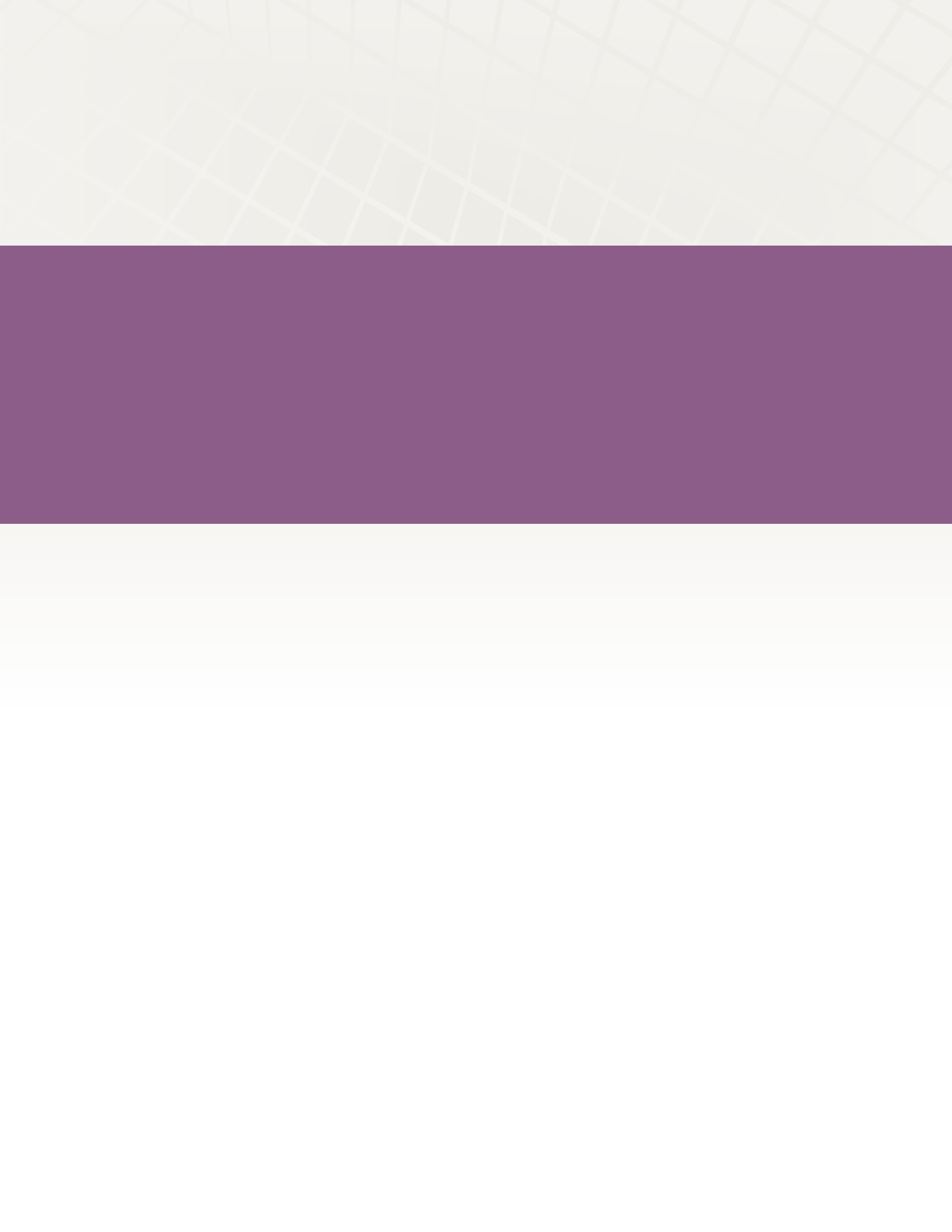




# Understanding the State of Knowledge of Youth Engagement Financing and Sustainability

PREPARED BY: ARACELIS GRAY AND CHERYL D. HAYES



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## ABOUT THE FINANCE PROJECT

### **Helping leaders finance and sustain initiatives that lead to better futures for children, families, and communities.**

The Finance Project is an independent nonprofit research, training, consulting, and technical assistance firm for public- and private-sector leaders nationwide. It specializes in helping leaders plan and implement financing and sustainability strategies for initiatives that benefit children, families, and communities. Through a broad array of tools, products, and services, The Finance Project helps leaders make smart investment decisions, develop sound financing strategies, and build solid partnerships. To learn more, visit <http://www.financeproject.org>.





# Executive Summary

Youth engagement is central to effective practices that aim to support the healthy growth and development of young people. Increasingly, educators, policymakers, community leaders, and service providers across the nation are providing youth with the skills, knowledge, abilities, and opportunities to become active participants in influential decision-making settings. To be successful, policy and program leaders need good information on developing effective youth engagement approaches and greater understanding of what works, for whom, and at what cost. They also need access to strategies to finance and sustain these efforts.

Despite the array of efforts already underway to engage young people in meaningful decision-making processes, little is known about the different approaches in the field and their effectiveness, costs, financing, and sustainability. Without this information, policymakers and program developers cannot make good decisions about whether and how to make youth engagement a central feature of future investments. Recognizing these information needs, the Annie E. Casey Foundation made a grant to The Finance Project to conduct research and analysis to build the knowledge base about the variety, effects, and effectiveness of existing youth engagement approaches and to uncover what is known about their costs, financing, and sustainability.

With these goals in mind, The Finance Project designed a study and collected data from 19 stand-alone programs representing different

youth engagement approaches. Five key *research questions* guided the data collection process:

1. What youth engagement approaches exist in the field?
2. What does youth engagement cost?
3. How is youth engagement funded (e.g., by building partnerships, making better use of resources, etc.)?
4. How is youth engagement financed?
5. How is youth engagement sustained?

The answers to these questions will provide funders, program planners, and program leaders with critical information to support the development of new financing and sustainability resources. These resources will assist programs and initiatives seeking to provide youth with opportunities to participate fully in decisions that affect their lives. Following are key findings of the study.

## Understanding Youth Engagement

Youth engagement is a relatively new, but growing, approach to youth development. Youth engagement approaches in the field include:

- youth service;
- youth media;
- youth philanthropy;
- youth in research and evaluation;
- youth civic engagement;
- youth organizing;

- youth decision-making and governance; and
- youth leadership development.

These approaches can be placed along a continuum from youth service, which includes individual activities, to youth civic engagement, which includes more engaging and purposeful collective actions.

Available research and evaluation studies demonstrate that youth engagement has positive effects on young people and the adults and organizations working with them. These opportunities enable youth to contribute to their own development by applying and learning life skills and to the development of their communities by designing solutions to address local issues. Involving youth in decision-making also positively affects adults and helps change organizational culture.

Despite the potential benefits of youth engagement, more research and evaluation are needed. This will help the field better understand and measure the process of youth engagement across contexts and assess its impact on young people, the adults working with them, and their communities.

### Clarifying the Costs, Financing, and Sustainability of Youth Engagement

To uncover sources of knowledge on the costs, funding sources, and financing and sustainability of youth engagement, Finance Project staff analyzed budget data from programs representing diverse youth engagement approaches.

Although staff sought to develop accurate cost estimates of youth engagement, doing so proved challenging because program leaders often do

not make a distinction between costs and expenditures. Nevertheless, the analysis provides useful information on the various cost elements that comprise the building blocks of youth engagement programs' operating budgets.

### Cost Elements

- Staffing costs, both salaries and benefits, represent programs' largest cost element—approximately 54 percent of programs' total costs.
- Other significant cost elements include space and utilities costs, administrative costs, costs for staff training, and expenses for items such as meals, equipment, and supplies used by program participants.

### Funding Sources

- Most youth engagement programs appear to rely on a diversified portfolio of private funding.
  - ◆ Private funding, specifically foundation grants, represents the largest share of overall program funding—approximately 54 percent of total funding.
  - ◆ About half of the programs reported they receive corporate donations, but these constitute a very small percentage of total funding—between 1 percent and 4 percent.
- Public funding represents a relatively small proportion of participating programs' funding sources—approximately 31 percent. Few programs reported more than one public funding source, and none of them are the direct recipients of federal grants.

- All program leaders reported they rely on in-kind donations of goods and services—most often, volunteers, equipment, program materials, administrative support, and space and facilities.
- Few leaders could specify how much of their funding is received in the form of donations.

## Financing Strategies

- Most leaders have focused their efforts on three financing strategies:
  - ◆ **making better use of existing resources** by maximizing the use of in-kind contributions such as space, volunteers, and equipment;
  - ◆ **building partnerships** with key stakeholders in their community, including local schools, civic organizations, youth programs, local universities, and city and local agencies; and
  - ◆ **developing new dedicated revenue** through contracts, community fundraising, and/or fees for services rendered.
- These financing strategies have enabled program leaders to reduce their program and administrative costs and connect, coordinate, and leverage resources to support and finance youth engagement.

## Sustainability Strategies

- Most program leaders have focused their sustainability efforts on accessing funding for their work. Several have sought to diversify their funding portfolio to avoid over relying on a particular funding source.

- A few program leaders have tried to build community support and cultivate key champions to strengthen the visibility and sustainability of their work and enhance their capacity to carry out the work.
- Most leaders have not yet begun to design and implement sustainability strategies critical to their program's long-term success.
- Few program leaders have invested resources toward developing internal and external evaluations to document the results of youth engagement.

## Meeting the Financing Needs and Promoting the Sustainability of Youth Engagement

- Youth engagement program leaders have critical needs for information resources and technical assistance tools to finance and sustain their work.
- Program leaders are not aware of any resources that are specifically focused on the financing and sustainability of youth engagement. They need:
  - ◆ information on accessing public and private funding sources;
  - ◆ technical assistance on developing strategic financing plans and innovative financing strategies;
  - ◆ assistance in developing evaluation plans and reporting outcomes; and
  - ◆ information on sustainability strategies.
- Program leaders want access to tools and materials, web-based resources, experts who can help them think strategically, and one-on-one technical assistance.

- They want to come together in local networks where they can build relationships, connect with programs, and share lessons learned on what it takes to create and sustain effective youth engagement.

## Identifying Opportunities to Strengthen the Field

The research findings suggest that youth engagement is a promising strategy for improving outcomes for youth, strengthening organizations, and creating systemic community change. Funders have an opportunity to strengthen the field by creating an “integrated platform” to address the needs for policy, program develop-

ment and design, costs, funding, financing, and indicators and outcomes of youth engagement. Specifically, funders can help bring together a consortium of national and local organizations with specialized expertise in research, evaluation, training, tool development, and technical assistance. The consortium would offer program developers and leaders easy access to support and assistance.

By supporting the consortium, funders would help strengthen the youth engagement field. They would also foster strong leadership and build a broad base of support for designing and implementing effective youth engagement approaches.





# Introduction

For many young people, growing up is an increasingly complex and risky process. Millions of youth live in communities that offer little support for healthy development. Most are maturing at earlier ages. They are also confronted with issues of identity formation and self-worth, receive no adult guidance, and face the threat of physical harm in their own neighborhood. Moreover, more young people engage in risky behaviors at younger ages and in ways that threaten their futures. At the same time, the demands on youth have increased. Adolescents must now acquire different and expanded sets of skills to be successful in an information-based economy. Unfortunately, too many young people reach adulthood unprepared to be productive workers, effective parents, or responsible citizens.

Increasingly, educators, policymakers, community leaders, and service providers have come to recognize that when youth are active participants in influential decision-making settings, they can become significant resources for themselves and others.

Youth engagement is central to effective practices that aim to support the healthy growth and development of young people. Increasingly, educa-

tors, policymakers, community leaders, and service providers have come to recognize that when youth are active participants in influential decision-making settings, they can become significant resources for themselves and others. Accordingly, policy and program leaders are working to provide young people with the skills, knowledge, abilities, and opportunities to engage in decision-making processes. To be successful, these leaders need good information on developing effective youth engagement and a greater understanding of what works, for whom, and at what cost. They also need access to strategies to finance and sustain these efforts.

## Youth Engagement Defined

Youth engagement is the intentional, meaningful, and sustained involvement of young people in a decision-making activity. It can be an integral feature of many different types of programs and services for youth, or it can be the singular focus of a program for young people. Youth engagement can be made available by large and small, public and private organizations in diverse settings, such as schools, workplaces, and community facilities. It aims to help young people develop the capacity and confidence to participate as productive partners in decisions affecting them individually and collectively.

Researchers and practitioners use a variety of terms to describe youth engagement in change processes, including these.

- **Youth Action:** concrete actions by young people that make a difference in their lives, their communities, and society as a whole.
- **Youth Empowerment:** an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of others.
- **Youth Infusion:** the process of integrating youth into all spheres of community life to ensure their voices and actions are valued and are influential in efforts aimed at social and community change.
- **Youth Participation:** the process of involving young people in the decisions that affect their lives.
- **Youth Voice:** the process of integrating young peoples' ideas, opinions, involvement, and initiative into community efforts.

### Purpose of the Study

Despite the efforts already underway to engage young people in meaningful decision-making processes, a review of the youth engagement literature suggests the field is still in its infancy. While some youth engagement programs are

well established, the majority are just getting underway. Consequently, little is known about the different approaches in the field or their costs, financing, and effectiveness.

Without information about the costs, financing, and effectiveness of alternative youth engagement approaches, policymakers and program developers cannot make good decisions on whether and how to make youth engagement a central feature of future investments. Recognizing these information needs, the Annie E. Casey Foundation made a grant to The Finance Project (TFP) to conduct critical research and analysis to build the knowledge base on the variety, effects, and effectiveness of existing youth engagement approaches and to uncover what is known about the costs, financing, and sustainability of these approaches.

This study was designed to address several important questions:

- What youth engagement approaches exist in the field?
- What does youth engagement cost?
- How is youth engagement funded?
- How is youth engagement financed (e.g., by building partnerships, making better use of resources, etc.)?
- How is youth engagement sustained?

The answers to these questions provide a necessary foundation for funders and program planners to support the development of new financing and sustainability resources. These resources will assist programs and initiatives seeking to provide youth with opportunities to participate fully in decisions that affect their lives.

