



A Comparative Analysis of Community Youth Development Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Many youth-serving organizations are engaging young people in youth organizing and/or in interventions to support specific identity development in response to a need for meaningful opportunities for older and diverse youth to be civically involved in their communities. In this paper, we explore differences in developmental outcomes and supports and opportunities among youth organizing, identity-support, and traditional youth development organizations. Survey and qualitative findings suggest significant differences, particularly in developmental outcomes such as civic activism and identity development. In addition, the youth organizing agencies are characterized by youth's experience of higher levels of youth leadership, decision making, and community involvement in comparison with other agencies in the study. This research suggests that deliberate approaches to staffing and decision-making structures can influence youth outcomes.

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A number of factors undermine social connectedness and civic engagement within America's increasingly diverse society. Among these are intolerance for diversity, poorly developed civic infrastructures to accommodate our nation's diversity, and limited opportunities for youth to critically examine their civic identities. These forces pose daunting challenges for youth, particularly those coming from poor and under-resourced neighborhoods, to see how they can contribute to their communities and find a place for themselves within the larger society (Hart & Atkins, 2002).

Concerned policy makers are calling for more meaningful opportunities for youth, particularly those who have been marginalized from the mainstream, to be involved in their local communities to address this troubling decline in civic participation (Kahne, Honig, & McLaughlin, 2002; Sullivan, 1997; Torney-Purtra, 1999). Although there is consensus that increased civic participation among marginalized youth is needed, there is no consensus as to the most developmentally appropriate and effective strategies for engendering such engagement. Some youth-serving organizations have responded by engaging young people in youth organizing and/or in interventions to support specific identity development (Ginwright & James, 2002; Lewis-Charp, Yu, Soukamneuth, & Lacoé 2003).

Youth within organizing groups hone their political participation and critical thinking skills by asserting their voices on the issues that most affect them. **Youth organizing** approaches include political education, community mapping, public protest, letter-writing campaigns, and public awareness movements. Youth have led successful campaigns to increase language access in standardized tests, lobbied against punitive California legislation that would lead to increased youth incarceration, organized against toxic waste facilities in their low-

income communities, and sought to create new forms of community policing.

Identity support groups foster opportunities for marginalized young people from a specific identity group (e.g. African-American youth, gay and lesbian youth, etc.) to build an autonomous yet socially integrated and connected sense of self.

Identity support approaches include "critical" education about the history and politics of the identity group, interactive and experiential learning, support groups, and community outreach, education, and advocacy. Community engagement within these groups focuses more broadly on civic awareness and connectedness rather than organized social action.

Although youth organizing and identity support are potentially powerful strategies for youth development, research is insufficient for demonstrating how effective they are for achieving desired community engagement outcomes and at supporting the holistic development of youth (Larson & Richards, 2003; Sherrod, 2000; Michelsen, Zaff & Hair, 2002). This study compares the youth organizing and identity support approaches to traditional youth development programs, so that the effectiveness of these approaches can be investigated.

Two key research questions guided this work: (1) do youth in organizing and identity-support organizations experience developmental supports and opportunities at different levels than youth in more traditional youth development organizations? and (2) are there differences in levels of key developmental outcomes between youth organizing, identity-support, and traditional youth development organizations?

ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

The findings reported in this article draw on data generated as part of an evaluation of the Youth Leadership Development Initiative (YLDI). The original data from the YLDI study came from

a group of nine organizations that utilized one of two key programming strategies – identity support or youth organizing. Findings from the evaluation suggested that youth organizing and identity support programs show promise in addressing the alienation and disengagement of marginalized young people from civic life. Evidence suggests they present opportunities for political socialization different from other youth-serving institutions because they strive to respond to issues of relevance to youth and address basic issues of personal and social identity as an entrée to civic action (Lewis-Charp et al., 2003). Additionally, such organizations emphasize respect for diversity and put youth in roles as leaders - where young people, rather than adults, construct meanings and understandings of public spheres (Camino & Shepherd, 2002; Torney-Purtra, 1999). While much existing research documents youths’ marginalization from civic participation and society because of their race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and immigrant status, the YLDI research focused attention on the ways that youth organizing and identity support enable young people to act upon their desire to change the forces that relegate them to the margins

(Mohamed & Wheeler, 2001).

