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ABSTRACT

This document profiles nine youth programs, illustrating concepts, strategies, and lessons available to communities as they start to form an integrated network of essential services designed to prepare out-of-school youth for success in the job market of the 21st century. "Introduction" (Marion Pines) lists considerations when planning a service system for out-of-school youth. "Youthbuild" (Dorothy Stoneman, Fatma Marouf) reports on a comprehensive youth and community development program focusing on core issues facing low-income communities. "Youth Service and Conservation Corps" (Kathleen Seltz) provides an overview of today's conservation corps. "The Center for Employment Training" (Andrew Forbes) describes a program offering an innovative approach to vocational training. "Strive" (Lorenzo Harrison) profiles a program to prepare, train, place, and support inner-city youth and young adults in long-term employment experiences. The Quantum Opportunities Program (Benjamin Lattimore) discusses an experiment that tested the impact of coordinated services on youths from families receiving public assistance. "Job Corps" (Mary Silva) reviews the lessons learned from Job Corps programs. "Youth Fair Chance" (Pamela Smith), "The Community Change for Youth Development (CCYD) Demonstration" (Bernardine Watson), and "Early

Findings from the Kulick Youth Opportunity Area Demonstration for Out-of-school Youth" (Andrew Sum, Neeta Fogg, Sheila Palma) report on three programs that were based on long-term approaches and provided comprehensive, integrated systems of services to teens and young adults in high-poverty areas. (MN)

Making Connections

Youth Program Strategies for a Generation of Challenge

Commendable Examples from The Levitan Youth Policy Network

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MAKING CONNECTIONS:

YOUTH PROGRAM STRATEGIES FOR A GENERATION OF CHALLENGE

Commandable Examples
from the
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April 1999

Sar A. Levitan

The Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies at the Johns Hopkins University was organized in 1995 to commemorate and extend the works of Sar A. Levitan, public policy commentator extraordinaire who died in May 1994 after 44 years of selfless public service on the national scene.

Levitan came to Washington in 1950 after military service and completion of his Ph.D. in Economics at Columbia University to serve on the staff of the Korean era Wage Stabilization Board. He remained thereafter with the Legislative Reference Service, researching and enlightening at congressional request issues related to labor relations, employment and economic development. On loan from LRS, he served on the staff of Senator Eugene McCarthy's 1959 Select Committee on Unemployment, in 1960-61 as Deputy Director of the Presidential Railroad Commission and then as advisor to Senator Paul Douglas in the formulation of the Area Redevelopment Act, the start of the Kennedy New Frontier.

Aware that pioneer social policies would need friendly critics to keep their administrators focused, he obtained a grant from the Ford Foundation which the Foundation itself has described as the longest lasting and most productive in its history. For thirty years thereafter, he was to advocate, evaluate, criticize, or praise (wherever and whenever deserved) every significant legislative act, policy and program related to employment, education, training or poverty during those tumultuous years.

Levitan was not satisfied with a 36-page bibliography of books, monographs, articles, congressional testimony and speeches. When cancer ended his life just short of his eightieth birthday, he left the bulk of his life savings to the National Council on Employment Policy, an organization he had helped organize and then single-handedly perpetuated, charging his closest friends to continue his life's crusade.

The NCEP in turn funded the Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies, which is the sponsor of this publication series.

Therefore to Sar A. Levitan this publication is lovingly dedicated.

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Andrew Sum	Director, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, the Kulick, Youth Opportunity Demonstration Areas

They and their associates were badgered unmercifully and responded with unfailing good cheer, despite their crowded schedules, multiple important commitments and our unrealistic deadlines. They share a fervent commitment to youth and a belief in the limitless possibilities of young people, if only we have the wisdom to continue to search for ways of realizing their full potential. We are all in their debt for sharing their insights and helping to guide our search. We also want to express our appreciation to both Garth Mangum, University of Utah, and Brenda C. Jackson, Johns Hopkins University for their editorial assistance.

Marion Pines
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INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 1997, A Generation of Challenge: Pathways to Success for Urban Youth was published by the Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy at the Johns Hopkins University. It resulted from over two years of research, study and spirited discussion among a distinguished group of academicians, practitioners and policy experts...all deeply concerned about the growing numbers of disconnected out-of-school youth who seemed to have fewer and fewer points of entry into the mainstream society. This informal group, now known as the Levitan Youth Policy Network, had four major concerns:

- the actual numbers of 18-24 year olds were beginning to grow rapidly
- those with no educational credentials faced disaster in the job market
- there was a public perception that "nothing works" for out-of-school youth

and worst of all

- no one seemed to care... these youth were off the policy agenda

In that publication, we pointed out that the skill demands of today's labor market are vastly different from the requirements of 20 years ago. Then, almost anyone with a strong back and a willingness to work could find employment paying a self-sustaining wage, including many male dropouts. But today on the brink of the 21st century, in the most successful economy in the world, only 11% of school dropouts under the

age of 25, are finding full time jobs that produce earnings over poverty wages. Community college graduates do three times as well and college grads are six times more likely than school dropouts to achieve those earnings adequacy thresholds.

Clearly, employers are looking for, and willing to pay for, more than strong backs. Education that produces strong literacy and numeracy skills really does pay off. But unfortunately, the skill requirements of the labor market have increased and changed more rapidly than our secondary schools systems' ability to acknowledge and respond to the needs of all students. This has only served to widen the gulf between aspiration and reality. Andy Sum's chapter on findings from the Kulick Youth Demonstration sites gives the readers a graphic demographic profile of the youth challenge today which is confirmed by observations of Dorothy Stoneman, the founder of YouthBuild:

> "The extreme poverty in which large numbers of young people are raised, contributes to early pregnancy, crime, family break-up and violence, and the widespread acceptance of marijuana and alcohol as recreational drugs. This all combines to seriously disrupt the social lives of many young people, making it difficult for them to finish school and lead productive lives. A comprehensive approach is needed over an extended period of time to help them build a life for themselves, with personal and social supports and a clear path to economic self-sufficiency and a positive identity."

We publish this follow-up companion piece to our earlier publication Generation of Challenge: Pathways to Success for Urban Youth in a hopeful spirit. There is growing interest and even excitement in many communities around the country as they come together to try to address this challenge. Much has changed in less than two years.

- Several Department of Labor Regional Offices with the Levitan Center have sponsored symposia for their urban areas to both raise consciousness and jumpstart a local planning process. Teams made up of school chiefs, juvenile justice administrators, youth service providers, elected officials, workforce development specialists, community-based organizations, the faith community, community college leaders, public housing officials and recreation staff have come together in over 40 communities to begin a

serious effort to link disconnected out-of-school youth back to the mainstream. Policy specialists are coming to the realization that for at-risk and out-of-school youth, they need to think beyond a GED and an entry level job. That old formulation does not lead to success in the labor markets of today or tomorrow.

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation and the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund have provided resources to the Levitan Center to work more intensively in a half a dozen cites across the country building pathways to success for urban youth through college enrollment utilizing innovative funding arrangements. The continuing challenge will be to provide the supports needed to keep students enrolled .

- The Department of Labor has requested proposals for a third round of Youth Opportunity Grants (popularly known as Kulick grants) to provide "saturation" services in geographically defined areas at six additional sites

- Four additional sites for new Job Corps Centers were announced by the Department of Labor

- **And the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was passed in late 1998 . The good news is that out- of -school youth are finally back on the policy agenda.** Of the one billion dollars appropriated for youth for the next fiscal year under WIA, at least 30% or 300 million dollars must be used for out-of-school youth, a five fold increase in resources targeted for this group of young people. This is in addition to the 1.3 billion dollars appropriated for Job Corps, DOL's primary residential training strategy for out-of-school youth and steadily increasing appropriations for YouthBuild programs in HUD. And the services required for both the national Job Corps program and state/local activities are consistent with the Levitan principles about "what works":

  - continuity of contact with caring adults,

  - centrality of work,

- connections to employers,
- contextual educational options for competency certification,
- leadership development,
- positive peer support,
- opportunities to serve the community,
- post secondary education

and

- follow up over a sustained period.

Since the one billion dollar appropriation authorized in WIA *includes* the funding previously earmarked for the summer youth program, a major policy concern is the ability of local Workforce Investment Boards, guided by their Youth Councils, to wean themselves from the traditional and politically popular model of a short summer program for in-school youth in order to accommodate the 30% out-of-school youth requirement. Will they be able to expand their thinking and develop creative programming that includes out- of -school youth in their summer work experience model as part of a year round comprehensive developmental strategy for this group? Will the mandated interdisciplinary Youth Councils share a common vision and be able to build enough trust and good will to bring about real institutional change and hope?

- Effective July 1, 1999, another 250 million dollars in Youth Opportunity Grants will be available for 25-35 high poverty areas around the country. The grantees will need to reach major proportions of at-risk youth living in those stricken communities and engage them in all encompassing dropout prevention and recovery strategies that put and keep these youth on a positive trajectory to success and self sufficiency. Major policy concerns center around the ability of local areas and their youth service providers to reach and retain disaffected youth. Will rigorous alternative

educational programs with "holding power" be developed? Will effective collaborations be forged among schools, communities and employers? What kind of developmental youth services will be provided that will make a lasting difference? Will local leaders redirect existing resources to institutionalize an effective system of connections for out- of - school youth?

All these questions deserve serious consideration in the coming months.