## Methodology

To examine the state of knowledge of the youth engagement field, TFP staff used three strategies. First, staff conducted an extensive literature review to examine the research on youth engagement approaches. Second, staff identified and selected a sample of programs to include in the data collection. Third, staff conducted telephone discussions with experts in the field as well as interviews with program directors and their staff. The literature review and conversations enabled TFP to:

- examine the different youth engagement approaches and create a map of the field;
- uncover sources of knowledge and information on the costs, funding sources, financing strategies, and sustainability of youth engagement;
- identify promising approaches for financing and sustaining youth engagement;
- examine the availability and use of existing resources and technical assistance to meet the financing needs and promote the sustainability of youth engagement; and
- assess the resource and technical assistance gaps in the field.

## Literature Review

TFP staff developed a framework for organizing the youth engagement literature. The framework guided the review of academic articles, government and youth-serving agency reports and publications, and information and policy analyses published by national coalitions and organizations addressing youth development and youth engagement. The goal was to uncover sources of knowledge and information on the costs, funding sources, financing strategies, and sustainability of youth engagement.

## Selection of Sample Programs

The sample of programs included in the research illustrates several of the youth engagement approaches in the field. It does not represent the universe of youth engagement approaches, nor is it intended to represent all programs, organizations, or initiatives that support youth engagement. The goal was to select stand-alone programs that intentionally focus on empowering, equipping, and connecting youth to decision-making processes.

TFP used data gathered from the literature review and conversations with leaders of national youth organizations and intermediaries to inform the sample selection. Based on this mapping effort, staff identified a pool of 25 programs to include in the data collection effort; these were categorized according to the following typology:

- youth in research and evaluation;
- youth in community organizing/advocacy; and
- youth decision-making and governance.

The goal was to have a relatively even distribution of programs that represented the full range of activities under these approaches.

## Interviews

TFP staff conducted telephone conversations with program leaders to discuss:

- program history and background;
- program structure and operation;
- program experience with research and evaluation;
- program costs; and
- program financing and sustainability strategies.

Staff also gathered information on the challenges to financing and sustaining program leaders' work and the resources they have used to address these challenges. Whenever possible, staff used documentation, such as evaluation reports and program budgets, to support the conversations with program leaders.

### Data Analysis

TFP used data gathered from the interviews and budget documents to explore the operating costs associated with the youth engagement approaches in the typology.<sup>1</sup>

Staff also assessed the funding sources available to programs and the financing and sustainability strategies most often carried out by program leaders. In addition, TFP developed profiles or mini-case studies highlighting promising strategies for financing and sustaining youth engagement.

Information from the conversations also helped shed light on the programs' financing and sustainability challenges and the availability and use of existing resources and technical assistance to meet leaders' financing needs and promote the sustainability of youth engagement.

### Overview of the Report

This report provides critical information on the costs, funding sources, financing strategies, and sustainability of youth engagement. It is organized into four major sections.

- Section I provides an *overview of the youth engagement literature*, including its grounding in theories of positive youth development, the various approaches in the field, and findings from evaluations of the approaches.

- Section II highlights the *key findings* on the costs, financing, and sustainability of youth engagement.
- Section III includes an analysis of the *critical gaps in tools, knowledge, and technical assistance resources* in the field.
- Section IV describes *opportunities for building knowledge about the youth engagement field*.

The report also includes several appendices designed to provide additional details on the tools and framework used in the research study.

- Appendix A presents the framework for organizing the youth engagement literature and describes various youth engagement approaches.
- Appendix B includes the discussion guide protocol used during the telephone interviews.
- Appendix C lists the programs and organizations that contributed to TFP's research.
- Appendix D presents five profiles of youth engagement programs that have implemented various promising strategies to finance and sustain their work. For each program, the profiles showcase:
  - ◆ how it operates;
  - ◆ its goals;
  - ◆ its costs;
  - ◆ how it is financed; and
  - ◆ financing and sustainability challenges and opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> TFP was able to gather program information, through telephone interviews, from 19 out of the 25 programs. However, only 14 out of the 19 programs shared their budget documentation.



# I. Understanding Youth Engagement

An important starting point for building knowledge about the youth engagement field is to examine two key questions:

1. What youth engagement approaches exist in the field?
2. What is known about their effects and effectiveness?

This section begins to address these questions by examining youth engagement in the context of youth development theories, providing an overview of existing youth engagement approaches, and summarizing findings from existing evaluations.

## Youth Development Theories

Tremendous shifts have occurred in youth policy and practice in the United States since the 1960s. These shifts have altered the view and definitions of young people's needs, rights, competencies, and responsibilities as well as those of their families, of institutions, and of communities.<sup>2</sup> During adolescence, young people face critical developmental tasks related to their social, moral, physical, cognitive, and emotional growth. How development proceeds depends on the characteristics of individual adolescents. It also depends on the quality of the interactions and experiences young people have in their families and communities.

Research shows that children who are able to overcome difficult odds typically possess strong social skills, strong intellects, pleasing personalities, and a sense of independence and purpose. They also have connections to caring adults who encourage them to aim high as well as opportunities to contribute through participation in meaningful activities.

Researchers and theorists have focused considerable attention on articulating what defines successful adolescent development and how to support it effectively. Adolescent development theory and research shed light on developmental milestones and the factors that promote development. Prevention research helps identify risk factors that lead to specific problem behaviors as well as protective factors that help children and youth avoid problem behaviors. Resiliency research illuminates the factors that enable individuals to overcome difficult life circumstances. This research shows that children who are able to overcome difficult odds typically possess strong social skills, strong intellects, pleasing personalities, and a sense of independence and purpose. They also have connections to caring adults who encourage them to aim high as well as oppor-

<sup>2</sup> K. Pittman, "Balancing the Equation: Communities Supporting Youth, Youth Supporting Communities," *CYD Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2000). Available at: <http://www.cydjournal.org/2000Winter/pittman.html>.

tunities to contribute through participation in meaningful activities.<sup>3</sup>

**Positive youth development** is a general approach that emphasizes factors that strengthen youth development. It is a framework for structuring services, systems, and supports so young people develop the knowledge and skills they need to successfully enter adulthood. Some youth-serving organizations, researchers, and scholars refer to positive youth development as “developmental assets” or “assets,” which are the skills, abilities, and experiences that young people need to become healthy, thriving adults.<sup>4</sup> Other professionals in the field define positive youth development by the supports necessary to promote the development of these assets. They emphasize that individuals do not develop assets solely by understanding and avoiding risk. They must also have positive opportunities:

- to participate in nurturing and mutual relationships with adults and peers;
- to explore talents and interests and develop a sense of competence and personal identity; and
- to engage in leadership and decision-making and develop a sense of self-efficacy and control over their future.

A key tenet of the positive youth development perspective is that young people need opportunities to develop positive traits in adolescence that will prepare them for adulthood. As a result, communities and organizations that promote positive youth development give youth the opportunities

to build skills, exercise leadership, and contribute to their communities. The self-confidence, practical knowledge, and skills that youth gain from these opportunities help them grow into healthy and self-reliant adults. For some youth, a positive youth development approach will help them maintain safe and healthy behaviors. For other more vulnerable youth, this approach can help redirect them to healthier and more positive behaviors.<sup>5</sup> Today, communities across the nation are implementing strategies that are influenced by positive youth development, including engaging young people in decision-making activities and affording them safe and healthy avenues to use their energy, insight, and voice to promote positive changes in their communities.

Today, communities across the nation are implementing strategies that are influenced by positive youth development, including engaging young people in decision-making activities and affording them safe and healthy avenues to use their energy, insight, and voice to promote positive changes in their communities.

### Youth Engagement Approaches

For decades, young people have served as important actors in creating positive community change. They have demonstrated an interest in volunteering, a passion for social justice, and the desire to transform their communities. Young people today continue to build on this legacy of youth engagement around similar issues in their own communities.

<sup>3</sup> E. E. Werner, “Resilience in Development,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1995): 81–85; E. E. Werner and R. S. Smith, *Overcoming the Odds* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992); and E. E. Werner and R. S. Smith, *Vulnerable but Invincible: A Study of Resilient Children* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> Pittman.

<sup>5</sup> Grantmakers in Health, *Positive Youth Development: A Pathway to Healthy Teens*, Issue Brief No. 15 (Washington, D.C.: Grantmakers in Health, December 2002). Available at: <[http://www.gih.org/usr\\_doc/positive\\_youth\\_development.pdf](http://www.gih.org/usr_doc/positive_youth_development.pdf)>.

*Youth engagement* is a relatively new, but growing, approach to youth development. The Search Institute, a recognized leader in the field of positive youth development, conducted a comprehensive assessment of the field of youth work and identified several cross-cutting approaches for engaging youth:<sup>6</sup>

- youth service;
- youth media;
- youth philanthropy;
- youth in research and evaluation;
- youth civic engagement;
- youth organizing;
- youth decision-making and governance; and
- youth leadership development.

These approaches can be placed along a continuum from youth service, which includes individual activities, to youth civic engagement, which includes more engaging and purposeful collective actions.

### Youth Service

The youth service approach can include *volunteering*, *community service*, or *service learning*. Through *volunteering*, young persons can provide a service that will benefit others or their community without receiving any compensation. Community service is volunteerism that occurs in the context of community action taken to meet the needs of others or in an effort to better the entire community. In its best form, community service encourages young people to work together to improve the quality of life by solving community

problems.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, *service learning* is a method that engages young people in solving school and community problems as part of their academic studies or other learning activities. Service learning, like volunteerism and community service, engages youth in becoming invested and important agents of change and contributors to their communities. For example, the **Maryland Youth Action Corps** program serves as a national model for showcasing the power youth have to make a difference in their communities through service and leadership. The program is available to young people between the ages of 12 and 23 who are committed to service, their communities, youth advocacy, and empowering and unifying Maryland's youth service.

### Youth Media

Youth media is an exciting way for young people to express themselves and create change, particularly at a time when youth are perceived negatively by many adults. Through the opportunity to create their own media, young people begin to realize that their voice matters and that they can make a difference in their communities. Youth media includes creative options such as video, audio, print, photography, digital art, and flash animation. Examples of youth involvement in media include developing youth as media activists and leaders, building the media capacity among youth organizations, organizing youth-run campaigns that help hold the media accountable to the public, and building long-term relationships between youth and news media to share youth issues and stories and increase strategic media coordination across youth-serving organizations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Search Institute, *The Power of Youth and Adult Partnerships and Change Pathways for Youth Work—Executive Summary* (Battle Creek, Mich.: W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2005). Available at: <<http://www.search-institute.org/research/KelloggExecSummary.pdf>>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

**Girls Incorporated** has a unique program to help girls develop the skills to wade through the media messages that bombard them. Girls Get the Message® is a national program that encourages girls and other media consumers to evaluate the messages in the media. The program helps girls recognize stereotypes in the media and differentiate between those stereotypes and their own lives; analyze critically what they see and hear in the media; advocate for change in news, entertainment, and advertising media; and create images that are more realistic and reflective of their lives.

### Youth Philanthropy

Youth philanthropy can include personal giving, volunteering, fundraising, and organized grantmaking. Since the emergence of youth philanthropy in the mid-1980s, more than 250 youth philanthropy programs have been identified.<sup>9</sup> At the root of this approach are common values that encourage, respect, and recognize the contributions of youth and the

responsibility of all citizens to contribute to the social health of their communities. Youth philanthropy can be an influential approach toward community development by encouraging young people to take action in their communities. The **Youth as Resources** (YAR) program at the Baltimore Community Foundation actively supports youth leadership opportunities and makes grants for youth-designed and youth-implemented community organizing projects. With the growth of the YAR program area, youth and adults have been exposed to youth-led philanthropy and community problem solving.

### Youth in Research and Evaluation

Engaging youth as partners in research and evaluation is relatively new. However, the positive youth development field has influenced scholars and practitioners to include youth as vital partners in designing and implementing research on issues that impact their lives. Terms such as “participatory-action research,” “youth participation in community research and evaluation,” “youth-led research,” “youth-led evaluation,” “youth-led research and evaluation,” “youth-led mapping,” and “community youth mapping” are frequently used to describe the phenomenon of youth engagement and assumption of youth leadership roles in community studies.<sup>10</sup> By engaging young people in these processes, communities gain useful knowledge while youth are provided with opportunities for development and empowerment.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



**Community YouthMapping** (CYM) is a strategy instituted by the Academy for Educational Development's Center for Youth Development and Policy Research to mobilize youth and adults as they identify resources and opportunities that exist in their community. Through the CYM process, young people—also known as YouthMappers—and adults canvass their neighborhoods in search of places to go and things to do. Using this data collection strategy, young people across the nation have identified resources that may not be found in traditional directories. Since 1995, Community YouthMapping has been implemented in more than 100 sites nationwide with positive community outcomes.

Youth participation in evaluation emphasizes active engagement where youth have real influence on relevant decisions.<sup>11</sup> To have meaningful youth involvement in evaluation and research activities, an intentional process of supportive youth participation in evaluation roles must exist. For example, the adults working to engage

youth in these processes must be prepared to provide the tools, knowledge, and opportunities that will enable young people to successfully master these competencies. Involving youth in research and evaluation is an excellent approach to explore the root causes of community issues. Yet, more importantly, this approach affords youth opportunities to identify and define evaluation processes and recommend solutions based on findings.

### Youth Civic Engagement

A complementary strategy to positive youth development is youth civic engagement, an opportunity for young people to develop and exercise leadership while affecting change in their communities. Civic engagement can be a dynamic and an effective strategy to enable young people to address societal issues and concerns. This approach encourages young people to meaningfully participate in community building, impact social change, and apply leadership skills, while accessing services, supports, and opportunities that facilitate their leadership development. Researchers have identified three broad dimensions of civic engagement. *Civic activities* are things people do to help or contribute in their communities or charities, *electoral activities* are activities undertaken during campaigns and elections, and political voice includes efforts to express political positions on social and economic issues.<sup>12</sup> Youth civic engagement can lead to powerful outcomes for young people, organizations, and communities.

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<sup>11</sup> K. Horsch, P. M. D. Little, J. C. Smith, L. Goodyear, and E. Harris, *Youth Involvement in Evaluation and Research* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Family Research Project, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Search Institute.