A limitation of the original YLDI study was its lack of reference to other types of youth programming against which youths’ developmental experiences within this type of organization could be considered. In order to strengthen and expand our findings, we identified and administered our survey to a comparison group of eight organizations. Comparison organizations were selected that targeted older and racially diverse adolescents and had some community engagement without an explicit focus on identity support or youth organizing. This article summarizes the results of this comparative analysis, and frames questions for further research on each of these strategies based on quantitative and qualitative data collected.

I. METHODOLOGY

RESPONDENTS

To get a comparative perspective of the effectiveness of different programmatic approaches, we administered a survey in four identity support (n=145 youth respondents), five youth organizing (n=65 youth respondents), and eight “traditional” youth development organizations

FIGURE 1

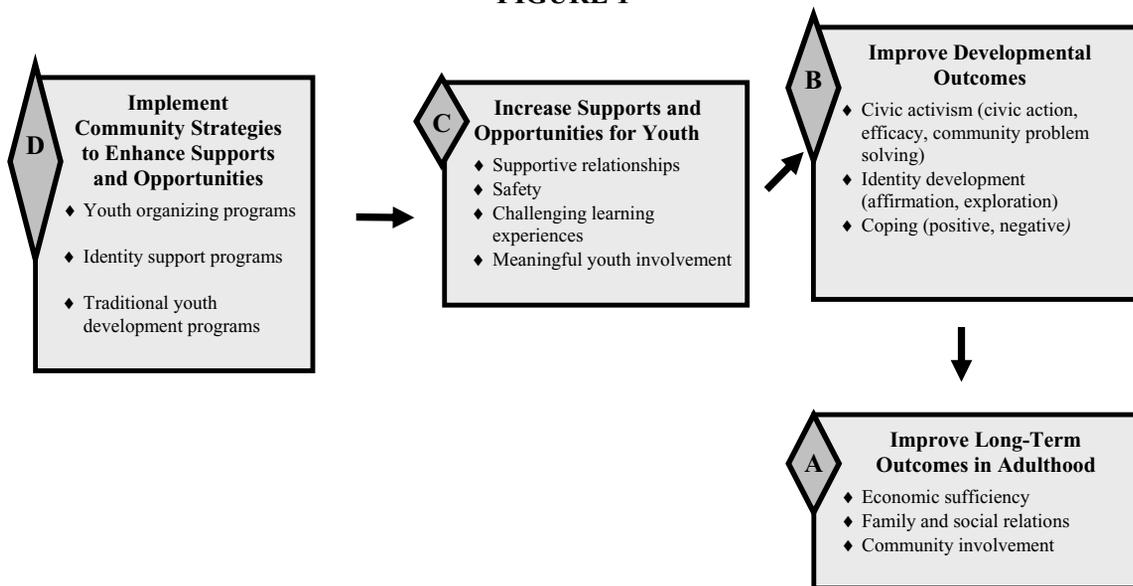


Table 1.
Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

	I. Identity Support YLDI Agencies (145)	II. Youth Organizing YLDI Agencies (65)	III. General Youth Development Comparison Agencies (257)
Race/Ethnicity			
African American	64%	27%	44%
Hispanic	0%	23%	13%
White	11%	12%	16%
Asian American & Pacific Islander	17%	30%	7%
Other/Multi-Racial	9%	8%	18%
Age			
Mean age	16.5	16.6	15.0
Time in Program			
At org 3 Months or Less	44%	24%	25%
At org > 1 yr	44%	60%	60%
Frequency of Attendance			
Attend every day	11%	54%	41%

SURVEY MEASURES

The youth development framework of Connell, Gambone and Smith (2000) provides a road map that identifies desired long-term outcomes for young people and articulates the youth development practices needed to achieve these outcomes. Specifically, the framework focuses on the supports and opportunities that young people need to experience in order to attain key developmental outcomes (i.e., learning to be productive, to connect and to navigate) as they move toward long-term, early adult outcomes. Community strategies (such as civic engagement programs) are expected to enhance developmental outcomes through the provision of these supports and opportunities (see Figure 1).