WHERE TO START?

No community is starting with an empty slate. But it is important to assess what is available and how effective it is. The time is past for quick fix solutions to complex problems. That is what gave rise to the perception that nothing works. We do know what works. The program descriptions and analyses presented in this publication contain valuable and candid insights by very experienced practitioners and researchers, to help inform and guide local communities.

However, this publication is not presented as a cookbook filled with fool proof recipes for success with out-of-school youth, nor is it a blueprint for designing the community collaboratives[1] necessary for building comprehensive systems. It is, however, a description of some of the important concepts, strategies and lessons...the"building blocks"... that are available to communities as they start to form an integrated network of essential services for youth. The Sar Levitan Center considers it valuable to know more about some of the "name brand", nationally replicated youth development and training models, with particular emphasis on lessons learned from years of operating experience in sites across the country. Authors were asked to present background information, funding, demographics, objectives and brief program descriptions. We also requested outcome information, the data sources that support it and any neutral evaluation findings. And most importantly, we asked the authors to share their wisdom about the problems of out-of-school youth, what they have learned about their successes and their failures.

[1]See chapter 6 "Moving to the Mainstream" A Generation of Challenge, Sar Levitan Center, 1997

On an organizational level, what have they learned about replication? Why are some program sites more effective than others, while ostensibly employing the same programmatic strategies? What have they learned about the importance of community supports? And we requested all this in an objective and candid fashion that *avoided propaganda!* A difficult challenge that they all met.

The program approaches and emphases vary widely as the readers will discern. YouthBuild and the Service and Conservation Corps emphasize important youth development strategies, creating mini-communities within their program framework to counteract the pull of the streets. They stress visible and constructive activities that add value to both the youth involved and the community. YouthBuild's comprehensive approach gives equal emphasis to community service, education, positive peer group support, and job training.. The academic component leads to either a GED or high school diploma. Many YouthBuild programs have become charter schools or alternative high schools with direct linkages to community colleges. The Corps have added a Corps to Career component to emphasize the importance of pathways to post secondary education. The Center for Employment Training (CET) is distinguished by its integrated approach to academic and skill training and unusually strong links to local employers. Their educational emphasis is not linked to an educational credential, but rather to gaining the academic knowledge needed by a particular vocational skill. CET experienced some difficulty in replicating the success of their flagship site in San Jose, California which had an over 25 year track record building employer confidence. STRIVE has based its strategy and success on short -term "in your face" techniques to produce attitudinal change, with long term support after job placement, but the initial model is subject to some flexibility when dealing with youth. STRIVE participants who retain employment for a year are now eligible for skill training to improve their long term prospects. The Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP) developed a unique, structured *after school* model for at-risk students that met with success in the pilot phase. However, there are important lessons to be learned about replication from the QOP experience in which significant deviations from the initial successful model took place. Job Corps is the senior member of the group, having opened its first residential center in 1965. Job Corps as a national, primarily residential program, is working to more fully integrate life skills

with classroom and work based training and intensified community service, with the goal of developing closer connections to local workforce investment systems so that graduates can be more smoothly transitioned into jobs in their home communities.

Most of these programs have had greater success with youth *older* than 16-18, giving credence to the growing importance of alternative educational options to re -engage the younger group.

Youth Fair Chance and the new R&D project being supervised by Public/Private Ventures called Community Change for Youth Development, bring additional dimensions to our thinking. Both have taken a very comprehensive system- building perspective which undertakes strategies to change the *environment* in which young people grow up. Both have a specific neighborhood focus and stress community involvement and governance and a wide and diverse variety of youth development and community development activities.

However diverse the approach and focus, all of these models are undergirded by the same principles...*the importance of caring and competent adults, a menu of educational options, work based learning, leadership development, linkages with employers, positive peer group value development and follow up support.* These are augmented by the early findings of Andy Sum from the first three Kulick Youth Opportunity Demonstration sites. He observes that *"given the lack of substantive work experience among many of the younger jobless youth in these target areas, future program operators may well wish to allocate a greater share of their grants for operating work experience programs"*. He reasons that "a larger work experience component (coupled with education and training) may allow target area youth to build appropriate work habits before being placed in unsubsidized jobs.

The Levitan Center and the Youth Policy Network are presenting this information, not as an endorsement of any particular strategy, but rather to share the unique and valuable insights and experiences of the authors.

There are important lessons to learn and rigorous expectations to demand when planning a service system for out-of-school youth under the Workforce Investment Act. It will be important to think about:

- management capacity
- the quality of staff
- comprehensive program design
- connections to networks of employers
- educational options and experiential training
- pathways to post-secondary education
- on going support systems

and

- leadership development

Much is at stake.

Marion Pines

CHAPTER ONE

YOUTHBUILD

by Dorothy Stoneman and Fatma Marouf

1. Background Information

YouthBuild is a comprehensive youth and community development program that simultaneously addresses several core issues facing low-income communities: education, housing, jobs, and leadership development. It is based on the conviction that the energy and intelligence of young people need to be liberated and enlisted in solving the problems facing our society, and that low income young people are an untapped resource for solving the problems facing their own communities.

YouthBuild engages disconnected young men and women who have no apparent path to a productive future by teaching them basic academic, life, leadership, and employability skills through work on community housing rehabilitation projects coupled with attendance at a YouthBuild alternative high school. Emphasis is placed on belonging to a positive peer group and developing leadership attitudes and skills that will benefit the community. The opportunity to build affordable housing gives young people the chance to play a visible constructive role that wins the respect and appreciation of the community. It immediately changes their identity and begins the process of personal change.

YouthBuild programs focus on real-life productivity. While the YouthBuild curriculum prepares graduates primarily for entry-level

positions or apprenticeships in construction, alternative career paths are made available to trainees who decide not to pursue construction-related work. Program staff help trainees prepare a resume, gain job-seeking skills, think about higher education.

YouthBuild programs are typically 12 months long, engaging 30 to 50 young people in a full-time program in which they alternate weeks on the construction site with weeks in the YouthBuild alternative school. A supportive mini-community is created. Students have a personal counselor, assist in governing their own program through a youth policy council, participate in community service activities in addition to housing construction, develop a strong positive peer group through many activities designed for that purpose, and graduate to higher education or jobs paying an average of $7.53/hour. Alumni clubs and ongoing supports of various kinds are organized by the program in partnership with the alumni.

While the day-to-day challenges of a YouthBuild program are focused on overcoming obstacles, skill gaps, and attitudes that would undermine participants ability to be productive and self-sufficient members of society, the larger and longer range goal is to produce leaders and role models who will be permanently involved in community development and civic life.

On the construction site, YouthBuild crews learn demolition, basic carpentry, masonry, Sheetrock, window framing, door framing, and painting. They work under the close supervision of qualified instructors, usually union journeymen. The supervisor: student ratio of 1:7 holds trainees to high standards of teamwork and productivity. In one year, 28 trainees can complete three to nine units of housing, depending on the units size and the degree of rehabilitation required.

Young people are paid a stipend that starts at $5.35/hr for their construction work and $50/week for lunch and transportation during school attendance. Students may obtain raises on a regular basis, usually $.25 cents/hr every two months, up to about $6.50 per hour. They also can receive a $25 bonus for perfect attendance for each two-week pay period. Thus, typically young people can earn $7855 in twelve months, if they have perfect attendance, while they receive education and training.

Early History of YouthBuild

The YouthBuild program was pioneered by Dorothy Stoneman and colleagues through the Youth Action Program of the East Harlem Block Schools between 1978 and 1984. The logical idea of employing teenagers to rehabilitate abandoned city-owned buildings in order to create affordable permanent housing for homeless and low-income people inspired community-based organizations (CBOs) around the city. In the mid-eighties 150 New York City CBOs joined the Youth Action Program to form the Coalition for Twenty Million Dollars, which persuaded the New York City Council to fund the Department of Employment to replicate YouthBuild in several sites. Some of these sites were extremely successful; others failed for lack of a clear prototype or technical assistance.

By June of 1988, a national coalition the YouthBuild Coalition for Two Hundred Million Dollars was organized by the Youth Action Program in partnership with ten other organizations from around the country. Its purpose was to persuade the United States government to fund the employment and training of young people to build affordable housing in their communities while returning to school to complete their own secondary education. The Youth Action Program launched the YouthBuild National Replication Project with a $50,000 grant from the Ford Foundation and a four-year grant of $100,000/year from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Soon thereafter, broadening national interest in the program, coupled with the lessons learned in New York City when replication was attempted without adequate training or technical assistance, pointed to the need for a national organization to orchestrate the replication of YouthBuild programs. YouthBuild USA was incorporated in 1990 with Dorothy Stoneman, director of Youth Action Program, as founding president.

By 1993 YouthBuild USA had generated 15 YouthBuild programs in 11 states that were demonstrating the replicability and the broad appeal of this program. With funding from The Ford Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, YouthBuild USA initiated an independent evaluation of the first five replication sites. The evaluation was carried out by researchers from MIT, Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and Public/Private

Ventures. They concluded the program was replicable and seemed to meet the needs especially well of low-income minority males. They observed that it worked best when the principles and practices promulgated by YouthBuild USA were followed, and when there was competent executive leadership who had adequate flexible funding, sufficient time for planning, a sponsoring agency with a compatible philosophy, and an appropriate housing site for construction.