**The Young Women's Project (YWP)** is a multicultural organization that builds and supports teen women and girl leaders so they can improve their own lives and transform their communities. Founded by and for young women in 1992, YWP provides leadership training, employment opportunities, project work, and a larger continuum of care that enables teens to educate and organize their peers and work to change laws and policies to reflect their realities.

**Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice (YMPJ)** is an urban ministry dedicated to fostering peace and justice through youth and community development and organizing. YMPJ's mission is to develop youth leaders by mobilizing their existing skills and capacities. Youth organizing gives young people the opportunities to share, reflect on their own unjust experiences, and work toward solutions to injustice.

### Youth Organizing

At its core, youth organizing is about combating institutional racism, social classism, and oppression that often stem from unjust public policies at the state and local levels.<sup>13</sup> According to the Funder's Collaborative on Youth Organizing, "youth organizing" is an innovative positive youth development and social justice strategy that trains youth in community organizing and advocacy while helping them apply these skills to create meaningful institutional change in their communities.<sup>14</sup> Youth organizing efforts rely on the power and leadership of young people. To promote youth development, these efforts in-

volve youth in the design, implementation, and evaluation of organizing. Youth roles and activities can include social and community activism, political education and analysis, political and policy lobbying, adult and peer education and training, research, campaign development, direct action, and recruitment.<sup>15</sup>

### Youth Decision-Making and Governance

Youth decision-making and governance focuses on the ways young people are involved in decision-making processes within an initiative or organization. This may include advising decision-makers or being decision-makers. In communities everywhere, youth are sitting at the governance tables where critical decisions are being made. Youth are serving as members of boards of di-

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

rectors, nonprofit organization and association boards, independent youth boards and councils, and advisory committees or councils and are collaborating with adults in essential functions such as program design, budgeting, staff hiring, community outreach, and public relations. They are also playing a leadership role and leading foundation and grant-making programs and governing boards. In recent years, a growing number of organizations have come to recognize the value of supporting the voice of youth in efforts to strengthen communities.<sup>16</sup> With supports, young people can participate in decision-making in ways that enhance their own personal development and provide valuable insight and contributions to organizations and their communities.

### Youth Leadership Development

Youth leadership development is the common thread found in all youth engagement approaches, making it difficult to define as a discrete feature or activity. It is a process that provides young people with opportunities to develop important skills and meaningful relationships with supportive adults and peers while participating in decision-making processes through meaningful engagement in the community. Youth leadership development is a core component of positive youth development and youth engagement strategies. The practice of engaging young people as active members and leaders of society can also lead to positive changes in adults who work with them, organizations, and communities.

To promote positive youth development, communities often use a combination of these ap-

**Youth In Action (YIA)** is a nonprofit youth development organization in Providence, Rhode Island, that provides high school youth with opportunities to develop the skills, resiliency, and determination to be successful adults. Youth participate in leadership training, lead and manage YIA's community outreach and educational programs, and compose the majority of YIA's board of directors.

proaches to enable young people to play essential roles as stakeholders in the community. Although these approaches can build on one another, one is not any more important than the other. Each promotes different activities and opportunities for young people to develop their strengths, interests, and leadership skills. Importantly, at the root of these and all successful youth engagement efforts are strong partnerships with adults who recognize and support the inherent value that young people bring to the table.

**At the root of all successful youth engagement efforts are strong partnerships with adults who recognize and support the inherent value that young people bring to the table.**

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<sup>16</sup> M. Fernandez, *Creating Community Change: Challenges and Tensions in Community Youth Research* (Stanford, Calif.: John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, School of Education, Stanford University, 2002). Available at: <http://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/>.

## The Effectiveness of Youth Engagement Approaches

Although sparse, available research indicates that youth engagement positively impacts youth and that the adults and organizations involved in youth engagement efforts also receive benefits. These opportunities enable youth to contribute to their own development by applying and learning life skills and to contribute to the development of their communities by designing solutions to address local issues. Young people who participate in youth engagement activities feel empowered, connected, and valued by adults and their communities.

Young people who participate in youth engagement activities feel empowered, connected, and valued by adults and their communities.

Several studies shed light on the effects of youth engagement on young people. Young people who participated in leadership activities reported higher levels of self-efficacy than young people who did not participate in these activities.<sup>17</sup> In addition to determining the impact of leadership opportunities on youth, researchers have studied the impact of youth involvement in civic activ-

ism. Civic activism was found to be a powerful approach for reaching more vulnerable youth not reached by traditional youth development programs. Youth interviewed indicated they struggled with the negative public perception of their abilities, limited options, and premature pressures and responsibilities and that participating in civic engagement gave them a voice to address the issues they related to most.<sup>18</sup>

Youth engagement provides opportunities for youth to learn and use new skills that enable them to build competencies. Studies have found that participating in youth philanthropic activities prepares youth to make decisions, helps them learn about community issues impacting them and their peers, and provides them with the skills to plan and facilitate meetings.<sup>19</sup> In a longitudinal study of the long-term effects of engaging youth in grantmaking, researchers found that former youth grantmakers had higher levels of volunteering and giving compared with other young adults.<sup>20</sup> These young adults also demonstrated significant leadership skills and contributed in important ways to their communities.

In addition, youth involvement in community efforts through research and evaluation projects prepares young people with the important skills and information to impact change. Zeldin,

<sup>17</sup> Andrea Edelman, Patricia Gill, Katey Comerford, Mindy Larson, and Rebecca Hare, *Youth Development and Youth Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, 2004). Available at: <<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/assets/background/YouthDevelopment.pdf>>.

<sup>18</sup> Social Policy Research Associates, *Lessons in Leadership: How Young People Change Their Communities and Themselves* (Takoma Park, Md.: Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development December 2003). Available at: <[http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/pdfs/Lessons\\_in\\_Leadership\\_exec.pdf](http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/pdfs/Lessons_in_Leadership_exec.pdf)>.

<sup>19</sup> Youth Leadership Institute, *Changing the Face of Giving* (San Francisco, Calif.: The James Irvine Foundation, October 2001). Available at: <[http://www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/youth/Youth\\_Philanthropy.pdf](http://www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/youth/Youth_Philanthropy.pdf)>.

<sup>20</sup> K. Tice, *Leadership, Volunteerism and Giving: A Longitudinal Study of Youth Grantmakers (1993–2003)* (Grand Haven, Mich.: The Council of Michigan Foundations, 2004). Available at: <[http://www.michiganfoundations.org/s\\_cmf/sec.asp?CID=2541&DID=6283](http://www.michiganfoundations.org/s_cmf/sec.asp?CID=2541&DID=6283)>.



O'Connor, and Camino found that youth participants gained important skills and competencies while learning more about themselves and building social capital.<sup>21</sup> They gained a sense of empowerment and self-confidence, established new or deepened relationships with community peers and adults, and learned concrete research, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Similarly, engagement in youth service and youth media activities helps youth learn new skills and express their passions and concerns for society. Anecdotal evidence suggests youth media programs provide a positive outlet for young people's passion and creativity and encourage engagement in the broader society.<sup>22</sup> A study of youth participating in community service activities found they gained knowledge about themselves and the nature of community service work and their community while also learning how to effectively work with others.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, involving youth in decision-making positively impacts adults and helps change organizational culture. In a study by Zeldin et al., adult leaders involved in shared decision-making with youth indicated that working with youth had a positive impact on them and their organizations. Working with youth helped enhance the commitment and energy of adults to the organization. Adults also felt more effective and confident

in working with and relating to youth, and they gained a stronger sense of community connectedness.<sup>24</sup>

### Implications of the Evaluation Findings

Findings from these studies suggest that youth engagement has promising effects on young people, adults, organizations, and communities. However, more research and evaluation are needed to understand and measure the process of youth engagement across contexts and to assess its impact on young people, the adults working with them, and communities. To fill this knowledge gap, several important questions need to be answered.

- In what ways are young people engaged in decision-making (i.e., what roles do they play and what are the choices and activities available to them)?
- What are the structures, beliefs, and practices that support authentic youth engagement?
- What are the impacts of youth engagement for the individual youth?
- How does youth engagement change adult perceptions and expectations of young people?
- What are the effects of young people on the organizations in which they participate?

<sup>21</sup> S. Zeldin, C. O'Connor, and L. Camino, "Youth as Evaluators: What's an Adult to Do?" *PrACTice Matters* (January 2006). Available at: <<http://www.actforyouth.net/documents/Jan06.pdf>>.

<sup>22</sup> Sheila Kinkade and Christy Macy, *What Works in Youth Media: Case Studies from Around the World* (Baltimore, Md.: International Youth Foundation, 2003). Available at: <<http://www.iyfnet.org/uploads/WW%20Youth%20Led%20Media.pdf>>.

<sup>23</sup> University of Wisconsin-Extension, *An Evaluation of the Land O'Lakes Community Service Projects* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin-Extension, 2001). Available at: <<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/pdf/landolake.pdf>>.

<sup>24</sup> S. Zeldin, A. K. McDaniel, D. Topitzes, and M. Calvert, *Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations* (Chevy Chase, Md.: Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development and National 4-H Council, 2000). Available at: <[http://www.cpn.org/topics/youth/cyd/pdfs/Youth\\_in\\_Decision\\_Making.pdf](http://www.cpn.org/topics/youth/cyd/pdfs/Youth_in_Decision_Making.pdf)>.

- How does youth engagement build social capital and strengthen communities?
- How do the perspective and contributions of young people influence policy and practice?
- How do organizations and communities sustain youth engagement?

This information is critical to the design of effective youth engagement approaches and to the long-term sustainability of programs and organizations working to provide these opportunities for youth.



## II. Clarifying the Costs, Financing, and Sustainability of Youth Engagement

To sustain their youth engagement efforts, program leaders face several challenges in aligning funding sources and financing strategies with their specific financing needs. Taking these key steps toward developing a strategic financing approach provides a useful framework for organizing information on what is known about the costs, financing, and sustainability of youth engagement.

- **Step 1:** Clarify what the financing is for (i.e., financing for what?).
- **Step 2:** Estimate what program components, activities, and improvements will cost.
- **Step 3:** Determine what resources (cash and in-kind) are already available to the program.
- **Step 4:** Assess the gap between available resources and program costs.
- **Step 5:** Determine what funding sources and financing strategies can help fill these gaps.

To clarify what is known about the costs, financing, and sustainability of youth engagement, TFP collected budget data from 19 stand-alone programs that focus on engaging youth in research and evaluation, community organizing/advocacy, and decision-making and governance.

This information enables some preliminary conclusions about the extent to which program leaders have adopted a strategic financing orientation. The study's primary goal was to develop cost estimates of youth engagement.

Developing accurate cost estimates was challenging; while program leaders generally understand and can provide information on the funding they receive, they often do not make a distinction between costs and expenditures. Donated goods and services also entail costs to someone, even if they are not paid for as a cash outlay by the program. TFP found that most leaders do not have the capacity to provide clear and comprehensive information on their program's income, expenditures, and receipt and valuation of donated goods and services.

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This section contains information on:

- the major costs elements included in the sample programs' budgets;

- the major types of funding sources program leaders have been able to access; and
- the most common financing and sustainability strategies program leaders have implemented.

## Cost Elements

The analysis is based on budget data from 14 programs. Despite some limitations, the analysis provides useful information on the typical types of expenses program leaders incur and the cost elements that comprise the programs' operating budgets.

What are the various elements—the building blocks of youth engagement programs' operating budgets—that contribute to their total costs? Program costs can be broken down into five categories: staff salaries, benefits, space and utilities costs, administrative costs, and other costs.

- **Staff salaries** includes financial compensation for management (e.g., the executive director, director, program coordinator, and youth advocate), activity leaders, and administrative/support staff as well as the value of volunteer time.
- **Benefits** include out-of-pocket expenditures on, for example, health insurance, paid sick and medical leave, paid vacation, unemployment insurance, retirement accounts, and parking/transportation subsidies for employees. These expenses do not include federal or state/local withholding taxes.
- **Space and utilities** costs include rent, maintenance, and repair costs for facilities as well as utility costs.

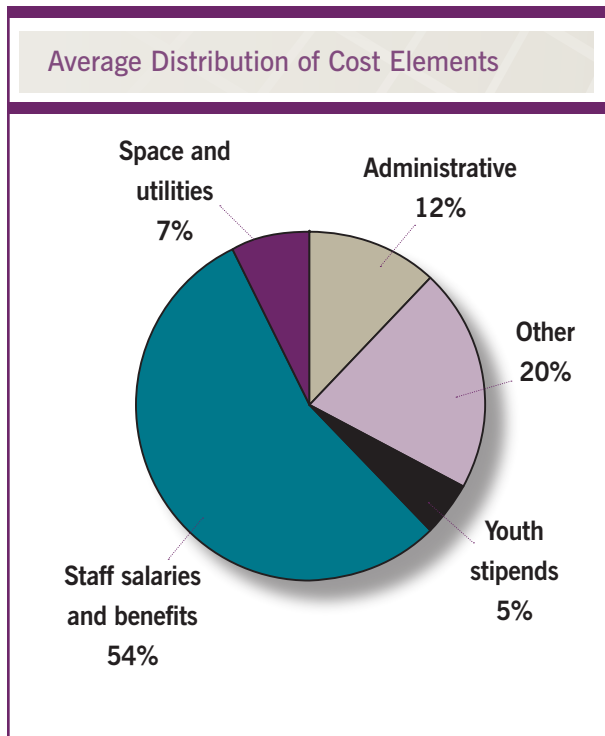
- **Administrative costs** are non-labor expenses associated with supporting program operations, including printing, accounting, payroll, liability insurance, community outreach, contracted services, and office equipment and supplies.
- **Other costs** include expenses for staff training, snacks and meals, and materials (i.e., equipment and supplies used by program participants) as well as costs for other miscellaneous expenditures.

The figure (“Average Distribution of Cost Elements” on page 27) shows the average distribution of cost elements across the sample programs. Although the programs vary in terms of their youth engagement approaches, locations, and size, some clear patterns emerge. Not surprisingly, staffing costs, both salaries and benefits, represent the largest cost element. On average, these costs represent 54 percent of total costs.<sup>25</sup> Program staff typically include a mix of management, activity, and administrative/support staff. In general, management staff members serve in a dual capacity; they mentor, coach, and support youth but also conduct the program's management functions (e.g., program planning, grant-writing, and fundraising).