In designing the research project, we operationalized each of the components in the theory of change relative to the work and goals of the organizations in the YLDI project. The developmental outcomes (Figure 1, Box B) measured are: (1) civic activism, so that young people can participate in civic action with a sense of efficacy, and the capacity for community problem

solving (11 items, $\alpha = .90$). (2) Identity development, so that young people experience a sense of affirmation of their identity and the ability to explore the different aspects of their identity (12 items, $\alpha = .89$). (3) Coping, so that young people increase the number of positive, or healthy, coping strategies they use; and decrease the number of negative, or unhealthy, coping strategies they use (6 items, $\alpha = .51$).

We also measured youth's experience of **supports and opportunities** (Figure 1, Box C) in five areas. Supportive relationships assess the extent to which young people experience guidance, emotional and practical support and whether adults and peers know them and what is important to them (10 items, $\alpha = .86$). Safety assesses young people's experience of physical and emotional security (8 items, $\alpha = .51$). Youth involvement assesses how young people are involved in meaningful roles with responsibility, that is, having input into decision-making, having opportunities for leadership, and feeling

a sense of belonging (13 items, $\alpha = .87$). Skill building assesses young people's experiences of challenging and interesting learning activities that help them build a wide array of skills, and experience a sense of growth and progress (7 items, $\alpha = .79$). Community involvement measures young people's understanding of the greater community and having opportunities to give back to their community (6 items, $\alpha = .79$).

ANALYSIS METHOD

We used a non-traditional method to analyze the survey data that shows the results in terms of youth's experiences measured against a standard, rather than conventional ways of looking at mean levels. The standard is created by looking across the questions for each of the supports and opportunities (e.g., supportive relationships) and developmental outcomes (e.g., civic activism) to see whether the pattern of answers indicates that youth are consistently experiencing all of the relevant developmental dimensions of that area.

For example, in supportive relationships if a youth's responses indicate they consistently have adults to go to for guidance, emotional support, practical support, etc., that youth's experience of supportive relationships is rated as developmentally optimal. Conversely, if a young person's responses indicate they consistently do not get these benefits from relationships with adults in the program, they are rated as having a developmentally insufficient experience. In this way we can see what proportion of the youth in a program are having experiences that reach the highest standard (i.e., optimal) and what proportion might be having experiences that do not meet the standard of being developmentally rich (i.e., insufficient).

We conducted chi square tests to determine whether there were significant differences in the proportion of youth who are having optimal or insufficient experiences and outcomes among the three groups: identity-focused, youth organizing and traditional youth development organizations.

In addition, paired t-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences between: (1) youth organizing and identity support agencies; (2) youth organizing and traditional agencies; (3) identity support and traditional agencies.

QUALITATIVE DATA

In presenting the survey results, we elaborate on the findings with qualitative data derived from two rounds of site visits to the identity support and youth organizing agencies, which included observations and extensive one-on-one and focus group interviews with program staff, youth, and community members.

II. FINDINGS FROM THIS STUDY

We were interested in comparing the results in two ways. First, we compared the organizing and identity development organizations with each other. Next, we compared those organizations to the traditional youth development agencies.

DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

Developmental theory and research has shown that achieving healthy outcomes as an adult requires that youth reach key developmental milestones during their adolescence. These milestones can be characterized as learning to be productive, learning to be connected, and learning to navigate (Gambone et al., 2002; Connell, Gambone and Smith 2000). We measured one outcome in each developmental area. It is important to keep in mind that developmental outcomes represent accomplishments of youth that are affected by the sum of their experiences, over time, in different settings. As such, these are outcomes that programs can contribute to only in the limited time they have contact with participants. Programs have relatively less ability to single-handedly change these outcomes than they do youth's experiences of supports and opportunities.