The YouthBuild Act was introduced by Congressman Major Owens (D-NY) and Senator John Kerry (D-MA) in 1990 with numerous co-sponsors. It was passed as a subtitle of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992: Hope for Youth: YouthBuild and signed into law by then President George Bush. In 1993 an appropriation to HUD of $40 million launched the federal YouthBuild program.

Current Organization and Funding

YouthBuild programs are operated by autonomous local organizations or by local governments through one or another public agency. By 1996 there were 108 YouthBuild programs in 34 states; by the end of 1999, there will be 129 programs. The primary engine of growth has been the HUD funding, distributed through annual competitions. While there has been bi-partisan support for YouthBuild from the beginning, the amount of funding has fluctuated in response to political priorities, fiscal constraints, and bureaucratic delays. Funds have been available in the following amounts in successive years between 1994 and 1999: $40M, $68M, $20M, $30M, $35M, $42.5M. The drop in 1996 from $68 million to $20 million caused a setback in the development of a cohesive, expanding, national program. It also motivated local programs and YouthBuild USA to protect programs with diversified funding. YouthBuild programs have thus sought and received funding from the Corporation for National Service, the Department of Labor, local and state school systems, state and city governments, and myriad private sources. As a result program funding varies from site to site.

The cost per student averages $20,000 for a full year in the program plus follow-up services, including stipends of between $6500 and $7800 per trainee. The cost of housing construction is calculated and raised separately, also from a variety of sources.

In addition to federal, state, and local public funds, YouthBuild USA and most of its affiliates receive financial support from private foundations. The Ford Foundation, The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Lilly Endowment Inc., The James Irvine Foundation, and The Commonwealth Fund have all made significant multi-year-investments in YouthBuild through YouthBuild USA. They have supported individual sites, evaluations and other systems of accountability, technical asssistance and training, alumni programs, communications, and publications.

More recently, YouthBuild USA has sought support from the corporate sector, resulting in a major grant of $1.5 million from The Home Depot, and additional grants of $300,000 from Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, $100,00 from Boston Capital, $25,000 from Citicorps, $35,000 from the Alcoa Foundation and $50,000 from the Fannie Mae Foundation.

Partly as a result of conversations with YouthBuild USA, Piper Jaffray Companies Foundation has committed $2 million to local employment training programs. Rotary Club International has committed $40 million to youth development programs, including YouthBuild. Local programs will apply for these latter opportunities directly to the source.

Some corporate relationships include partnerships with the local program and/or with YouthBuild USA. For example, The Home Depot not only provides program funding to 25 YouthBuild programs, but also participates in training, hires YouthBuild students and graduates, and seeks volunteer opportunities for their employees.

Demographics & Outcome Statistics

Over the past ten years, 108 independent YouthBuild programs have been established in 34 states, engaging over 20,000 young people. YouthBuild participants in 1997 were 75% male, 56% African American, 19% Latino, 18% White, 4.4% Native American and .5% Asian. These demographics have been roughly stable from year to year.

A typical program enrolls between 28 and 42 young people ages 16 to 24, at least 75 percent of whom have dropped out of high school and also lack a GED. While the program is ideally defined as a 12-month basic period, it remains flexible, placing some people in jobs or college prior to the end of the year and allowing others to stay in the program up to an additional six months. (Federal HUD YouthBuild funding allows two full years of training and an additional 12-month follow-up period, but funding levels tend to constrain programs to one year plus follow-up). The average length of stay in 1997 was 8.7 months and the average participant's age was 20.

YouthBuild programs are working in large urban inner cities, rural areas, tribal areas, and low income areas of smaller cities. The ethnic, racial, and geographic background of the students, as well as their gender, does not seem to affect the applicability of YouthBuild; it does require flexible adjustments to the needs of each population group.

2. Outcomes

Definition of Success

There are five distinct indicators of success within the YouthBuild movement:

1) Does the program produce the units of affordable housing that it has promised to produce, on time and within budget?

2) Do the students attain reasonable levels of success in terms of measurable outcomes such as attendance, retention, job placement, wages, GED and diploma acquisition, college entrance, and job and college retention?

3) Do the students fairly consistently offer passionate testimonials as to the life-changing impacts of the YouthBuild community on their own lives?

4) Does the local program survive, with stable funding, strong local partnerships, and minimal staff and leadership turnover, building a stronger and more contributing presence in the community?

5) Do the graduates of YouthBuild programs remain engaged in community life as leaders and role models?

Measurable Outcome Data

Outcome data for 1998 from affiliated sites show 60% of the incoming students graduated from the program with an average length of stay of 7.9 months. 85% of the graduates were placed in college or jobs with wages averaging $7.53/hour. Of these incoming students, 47% were parents, 39% on public assistance at entrance, 31% were adjudicated, 18% had been convicted of a felony, 22% were living in public housing, and 79% had no diploma or GED. Data for other years has been roughly comparable, with slight variations.

Data for graduates from 33 affiliated programs in 1998 show that of 1468 students tracked for more than 6 months, the programs had current information for 82%, of which 74% were still working or in school. In 1997, of 437 students tracked for more than 6 months in 14 affiliated programs, current information was available for 98%, of which 84% were still working or in school, at an increased wage. Tracking graduates is a relatively new activity, required by membership in the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network.

YouthBuild programs have shown steady improvement in the outcomes of their education components. In 1993, only 10% of students obtained their GED. In 1994, it had doubled to 20%. By 1997, affiliated YouthBuild programs were reporting 40% of students who needed them were obtaining their GED or high school diploma, and by 1998, the percentage had risen again to 42.5%. Average incoming reading levels remained stable during these years at about grade 7.4. During this period some YouthBuild programs became certified by local superintendent as alternative schools, and others became state charter schools, giving them access to state education funding. YouthBuild USA provides training for YouthBuild teachers and provides on-site education consulting to local sites, and is brokering relations with community colleges. YouthBuild's growing role as an alternative learning network for out-of-school youth is becoming increasingly noteworthy.

Variance Across Sites and Typical Problems

While average performance across all YouthBuild sites has held remarkably stable and continued to improve as the field has increased from 1 to 15 to 108 programs, there is always variation among the sites. There is not only variation between YouthBuild sites in their level of success in any given year, but there may also be variation within sites from year to year. At any given moment, there are always a few sites facing severe problems. One or two problem sites may be ones that were outstanding a few years earlier. Such change is almost always due either to a change in leadership, or a drastic change in funding, or both. Sometimes it is due to a build-up of internal organizational tensions that burst forth suddenly in a power struggle among adults.

The most commonly recurring organizational difficulty is when sponsoring agencies either do not have philosophical agreement with or adequate management infrastructure for the YouthBuild program. Inadequate funding is often a part of the picture when a site is faltering.

As technical assistance provider, YouthBuild USA can provide emergency assistance in a variety of ways. Advice, mediation, training, and various types of interventions can help. In four separate situations, YouthBuild USA has provided temporary, full-time leadership to carry a program through a crisis or a leadership transition. In several cases, YouthBuild USA has also had to intervene to organize the students to rebuild their morale when problems have demoralized them or angered them. In each case, with assistance, the site has recovered.

Since YouthBuild USA is neither the owner nor the manager of local programs, the local boards of directors have direct responsibility for the quality of the program. Some boards do not do enough evaluation because they are in charge of multi-service organizations and cannot focus exclusively on YouthBuild programs.

Sites that do not have a systematic mechanism for staff coordination and accountability, that lack a system of rapid intervention when weaknesses appear, or that fail to show sound fiscal management are unlikely to achieve their goals. Without a strong, committed management, a group of young people carefully selected because of their readiness for

the program, a united and competent staff, a carefully designed construction schedule, and morale-building activities, the program is likely to encounter problems that interfere with the quality of program performance. While all of these difficulties lead to discrepancies in site performance, the exemplary sites act as a quality magnet, pulling the whole field towards higher standards.

Quality Control and Data Collection

HUD carries out an annual competition for YouthBuild funding. HUD selects the sites and then through YouthBuild, USA, as its technical assistance contractor, makes sure that each site has access to information and training, and that when problems surface, help is available. If sites show persistent problems, HUD will freeze funds mid-cycle, and send a YouthBuild USA intervention team in to assess and hopefully solve the problem. If the problems cannot be solved, HUD will terminate the contract, or simply not re-fund a site. HUD receives bi-annual reports from each site that include outcome and demographic data.

Separate from HUD's procedures, the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network acts as a vehicle for promoting and monitoring quality among its affiliated programs by providing program design and performance standards, and methods for reviewing how well sites adhere to them. YouthBuild USA's computerized student tracking system gathers monthly performance and demographic data from affiliates. It generates statistics that document impact and guide program improvement. The system enables sites to easily tabulate their outcomes, set reasonable goals for self-improvement, and measure their progress toward achieving program performance standards.

YouthBuild USA also does on-site program audits of its affiliates. These are scheduled for every two years, to formally assess whether programs are achieving program design and performance standards and to learn what factors are enabling some sites to excel. Sites with outstanding performance are invited to present their policies and practices at conferences for the benefit of other sites.

Follow-up with Graduates

The creation of an ongoing community that establishes and reinforces positive values and provides access to opportunities over a long period of time is the goal of graduate follow-up. Optimally, follow-up is active, constant, well planned, and thorough. The graduate program provides continuous information and counseling about education, careers, personal issues, leadership skills, and social life. Even when funds are not available for a full graduate program, sites usually assign a counselor to provide ongoing support for the young people, reaching out to them by regular phone calls as well as responding to their requests for help. Unfortunately, when funds are cut back, funding for follow-up is often cut first, so graduate programs remain weaker in most sites than the basic program.

