural conditions, critical analysis of power dynamics, and sociopolitical awareness as the basis for empowerment and social action.

Structure as Discipline

Program structure is relatively inflexible; it uses behavioral rewards and sanctions to produce or increase compliance with program expectations.

Structure as Structure

Program structure is framed by social norms, with age-appropriate content and monitoring; it offers clear and consistent rules, expectations, and limits; it provides continuity, predictability, and clear boundaries.

Structure as Responsiveness

Program structure offers flexible programming in response to the needs of youth; it emphasizes youth resources, perspectives, goals, and settings; it helps youth and adults work in partnership to determine and guide the agenda.

Autonomy as Conformity

Program practices emphasize conformity to adult and programmatic expectations.

Autonomy as Self-determination

Program practices support autonomy, self-advocacy, and individual youth empowerment; they offer opportunities to make a difference in one's community, have meaningful challenges and responsibilities, and be taken seriously.

Autonomy as empowerment

Program practices emphasize youth as collective community actors; youth agency, resistance, and leadership; youth as powerful resources and agents of change.

3. CREATIVITY/PLAY

<p>Creativity as Activity Program engages youth in structured recreational and artistic activities as an alternative to participating in risky behaviors.</p>	<p>Creativity as Expression Program engages youth in exploring ideas through different media; it encourages creative expression through the arts (e.g., art lessons, dance classes, theater troupes, bands, orchestras) as a component of individual development.</p>	<p>Creativity as Social Change Program engages youth in creative activities—art, design, music, dance, theater, journalism, photography, video, multimedia, youth culture—as a vehicle for personal and social change; it recognizes the transformative value of playfulness and happiness.</p>
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4. CONTRIBUTION

<p>Service as Volunteerism Program involves youth in sporadic community service activities, which are typically not an integral element of the program design.</p>	<p>Service as Community Service Program involves youth in long-term, intensive volunteerism or civic service that requires a substantial investment and contribution, and comprises a meaningful activity within a larger program.</p>	<p>Service as Engagement Program involves youth in service as civic engagement and activism through participatory community planning, community design, placemaking, community development, community action, community organizing, legislative and political advocacy, alliance-building, cultural preservation, movement-building, and social change.</p>
<p>Involvement is Adult-directed Program services are adult-designed and implemented.</p>	<p>Involvement is Youth-included Program activities are adult-designed but encourage meaningful youth participation, involvement, and leadership in community life (youth leadership may be in activities external to program itself).</p>	<p>Involvement is Youth-directed Program activities are of central importance to youth and are primarily youth-identified; they capture youth vision and imagination; they allow for a significant degree of democratic participation.</p>

5. COMPETENCE**Skill-building as Problem Management**

Program emphasizes the skills and competencies needed to manage stress or challenges, e.g. being able to avoid risky situations, manage problem behaviors, or practice healthy behaviors.

Skill-building as Skill Building

Program emphasizes the skills and competencies required for normative social integration, e.g. being able to achieve academically (completing high school or accessing post-secondary education); being prepared for adult employment (having vocational skills and a work ethic); acquiring personal and social skills and habits of mind; developing social and cultural capital.

Skill-building as Social Mobility

Program emphasizes having skills and competencies as a matter of social equity, e.g. having a meaningful education (gained through popular and political education, action research, or project-based and experiential learning); being prepared for entrepreneurial versus low-level employment (having digital, computing, multimedia, or managerial skills); being able to provide leadership (having writing, public speaking, communication, visioning, and advocacy skills).

6. THEORY OF CHANGE**Change is Person-centered**

Program practices focus on changing or preventing the problematic behaviors of individuals.

Change is Ecological

Program practices focus on facilitating healthy individual development within the context of family and community.

Change is Contextual

Program practices focus simultaneously on youth and community development; they consider the situatedness of youth (in place, neighborhood, and community) and express a commitment to individual and collective well-being.

Senior Research Team

Sharon E. Sutton, PhD, FAIA, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design, Adjunct Professor of Social Work, and Director of CEEDS (Center for Environment Education and Design Studies) at the University of Washington. She served as the principal investigator and lead on West Coast data collection.

Susan P. Kemp, PhD, Associate Professor of Social Work and Faculty Affiliate in CEEDS at the University of Washington. She served as a co-principal investigator and primary author of the youth development philosophy matrix.

Lorraine Gutiérrez, PhD, Professor of Social Work and Psychology, and Faculty Associate in American Culture at the University of Michigan. She served as a co-principal investigator and lead on Midwest data collection.

Susan Saegert, PhD, Professor of Environmental Psychology and Director of the Center for Human Environments at City University of New York. She served as a co-principal investigator and lead on East Coast data collection.

Michael K. Conn PhD, Director of the Girl Scout Research Institute at Girl Scouts of the USA headquarters in New York City. He served as a research consultant.

Jeffrey Hou, PhD, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Faculty Affiliate in CEEDS at the University of Washington. He served as a community practice consultant.

Monica Oxford, PhD, Research Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of Washington. She served as the statistician.

Center for Environment Education and Design Studies
College of Architecture and Urban Planning
208P Gould Hall, Box 355720
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98195-5720