Table 2 shows the percentage of youth

demonstrating optimal or insufficient levels of each of the developmental outcomes. Column I contains data for the YLDI agencies classified as identity support programs; Column II has data for the YLDI agencies classified as youth organizing programs; and Column III shows data for the traditional youth development agencies. We found significant differences across the three types of agencies in the proportions of youth in two of the three outcome areas measured.

Table 2.
Developmental Outcomes by Agency Type

	I. Identity Support YLDI Agencies (145)		II. Youth Organizing YLDI Agencies (65)		III. General Youth Development Comparison Agencies (257)		
	Insufficient	Optimal	Insufficient	Optimal	Insufficient	Optimal	
Civic Activism Overall	34%	33%	18%	42%	52%	20%	***
Civic Action	28%	30%	15%	42%	42%	19%	***
Efficacy/ Agency	10%	46%	6%	40%	23%	26%	***
Community Problem Solving	11%	33%	3%	37%	23%	20%	***
Identity Development Overall	2%	55%	6%	34%	21%	16%	***
Affirmation	1%	62%	3%	46%	20%	21%	***
Exploration	12%	42%	14%	31%	38%	12%	***
Coping Overall	12%	67%	14%	63%	18%	58%	ns
Positive Coping	10%	54%	9%	49%	21%	49%	ns
Negative Coping	15%	59%	15%	55%	15%	53%	ns

*** Significant differences between groups at .001

** Significant differences between groups at .01

* Significant differences between groups at .05

Civic Activism. Higher proportions of youth in both identity support and youth organizing agencies report optimal levels on the indicators of this outcome – civic action, efficacy and community problem solving – compared with youth in the traditional youth development agencies. About 40 percent of youth in the **youth organizing** agencies are optimal on civic activism overall and on each of the indicators of civic activism. About one-third of youth in the **identity support** agencies are optimal on these indicators as well (with the exception of efficacy, where 46% of youth are in the optimal category). Although the proportions are somewhat higher on the indicators for youth in the youth organizing agencies than they are for youth in the identity support programs, the differences are not statistically significant. Both types of civic engagement agencies, however, have significantly higher proportions of youth demonstrating optimal levels of civic activism outcomes than do the traditional youth development agencies.

We know that many traditional youth development organizations provide only limited opportunities for youth to participate in community service types of activities. Where these opportunities do exist they usually occur only periodically and for small numbers of the most engaged youth. Even fewer youth seem to have opportunities in these programs to explore the communities around them and understand how they can play a role in their communities. Given the lack of emphasis on this area in programming, the findings here are consistent with our expectations that fewer youth in traditional settings have attained the civic activism outcomes measured in this study.

Identity Development. As we would anticipate, youth in identity support agencies fare better in terms of identity outcomes – identity affirmation and identity exploration – than either the of the other type agencies. Although the identity support agencies were strongest of the three types in this area, the youth organizing agencies also have significantly more youth at optimal levels of these indicators than did the traditional youth

development agencies.

Qualitative data indicate that identity development is linked to specific practices within YLDI agencies. Identity-support agencies celebrate and affirm the ethnic, racial, cultural, and/or sexual identity of youth participants. They provide information on the history, art, and spiritual traditions of youths' identity group, and work to equip youth with knowledge and skills to deal with prejudice. Key program strategies included support groups, consciousness raising (through critical self-reflection), and cultural celebrations. Youth organizing agencies had less of an explicit focus on identity, and yet they too overtly discussed issues of identity within the context of the community issues they were addressing.

Coping. Coping is the only developmental outcome for which all agencies look similar. There were no significant differences among these agencies on either indicator of coping skills – negative coping or positive coping. In fact, half to two-thirds of the youth participating in all of the agencies fall into the optimal range of the coping measure used in this study. Because we did not collect qualitative data on strategies specifically used to address these skills, we are limited in our ability to explain this result. It is possible: 1) that participation in any of these types of youth organizations generally helps young people develop positive coping strategies; 2) young people with better coping skills come to these organizations (i.e., self-select into them); or 3) we might need to do further work on refining the measurement coping in a way that better distinguishes differences.