Third-Party Evaluation

An independent, systematic and objective process evaluation of the replication of five early YouthBuild sites was performed between 1992 and 1996 by Ronald F. Ferguson and Jason C. Snipes from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, Philip L. Clay from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, and Gary Walker at Public/Private Ventures. As mentioned earlier, this study concluded that YouthBuild is replicable and works best when it follows the philosophy and design put forth by YouthBuild USA. **The quality of local executive leadership and the availability of sufficient funding proved to be the most important factors in analyzing success.**

Ferguson and Snipes also presented a framework for understanding the process of transformation that young people enrolled in YouthBuild were seen to experience. Their model represents an adaptation of Erik Erikson's seminal ideas regarding the stages of the human life cycle to convey the changes that occur during the course of one program cycle.

First, the trainee must learn to trust in the caring, competence, resourcefulness and fairness of YouthBuild staff and in the physical and emotional safety of the program environment. Once trust has been established, the trainee can begin to negotiate an acceptable range of autonomy in decision-making, learning to respect the program's rules

and to value guidance. The next step involves initiating an honest attempt to collaborate with staff and peers toward self-development, learning to cope with or to overcome any pre-existing guilt and feelings of rejection or isolation from the old peer group. Young people can then begin working industriously to learn and integrate skills, steadily building belief in their capacity for mastery. Resolving inconsistencies and tensions between old and new beliefs represents the trainee's final task, and, with the support of staff, participants assimilate a positive identity that fosters a healthy life style, and a sense of positive expectancy about the future.

Ferguson and Snipes evaluation has been extremely useful for the YouthBuild movement because it documents and explains a process that staff intuitively understood.

3. Lessons Learned

Program Approach

To deal effectively with the problems faced by out-of-school youth, YouthBuild's approach is to chart a course that is directly opposite from the consistent disrespect that young people in disadvantaged communities have often experienced. YouthBuild programs must include the positive elements of respect for the intelligence of young people, and development of power for them over their immediate environment through participation in program governance. In addition, YouthBuild staff aims to offer patient caring, consistently positive values, family-like support, and a firm and supportive challenge to stop self-destructive behavior and change negative attitudes. YouthBuild remains committed to developing young people as leaders who can join in changing the conditions that have hurt them and the people they love.

In fact, leadership development is the most important element of YouthBuild programs. As much as society needs more good leaders at every level, young people need the challenge of engaging themselves in their communities by stepping into leadership roles. Real decision-making responsibility can heal low self-esteem and feelings of powerlessness and anger, counteracting some of the effects of oppression, in addition to giving young people the opportunity to experience success, and to change their identity from victim to change agent.

Leadership development is carried out in every aspect of the program. Young people learn public speaking and oral communication skills as well as general organizational skills such as how to chair meetings, facilitate discussions, set an agenda, take minutes, or draft a budget. The YouthBuild Policy Committee, a body comprised of at least one staff representative and an elected group of students who work together to make decisions about the YouthBuild program, involves trainees directly in governance by providing a forum to work through problems, compromise, and provide creative solutions that take into consideration the ideas, opinions and viewpoints of everyone.

While the scope of responsibility and authority of a YouthBuild Policy Committee varies considerably among YouthBuild programs, the Committee's role usually includes: participation in hiring staff, consultation on staff evaluations, recommending improvements in management and services, review of annual budget, planning events, and consultation on program design and policy. In addition to a Policy Committee that focuses internally, YouthBuild programs may have a community involvement committee that participates in community affairs. YouthBuild trainees and graduates can also become involved in leadership on the national level by being elected to the Alumni Council or the Young Leaders Council. The Young Leaders Council is unique in that it has a voice in policy governing the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network equal to the role of local directors and YouthBuild USA staff.

YouthBuild gives young people direction by providing a desirable alternative to street culture. Programs set attractive and feasible goals relevant to the human drive towards achievement, influence, affiliation and security. We have learned that the qualities required in a program to win the confidence of the students, include:

- profound respect for the intelligence of young people and their leadership potential;

- staff members who have overcome similar obstacles to those faced by the young people and who have the clarity to challenge self-destructive behavior and the love to nurture people through the fears and trials they face;

- involvement in public service activity, which demonstrates the agency's concern for changing negative conditions that have affected the youth, diminishes the cynicism of youth, and provides transferable skills for civic involvement;

- cultural, recreational, and community-service activities (both during and after program hours) that are fun and create group cohesion.

The YouthBuild program's particular success in recruiting and holding minority men is the result of several specific factors:

- construction work attracts men;

- programs are often located in African-American or Latino communities;

- YouthBuild staff in black and Latino communities are predominantly black or Latino/a;

- recruitment strategies make clear that past prison records do not exclude applicants;

- school curricula give attention to the culture and history of the students attending

YouthBuild USA holds that successful programs for unemployed and undereducated young people in general are long-term, full-time interventions that involve training, education, and continuing support. They have staff who consistently communicate both competence and caring. Students want to see that staff truly cares above the call of duty, beyond what they ever received before or expected from a program. When staff offer home telephone numbers, are available around the clock, and come through in personal crises, they gain the trust and gratitude of the students. When staff additionally possess and offer skills and wisdom, the students will fully engage in changing their own lives.

Staff Selection & Training

The development of a unified staff team is crucial to the success of YouthBuild programs. Programs seek competent, caring, and committed staff who understand the young people and are sensitive to the issues they face. Flexibility, patience, a high frustration tolerance, and the ability to work well with others are necessary personal qualities.

Hiring all staff at least one month before start-up to allow time for orientation, and providing annual periods of planning and reflection, makes a difference. Use of consultants from YouthBuild USA to do initial staff training has been useful. Staff participation in national training and conferences so they can feel their own belonging to something larger than the local program strengthens each program. The staff needs to become a community of individuals who reinforce, overlap, and balance each other's work without competition and turf struggles.

Regular staff meetings and retreats are essential. It is surprising how many programs can fall into a pattern of working without regular staff meetings and expect the cohesion to persist.

Overall

Extrapolating from what has been observed in YouthBuild programs, it seems apparent that successful programs for unemployed and undereducated young people will usually include all of the following:

- opportunities to perform meaningful work in a well-supervised context that enables trainees to learn marketable skills and good work habits while producing something of value, preferably something visible and important to the community;

- warm ongoing relationships with caring adults who serve as teachers, trainers, counselors and mentors, committed to assisting each trainee achieve his or her potential and gain the skills available through the program;

- systematic and extensive attention to improving basic education skills including reading, math, writing, analytical, computer, and communication skills, toward a GED, high school diploma, and college preparation;

- development of a positive peer group with a set of positive values and a philosophy of life that can compete with the negative values encountered on the streets;

- careful linkages with the private sector and trade unions providing employment opportunities, and follow-up with both trainees and employers for an extended period after job placement, with counseling and job development support available;

- involvement in significant decision-making regarding program policies, and opportunities to play public leadership roles influencing policy that affects the community;

- participation in some form of direct human service that improves the quality of life in the community and builds an ethic of service among trainees.

4. The Aspirations of Young People

The deep-seated desire of disconnected young adults to find a path to a productive and respected life style is not widely recognized and appreciated in our society. The large numbers of youth who flock to YouthBuild programs, who beg to be admitted because they see it as their last and only chance, the passion and poetry that flows from them as they begin to find themselves underneath the fog of despair, cynicism, boredom, drug influence, and fear that have weighed on them - these things are inspiring and poignant to YouthBuild staff.

The creation of a safe community in which people can dare to dream, to work toward goals, to create new relationships based on mutual respect and caringY this liberates an extraordinary energy among young people who are quickly eager to give back when they finally find a positive community full of caring and purpose. Learning about this energy and how to release and channel it is the most important learning going

on at YouthBuild programs. Seeing this, staff call YouthBuild a program of transformation, calling to mind the image of the irreversible changes that a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly, never to return again to its previous form.

The young people use the image of the abandoned buildings that they are rehabilitating to describe their own changes: This building is like me - rebuilt from the inside out, completely new, and beautiful.

This is what the young people yearn for. And when they get their hopes up, if they are then disappointed by the staff or the program as a whole, the feelings of anger and hurt can be intense. We have thus come to see YouthBuild programs as having a sacred obligation to fulfill their promise. Not all of them do; but those that do, generate a kind of religious fervor in their staff and youth. It is not uncommon to hear youth say, AI want to dedicate my life to giving other people what I have gotten at YouthBuild.

Why Some Youth Fail

Youth who fail to meet program objectives stumble on many types of obstacles. These include unsupportive home and community environments, inappropriate actions by program staff, or a personal lack of resolve to change. Young people who equate taking positive initiatives with selling out and abandoning their peers or who continue to rationalize the immorality of old behaviors may have difficulty remaining in the program. Similarly, sometimes mistrustful and pessimistic youth, who firmly believe that schools and conventional settings have little to offer them, never become engaged or focused enough to move through the program's early stages. While habits of suspicion are survival skills on the streets, they may prevent young people from being sufficiently open with staff, making it impossible for the staff to help them solve problems. Furthermore, participants who have led highly unconventional life styles may resist rules from external authority figures and refuse to conform their behavior to the program's requirements. Some trainees, on the other hand, worry that the program will exploit them even if they live up to its rules. Thus, finding conventional goals that have moral legitimacy and finding moral legitimacy in conventional goals represents a major obstacle that not all trainees overcome.