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<sup>25</sup> Staffing costs include salaries and benefits because many programs did not disaggregate benefit amounts from their staffing costs. Also, the estimate does not include the value of volunteer time because this information was not available.





Other significant cost elements include other program costs (20 percent of total costs), administrative costs (12 percent of total costs) and space and utilities costs (7 percent of total costs). In addition to these costs, several programs provide stipends to participating youth while others incur costs related to their youth philanthropy or grantmaking activities. Of programs that provide youth stipends, these costs represent a small percentage of total costs (5 percent). Four programs—**Dane County Youth Commission, Hampton Youth Commission, In Youth We Trust, and Youth Innovation Fund (Chicago)**—have set aside a portion of their budget to cover the costs of youth philanthropy activities; these costs typically range between \$24,000 and \$40,000 annually. The funds are used to make grant awards to support youth-developed projects that meet specific needs in the community.

### Funding Sources

Understanding the costs of youth engagement is an important first step toward planning strategically for how to finance and sustain this activity. With concrete information on costs, funders, program planners, and program leaders can begin to assess how current funding can be used to cover current and projected future fiscal needs. To understand the major types of funding sources that support youth engagement, TFP staff asked program leaders to share information on their startup and current operating funding, including:

- sources of funding (public, private, and in-kind donations);
- amount received;
- duration of funding; and
- uses and restrictions of funding sources.

Potential funding sources to support youth engagement can include public and private funding as well as in-kind donations. Most youth engagement programs appear to rely on a diversified portfolio of private funding. Among the study sample, private funding (specifically foundation grants) represents the largest share of total program funding—approximately 54 percent of total funding. Importantly, 50 percent of programs reported three or more sources of foundation funding. In contrast, public funding constitutes a smaller percentage of total funding—approxi-

Most youth engagement programs appear to rely on a diversified portfolio of private funding. Among the study sample, private funding (specifically foundation grants) represents the largest share of total program funding—approximately 54 percent of total funding.



mately 31 percent for the sample programs. Of programs accessing public funding, few reported more than one public funding source.

### Public Funding

Public funding sources can include funding from a wide array of federal, state, and local programs. More than 103 federal funding streams can support youth programming, and many of these funding programs have the potential to support youth engagement.<sup>26</sup> Among the most prominent are the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, the Social Services Block Grant, and YouthBuild. In addition to federal programs, states and localities can support youth engagement through their general funds. Funds can flow through different state and local agencies, including departments of education, youth development, juvenile justice, and health and human services.

TFP found that public funding constitutes a relatively small portion of participants' funding sources—approximately 31 percent. Following are other key findings.

- None of the study sample programs are the direct recipients of federal grants.
- Through partnerships with their state, county, and/or city, some programs have access to funding from such federal programs as the Community Services Block Grant, the Community Development Block Grant, and Byrne Formula Grants.

- Several programs, including **Youth Leadership for Action**, **Project WHAT!**, and **Youth United for Change**, have been able to access public grants from the state or local level.
- Three programs, the **Hampton Youth Commission**, **Dane County Youth Commission**, and the **Boston Mayor's Council**, receive direct funding from county or city general funds.

### Private Funding

Private funding sources include loans, foundation grants, corporate donations, individual donations, United Way contributions, and contributions from churches and civic organizations. It can also include some earned income (e.g., from earned interest and the sale of services or products) and fundraising income (e.g., from capital campaigns and special events). Private funding sources can provide crucial resources because many public sources require matching contributions. They can also be important sources of funding for program components and budget line items that are specif-

Private funding sources can provide crucial resources because many public sources require matching contributions. They can also be important sources of funding for program components and budget line items that are specifically restricted from public funding.

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<sup>26</sup> See Dionne Dobbins-Harper and Soumya Bhat, *Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Youth Programs* (Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, January 2007).

ically restricted from public funding. Because private funding is generally the most flexible funding programs receive, it can fill gaps and help program leaders cover the full costs of providing youth engagement opportunities.

Following is an overview of key findings on programs' access to private funding from foundation grants, corporate and individual donations, and United Way contributions. Programs' access to individual donations, earned income, and fundraising income is discussed in the section on financing strategies.

- **Foundation Funding.** Most of the programs in the research study have been able to leverage funding from the foundation community. On average, foundation grants represent 54 percent of these programs' funding sources. About 50 percent of the programs have successfully accessed funding from foundations. At least three programs—**Hope Street Youth Development**, **Wide Angle Youth Media**, and **Youth United for Change**—receive funding from five or more foundations. In most cases, the granting foundations are local or community foundations. However, several programs have successfully received both startup and ongoing funding from national foundations; this is particularly the case for programs initiated as part of a larger foundation initiative, such as the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's Youth Innovation Fund.

- **United Way Contributions.** One program, **Youth Leadership for Action**, receives a United Way contribution. It uses the funds to support a forum where young people come together with community stakeholders to discuss and identify solutions to community problems or needs.

- **Corporate and Individual Donations.** About half the sample programs reported they receive corporate donations, but only three programs provided an estimate of the amount of these donations. For these programs, corporate donations constitute a very small percentage of total funding—between 1 percent and 4 percent. Similarly, only three programs provided an estimate of their individual donations; these estimates ranged from 2 percent to 15 percent of programs' total funding.

### In-Kind Donations

Public and private funding can be provided as cash contributions or as in-kind donations of goods and services (most often, volunteers, equipment, program materials, administrative support, and space and facilities). All program leaders stated they rely on in-kind donations, but few could specify how much of their funding is received in this form. However, many noted these donations account for a large proportion of their program funding. **KBOO Youth Collective**, a youth media program, estimates that 60 percent of its funding comes from in-kind donations (e.g., field recording equipment, recording studio rental, on-air productions, and volunteer time). A program leader's ability to find donated goods and services is partly related to program size, the development skills or charisma of the program leader, and the resources available in the community.

All program leaders stated they rely on in-kind donations, but few could specify how much of their funding is received in this form. However, many noted these donations account for a large proportion of their program funding.

Many in-kind donations include equipment, program materials, and space and facilities that would be very expensive for programs to purchase. Similarly, volunteers with specialized program and legal expertise represent a valuable enhancement for youth engagement programs that likely would not otherwise have the resources to purchase their services. For example, **Critical Exposure** receives legal representation and web design and support services as in-kind donations. Many programs also noted they were able to access training services for youth as an in-kind support. Finally, the value of in-kind donations can count toward matching requirements for public funding, creating important opportunities to leverage additional resources.

### Financing Strategies

With information on their program costs and available resources, program leaders can assess their funding gaps and develop strategies to meet their financing needs. Financing strategies can include:

- making better use of existing resources;
- maximizing public revenue;
- building partnerships;
- creating more flexibility in existing funding; and
- developing new dedicated revenue.

Taken together, these strategies provide a clear roadmap for addressing financing issues for youth engagement programs. However, decisions about which strategy or combination of strategies program leaders pursue will depend on the nature and scope of the program and the economic and political environment in which it operates.

Program leaders were asked for information on strategies they have implemented to finance youth engagement. TFP found that most leaders have focused their efforts on three financing strategies: making better use of existing resources, building partnerships, and developing new dedicated revenue (see “Youth Engagement Programs’ Use of Financing Strategies” table on page 33). However, few programs have been able to access public revenue.

**Most leaders have focused their efforts on three financing strategies: making better use of existing resources, building partnerships, and developing new dedicated revenue.**

### Making Better Use of Existing Resources

For program leaders, targeting existing resources is often the first step in implementing strategic financing improvements. Efforts to make better use of existing funding sources frequently focus on reducing service and administrative costs through operational efficiencies so scarce dollars can be stretched further. This may involve outsourcing administrative functions, such as payroll and accounting; maximizing the use of in-kind contributions; and developing data and management information systems that support strategic decision-making.

All the sample programs maximize the use of in-kind contributions (e.g., space, equipment, and volunteers). Yet program leaders have not engaged in efforts to outsource administrative functions or develop data and management information systems for their work. Given that program leaders do not have the capacity to track financial

information (e.g., information on income, expenditures, and the receipt and valuation of donated goods and services) or collect program and outcome data, they can partner with others in their community that can share their data, accounting, and fiscal management systems and/or expertise.

### Building Partnerships

A key strategy for financing youth engagement is for program leaders to build partnerships with leaders and organizations in their community and state. By establishing partnerships, leaders can bring together diverse individuals and groups, including:

- school leaders (teachers, principals, and administrators);
- leaders in community organizations (civic groups, youth programs, and faith-based organizations);
- state and local government officials (governors, mayors, council members, tribal leaders, police chiefs, and other agency officials);
- business and foundation executives; and
- individuals (parents, neighbors, and community leaders).

These individuals can help program leaders access essential resources, including space, equipment, supplies, volunteers, and staff with professional expertise. Some can provide financial support and/or guidance and assistance to help leaders access available funding sources. By bringing together a broad range of perspectives and expertise, these partnerships can help program leaders connect, coordinate, and leverage resources from different sources to support and finance effective youth engagement.

**Leaders in all sample programs reported they have built partnerships with key stakeholders in their community.**

Leaders in all sample programs reported they have built partnerships with key stakeholders in their community. Many have engaged their local schools; some have partnered with civic organizations, youth programs, and local universities; and still others have engaged city and local agencies. These partnerships have helped program leaders reach out to greater numbers of youth, gain access to donated space and staff support, and leverage funding for their programs through new grants and contracts. For example, in partnership with the Marshall/Renaissance Arts Academy, **KBOO Youth Collective** received a \$40,000 grant from the Portland Schools Foundation to strengthen arts programs and improve student achievement by engaging youth in media-making activities. Nevertheless, none of the program leaders have formed partnerships with school district administrators or used their partnerships with their local schools to try to leverage federal funds administered by the school system.

**These partnerships have helped program leaders reach out to greater numbers of youth, gain access to donated space and staff support, and leverage funding for their programs through new grants and contracts.**

Although several program leaders have established important relationships with local or community-based foundations that have resulted in new and continued funding, most stated they want, but do not know how, to engage national foundation executives. TFP also found that very few leaders

have built partnerships with state agency officials or leaders of the faith-based community who can be important advocates for new and continued funding to finance youth engagement work. Finally, only some programs (e.g., **Critical Exposure**, **Hope Street Youth Development**, and **Wide Angle Youth Media**) have engaged their partners in an advisory or leadership capacity on their boards and other governance structures.

### Developing New Dedicated Revenue

An important category of financing strategies for youth engagement is developing new revenue sources for specific programs, services, and capacities. These funds can be generated at the program level by engaging in fundraising and solicitation, accumulating earned income through fees and contracts, and taking advantage of opportunities for unrelated business income. Funds generated through dedicated revenue, particularly fundraising and earned income, can be a significant source of a program's portfolio because they generally are unencumbered and can be used for different purposes.

More than half the sample programs have sought to create new dedicated revenue. These activities tend to include community fundraisers, solicitations for individual donations, and fees for services. On average, access to dedicated revenue through community fundraising and contracts and fees represents a very small proportion of youth engagement programs' revenue streams—approximately 7 percent. However, because most program leaders did not account for the expenses related to community fundraising in their budgets, it is difficult to assess the true yield of revenues generated through these activities.

- **Community Fundraising.** Approximately 57 percent of participants reported they have engaged in fundraising activities to generate funds

they can use flexibly to meet their financing needs. Most fundraising activities include special events, such as dinners, banquets, and auctions. In addition, a few programs (e.g., Hope Street Youth Development, the Seattle Young People's Project, and Critical Exposure) have developed annual giving campaigns, engaging in such activities as personal contact, direct-mail campaigns, and online campaigns to solicit donations from individual donors. At least one program, the Youth Empowerment Program, has partnered with a local university to participate in shared revenue events that benefit both organizations. Through this partnership, young people work the concession stands at university football games and the program receives some of the proceeds from the sales.

- **Contracts and Fees.** About 50 percent of participants receive funding through contracts and/or fees for services rendered. With the exception of Critical Exposure, for which earned income through contracts represents 43 percent of its budget, fees average about 6 percent of the sample programs' revenue source. Program leaders may enter into a contract or charge a nominal fee for such activities as training young people in media literacy, video production, public speaking, and organizing; training youth workers, teachers, and other professionals working with youth; and participating in conferences and workshops. Reel Grrls is the only program that charges young people a nominal participation fee.

These findings provide important information on how program leaders finance youth engagement. However, because the sample programs are stand-alone programs, more research is needed to assess variations in financing when youth engagement is a component or an integral feature of programs for youth.



## II. Clarifying the Costs, Financing, and Sustainability of Youth Engagement

Youth Engagement Programs' Use of Financing Strategies				
Youth Engagement Programs	Financing Strategies			
	Making Better Use of Existing Resources	Building Partnerships	Developing New Dedicated Revenue	
	In-Kind Contributions*		Contracts and Fees	Community Fundraising
Boston Mayor's Council	✓	✓		
Cleveland Youth Council	✓	✓		
Community IMPACT	✓	✓		
Critical Exposure	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dane County Youth Commission	✓	✓		
Hampton Youth Commission	✓	✓		
Hope Street Youth Development	✓	✓		✓
In Youth We Trust	✓	✓		
KBOO Youth Collective	✓	✓		
Project WHAT!	✓	✓	✓	
Reel Grrls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seattle Young People's Project	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Center for Teen Empowerment	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wide Angle Youth Media	✓	✓	✓	✓
Youth Empowerment Program	✓	✓		✓
Youth Innovation Fund—Chicago	✓	✓		
Youth Leadership for Action	✓	✓		
Youth Rights Media	✓	✓		
Youth United for Change	✓	✓	✓	✓
Note: *In-kind contributions include donations of goods, services, volunteers, facilities, and equipment.				

### Sustainability Strategies

Sustaining youth engagement requires more than just fiscal resources. To ensure their program's long-term sustainability, leaders need to establish a clear mission for their work, identify results and measure the program's progress over time, and develop various financing strategies to help diversify their funding portfolio. Leaders also must be able to respond to changing conditions in their program's environment and design strategies to build community support, cultivate key champions, and develop strong internal systems that will ensure they have the organizational capacity to carry out the work. Importantly, program leaders should have a written sustainability plan that clearly outlines these strategies, helps demonstrate the value of the program, provides overarching guidance for the work, and helps bring funders and other stakeholders on board.