Table 3
Youth's Experience of Supports and Opportunities by Agency Type

	I. Identity Support YLDI Agencies (145)		II. Youth Organizing YLDI Agencies (65)		III. General Youth Development Comparison Agencies (257)		
	Insufficient	Optimal	Insufficient	Optimal	Insufficient	Optimal	
Supportive Relationships Overall	6%	70%	6%	71%	18%	52%	***
Guidance	6%	81%	6%	82%	22%	62%	***
Emotional Support	7%	83%	6%	88%	14%	73%	**
Practical Support	8%	77%	6%	77%	22%	56%	***
Adults' Knowledge of Youth	43%	52%	22%	68%	38%	60%	***
Peer Knowledge of Youth	26%	72%	18%	78%	32%	68%	ns
Safety Overall	0%	38%	0%	31%	0%	29%	ns
Physical Safety	0%	48%	0%	38%	0%	45%	ns
Emotional Safety	0%	61%	0%	57%	0%	45%	*
Youth Involvement Overall	41%	4%	17%	26%	41%	7%	***
Decision Making	32%	4%	2%	31%	31%	10%	***
Youth Leadership	62%	3%	23%	26%	54%	4%	***
Belonging	17%	43%	15%	54%	27%	28%	***
Skill Building Overall	30%	43%	34%	26%	38%	26%	**
Interesting	23%	50%	25%	40%	23%	27%	***
Growth & Progress	6%	50%	0%	51%	17%	28%	***
Challenging	11%	52%	11%	38%	24%	32%	***
Community Involvement Overall	12%	35%	3%	58%	16%	24%	***
Chance to Give Back	31%	48%	14%	69%	23%	49%	**
Knowledge of Community	16%	23%	3%	72%	37%	29%	***

*** Significant differences between groups at .001

** Significant differences between groups at .01

* Significant differences between groups at .05

SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The level of supports and opportunities youth experience during adolescence has been linked to the likelihood that they will achieve good outcomes as young adults (Gambone et al., 2002). This is one of the primary ways that youth settings such as the ones studied here can contribute to the developmental trajectory youth follow and their ultimate ability to thrive as self-sufficient, healthy, contributing members of communities.

Table 3 shows the percentage of youth experiencing optimal or insufficient levels of each of the supports and opportunities for the YLDI agencies classified as identity support (Column I); the YLDI agencies classified as youth organizing agencies (Column II); and the traditional youth development agencies (Column III). We found significant differences in the experiences of youth across the three types of agencies for most of the supports and opportunities measured.

In general, greater percentages of youth in the YLDI agencies than in the traditional youth development agencies report experiencing optimal levels of the supports and opportunities. Only with regard to safety are youth's experiences similar across all types of agencies. Beyond this general trend, however, we noted some differences in the experience of youth depending on the type of YLDI site in which they participated; as well as differences when comparing the YLDI and traditional youth development agencies.

Supportive Relationships. The YLDI agencies – **youth organizing** and **identity support** – are very similar with regard to the extent they provide youth with supportive relationships overall. In both types of agencies, 70 percent of youth report experiencing consistently supportive relationships (Column I and II). More than 80 percent of youth in both types of agencies receive optimal levels of guidance and emotional support from the adults in these organizations and nearly as many (77%) receive an optimal level of practical support. These results are significantly higher than in the comparison agencies where just over half of youth

(52%) report experiencing relationships that are consistently supportive overall (Column III); and significantly fewer youth in these agencies consistently receive guidance, emotional support or practical support from adults.

Qualitative data for YLDI agencies indicate that supportive relationships within these agencies were tied to (1) the types of youth workers and adult volunteers recruited by the agency and (2) the unique qualities of the organizational contexts within these agencies. First, both youth organizing and identity support agencies were successful at recruiting young adults from the community who shared youths' experiences, interests, and backgrounds. In identity support agencies, adults shared the racial, ethnic, cultural, or sexual identity of youth, and could relate to their experiences of marginalization. In youth organizing agencies, youth and adults shared a dedication to various social justice issues and causes. In each case, these similarities helped facilitate positive communication and relationships between adults and youth.