Persistent use of marijuana also undermines some student's success. When the program fails to appropriately challenge and change this behavior, it is difficult to set students on a permanent path to success. Most YouthBuild programs do random drug testing to enforce a no-drug policy, and require students to pass such drug tests to remain in the program or to graduate.

A significant number of young people leave YouthBuild for reasons that are difficult to classify as successes or failures of either the program or the young people themselves. According to Ferguson's report, death, poor health, the relocation of families and other such difficulties resulted in 17% of the terminations in the first demonstration sites.

5. Qualities of an Effective National Delivery System

In our experience, delivery of an effective program in many locations depends on excellent central and local leadership, small operational units, and accountability to standards, flexibility, democratic input, and an inspirational set of basic values. Each of these factors is discussed below.

a. **Quality of leadership:** Success is dependent on highly skilled and energetic entrepreneurial local leadership with vision and commitment. The ability to attract such leaders depends less on the level of pay and more on the vision, mission, level of flexibility, feasibility of success, and support offered by funders and system leaders. When talented people believe they can make a difference in a particular context, they will take on the challenge.

b. **Size:** The size of the program unit should be small enough to be manageable and to build a mini-community. Trainees need to know each other and the staff; they need to be known by the staff. A large impersonal context does not foster a substitute value system and a sense that someone finally cares.

c. **Accountability to standards:** There should be objective goals and standards regarding recruitment, attendance, retention, leadership skill attainment, and job and college placement, wage levels, and job and college retention that programs set and hold

themselves to, with flexibility to adjust to different circumstances and population groups.

d. **Flexibility instead of bureaucracy:** While systems and standards are necessary, creative leadership needs the flexibility to move quickly and responsively to new opportunities and problems. This implies adequate flexible funding and a minimum of paper work, requirements, and approvals for deviations. This flexibility will attract higher-level entrepreneurial leadership.

e. **Democratic input:** To obtain the best ideas and highest level of commitment, the system needs a balance of central coordination and democratic input from local leaders, staff, and youth, regarding policies and goals.

f. **Clear values:** There is an element of soul, of faith, of humanistic passion, an understanding that love in action is what will make the difference, regardless of the religious persuasion of the adults involved, that provides a necessary underpinning to ventures that are going against the grain of society=s prejudices and injustices. Effective interventions with the population that has been marginalized by poverty, racism, and past mistakes seem to need this element of heart and soul.

Taken together, these factors characterize a decentralized, rapidly moving set of programs that multiplies local leadership, is infused with deep personal commitment, and focuses on obtaining results without fearing change.

YouthBuild USA: The Home Office

The success of the YouthBuild movement depends on having a set of program ideas that are sound and well developed through experience, and on having a national support center that can teach those ideas and attract local leadership of very high quality. Since its founding in 1990, YouthBuild USA has shepherded the national YouthBuild program into existence, and has brought it to intermediate scale as a substantial network of locally autonomous but philosophically united programs. Its functions have included:

1) articulating basic philosophy;

2) providing extensive local and national staff training and technical assistance to both new and experienced programs;

3) observing, writing, and disseminating best practices in handbooks and newsletters;

4) developing standards and systems of accountability through democratic processes and implementing them;

5) offering leadership opportunities at the national level to YouthBuild students, and organizing an alumni network;

6) advocating for public funding and organizing supportive constituencies;

7) offering grants and loans that can fill gaps and pioneer new developments;

8) leading interventions and damage control in crises at local sites;

9) facilitating research;

10) disseminating ideas and lessons learned from YouthBuild programs into other related areas;

11) encouraging appropriate publicity and avoiding premature publicity;

12) raising private funds;

13) building partnerships with other national organizations that can be helpful.

As mentioned earlier, YouthBuild USA serves as HUD's training and technical assistance contractor, and in this capacity, provides extensive training and on-site assistance to HUD's YouthBuild grantees. Also, under contract to HUD, YouthBuild USA has written six handbooks for

local sites, covering the overall program: the education, construction, leadership development.counseling, life skills, and graduate resources components. Under contract with the Corporation for National Service, YouthBuild assists 22 sites that are both YouthBuild and AmeriCorps programs and under contract with the Department of Labor assists 10 welfare to work YouthBuild sites.

CHAPTER TWO

YOUTH SERVICE AND CONSERVATION CORPS

by Kathleen Seltz

1. Background Information

Service and conservation corps, generally referred to as "youth corps," engage out-of-school youth and young adults (ages 16-25) in stipended full-time programs which combine work experience, education and life skills development within the framework of environmental and community service. Over the past 22 years, the corps have prove to be an effective strategy for giving educationally and economically disadvantaged young men and women the chance to build new skills, while changing their communities, their own lives and those of their families for the better.

Where Did the Corps Come From?

The nation's corps are heirs to the tremendous legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a Depression-era public jobs program. From 1933-42, the CCC employed six million young men in conservation work that dramatically improved the nation's public lands, while also providing President Roosevelt's "CCC boys" with food, shelter, education and a precious $30/month stipend — $25 of which was mailed home and literally saved many families from hunger in tough times.

With the beginning of World War II, the CCC — along with its urban

companion program, the National Youth Administration — was disbanded, as young men went into military service and young women went to work to support the war effort. The concept, however, lived on and was revived in 1957, when the Student Conservation Association (SCA) placed its first groups of high school students as summer volunteers in national parks and forests.

Twelve years after those first SCA volunteers started restoring back country trails, the late Senator Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson used the SCA model as the basis for legislation that created the Youth Conservation Corps — the YCC — a summer residential conservation and education program for 15-18 year olds. At its height during the mid-1970's the YCC was funded at the level of $60 million and enrolled some 32,000 young people each summer in programs operated by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture. YCC participants worked in both cities and wilderness areas across the country, performing a variety of conservation projects, including tree-planting, river clean-up and erosion control.

Late in the '70s, an even larger federal program was launched — the Young Adult Conservation Corps — the YACC — which provided 16-23 year old young people with year-round conservation-related employment and education opportunities. As a part of the larger CETA program, the YACC received an annual appropriation of $260 million, operated at both the Federal and state levels, and enrolled 25,000 young adults each year.

Both the YCC and the YACC were virtually eliminated in 1981 due to federal budget reductions. By that time, however, the value of youth conservation corps had been proven and many states had already begun to support these programs directly. California took the lead, when Former-Governor Jerry Brown launched the California Conservation Corps in 1976. By the end of the decade, conservation corps were operating in Iowa and Ohio. Several other states, including Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin, followed suit in the early 1980s.

In 1983 the emerging youth corps movement took a new twist with the birth of the first urban conservation corps. Once again, California

stepped up to the plate first with the almost simultaneous start-up of urban conservation corps in Marin County, Oakland and San Francisco. Just a year later, New York City established the City Volunteer Corps and added a new dimension to the youth corps field by engaging young people in the delivery of human services as well as conservation work. Shortly thereafter, the State of Washington established a Service Corps and soon, many of the early corps began to supplement their conservation portfolios with human services projects.

During the mid-1980s, despite the absence of federal support, new state and local corps continued to spring up across the country, as governors, state legislators and mayors recognized that corps represented a vehicle for using the same dollar to simultaneously address multiple social goals. Mostly this occurred by happenstance, but there was one formal replication effort — the Urban Corps Expansion Program (UCEP) — undertaken from 1989 to 1993 by the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC) and Public/Private Ventures. Funded by a consortium of foundations, the UCEP demonstration was aimed at establishing and evaluating 15 new urban corps. It was enormously valuable to the corps field, as it provided the compelling reason and resources needed to finally codify best practices across the field. UCEP also brought several new dynamic leaders into the corps movement.

Among the 10 new corps that were launched and took root, five remain alive and well today in Albany, Dallas, Miami, Milwaukee and Newark; the remaining five were not able to secure a solid funding base and closed their doors. The evaluation effort was abandoned when the UCEP demonstration sites did not grow to the scale originally projected over a three-year period.

The replication confirmed what the field already knew: 1) it is hard to build a high-quality corps program and even harder to maintain it over time; and 2) the success of any corps depends to an inordinate degree on the commitment, talent and sheer energy of the director and senior staff. Fortunately those kind of individuals do exist.

What Do Corps Look Like and What Do They Do?

Today there are 100 corps operating programs in 168 locations covering 33 states and the District of Columbia. They enroll over 20,000 corpsmembers, who provide a total of 13 million hours of service in year-round and summer programs.

Unlike the original CCC, youth corps are state and local programs which have grown up and matured without a dedicated source of Federal funds or the accompanying government regulations that dictate standard form and function. Rather, over the past two decades, the corps movement evolved one piece at a time into a patchwork quilt of diverse programs stitched together by a shared commitment to youth development and community service. *As a result, there is no "average" corps.*

Some corps are part of state government agencies and focus primarily on conservation projects, often in wilderness areas; most, however, are community-based non-profits which perform environmental work but also address an array of neighborhood revitalization and human service needs. Among other things, corps protect and restore the fragile eco-systems on public lands, revive green spaces and play spaces in urban neighborhoods, handle massive amounts of recycling and community education around recycling, and buttress the efforts of professionals in elementary schools, health clinics, residential facilities for the elderly and countless other human service delivery settings.