Most program leaders have focused their sustainability efforts on accessing funding for their work. They have not yet begun to design and implement the range of sustainability strategies critical to their program's long-term success.

TFP's analysis shows that most program leaders have focused their sustainability efforts on accessing funding for their work. They have not yet begun to design and implement the range of sustainability strategies critical to their program's long-term success. For example, though most leaders identified research and evaluation as an important component of a program's sustainability, few have invested resources to conduct internal or external evaluations to document the results of youth engagement.

### Develop Financing Strategies

Several of the study sample programs have tried hard to begin implementing financing strategies to support their work. Through this process, they have sought to diversify their funding portfolio to avoid over relying on any particular funding source. However, as reflected in the table (see "Youth Engagement Programs' Use of Financing Strategies" on page 33), program leaders have been very limited in their approach and the types of financing strategies they have pursued. Accordingly, there is ample opportunity to build their capacity.

### Build Community Support

Building a broad base of community support has been a key strategy for many programs. To build the support of a wide range of stakeholders in their communities, program leaders and staff have reached out and established partnerships with schools, local government agencies, national and local youth-serving organizations, and colleges and universities. To build community support, several program leaders—most notably the leaders of **Wide Angle Youth Media** and the **Youth Empowerment Program**—have engaged the media to bring greater visibility and

To build community support, several program leaders—most notably the leaders of Wide Angle Youth Media and the Youth Empowerment Program—have engaged the media to bring greater visibility and attention to the issues affecting young people as well as their program's role in helping youth develop the skills and knowledge to actively participate in and inform decision-making processes in the community.

attention to the issues affecting young people as well as their program's role in helping youth develop the skills and knowledge to actively participate in and inform decision-making processes in the community. These partnerships have enabled program leaders to reach a broader audience in their community, increase the number of young people they support, and expand their access to in-kind support and contributions to ensure their program's long-term sustainability.

### Cultivate Key Champions

Several program leaders also engaged key champions to strengthen the visibility and sustainability of their work. These individuals typically have power and influence over resources and can use their influence to generate support for an organization, build public will, and garner increased support from public and private entities. For example, **Reel Grrls'** program leaders spent considerable time turning funding agents into key champions to increase their knowledge of where funding needs and interests lie among funders and to help build a network for their program. Similarly, leaders of the **Seattle Young People's Project** (SYPP) note that alumni youth have been the program's strongest and most vocal champions. Many of these individuals have been able to cultivate relationships with different organizations in the community and speak highly about the program's value to young people. Moreover, because of their positions within city, county, and other local organizations, they have been able to mentor and make SYPP staff aware of funding opportunities. By establishing relationships with key champions, these and other program leaders have been able to leverage allies and supporters within different sectors and constituencies in their community.

### Develop Strong Internal Systems

Building strong internal systems is an important, yet often overlooked, element of sustainability. They include fiscal management, information, personnel, and governance structures that help ensure an organization and its leaders have the capacity to carry out the work. Analysis of the data show that a small number of program leaders have invested resources in developing their program's capacity, particularly its ability to attract and manage youth as volunteers and program staff. Importantly, the few program leaders that have done so have focused on building the leadership and expertise of their boards. For example, **Hope Street Youth Development** (HSYD) secured and used grant funding to hire a consultant to train board members on their roles and responsibilities, with the hope of increasing members' buy-in and commitment to the organization. In addition, recognizing that a change in executive leadership is inevitable, HSYD leaders will begin developing a succession plan to ensure the organization's stability and accountability.

### Implications of the Data Analyses

Despite the small sample size, the data analyses yielded important information on the costs, funding sources, financing strategies, and sustainability of youth engagement. All program leaders mentioned the importance of sustainable financing, but few have the capacity to:

- document various program costs;
- analyze what funding currently supports their work; and
- design and implement long-term financing strategies.

Without cost and revenue information, program leaders cannot document their financial status or develop realistic financial projections. Moreover, they cannot make the case to funders for continued investment.

Leaders also expressed concern about their program's sustainability, but most have not yet systematically identified the different resources necessary for their program's sustainability. Nor have these leaders begun to design and implement strategies critical to their program's long-term success.

Although some program leaders have engaged in limited efforts to finance and sustain their work, the data also reveal a need to develop the skills and capacities of most leaders to:

- track the costs of their program components and the nature, amount, and sources of their in-kind contributions;
- access the wide array of public funding sources with the potential to support youth engagement;
- establish partnerships with diverse stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels; and
- implement various strategies and approaches to sustain their work over time.



# III. Meeting the Financing Needs and Promoting the Sustainability of Youth Engagement

Youth engagement program leaders have several critical needs for information resources and technical assistance tools to finance and sustain their work. TFP staff asked program leaders to identify the training and technical assistance resources available to them to address their financing and sustainability challenges. This section summarizes the study's key findings on:

- the resources leaders have used to meet their financing and sustainability challenges; and
- program leaders' preferred technical assistance approaches.

## Financing and Sustainability Resources

All program leaders stated they are not aware of any resources that are focused specifically on the financing and sustainability of youth engagement. Some leaders identified general resources, such as fundraising guides and the "Foundation Directory Online," but noted they do not have the time or money to access these resources and apply them to their program's funding environment.

All program leaders stated they are not aware of any resources that are focused specifically on the financing and sustainability of youth engagement.

When asked to identify what resources would be useful, leaders said they want access to:

- information on funding sources from the public and private sectors;
- tips and strategies on how to access and sustain access to public and private funding, including developing sound grant proposals;
- innovative strategies for fundraising and soliciting support;
- assistance in developing budgets and using budgets to make projections;
- training and technical assistance on developing long-term strategic financing plans;
- assistance in developing evaluation plans and reporting outcomes;
- strategies for building community support for youth engagement; and
- technical assistance on developing a business plan for their work.



## Technical Assistance Approaches

In addition to identifying the types of resources that would be useful to them, program leaders discussed their preferred technical assistance approaches.

- Program leaders desire written resources, such as tools and materials, and web-based resources, such as discussion groups and on-line forums, that are user-friendly and easy to access.
- Program leaders expressed a need for experts who can help them think strategically about how to plan for the future, including developing their own leadership skills, building the capacity of their staff, collecting data and demonstrating results, and integrating program sustainability into their daily routine.

- Program leaders want linkages to other youth engagement programs in the field. They want to come together in local networks, build relationships and connect with programs within and outside their community, and share lessons learned about what it takes to create and sustain effective youth engagement.
- Program leaders also mentioned needing conferences and workshops that support peer network exchanges, access to experts, and opportunities to share and obtain information about best practices.
- Program leaders desire one-on-one technical assistance.

Finally, leaders emphasized that training and technical assistance needs to be customized to their individual needs. The resources must be accessible, easy to use, and able to build the capacity of program staff and participating youth.



## IV. Identifying Opportunities to Strengthen the Field

Early research suggests that engaging young people in decision-making is a promising strategy for improving outcomes for youth, strengthening organizations, and creating systemic community change. Despite its potential benefits, the youth engagement field is still in its infancy. Many questions remain unanswered about the costs and benefits of the approach. Nevertheless, program developers, leaders, and funders all share an interest in:

- encouraging and expanding youth engagement opportunities;
- knowing more about what works, why, how, and at what cost;
- understanding how to finance and sustain youth engagement; and
- assessing the costs and benefits, or return on investment, of these activities.

Funders have an opportunity to strengthen the youth engagement field by bringing together national and local organizations in a consortium to create an “integrated platform” for working independently and collectively in order to meet the needs of programs and program leaders. Consortium participants would bring specialized expertise in research, training, evaluation, tool development, and technical assistance. They would expand existing knowledge and resources related to the implementation, financing, and sustainability of youth engagement and develop infor-

mation on practical indicators and performance measures for assessing program performance and program impact on young people and their community.

To be effective, the integrated platform would need to be flexible, be able to respond to specific situations and the particular needs of program leaders, and be able to blend funding where appropriate. Each of the participating organizations would take the lead as the consortium responds to particular opportunities or requests for help; assignment of the lead role would depend on the specifics of the situation to which the consortium is responding.

Participant organizations could include these entities.

- *The Finance Project*—an independent research and technical assistance firm with a unique capability to help decision-makers project costs, map public- and private-sector funding, plan for sustainability, design effective financing strategies, and implement sound fiscal management systems and practices.
- *The Forum for Youth Investment*—a nonprofit organization that provides youth and adult leaders with the information, technical assistance, training, network support, and partnership opportunities needed to increase the quality and quantity of youth investment and youth involvement.

- *The Academy for Educational Development's Center for Youth Development and Policy Research*—a national capacity-building intermediary with a mission to create and strengthen the infrastructures, including data collection and analysis, capacity and community-building and educational issues, that support the positive development of all youth.
- *Youth in Focus*—an intermediary organization that offers training and technical assistance to support the development of youth-serving organizations and communities that include and empower young people to be critical thinkers, effective leaders, and active change agents.

### What Would the Consortium Offer?

The consortium would offer program developers and leaders easy access to support and assistance that is consistent, coordinated, and complete. They would be able to address their multiple needs for help with policy and program design and implementation, financing and sustainability, and results tracking and evaluation in a thoughtful and efficient way that takes full account of how all the pieces fit together.

### What Would the Consortium's Partner Organizations Gain?

Partner organizations would have a strong new integrated platform to contribute their specialized expertise to improving youth outcomes. They would be able to identify needs in the field and develop a coordinated capacity to address these needs responsively that goes well beyond the capability of any individual partner.

### What Would Funders Gain?

By supporting the consortium, funders would help strengthen the youth engagement field, foster strong leadership, and build a broad base of support for the design and implementation of youth engagement policies and programs.

# Conclusion

Youth engagement is at the center of effective practices that aim to support the growth and development of today's young people. It not only develops leadership skills in youth, but also adds energy and insight into community change efforts. In recent years, public and private leaders have dedicated significant time and energy to providing opportunities for youth to become engaged as active participants in decision-making processes. This trend affords an important opportunity for enhancing the capacity of programs seeking to support youth in these roles.

This report lays out a strategy funders can consider in their efforts to build programs' capacity and promote continued development of the field. It suggests bringing together national and local organizations in a consortium to create an integrated platform for meeting the needs of policy and program leaders for technical assistance and support in policy and program design, financing, sustainability, and evaluation.





# Appendix A.1: Elements of a Framework for Youth Engagement

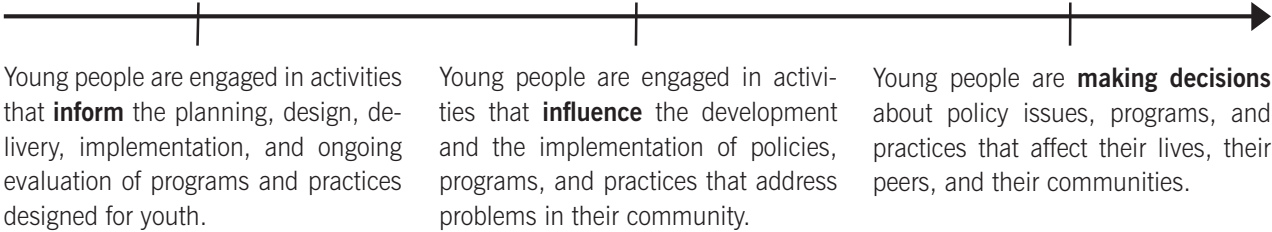
## Definition

Youth engagement is the intentional, meaningful, and sustained involvement of young people in a decision-making activity. At the core of youth engagement are efforts to empower and equip young people with the skills to inform, influence, and make decisions on issues that affect their lives and the lives of their peers and communities.

For this mapping effort, the organizing framework focuses on youth engagement approaches that focus on empowering, equipping, and connecting youth to decision-making processes. These activities fall along a continuum that helps describe youth engagement under the rubric of decision-making.

Youth Engagement Approaches			
Activities	Youth in Research and Evaluation	Youth in Community Organizing/Advocacy	Youth Decision-Making and Governance
	Youth-led mapping	Social and community activism	Youth on nonprofit/association boards
	Participatory-action research	Political and policy lobbying	Independent youth boards and youth councils
		Adult and peer education and training	Youth-led grant-making programs (independent)
		Radio, web publishing, television, video/music production, and written publications	Youth-run foundation programs
			Youth-led governing boards

Youth engagement continuum under rubric of decision-making





# Appendix A.2: Youth Engagement Approaches

## Youth in Research and Evaluation

This approach includes activities that enable young people to develop knowledge and inform the planning, design, delivery, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of programs and services in ways that contribute to social and community change. Specific activities include youth-led mapping and participatory-action research projects.

## Youth in Community Organizing/Advocacy

This approach is defined by activities that encourage youth to be leaders in social and political activism in order to create positive social (or systems) change in their communities. Specific activities include social and community activism, political and policy lobbying, adult and peer education, and training. This approach also includes activities in which youth are directly involved in writing, publishing, and producing information to communicate their issues and concerns. Through these activities, young people influence the development and implementation of policies, programs, and practices that address problems in their community.

## Youth Decision-Making and Governance

This approach includes activities that involve young people directly in making decisions about policy issues, programs, and practices that affect their lives, their peers, and their communities. Specific activities include youth on nonprofit/association boards, independent youth boards, youth board and councils, youth-led grant-making programs, and youth-run foundation programs.



# Appendix B: Discussion Guide Topics and Questions

## I. History and Background

- a. When and how did the program get started?
- b. Which person or organization was instrumental in the program's inception and development?
- c. What was the impetus for the program (at the local level, within the organization, etc.)?
- d. What are the program's goals and purposes?

## II. Structure and Operation

- a. How has the program's administration and management been designed (i.e., are all program responsibilities—fiscal management and program implementation and daily operations—housed within one organization)?
  - i. Number of staff and their roles.
  - ii. Staff background and experience and training and professional development.
- b. Are other organizations involved in the program? If so, which ones and what role do they play (e.g., collaboration for program implementation, support for youth, funding, advocacy, in-kind support, technical assistance, and/or expertise)?
- c. What are the program's key components or activities?
- d. Does the program target a specific youth population?
- e. How do youth get selected to participate or join the program?