Second, youth organizing and identity support agencies had unique organizational contexts that facilitated relationships. The small size of youth organizing agencies, with small youth adult ratios, created increased opportunities for supportive relationships. Further, youth and adults within youth organizing agencies were engaged in cooperative action, rather than a traditional service delivery model, and this too helped foster respectful and non-hierarchical youth adult relationships. Identity support agencies, on the other hand, placed an explicit and ongoing focus on introducing healthy adult role models into youths' lives. The organizational emphasis on the centrality of relationships in youths' lives translated into the highlighted survey results.

Safety. Overall, no differences appear in the proportion of youth who consistently feel safe at these organizations; only about one-third feel both physically and emotionally safe (overall safety).

However, with regard to emotional safety there are significant differences across these organizations; a higher percentage of youth in identity support agencies report consistently experiencing emotional safety compared with those in the traditional youth development agencies.

Qualitative data collected in the YLDI agencies provide a potential explanation for the higher levels of emotional safety in identity support agencies. The organizations that provide identity support activities have a direct focus on the extent to which youth feel emotionally safe (i.e. through the diligent use of communication ground rules and support groups)– which might result in higher proportions of youth deriving this type of benefit from participation.

Youth Involvement. As is true for most youth serving agencies, all of the organizations in this study are less successful providing youth with optimal opportunities for meaningful youth involvement than with other developmental experiences. However, greater proportions of youth in the youth organizing agencies report consistently receiving opportunities for meaningful involvement: about one-fourth (26%) of youth in these agencies compared with less than ten percent of youth in either identity support or the traditional youth development agencies.

About one-third (31%) of youth in the youth organizing agencies consistently have opportunities for decision-making, compared with only four percent in identity support agencies and ten percent in traditional youth development agencies. With respect to leadership, about one-fourth of youth in youth organizing agencies report having these types of opportunities compared with less than five percent in other organizations. Similar proportions of youth (about half) in the youth organizing and identity support agencies report a strong sense of belonging compared with only about one-fourth of youth in the traditional youth development agencies.

Qualitative data for YLDI sites suggest that youth

leadership is tied to the way youth organizing agencies are structured. Youth organizing groups were more likely to have formal staff and leadership positions for youth than were identity-support or traditional youth development agencies. Formal roles for youth within the agency appear to have translated directly into increased decision-making and leadership roles. Further, youth organizing agencies work closely with a small, core set of youth to train them to lead their larger membership. This intensive focus on a smaller cohort creates more opportunities for leadership within the organization and more time for adults to work one-on-one with youth leaders so that they can succeed in those roles.

Skill Building. Overall, higher proportions of youth in the identity support agencies experience optimal levels of skill building compared with youth in either the youth organizing or traditional youth development agencies. However, identity support and youth organizing agencies look similar on each of the dimensions of skill building. (Although a higher percentage of youth in the identity support agencies report that the activities are interesting and challenging than those in youth organizing agencies, the differences are not statistically significant.)

Compared with the traditional youth development agencies, higher proportions of youth in both types of YLDI agency consistently report that their activities are interesting and provide opportunities for growth and progress. And a higher percentage of youth in the identity support agencies find their activities challenging compared with youth in the comparison agencies.

Our qualitative analyses suggest skill building dimensions, such as whether youth feel “interested” and “challenged” by their work, can be difficult to measure with older youth populations. YLDI interviews reveal that youth within youth organizing agencies, for instance, were not consistently interested by some of the daily, routine tasks of organizing (i.e. envelope stuffing, community surveys), and yet are engaged and

interested in the overall work of the agency. A finer grained analysis is necessary to tease out youths' perceptions of specific activities or tasks within an agency from their overall skill development.