Per the following breakdown of the 13 million service hours performed by corpsmembers in 1997, corps are still very much in the conservation business:

Conservation/Environmental Restoration/Recycling:	53%
Education/Human Services/Health Care/Public Safety	25%
Building Renovation/Construction:	13%
Disaster Relief:	5%
Other:	4%

Interestingly enough, however, 63% of these service hours were delivered in an urban or suburban, rather than rural setting.

While the organizational structure, kind of service projects performed and — for that matter just about everything else — vary con-

siderably from corps to corps, most share a common framework:

- Corps accomplish tangible, visible work projects that otherwise could not be done.

- Corps are crew-based, organizing young people ages 16-25 into teams of 8-12 which work under the supervision of a paid adult leader.

- The young people who participate in corps receive stipends approximating minimum wage; they generally devote 32 hours or more each week to service projects and another 8-10 hours to education and life skills development.

- In that more than half of the young people who serve in corps arrive without a high school diploma, corps provide special classes to enable corpsmembers to earn their GEDs.

- Corps also focus on improving basic skills through work-based learning (the best method for adults young and old), so that corpsmembers gain the reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities that employers demand.

- Corps ensure that young people acquire valuable work skills, preparing them for future employment in the public and private sectors.

Corps range in size from fledgling programs which enroll just 20 up to the oldest and largest — the California Conservation Corps — which enlists over 5,000 young people annually. While there is no average size, most corps enroll at least 50 — pretty much the break-even point for financial viability; one-third (36) operate with a steady enrollment of 100 or more corpsmembers annually.

Where Do Corps Get Their Funding?

In 1997, corps nationwide operated at a total level of $223 million, derived from sources as diverse as the corps themselves: 34% of corps funding came from state, county and municipal appropriations and

grants; Federal funds (channeled primarily through state and local government agency grants) provided 31%; cash and in-kind contributions from foundations, corporations, individual donors and project sponsors accounted for another 10%. The corps earned the remaining 25% of their collective revenue through sponsored work or fee-for-service contracts with Federal, state and local public agencies as well as non-profits organizations. This latter funding reflects both the entrepreneurial nature of the corps and the spiraling downturn in funds targeted to youth employment and training. Having no choice but to sing for their supper, the corps have become adept at accessing public funds not intended for services to out-of-school youth (eg., EPA Section 319 Clean Water Act funds administered by State environmental protection agencies; FHWA "transportation enhancements" funds administered through State Departments of Transportation, etc.)

Who Do The Corps Serve?

While a few corps enroll children as young as 12 in special after-school and summer programs, corps traditionally serve out-of-school young adults between the ages of 16 to 25 — with two-thirds of them clustered in the 18-21 year-old range. As the chart below illustrates, 62% of corpsmembers are young people of color; over half come to the corps without a high school diploma or GED; only 16% have any post-secondary experience. The high percentage of young men reflects the fact that the largest corps programs (especially the state conservation corps) engage primarily in strenuous, outdoor physical labor, which tends to dissuade young women from enlisting. Moreover, the large residential corps programs in California and Ohio lack the kind of child-care services that many young women would need.

Gender:	Male: 67%		Female: 33%	
Race/Ethnicity:	African-American:	30%	Latino:	23%
	Asian:	4%	Multi-Racial/Other:	4%
	Caucasian:	38%	Native American:	2%
Education:	No HS Diploma:	53%	HS Diploma/GED:	31%
	Some College:	11%	College Degree:	5%

The authorizing legislation for many state conservation corps either mandates or gives preference to the enrollment of low-income partici-

pants, but many of the corps do not track the economic status of their participants. The most reliable data on this topic come from an in-depth assessment of 8 very diverse corps, undertaken in 1993-1994 by Abt Associates/ Brandeis University. The study revealed that 70% of participants reported a household income of less than $15,000; 45% were receiving AFDC, food stamps, general relief or some other form of public assistance. Although the advent of Federal national service funding with its substantial post-program educational award has begun to attract more advantaged young adults to many corps, the average corpsmember continues to come from the low-income ranks of society.

Most corps set 12 months as the official program term and operate on a revolving enrollment system. In recent years, however, in order to comply with national service funding requirements, several corps have adopted a more rigid "school year" schedule with common entry and exit dates for all participants. Most corps also allow for a second year of participation. Nationwide, roughly half of all corpsmembers complete the full term; among those who leave early, nearly 50% do so for positive reasons, such as a higher-paying job or full-time education; the remainder are either dismissed for poor conduct or leave due to family difficulties. Not surprisingly, the completion rate is higher in programs which offer a substantial post-program education award tied to the performance of a mandatory number of service hours.

What Are The Corps Trying To Accomplish?

Despite their great diversity, all corps have two basic objectives: 1) to provide valuable service to their communities; and 2) to provide young people with the skills they need to succeed in the workplace and society. The corps model began life based more on the pragmatic need for a conservation workforce, than on the desire to create a comprehensive youth development program. Yet — as was the case with the original CCC — classroom and experiential education, life skills training and supportive social services were added along the way. While "work-based" continues to be the lead adjective used to describe the corps, education, job training, counseling and other services are now equally valued components.

2. Outcomes

The above having been said, it is not too surprising that in the corps community, success is defined in terms of the value of work performed and the satisfaction of work project sponsors. *(In the end, it is the sheer volume of work that prompts " tight-fisted " State Legislatures to approve appropriations for the corps year after year; likewise public agencies and non-profit organizations contract with the corps to get a high-quality product.)* And the corps do, indeed, excel as an efficient workforce. The Abt Associates study used a supply price methodology to set the value of work at $13.24 per participant hour, yielding $1.04 in monetary benefits *over* and *above costs* not including any of the social impacts resulting from changes in corpsmember attitudes and behavior. Likewise, the Abt study reported that 80% of project sponsors rated the work performed as *good* or *excellent.*

When it comes to documenting success in terms of corpsmember development, the picture is less clear cut. The corps generally track increases in reading and math grade-levels, GEDs/diplomas or certifications of technical skills earned, and placement in a job at graduation as indicators of progress made by each corpsmember. However, as one crew supervisor noted, "Sometimes, success means just getting one of the kids to lift his head, look you in the eye, shake your hand without trembling and say 'hello' without mumbling."

The corps do many things very well, but collecting data regarding corpsmember progress and long-term outcomes is not among their strengths. Systems range from the proverbial "shoebox" full of forms, to relatively sophisticated relational databases that seem always to be *in development.* Mostly, however, the corps use spreadsheets — many of which are limited and configured to develop specific reports that corps must submit to local funders.

Prodded along by their national association, corps are just now beginning to think seriously about tracking the post-program progress of their graduates. Thus, the field itself has little to say about long-term impacts, except in anecdotal ways.

Fortunately, the Abt Associates study also provided documentation

on corpsmember outcomes. Abt's participant impact study employed a random-assignment treatment/control group methodology at four large corps in California, Miami, New York City, and Washington State over a 15-month period. The analysis examined nine broad categories of program outcomes and reported the following statistically significant findings:

- All young people enrolled in a corps worked more and earned 25% more — than their control group peers.
- Arrest rates dropped by one third among all corpsmembers.
- Positive outcomes were particularly striking for young African-American men; *they scored significantly higher on measures of personal and social responsibility; were four times more likely to have voted in the last election; were more likely to have earned an associate's degree and had higher educational aspirations.*
- Out-of-wedlock pregnancy rates among young African-American women enrolled in the corps were two-thirds lower than their peers.

What Makes The Difference Across Sites?

In that most corpsmembers spend 32 hours a week working, much of their learning and skill development occurs on-the-job. Thus, the type and level of sophistication of work projects are key determinants to the experiential learning potential and overall quality of the corps experience. All work may have value, but you don't learn as much digging agricultural ditches as you do helping to plan and apply complex bioengineering techniques to stream or habitat restoration activities or educating school children about the environmental protection principles behind recycling. In turn, the complexity and even the "meaningfulness" of the work depends heavily on the creativity and sheer oomph of each corps' Work Project Coordinator, especially during the winter months when most environmental work is impractical.

The second and equally important determinant revolves around the combined technical and youth development skills of each crew supervi-

sor. These critical front line staff spend 8 hours a day with 8-12 corpsmembers; each must function as a technical work skills trainer, quality control expert, teacher, mentor and counselor as well as "the boss." Crew supervisors have demanding jobs; they are the linchpins of the entire corps experience. As often as possible, crew supervisors are drawn from the ranks of promising corpsmembers themselves.

3. Lessons Learned

How Do The Corps Address The Needs Of Out-of-School Youth?

It is important to note at the outset that young people come to the corps of their own volition, having already made the decision to change their lives for the better. Many of them arrive with one or more barriers to a positive future: weak academic competencies; shaky self-esteem; little or no experience in or with the workplace environment; no clue as to how to find out about employment opportunities; a history of having never completed anything; the absence of positive "real life," role models; in many cases, a background of poverty; and, in some cases, a background of sheer chaos. All of this said, perhaps the greatest problem is their chronic disconnect from the kinds of people and institutions that provide the fundamental encouragement and direction which more advantaged children get from day one and, rightfully, consider their birthright.