## III. Financing

- a. Startup/initial funding
  - i. Amount of funding, sources of funding, duration of funding, and authorized uses of funding and restrictions on funding.
- b. Current resources
  - i. Grants and in-kind support.
  - ii. Sources.
  - iii. Amount of funding, duration of funding, and authorized uses of funding and restrictions on funding.



- c. Current program costs (cost elements include staff, rent/space, training and technical assistance, professional development, meetings, evaluation, travel, etc.).
- d. Financing strategies implemented to finance the program (e.g., making better use of existing resources, accessing public revenue, establishing partnerships, developing dedicated revenue through, for example, fees and fundraising).

### IV. Research and Evaluation

- a. Has the program been evaluated (external or self-evaluation)?
- b. Does the program track youth and collect data to evaluate and measure its own performance?
- c. What results have been noted?

### V. Sustainability

- a. Strategies (past, current, or future) that have supported the program's long-term sustainability (vision, results orientation, financing, adaptability to changing conditions, community support, key champions, and organizational capacity).

### VI. Lessons Learned

- a. Lessons learned regarding program implementation and financing and sustainability strategies.
  - i. Successful strategies and approaches.
  - ii. Challenges (i.e., barriers to success).

### VII. Resources on Financing and Sustainability

- a. What resources have been used to help address the program's financing and sustainability challenges (e.g., publications, websites, tools, and/or other)?
- b. What resources would be useful to help the program address its financing and sustainability challenges?

### Other Information

- Website
- Contact information

# Appendix C: Participating Programs, Intermediaries, and National Organizations

## Youth Engagement Programs and Organizations

1. Boston Mayor's Council —Boston, Mass.
2. Cleveland Youth Council—Cleveland, Miss.
3. Community IMPACT (Oasis Center)—Nashville, Tenn.
4. Youth Leadership for Action (Constitutional Rights Foundation)—Los Angeles, Calif.
5. Critical Exposure—Washington, D.C.
6. Dane County Youth Commission—Madison, Wis.
7. Hampton Youth Commission—Hampton, Va.
8. Hope Street Youth Development—Wichita, Kansas
9. In Youth We Trust (Community Foundation of Northern Illinois)—Rockford, Ill.
10. KBOO Youth Collective—Portland, Ore.
11. Project WHAT! (Community Works)—Berkeley, Calif.
12. Reel Grrls—Seattle, Wash.
13. Seattle Young People's Project—Seattle, Wash.
14. The Center for Teen Empowerment—Boston, Mass.
15. Wide Angle Youth Media—Baltimore, Md.
16. Youth Empowerment Program (Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio)—Columbus, Ohio
17. Youth Innovation Fund (Chicago)—Chicago, Ill.
18. Youth Rights Media—New Haven, Conn.
19. Youth United for Change—Philadelphia, Pa.

## Youth Engagement Intermediaries and National Organizations

1. Academy for Educational Development, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research
2. Common Action
3. Enfusion Network
4. Keep it REAL
5. Listen Up!
6. National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education and Families
7. Youth Action Research Institute
8. Youth in Focus
9. The Forum for Youth Investment
10. W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Youth Innovation Fund



# Appendix D: Promising Practices Profiles

This appendix profiles five innovative initiatives—**Youth United for Change** (Y.U.C.), **Wide Angle Youth Media** (Wide Angle), **Critical Exposure**, **Hope Street Youth Development** (HSYD), and **Hampton Youth Commission**—dedicated to providing youth with opportunities for full participation in decisions that affect their lives. Inherent in each of the programs and organizations profiled is a desire to empower young people and provide them with the supports necessary to facilitate their meaningful involvement in decision-making processes. Although each of the programs and organizations share similar overarching goals, their methods for fulfilling their missions vary greatly. Two of the organizations, **Wide Angle Media** and **Critical Exposure**, have used media as a means to more effectively advocate for social change. **Youth United for Change** and **Hope Street Youth Development** use a different method; they provide leadership training to achieve their desired outcomes. Similarly, the **Hampton Youth Commission** sponsors leadership initiatives to help ensure youth will become productive members of the workforce and community.

Myriad methods exist to achieve sustainability. Each of the initiatives profiled has achieved significant success incorporating and adeptly using different strategies to plan for their long-term sustainability, including building community support, forming partnerships, accessing private funding, developing new dedicated revenue,

and accessing in-kind donations. For example, **Y.U.C.**'s sustainability has stemmed primarily from private funding; more than 90 percent of its budget is generated from foundation grants and individual donations. In contrast, the successes of **Critical Exposure** and **Wide Angle Youth Media** have derived mainly from their ability to develop diverse funding bases; **Critical Exposure** receives funding from foundations, individual donations, earned income, and in-kind donations, while **Wide Angle** accesses funding from foundation and government grants, fee-for-service projects, and community partnerships. **HSYD** and the **Hampton Youth Commission** have strategically focused their efforts on building community support and developing relationships with major stakeholders in the community as key aspects of their sustainability. By using different financing and sustainability strategies, these programs and organizations have been able to access critical fiscal and nonfiscal resources to sustain their work.

To ensure their continued success, however, these youth engagement programs and organizations must overcome several challenges. They must develop strategies and identify resources to help diversify their funding base, develop their staff and organizational capacity, demonstrate the effectiveness of their work, and identify and leverage key champions. These resources and activities will be essential to ensure their long-term sustainability.





# Critical Exposure

## Overview

Critical Exposure is a youth media-making organization that aims to help students and organizations advocate more effectively for school reform and social change through the power of documentary photography and youth voice. Although it is a relatively new organization, Critical Exposure has been able to establish important partnerships that have increased its visibility locally and nationally and enabled the organization to generate significant financial and in-kind support.

## Getting Started

Established in 2004 in Washington, D.C., Critical Exposure provides hands-on training and innovative tools that empower young people to develop skills as advocates and documentary photographers. Training workshops give students the opportunity to learn documentary photography, discuss relevant policy issues, and create images that tell their stories. Students also learn to create captions, narratives, and poems to provide context for their photography. Through this training, students learn to document their experiences both at and outside school and to use their voices and images to impact decisions that affect their education and lives. Critical Exposure works with low-income, middle school-age and high school-age youth to display the good things that are happening in their schools while highlighting the resource gaps that may be hindering students' achievement.

Critical Exposure works in partnership with out-of-school time programs and youth organizations as well as with advocacy groups that are guiding campaigns to improve public education in their states or localities. In addition to the training,

Critical Exposure staff members help young people and program staff implement creative strategies that use student photography and voice to strengthen campaigns to improve public schools. Critical Exposure works to inform and engage the public by using students' photographs and writing to create traveling exhibits that can be shown in public spaces to increase awareness of conditions in public schools.

The organization began working with youth in the Baltimore, Md., and Washington, D.C., areas, but because of its record of accomplishment, Critical Exposure has been expanding its work outside the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. During the past two years, youth programs and organizations have expressed an interest in working with Critical Exposure. Current and previous projects include work in Albuquerque, N.M.; Philadelphia, Pa.; and Austin, Texas.

## Operation/Organizational Structure

Critical Exposure is a small organization managed by its two founders. Other staff support is generated from summer interns and volunteers. In addition, depending on the assignment, staff may receive support from the program staff at the various organizations that hire Critical Exposure to work with young people.

## Financing

Startup funding for Critical Exposure included a \$12,500 grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and small grants from the Melton Arts Foundation and Social Venture Capital Foundation. The organization's current budget, includ-

ing in-kind support, totals \$146,229. Critical Exposure's funding comes from grants, earned income, and individual donations (see figure below). In-kind support includes donated office space, *pro bono* legal representation, technology

support for the organization's website and program database, and numerous volunteers who assist with grant-writing and strategic planning.

## Financing and Sustainability: Keys to Success

One of the keys to Critical Exposure's success is the organization's ability to diversify its funding base. Although it began operating with one primary foundation grant, Critical Exposure's largest source of funding is now earned income from contracts with youth programs and advocacy groups that hire the organization to provide its program. Critical Exposure continues to secure limited foundation support for its work, including grants from the Fannie Mae, Crowell & Moring, and Leonsis Family Foundations, while generating revenue from fundraisers and individual donors. Board members make annual donations, and the organization sends out an annual "holiday letter" to solicit individual donations from friends and supporters. The organization also holds an annual exhibit and reception showcasing students' artwork. In 2007, Critical Exposure was able to generate approximately \$18,900 in individual donations.

Another key to Critical Exposure's success has been its ability to establish relationships and partnerships with various stakeholders at the local and national levels. For each project, the organization develops partnerships with youth programs that are interested in having training provided to their students and with local and state advocacy organizations that recognize the added strength Critical Exposure's program can provide to their campaigns to improve public education.

Although the organization has spent no or little money on marketing, it has successfully expand-

### Critical Exposure Fiscal 2007 Funding Sources

#### *Foundations*

Fannie Mae Foundation .....	\$10,000
Crowell & Moring Foundation ...	\$3,000
Leonsis Family Foundation .....	\$16,600
Subtotal Foundations.....	\$29,600

#### *Individual Donations*

Board Members .....	\$2,150
Unsolicited .....	\$245
Holiday Ask.....	\$6,689
ARTiculate Exhibit .....	\$9,873
Subtotal Individual Donations ...	\$18,958

#### *Earned Income*

Contracts.....	\$60,711
Honorarium for Speaking Engagement .....	\$300
Licensing Fees .....	\$2,000
Subtotal Earned Income .....	\$63,011

#### *In-Kind Donations*

Rent .....	\$6,000
Legal Representation .....	\$18,000
Web Design and Support .....	\$10,650
Subtotal In-Kind Donations ..	\$34,650

**TOTAL INCOME..... \$146,229**

ed the number of contracts it has by identifying champions at national education and advocacy groups, including such organizations as the Public Education Network (PEN) and the National Access Network at Columbia University's Teacher's College. These relationships have increased Critical Exposure's portfolio. For example, the National Access Network has listed Critical Exposure on its website as a resource for youth organizations and invited the organization's leaders to exhibit at its annual conference. This publicity led to Critical Exposure's work in Philadelphia and other cities in Pennsylvania. Similarly, the organization's relationship with PEN led to a project in Austin, Texas.

## Next Steps and Future Challenges

Moving forward, Critical Exposure hopes to increase its revenue from all three types of its

funding sources (individual donations, foundation grants, and earned income), while adding a corporate fundraising stream. The added support will enable the organization to increase its staff capacity to meet the growing demand for its program, both locally and across the nation.

The organization's leaders recognize the importance of demonstrating the effects of its program. Yet a lack of funding has limited efforts to evaluate and measure the success of Critical Exposure. The organization has begun working with two graduate students to develop evaluation measures and start collecting data on the impact of its work on youth, the public, and elected officials.

### Contact:

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[www.criticalexposure.org](http://www.criticalexposure.org)



# Hampton Youth Commission

## Overview

The Hampton Youth Commission, established in 1997, is one of numerous initiatives implemented by the city of Hampton, Va., to support youth engagement in the community. A sample of other initiatives includes UthAct, a youth activism organization; Youthinc, an effort to organize youth-driven organizations together; WORD! magazine; service learning for elementary and middle school students; and out-of-school time programs throughout the city. Because of its work with young people, the city of Hampton was recently recognized as one of the 100 Best Cities nationwide for youth and is the recipient of the 2005 Innovations in American Government Award.

## Getting Started

In 1990, at the request of the mayor, city representatives and nonprofit organizations in Hampton came together to develop recommendations for a plan of action to ensure the city's youth would become productive members of the workforce and community. This group, the Coalition for Youth, embarked on a community research process to look at the quality of Hampton's workforce in the 21st century and identify ways that young people could become an economical force in the city. A youth development organization, Alternatives, Inc., played a key role in the research process that included a one-year data collection process to assess community needs. Data were collected from youth, parents, businesses, youth advocates, and civic, social, and faith-based organizations.

This process culminated in the development of a Youth Master Plan focused on identifying solutions to the problems facing children, youth, and families. The Youth Master Plan became the city's approach to meeting the needs of these groups; it identified several desired strategic initiatives:

- strong families;
- healthy neighborhoods;
- youth as resources (i.e., youth civic engagement); and
- investments in the first two decades of life.

One entity was assigned to develop, oversee, and ensure a strong connection among each of the strategic initiatives. The Youth Master Plan has been updated twice since its initial development, and it has been folded into the Hampton Community Plan. In addition, young people have their own component of the plan, the only one of its kind in the nation, written and maintained by young people.

The city's approach to youth engagement—what Hampton calls youth civic engagement—is strongly grounded in youth development and viewing youth as resources. The pathway to youth engagement is based on the assumption that youth will have opportunities for service, influence, and shared leadership. As such, young people participate in short-term hands-on projects planned by youth and adults; they organize and participate in summits, speak outs, focus groups, advocacy, and policy-influencing events; and they



take on positions of authority where they have an equal voice with the adults at the table.

Specific positions include two youth city planners and 20 to 25 youth commissioners and other youth who participate on boards and commissions throughout the city. To ensure the effectiveness and success of these activities, a strong emphasis is placed on training youth and adults to work in partnership to address community issues, to build caring communities within their neighborhoods and schools, and to create opportunities for youth to serve the community.

### Operation/Organizational Structure

The Coalition for Youth, a department within city government, has responsibility for developing and overseeing Hampton's youth civic engagement initiative through its partnership with Alternatives, Inc. Among its many functions, the coalition oversees and supports the **Hampton Youth Commission**.

### Staffing and Other Supports

A full-time program coordinator and a half-time youth secretary/administrative assistant staff the commission. Both positions are funded with city general funds. The Youth Commission also benefits from the management and support of the two youth planners, the director of the Coalition for Youth, the director of the city planning department, and city planners who work with the youth planners. In addition, an adult staff person from Alternatives, Inc., is assigned to the Hampton Youth Commission. This person attends the commission meetings, retreats, and other events; helps identify training needs; and designs team-building activities to support the young people's work.

### Programmatic Activities

Young people engaged in the Hampton Youth Commission have the opportunity to participate in activities that contribute to the community and influence decision-making. These include philanthropy, policy, partnerships, and programs. Each year, the youth commissioners determine which of these areas they will focus on during the year.