Community Involvement. Youth in the youth organizing agencies clearly have the most opportunity for community involvement opportunities. Higher proportions of youth in these agencies consistently experience opportunities to give back to their community and report greater knowledge of their communities compared with youth in both the identity support and traditional agencies. The latter two types of organizations are similar in terms of youth's opportunities to give back to and knowledge of their communities. The community involvement results reflect the structured community focus of the youth organizing agencies, as well as the personal relevance of the issues that youth were addressing. Unlike traditional community service programs, where youth might engage in small and disconnected projects designed to help others, youth organizing agencies worked in a coordinated and strategic effort to reach tangible and personally relevant changes in policy or resource allocation.

II. DISCUSSION

This study examined whether civic activism provides an avenue for youth to become active participants in institutions and decisions that affect their lives, while at the same time creating quality opportunities for marginalized and diverse youth to develop holistically. We were interested in whether differences exist in key developmental outcomes, supports and opportunities among youth organizing, identity-support, and traditional youth development organizations. Our findings suggest that there are significant differences, particularly in developmental outcomes such as civic activism and identity; and in supports and opportunities such as supportive relationships, youth leadership, decision making, and community involvement. This research suggests that deliberate approaches to staffing and youth-led decision-making structures can influence the quality of participation and level

of outcomes youth experience.

The YLDI groups provide some important lessons and insights into the challenges of promoting youth leadership and involving youth in community for all youth development organizations. Promoting high quality youth leadership and community involvement experiences takes well-trained staff, time, and resources. First, staff of the youth organizing and identity support agencies approach their work with older adolescents with much deliberation. They have thought through key issues such as power imbalances between adults and youth, what roles youth can and should play in their organizations and community, the skills and knowledge that staff need, and the skills and supports that youth need to be effective leaders.

Secondly, processes led by youth tend to take more time in order to accommodate and respond to the learning curve youth need. Organizations that seek to support increased youth involvement in decision making need to assess if they are willing and able to slow down their processes so that youth can play an authentic role. Meaningful community involvement, especially for disaffected youth, also takes time and attention. We found that if provided with a structure and framework for identifying challenges in their communities, developing a community change agenda, and engaging in direct action, youth will show the interest and enthusiasm to become more authentically involved in their communities.

Finally, we found that clear, focused approaches to promoting youth leadership and community involvement can require more resources. Many of the youth organizing and identity support agencies were specific and targeted in who and how many youth they wanted to reach, primarily due to the background characteristics and the contexts where these youth live. This allowed them to develop a population-specific program curriculum and to develop, close, stable, mentoring relationships with youth throughout their leadership and organizing skill training and activism work. In the case of youth organizing groups, this meant a low staff to

youth ratio, which allowed staff to work intensely with a relatively small cohort of youth. Given the promising outcomes presented in this paper, a follow-up cost-benefit study would delineate what resources traditional youth development programs need in order to adopt successful youth leadership and community involvement strategies.

strategies.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

The study presented in this paper is a comparative analysis based on a small convenience sample. Future studies should address questions of attribution and causation. One such study might address questions of: (1) whether the youth drawn to community youth development organizations are fundamentally different than those who attend traditional youth development groups; and (2) what extraneous factors influence participation in community youth development organizations. In addition, longitudinal studies of individual level outcomes are needed to answer at least three important questions: (1) Does receiving higher levels of supports and opportunities in a program setting result in higher levels of civic engagement outcomes? (2) Are youth more likely to attain positive developmental outcomes the longer they stay in a program? (3) Can these developmental outcomes be directly related to desired long-term outcomes including economic self-sufficiency, healthy family and social relationships, and civic involvement? Information from these studies will provide critical knowledge to better design youth programs and train practitioners to enable youth to be effective change leaders in their communities.

Finally, a cost-benefit analysis of varied interventions is needed to provide information about the number of youth served by these organizations and the level of resources needed to effectively serve them. Several YLDI groups took a high resource approach to engaging youth, working intensely with a relatively small cohort of youth. The cost-benefit analysis would further delineate what resources traditional youth development programs need to have in place in order to adopt successful community youth development

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