By its very nature, the corps model addresses many of the needs and squares with current theory on what works best for young people who have become disconnected from the traditional educational system and other supportive institutions. Corps provide a comprehensive mix of services — work experience, on-the-job training, basic education and GED preparation, and life skills training. They create an intense connection to caring adults and to peers as well through the supervised crew-based structure. Corps create countless opportunities for young people *to complete something* — a project, a GED, a journal. Last, but not least, corps have high expectations for their participants; they convey that message consistently in ways large and small until the corpsmembers come to have high expectations of their own.

How Are The Corps Seeking To Improve?

In their infancy and adolescence — most corps are less than ten years old — youth corps have survived by concentrating relentlessly on delivering good services to the community, and upon providing solid work and education experiences for the corpsmembers ***during the time that they participate.*** This is hardly surprising in that corps directors have grown up in their jobs during a spiraling downturn in support for youth and young adult job training at the Federal, state, and local levels. As noted above, corps have become entrepreneurial organizations, skilled at accessing resources not necessarily intended for services to out-of-school youth. While this diversity of funding has been pivotal to the survival and growth of the corps, with a few exceptions, it has not contributed to their ability to concentrate on helping corpsmembers plan careers, build industry-specific skills or pinpoint the next training and education opportunity.

While corps prepare young people for the workforce, the intensity and sophistication of their efforts to create ***specific, lasting employment and/or educational outcomes*** vary from program to program. Moreover, as noted above, corps rarely track the progress of their graduates and generally provide none of the post-program support services that experience and research have shown can assist young people to negotiate the transition into primary labor market, living-wage jobs, to retain them and advance in them.

The corps recognize that the time has come to capitalize on their assets and do more to ensure that out-of-school young people move from their tenure in the corps into permanent, decent-paying employment and/or post-secondary education. The effort is already underway through a three-year "Corps-to-Career" Initiative. With anchor funding from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, the Initiative is aimed at ratcheting up the ability of the corps to:

Target emerging employment and educational opportunities in their communities;

Prepare their corpsmembers for these opportunities;

Secure actual placements;

Deliver post-placement services to bolster retention;

Track and reinforce the progress of their graduates for a year or more; and

Access new funding sources to sustain the endeavor.

For the corps, documented proof of thorough career preparation and post-program success is the critical gap to be bridged in order to secure expanded and more permanent public funding and, thereby, continue to offer young people the opportunity and support needed to change their own lives for the better, secure sound employment and/or further education that will lead to sound employment, and become nurturing parents and engaged citizens.

What Holds The Corps Together?

In 1985, having decided with some amount of audacity that they constituted a national movement, the directors of the country's first 24 corps banded together to secure an advocate at the Federal level and a central clearinghouse of information on how to start and run "best practice" corps. Of course, these early corps did not have a farthing amongst them, but they were fortunate enough to have a godfather — Syd Howe, the legendary intellectual and activist behind the environmental justice movement and founder of the Human Environment Center (HEC). Syd gave the flegling association of corps a home at HEC and raised the first funds from the Ford, Hewlett and Mott Foundations to support it.

Ever since, the National Association of Service Conservation Corps has served as the primary source of information, training and technical assistance and the national policy voice for the network of state and local corps. It is also the structured forum for the on-going exchange of ideas, innovations and best practices across the corps. NASCC has grown from those first 24 corps to encompass more than 100 programs and has assisted in the birth of virtually all them.

Much of NASCC's work today revolves around resource development to sustain and expand youth corps services to young people and their communities. The days of large earmarked Federal appropriations

for particular program models like the corps are long gone. Thus, the NASCC headquarters staff work to identify existing sources of funds managed by various Federal agencies and find ways to build in youth corps involvement, thereby increasing the availability of work-based funding for the corps. Through legislative advocacy, but more so through outreach and negotiations with Federal and state agencies, NASCC has succeeded in opening up new avenues of support. A good example is the inclusion of language in the new transportation bill, TEA-21, which encourages State Departments of Transportation to enlist youth corps in enhancements and recreational trails projects.

As noted above, NASCC recently launched the **Corps-to-Career Initiative** to help its member corps excel at putting young adults on a firm path to post-secondary education and decent-paying jobs and — equally important — to keeping them there after they leave the corps. This three-year collaboration between NASCC and its member corps parallels NASCC's efforts to prepare youth corps for projects and corpsmembers for future employment in environmental remediation careers.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

by Andrew Forbes
Development Manager - East Coast

1. Background Information

The Center for Employment Training was founded in 1967 by Dr. Anthony Soto and Russell Tershy in the east San José barrio *Sal Si Puedes* ("Get out if you can!"). The organization and its innovative approach to vocational training developed in response to the failure of traditional programs among local migrant and seasonal farm workers. Dr. Soto and Mr. Tershy recognized that the barriers which prevented this low-income population from joining the economic mainstream — limited English, negligible job skills, and little work experience — also hindered the effectiveness of traditional training methods. Their own innovative approach addressed these barriers directly in a hands-on environment, and empowered a population previously considered "untrainable" to pursue and achieve sustained employment and economic self-sufficiency.

Over the years, the Center for Employment Training has expanded its mission to address the plight of low-income urban populations. CET's practical approach to vocational training and human development has proved to be as successful for the out-of-school youth and displaced workers of inner cities as it has for the migrant farm workers of California. Today, CET has a national reputation for providing hard to

serve populations with the skills and professionalism necessary to enter today's competitive job market.

Since 1967, over 80,000 men and women have passed through CET into meaningful employment, and their number increases by over 6,000 each year. While still home- based in San José, California, CET began expanding nationwide in 1993 with the help of a grant from the US Department of Labor. As a result, CET now runs training centers in Bronx, NY; Baltimore, MD; Alexandria, VA; Delray Beach, FL; Raleigh, NC; Chicago, IL; Reno, NV and Soccorro, TX. In addition, CET affiliate community-based organizations have set up training centers in Kentucky, New Jersey and Ohio.

Program Design

CET was established with one overarching purpose: to help the poor become self sufficient by training them in marketable skills. The key components of the CET training model include:

No Prerequisites for Entry - CET makes training accessible to anyone who wants it, without entry level prerequisites or "creaming." Many organizations require that participants enter their program with a base level of education, and as a result weed out the individuals who are the hardest to serve. CET, however, does not screen out students who are weak in math, reading, or English, and instead teaches these skills along with a vocational skill. Consequently, nationwide, approximately 40% of our trainees have limited English skills, and approximately 50% had dropped out of school, over 30% before the 8th grade.

Individualized, self-paced instruction - In a typical classroom setting, students must move at a standard pace; those for whom the pace is too slow are forced to wait, while those that are struggling with the curricula fall behind. In contrast, CET lets students move at their own pace, without penalizing those who progress more slowly, and ensures that all students are given the greatest opportunity to gain competency in their chosen occupation.

Open Entry and Open Exit - As a result of the self-paced program design, not all students finish their training at the same time, as they would in a traditional program, but leave the program only when they are ready to enter employment. Thus, students may enroll and begin training for a course any time there is an opening.

Industry Focused Course Development - The CET curriculum is designed to reflect the current demand of area employers. Consequently, prior to implementation of any new training program, CET conducts an exhaustive study of the local labor market to determine which course offerings are most compatible with the needs of the local economy. Courses are offered only after consultation with area businesses and labor market research both confirm that the proposed courses: 1) Provide skills which are readily marketable in the surrounding community; and 2) Lead to occupations which pay a meaningful wage. Each CET center develops and enlists the aid of an Industry Advisory Council and Technical Advisory Committee made up of volunteers from local industry to ensure that these goals are met.

Competency Based Training - CET's curricula are designed to emulate industry-specific skills as identified by employers. Each course is divided into competencies which represent the essential elements of the job. Each competency is divided into specific tasks which, when they are all acquired, enable the student to meet industry skill standards. As noted above, students progress through the training at their own speed, advancing from one competency to the next as they show themselves to be proficient in each group of tasks. Consequently, by the time students leave training they are not only thoroughly prepared, but are confident in their own abilities to perform the tasks which will be assigned to them by their new employer.

Integrated Remedial Instruction - CET students learn English, math, and language skills that are pertinent to the job for which they are training. The level of remedial instruction provided is determined by the student's needs once they have entered the program. While CET does not prepare students specifically for the GED (though many do go on to attain that qualification) the train-

ing provided ensures that they are able to read, write, and compute within the context of the specific workplace and at the level needed to succeed in that occupation. English-as-a-Second-Language training is also incorporated into training for those who need it, again with the emphasis being placed on workplace literacy, rather than on passing standardized tests.

Focus on the Job - CET focuses not on a diploma, but on finding a job for each student. Effectively the CET student's graduation certficate is their first pay check. CET's involvement does not cease when the student masters the skills portion of the training, but when the student is placed in a job. To this end the nature of the training and the atmosphere of the training center attempts to replicate the workplace as closely as possible. Students must come to training on time, punch in at a time clock, and be properly dressed for their job. Adherence to the rules of the workplace is expected of all students. CET employs professional job developers to work with students, almost from the moment they start training, to develop a resume, improve interview skills and pre-employment and work maturity skills, and ultimately to find and place them in well-paid, permanent employment.

Rather than providing a program of skill training specifically for youth, CET does not differentiate among students, preferring to integrate all students into the same classes. Thus a training class may include older welfare recipients, dislocated workers and out-of-school youth, all receiving the same training model with the same goal of finding stable employment.