- Through the Hampton Youth Commission's philanthropy or grant program, youth commissioners fund projects operated as youth and adult partnerships that will help address major youth issues in the community. Youth commissioners have sole responsibility for determining the eligibility requirements, writing up the applications, advertising the grants they want to offer, reviewing grant applications, selecting eligible grant recipients, evaluating funded projects and reporting to the city council on the successes of grant recipients. The grant program not only gives youth commissioners the opportunity to fund programs, but also enables young people in the community the opportunity to start their own projects without competing with agencies and providers in the community for city funds.
- Another important aspect of the Hampton Youth Commission is commissioners' participation in meetings. Youth commissioners hold public meetings to conduct the business of the commission, get public input on the commission's current focus, and enable citizens to alert the commission to important issues. In addition, youth commissioners have the opportunity to present before the city council at least twice per year and monthly to the planning commission as well as present to the school board, other boards and commissions, and the city department heads.

## Financing

The Hampton Youth Commission's general budget on this page ranges from \$45,000 to \$46,000 per year (see the general budget). This budget covers the program coordinator and secretary positions as well as stipends provided to young people for their participation in public meetings and training services by Alternatives, Inc. These costs are covered by the Coalition for Youth. Separate from these funds, the commission receives \$40,000 in general funds from the city council to support the commission's youth philanthropy component.

The Hampton Youth Commission also receives significant in-kind staffing support from various city agencies and departments, including the Coalition for Youth and the city's planning department. Other in-kind donations include meeting space provided by the City and discounts and donations from local businesses.

## Sustainability: Keys to Success

The sustainability of the commission rests on its broad base of community support. The director of the Coalition for Youth has focused her energies on developing networks and building relationships with key stakeholders, such as the superintendent of schools, chief of police, and United Way, to ensure their long-term support of the initiative.

The long-standing relationship among the city of Hampton, Alternatives, Inc., and the Hampton Youth Commission has been, and will continue to be, critical to the commission's long-term sustainability. This relationship not only has ensured the commission receives financial and in-kind support from the city and its key agencies, including the planning department and neighborhood office, but also ensures the commission continues to op-

erate within the broader youth development context. In addition, this relationship ensures young

### Hampton Youth Commission Fiscal 2007 General Budget

Coordinator.....	\$18,000
<i>(1/2 of one full-time person)</i>	
Secretary.....	\$2,700
<i>(1 high school-age youth at \$6.00/hr for 10 hrs/wk for 45 wks)</i>	
Stipends for Commissioners .....	\$3,300
<i>(\$5/meeting for up to 20 meetings)</i>	
Training and Support.....	\$2,500
<i>(Contract with Alternatives, Inc.)</i>	
Youth Planners.....	\$13,260
<i>(2 youth planner positions in the planning department)</i>	
Staff/Commissioner Training and Conferences.....	\$3,080
<i>(Cost of annual commission retreat and 3 commissioners to attend national conference/meeting)</i>	
Printing .....	\$500
<i>(Brochures, fliers, posters, notebooks, etc.)</i>	
Mileage .....	\$200
<i>(Compensation for travel to paid employees)</i>	
Food/Operating Supplies .....	\$2,500
<i>(Meals and snacks for work sessions/committee meetings, office supplies, newsprint, etc.)</i>	
Shirts.....	\$585
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$46,625</b>

people are front and center with decision-makers and the community and they have an understanding of young people's accomplishments and the commission's value.

The connection between the commission's work and an official city government document (the Hampton Community Plan) gives the commission's work more credibility. Because of the value-added, the connection further ensures the commission benefits from continual support during difficult economic times.

### Next Steps and Future Challenges

Although the Hampton Youth Commission has been able to rely on the financial support of the city, commission staff members currently do not generate additional funds to finance the work of the commission and/or invest in training and professional development for youth and staff.

At the same time, despite its location within a city department and strong base of community support, an ongoing challenge to the long-term sustainability of the commission is the changing environment in which the program operates. To

address these challenges, staff members spend significant time building and maintaining relationships with key city officials to ensure these officials continue to see youth as a resource and to ensure the work is sustainable. For example, while many city officials have been supportive of the Hampton Youth Commission, others have sought to eliminate the commission in its entirety and reallocate the funds to core city services. As a result, coalition staff and other stakeholders must constantly educate and remind city council members and other key stakeholders about the role, value, and impact of youth engagement in the lives of young people and the community at large.

### Useful Resource

*Shaping the Future: Working Together, Changing Communities* is a resource manual on starting or improving youth commissions.

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# Hope Street Youth Development

## Overview

Hope Street Youth Development (HSYD) is a youth organizing organization in Wichita, Kansas, that seeks to engage young people in opportunities where they gain leadership skills and build power in order to reach their full potential and contribute to positive social change. Initiated with a small startup grant, HSYD has successfully garnered financial support from private donations and various national and local foundations and corporations to sustain its work.

## Getting Started

A group of volunteer Quakers founded HSYD in 1990 to create a place where middle school youth could find sanctuary from the street and receive academic support. During its early years, the organization provided one-on-one mentoring and tutoring to local students. As the program continued to grow, young people began to express an interest in getting involved in the community. In 1998, HSYD's work began to shift to focus more on youth organizing as a strategy to effect systemic change at the neighborhood and community levels. Specifically, young people worked to influence how safety and crime issues in their community were addressed. For example, youth fought and won \$100,000 in improvements to rental properties in their neighborhoods and successfully negotiated with the city of Wichita to install new street-lights in dimly lit, high-crime areas.

HSYD works to empower at-risk, middle school-age and high school-age youth in urban areas to take an active role in the improvement of their

own lives and in the community. It provides academic help as well as assistance and guidance on youth-led projects, ranging from neighborhood clean-ups to youth-led city events and youth-initiated change in their neighborhoods and individual schools.

In 2003, HSYD started the Students United (SU) chapter at a local high school, reflecting young people's interest in effecting change within the school system. SU empowers students to *think* for themselves, *speak* for themselves, and act to create positive social change. The project currently has six chapters in six of the eight local schools—West, North, Southeast, East, Northwest, and Heights. Previous school campaigns and accomplishments include these.

- The North SU chapter won an agreement from the Northeast Magnet High School principal to implement student-led evaluations of classes.
- SU leaders held a rally to oppose a proposed school board policy change that would have removed vending machines and cost Wichita public schools hundreds of thousands of dollars. They also obtained the superintendent's commitment to oppose the proposed change.
- SU partnered with United Teachers of Wichita to host a candidate's forum on public education. Seven candidates were present to discuss funding, testing, and the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. All agreed to meet with HSYD to ensure youth voices are heard in the state capital.

In their most recent school campaign, leaders from SU have made 10 policy reform recommendations to the Wichita school district on the use of tasers. Their goal is to have a more defined policy about the use of these weapons in schools and classrooms.

### Operation/Organizational Structure

HSYD's founder and executive director leads the organization's work. Other staff members include a full-time director of academics and three full-time organizers. These staff members are available to provide support, including training on organizing, negotiation, public speaking, and other leadership skills, to enable young people to successfully implement their campaigns and achieve their goals.

### Financing

Prior to 1998, the organization's work was financed with approximately \$12,000 to \$14,000 in initial funding from the Friends of Jesus Community and individual business donations. In 1998, Hope Street Youth Development became its own 501(c)(3) and received a grant of \$15,000 from the Edward W. Hazen Foundation. Its second source of foundation funding is a six-year grant totaling \$115,000 from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). HSYD's current budget totals \$295,000, and approximately 36 percent of these funds support its youth organizing work (see the list of expenses related to youth organizing on page 63).

Although most of HSYD's income comes from national foundation and corporate grants, the organization also receives some support from local foundations and corporations as well as individual donations. Supporters besides the Edward W. Hazen Foundation and CCHD include the:

- Ben & Jerry's Foundation;
- Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People;
- Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing;
- Youth Justice Funding Collaborative;
- John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; and
- Kansas Health Foundation.

HSYD also receives in-kind support from various sources, including the National Training and Information Center in Chicago, which provides technical assistance on organizing, local media, and individual business donations. Typical business donations include materials as well as services and volunteer support.

### Financing and Sustainability: Keys to Success

HSYD recognizes that foundation and corporate grants are limited and often support particular services or programs for specific populations. During the past year, program leaders have tried hard to diversify the organization's funding portfolio. They want to build the organization's private donor base.

Through a local contact, HSYD staff gained access to a list of 300 individual donors in Wichita. Using this list, staff implemented several strategies to cultivate these donors. First, the organization conducted a direct-mail campaign; potential donors received a quarterly newsletter with updates on the organization's progress. The newsletter also included a self-addressed stamped envelope that prospective donors could use to send their individual donations.



Following the direct-mail campaign were two “welcoming events” attended by 20 prospective donors. During the events, HSYD staff members spoke about the organization and youth had the opportunity to “tell their stories.” They have continued to cultivate relationships with the 20 attendees to generate additional support for the organization. As a result of these efforts, 100 percent of those guests have become program donors.

In addition to its financing orientation, HSYD leaders understand the importance of board development to an organization’s long-term sustainability. In 2006, HSYD wrote and successfully received a small grant from Compassion Kansas to do board development. HSYD leaders used the funds to hire an outside consultant to train board members on member roles and responsibilities in order to increase members’ buy-in and commitment to the organization. Because of the training, board members established three committees to focus on fund development, finance, and public relations and marketing. In addition, they developed specific outcomes to measure their progress in program development, board development, fundraising, and internal and external communications. Finally, understanding that a change in executive leadership is inevitable, HSYD leaders will begin to develop a succession plan in the next year to ensure the organization’s stability and accountability.

### Hope Street Youth Development Fiscal 2007 Youth Organizing Expenses

Staff .....	\$77,702.90
<i>(Payroll, benefits, and taxes)</i>	
Legal and Professional .....	\$856.48
<i>(Workers’ compensation and membership dues)</i>	
Services .....	\$2,375.00
<i>(Consultants, technical assistance, and annual audit)</i>	
Office Expenses .....	\$2,600.00
<i>(Advertising, equipment, Internet, telephone, printing, etc.)</i>	
Occupancy Expenses.....	\$2,500.00
<i>(Building maintenance, utilities, insurance, etc.)</i>	
Program Expenses .....	\$6,050.00
<i>(Curricula and supplies and transportation and insurance)</i>	
Training.....	\$6,000.00
<i>(Staff and youth)</i>	
Travel .....	\$7,250.00
<i>(Staff and youth)</i>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES .....</b>	<b>\$105,334.38</b>

## Next Steps and Future Challenges

Since its inception, HSYD has provided opportunities for students to empower themselves through academic and leadership opportunities that contribute to meaningful and positive change in themselves, their schools, and their communities. As the organization's work continues to expand, its leaders have expressed the need to formally document and evaluate the success of the youth organizing work. Although HSYD staff members collect data to assess the effective-

ness of meetings and campaigns, the organization has not been able to invest in an external evaluation that will measure the impact of its work on young people, the community, and the systems HSYD youth participants seek to affect.

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# Wide Angle Youth Media

## Overview

Wide Angle Youth Media (Wide Angle) is a nonprofit organization in Baltimore, Md., that provides Baltimore youth with opportunities to use video technology and critical-thinking and public-speaking skills to tell their stories and become critical consumers and skilled producers of media. By working in collaboration with community groups, education institutions, and organizations, Wide Angle has sought to use media as a tool to give youth a larger audience for the issues that matter to them. Although Wide Angle is a relatively new organization, its leaders' ability to establish significant partnerships in the community has both increased its capacity to work with large numbers of youth and helped generate important financial and in-kind support for the organization.

## Getting Started

Wide Angle's current executive director co-founded the organization in 2000 to provide ongoing media education resources to young people in Baltimore communities. Since its inception, Wide Angle has trained more than 750 youth and community members in media literacy and production and community-based distribution. These grassroots producers have created more than 50 videos, including public service announcements, documentaries, and narrative videos. This work has been screened in neighborhood screenings, at citywide events, at national media festivals, and on PBS and cable channels nationwide.

Wide Angle trains more than 130 youth yearly through workshops for young people and advanced training for high school students. In partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library, Wide Angle staff members conduct workshops to teach video education, critical thinking, team building, and public speaking to youth ages 11 to 15. The organization's Mentoring Video Project (MVP) is an advanced, internship-based program that enables a small group of high school students in Baltimore City, ages 14 to 19, to produce episodes of issue-oriented shows that are aired on public access television. Young people are responsible for researching issues of interest to them and their peers, creating the shows, reviewing submissions from other youth and youth programs, producing media segments, editing the program, and conducting community outreach to get the word out and generate dialogue in the community. Youth also have the opportunity to engage in peer education and community outreach projects; they make presentations to school groups, assist with introductory workshops, and serve as mentors to younger youth.

In addition to its youth training activities, Wide Angle hosts the annual Who Are You? Youth Media Festival that gives all Baltimore youth the opportunity to tell their stories through photography, poetry performances, videos, and other media. To support the field of youth media, Wide Angle also provides specialized training in media literacy, technical training, and youth media facilitation to educators and youth workers.

## Operation/Organizational Structure

Wide Angle's executive director, with support from a program director, directs the work of the organization. In addition, six other staff members work approximately 10 to 12 hours per week in different capacities. Several of these individuals are former students who benefited from their participation in the organization and have returned to support the organization and their peers.

## Financing

Initial funding for Wide Angle came from a grant from the Open Society Institute–Baltimore's Community Fellowship Program. The money enables fellowship recipients to implement innovative projects that seek to improve the circumstances and capacity of a marginalized or disadvantaged community in Baltimore City. Wide Angle received \$48,000 in grant funding, which it used to provide film education for youth and to give honorarium payments to volunteers. The grant was also used to access technical assistance and support, including participation in meetings and conferences with other grantees to share information and lessons learned. To supplement these resources, Wide Angle's leaders sought and received in-kind donations of workshop meeting space and cameras and equipment that were available to young people.

Wide Angle's 2006 budget totaled \$167,500 (see program expenses on page 67). From 2001 to 2006, the organization received support from the Open Society Institute, from both the Community Fellows Program in Baltimore and the national Youth Media Communication funding strategy. Other local foundations and government (both city and state) grants as well as individual donations, fees for service, and corporate sponsorships round out Wide Angle's funding

sources. In 2006, approximately 43 percent of the organization's funds came from foundation grants, 31 percent from government grants, 15 percent from fees for service, about 9 percent from donations, and less than 2 percent from corporate sponsorships. Wide Angle also receives significant in-kind support and relies on an extensive volunteer base.

## Financing and Sustainability: Keys to Success

Wide Angle's leaders have sought to diversify the organization's funding portfolio to prevent reliance on any single funding source. In addition to foundation and government grants, the organization's leaders have engaged in strategies to raise funds that it can use flexibly. Sponsorships play a key role in Wide Angle's support for the annual Youth Media Festival, a program focused on presentations of youth-made media that requires flexible funding. Individual giving is also a key support, especially for programs for older youth who have more associated costs, such as stipends and travel. In 2006, Wide Angle invested in a donations database, which has made it easier to keep track of donations and donors, ensuring communication is appropriate and timely. This has resulted in a 30 percent increase in small gifts from the prior year. Most of Wide Angle's individual giving comes from targeted mailings, though the organization's leaders plan to begin holding annual fundraising events this year.

Fee-for-service projects give Wide Angle new partnerships and additional support for its programs. The organization is under contract to teach workshops for afterschool programs and provide training to young people in media literacy, video production, and public speaking.

Recent partnerships include a 20-week program for Southeast Youth Academy and a 22-week workshop series for Carrera East. These workshops train middle and high school youth, employ Wide Angle staff and students, and result in the production of community media and often the creation of media clubs that remain in the afterschool site once the workshop has concluded.

Costs depend on the program; they have ranged from \$11,000 to \$20,000, depending on hours, equipment, curriculum, and number of youth served. Short-term workshops of two to three days are also offered, focusing on specific projects or techniques, including poetry and public speaking, media literacy through collage, and introductions to camera work. These “micro-workshops” cost between \$300 and \$750 to conduct.

Community partnerships have been critical to the organization’s sustainability. Because of its partnership with Goucher College, Wide Angle is able to sublet, at a reduced rate, a portion of the college’s office space. Similarly, the partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library provides Wide Angle with staff support for programming, in-kind donations for space, snacks, promotion, and security and financial support. Wide Angle receives approximately \$6,000 annually from the library. In addition, Wide Angle staff members have built relationships with the media industry to learn from the successes of the corporate community. These relationships have greatly increased the organization’s visibility in the community and have resulted in new funding and in-kind support. For example, through the Girls Speak Out! Workshop, an offshoot of Wide Angle’s introductory workshops, staff partner with local production stu-

Wide Angle Media Fiscal 2006 Program Expenses	
<i>Program Staff</i>	
Executive Director (75%) .....	\$27,000.00
Program Director (85%) .....	\$28,475.00
MVP Coordinator (100%).....	\$6,000.00
Workshop Instructor (100%)..	\$23,000.00
Youth Media Festival	
Coordinator (100%) .....	\$1,600.00
Program Staff Benefits (15%)..	\$12,920.00
Contract Specialist .....	\$1,500.00
<i>Staff Development</i>	
(training and conferences).....	\$2,700.00
Stipends.....	\$1,450.00
Travel .....	\$4,100.00
Equipment .....	\$10,500.00
Supplies .....	\$6,500.00
Distribution and Promotion	
Costs .....	\$3,500.00
Printing and Reproduction ....	\$3,200.00
Payroll Services .....	\$2,000.00
Background Checks .....	\$210.00
Postage and Delivery .....	\$2,000.00
Administration/Overhead.....	\$30,845.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES .....</b>	<b>\$167,500.00</b>

dios and women in the media to provide girls with knowledge of the media field and access to role models. These partnerships have resulted in donations of meeting space, equipment, and volunteer time.



## Next Steps and Future Challenges

As Wide Angle continues to develop, its leaders would like to focus their efforts on developing better marketing and community outreach strategies. However, these strategies are difficult to implement given limited administrative capacity and flexible funding sources to invest in infrastructure development. A related challenge for the organization's leaders is being able to hire and retain competent staff with the skills and knowledge to teach media education who are also grounded in youth development and able to

work with and meet the needs of young people. Finally, as it plans for the organization's sustainability, Wide Angle's leaders want to ensure they can cover their costs and sustain their work while keeping their mission of teaching and developing young people intact.

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# Youth United for Change

## Overview

Youth United for Change (Y.U.C.) is a nonprofit youth organizing initiative dedicated to developing young leaders in Philadelphia, Pa., and empowering them to improve the quality of education and services in their communities to better meet their needs. The organization seeks to accomplish this goal by providing young people with the leadership skills and opportunities to create systemic change within the school system. Since its inception, Y.U.C.'s leader has successfully generated private funding to finance the organization's work.

## Getting Started

The idea for developing Y.U.C. came about in 1992, when a group of youth at Woodrock, Inc., a local youth development organization, came together during a weekend retreat to learn about and discuss youth organizing in Philadelphia. These conversations spurred the interest of the young people and served as the impetus to establish Y.U.C. Students created the Y.U.C. program and established a chapter model in one local school. Students' first school campaign focused on eliminating the general math and science courses from the curricula to replace them with college-preparatory courses; as a result of the campaign, all students in Philadelphia's high schools take college-preparatory sequence courses.

In 1993, Y.U.C. became its own independent 501(c)(3) organization. As the organization developed, it began to attract large numbers of students and expand its youth organizing work to different sections of the city. Currently, the organization has five chapters with approximately 130 active youth members. Four chapters operate out of four comprehensive neighborhood high schools, and one chapter operates out of a special admissions vocational high school that admits students from across the city. Through their engagement with Y.U.C., students identify and define the issues and concerns they want to address within their high schools and community, gather information and research the issues, and develop plans and strategies for addressing those issues. Once students have developed a plan of action, they meet with school and public officials to discuss the issues and identify solutions. The most recent campaigns have focused on school libraries, college and career preparation, building facilities, the privatization of Philadelphia's public schools, the development of a student educational plan for Philadelphia's public high schools, and the disaggregation of large, failing, comprehensive high schools into small, autonomous schools of 400 students each. By working in teams, these campaigns not only strengthen relationships among youth, but also help young people develop their leadership and decision-making skills.

To ensure youth are prepared for their organizing work, Y.U.C. staff members provide leadership training opportunities in, for example, public speaking, negotiation, critical analysis, team building, decision-making, and problem-solving. In addition, training sessions focus on issues of racism, classism, and sexism; methods for developing organizing strategies; and the Philadelphia school system and the role of government in education. Through this training, students learn about the organization, operation, and structure of the school system and engage in political analysis to understand who is politically connected to whom. Although most training is conducted in-house, Y.U.C. staff members also bring in other groups or individuals from the community to provide issue-specific training. For example, a representative from the American Civil Liberties Union conducted a training session to educate Y.U.C. youth on their individual rights under the law. Often, this training is provided *pro bono* or in-kind, enabling Y.U.C.'s staff members to use its fiscal resources more flexibly to meet other programmatic needs.

### Operation/Organizational Structure

Y.U.C.'s primary staff includes a full-time executive director, a full-time youth organizer, and a full-time administrative assistant. The executive director has overall responsibility for the organization's management and administration, but she also supports one of the local high school chapters. The organization also relies on part-time staff support; these staff members typically include Y.U.C. alumni who are now in college and have returned to the organization to support the student-run Y.U.C. school chapters.

### Financing

Y.U.C. received its initial funding from Woodrock, Inc., the Philadelphia Foundation, the Bread and Roses Community Fund, and the Edward W. Hazen Foundation. The organization continues to receive funding from some of its initial funders as well as a variety of other funders. Although Y.U.C. receives both public and private funding, 90 percent of its funds come from the private sector in the forms of foundation grants and individual donations (see Y.U.C.'s income sources on page 71). In addition, Y.U.C. generates a small portion of its budget through earned income.

### Financing and Sustainability: Keys to Success

Since its inception, Y.U.C. staff have made efforts to leverage funding from different foundations to finance the organization's work. Most of this funding has been unrestricted, enabling the organization to use the funds flexibly to cover its operating expenses. By demonstrating the value of youth organizing to young people and the school systems that serve them, Y.U.C. has managed to build a repeat funder base.

Recognizing that foundation resources are short term in nature, Y.U.C.'s leader has also engaged in long-term planning and has begun to develop strategies to raise dedicated revenue, primarily through fundraisers, that the organization can access when other funds are no longer available.

### Youth United for Change Fiscal 2006–07 Income

William Penn Foundation .....	\$82,300.00
Fund for Children of Philadelphia .....	\$50,000.00
Surdna Foundation .....	\$70,000.00
Community Organizing for Drug Abuse Prevention .....	\$52,400.00
Cricket Island Foundation ....	\$50,000.00
Edward W. Hazen Foundation .....	\$30,000.00
Capacity Building Initiative ...	\$17,000.00
Common Stream .....	\$15,000.00
Norman Foundation .....	\$20,000.00
Individual Donors/Grassroots Fundraising .....	\$8,000.00
Earned Income .....	\$21,000.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME .....</b>	<b>\$415,700.00</b>

For example, the organization held a fundraising dinner event that generated \$8,000 in unrestricted funds. Y.U.C. staff and youth also participated and received compensation (in the amount of \$21,000) for their participation in research studies sponsored by Education Reform Organizing. The organization's leader has put aside the funds generated from these activities in anticipation of two of its foundation grants ending.

In addition to its financing orientation, another key to Y.U.C.'s sustainability has been its leader's efforts to engage in strategies to cultivate key champions within the foundation community as well as among local leaders and community-based organizations. These individuals believe in the organization's work and have ensured it continues to receive financial support. For example, because of the support of staff at the state level, Y.U.C. has been able to maintain its yearly Community Organizing for Drug Abuse Prevention grant. Similarly, because of its long-standing relationship with the Edward W. Hazen Foundation and the success of its youth organizing work, a foundation program officer recently awarded Y.U.C. a two-year grant that will ensure it can cover its funding gaps.

### Next Steps and Future Challenges

As Y.U.C. continues to grow, a challenge for the organization is developing its staff capacity, particularly at the leadership level. For the organization's executive director, this means identifying potential candidates (e.g., youth alumni) who could move into the executive director position and identifying ways to create a ladder within the organization that provides leadership opportunities and prepares candidates for the responsibilities required to lead the organization into the future.

To build its organizational capacity and ensure its long-term sustainability, Y.U.C. applied for and received a Capacity Building Initiative grant from the Cricket Island Foundation that provides the organization with access to technical support and assistance as well as resources to invest in program evaluation. Through this grant, Y.U.C. staff members are getting help on how



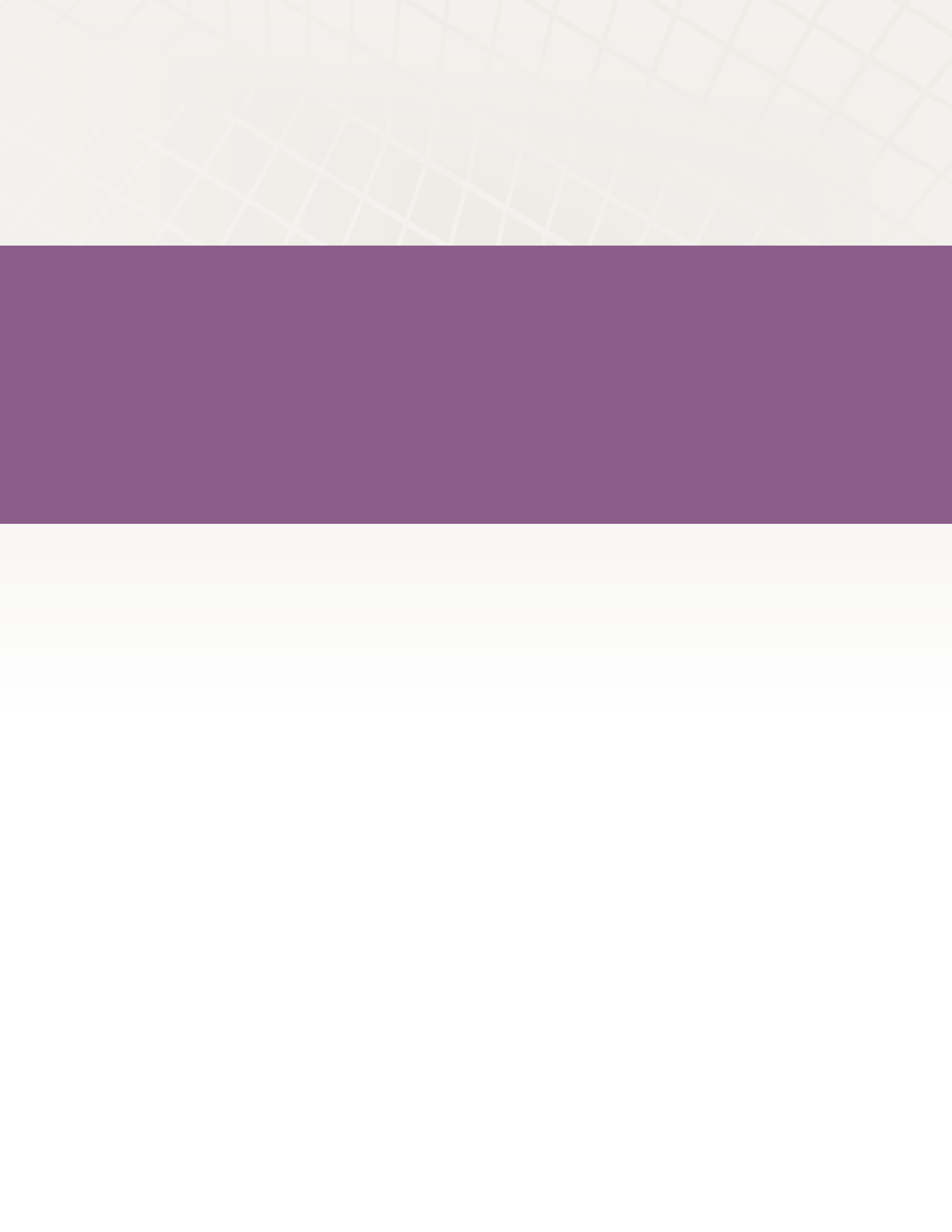
to develop a participatory evaluation, including assistance on developing a process evaluation to document the quantity and quality of Y.U.C.'s youth organizing activities.

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