Organization and Funding

The Center for Employment Training's corporate office, located in San José, oversees the operation of 34 centers throughout the country, and provides management services including Human Resources, Fundraising, MIS, Fiscal and Payroll support. The country is divided into regions, each overseen by a Regional Director who coordinates the operation of local training centers within each area. Center Directors manage the day-to-day operation of the individual local training centers. All CET training centers follow the same principles and training model, while taking into account local differences in funding and the

demands of the local labor market. The management of replication sites run by local CBOs varies somewhat from those run directly by CET, depending upon the management structure of the organization, but nonetheless retains the same basic structure and they report to a CET Regional Director.

All CET training is tuition-based, with an average cost between $6,000 and $6,500, depending upon the type of skill training. Given CET's open-entry/open-exit training policy, training programs last, on average, six months, depending upon the ability of the individual student. Approximately thirty skill training options are offered by CET nation-wide. These include, but are not limited to, Automated Office Skills, Precision Sheet Metal Fabrication and Machining Trades, Facility/Building Maintenance, Electronic Trades, Commercial Foods, Automotive Mechanic, Child Care Provider, Medical Occupations, and Printing and Graphics. Skill offerings vary from one center to another, depending upon the local job market. A typical CET center offers training in 4-5 occupational skills and may serve up to 250 students annually.

CET is funded with contracts from federal, state and local government sources, as well as, private funding. Nationally and locally obtained Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds account for over 60% of CET training funds. Federal financial assistance accounts for about 25% of funding and the balance of funds come from public and private vocational rehabilitation agencies, welfare programs, foundations, and other sources.

Most CET operated centers are accredited through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). This accreditation validates CET's quality of education and training, and allows students to qualify for a variety of federal financial assistance programs (Pell and SEOG Grants, Student Loans, Work Study) to help with tuition and basic living costs. About eighty-five percent of CET students currently receive some form of federal financial aid.

CET's national annual budget amounts to approximately $35 million with funding for local centers varying between aproximately $500,000 and $2 million. The bulk of CET's funding over the years has come

from the US Department of Labor, either directly or through local administrative entities, primarily from CETA and JTPA funds. As the primary service provider in California for DOL's 402 Farm worker training program, CET receives approximately $9 million per year to service that population. CET was recently awarded national Welfare-to-Work funding of approximately $7 million, which has been allocated to local training centers. Other sources of funding include HUD, through local Empowerment Zones grants and contracts and private sources including the Ford and Rockefeller foundations.

CET has received funding specifically to train out-of-school youth in national demonstration programs. The initial funding was provided to CET's San José training center as part of the JOBSTART study conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC). For more information on the outcome of this study, see the "Outcomes"section, below. A follow-up study by MDRC, looking at CET's training on both the East and West coasts, provided CET with an additional grant to train youth between the ages of 17 and 21. The study has not yet been completed, so results are not available at the time of writing.

Demographics

While specific numbers vary from year to year, the statistics for program year 1997/98 are representative of CET's training population. Of 4,743 students trained by CET in the last year, 23% were aged 17 to 21, 57% were school drop-outs, 40% had limited English skills, and 26% were receiving some form of welfare payments. Males accounted for 45% of students, 18% were African American, 73% Latino, 5% were White, and 4% were of American Indian or Asian descent.[1] A total of 62% of the participants had children, with single parents accounting for 49% of the total population of trainees.

Statistics for youth are similar to the overall population, with two significant variations. First, only 20% of the youth population, as

[1]It should be noted that in general the proportion of Latino and Asian students is much higher in the West Coast centers, while African Americans account for the bulk of East Coast students.

opposed to 40% of the overall training population, classify as having limited English skills, which would seem to reflect a higher percentage of first generation immigrants amongst older students. Second, while single parents account for 49% of the total population, they account for only 37% of the youth population.

What is especially noteworthy, however, is that, of those participants over the age of 21 who had children, 76% were single parents, while of the students 17 to 21 years old with children, a stunning 94% were single parents. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the barriers they face, this sector of the trainee population as a whole, and especially the youth, has one of the lowest job placement rates (65% and 58% respectively) of the CET student population.

2. Outcomes

Definition of Success

From the very start, the Center for Employment's mission has been to provide the hardest-to-serve population with the educational and vocational skills to obtain economic independence through well-paid, long-term employment. Consequently, CET's goal is to place each student in a permanent, unsubsidized job with good benefits and the potential for growth. The success of the program is judged primarily by this standard. CET's national placement rate for students completing the training in program year 1997/98 was 72% overall, and 69% for youth.

Other important measures of success monitored by CET management include the average wage at placement ($7.94 overall, $7.60 youth), training-related placement rate [2] (87% of students placed, 87% of youth placed) and training completion rate. An additional measure of success which is increasingly being studied is job retention rate of graduates 90 days after placement. As many funders base contract payment

[2]The training related placement rate measures the percentage of those students placed in jobs whose employment is related to the training they received at CET. Thus, while 69% of youth (482 individuals) were placed in jobs, 87% (418 individuals) of those placements were in jobs directly related to their training, while 13% (64 individuals) obtained jobs in unrelated areas. This is a good indicator of the relevance of the training to the job market.

upon longer term job retention (from six months to a year) CET is looking at methods for tracking students for longer periods of time, possibly up to three years.

Variance Across Sites

There is some variation in the results obtained by CET training centers around the country. All CET centers are expected to place at least 70% of program graduates. In general the older, more established training centers in California tend to have more consistent, though not necessarily better, overall performance than the newer East Coast centers. Largely due to initial management and funding problems, several East Coast centers performed poorly during the first years of operation, but most are now posting successful outcomes at levels at least as good as their Western colleagues.[3] Factors affecting the performance of individual training centers can be divided roughly into the categories of training related and non-training related. The primary training related problem affecting youth in particular lies in the staffing of the training centers. In those centers where there has been turn-over among the instructional staff in particular, as well as support staff, the youth are more likely to leave training. This factor testifies to the need for building trust and maintaining continuity in the training if youth are to believe in the program. Non-training related factors reflect the need for a comprehensive network of supportive services to help younger students overcome their many challenges to success in employment and training. While the challenges vary, and are more severe in some cities (Chicago and New York for instance), they can be surmounted if CET support staff have access to an array of agencies and organizations providing the necessary services.

Data Collection and MIS

Participant tracking and reporting begins at intake. A file is maintained for all enrollees containing enrollment documents, an Individual

[3]For a detailed study of the replication of the CET program as a whole, see Edwin Meléndez's "Working on Jobs," published by the Mauricio Gastón Institute of the University of Massachusetts.

Service Strategy, competency attainment documentation and placement information. Participant files are kept at each division, while status change information is sent to the corporate office in San José for entry into the computerized participant database. This database contains information on client characteristics, training activities, and placement outcomes.

Local CET staff, and Job Developers in particular, continue to provide counseling and support services after a participant is placed in employment. Follow-up reports are prepared at 30, 60, 90, 120 and 180 days following placement, and as demand increases from funders plans are being considered to track participants over a longer period. The MIS system records data regarding graduates' employment status, employer name and current wage rate. Graduates are encouraged to stay in touch with CET and are eligible for repeat placement should they lose their job.

MIS statistics are published and are available to all management staff and local center directors via CET's corporate e-mail system. These reports are uniform in their measurements, providing corporate management with a useful means of evaluating the performance of centers across the country. Placement reports are published monthly showing the placement rates for individual centers and the skill classes within each center. The monthly Absentee Report and Capacity Utilization Report allow management to monitor the internal operation of training centers. Centers or skills classes with consistently high absentee rates or low capacity utilization will receive technical assistance from corporate staff to help determine the source of trouble and correct it. Quarterly Client Characteristics reports break down the enrollment, termination and placement statistics of students by age, ethnicity, and other demographic factors, allowing management to identify possible weaknesses in a center's training and placement activities.

Third Party Evaluations

Over the thirty-two years of its existence, CET has been the subject of a number of evaluative studies. The most significant of these studies with regard to CET's ability to train and place out-of-school youth was the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's (MDRC) JOB-

START study. This demonstration project targeted 17 to 21 year old, economically disadvantaged school dropouts with poor reading skills. MDRC tracked graduates of 13 JOBSTART programs during a four year period and compared the impact of program services on an "experimental group" (given access to JOBSTART services) and a control group (who were not). Overall, the findings were disappointing. Earning gains by those who were provided JOBSTART services by most program operators were negligible. In some, the control group even earned a greater income than the experimental group. The single exception was CET. This study concluded that CET offered the only statistically significant benefits in terms of both increased employment and wages. Not only was CET the only clearly effective program in both studies, but its benefits were "very large." The "JOBSTART: Final Report on a Program for School Dropouts" states:

> *Earnings impacts were very large for one site in the demonstration: the Center for Employment Training (CET) in San José, California. Earnings impacts at CET/San José in the last two years of follow-up totaled more than $6,000, far larger than at any other site. When these results are combined with CET/San José's strong earnings impacts in the Minority Female Single Parent Demonstration, there is growing evidence of the strength of the program at this site."*

The results of some other, more general, studies conducted include:

1990 — The Rockefeller Foundation's five-year study of national employment training programs. Results of its study to identify effective ways to assist low-income, minority single mothers get off welfare and into the working world indicated that CET "was the only one (of the programs studied) to increase employment and wages significantly. It was also the only one to use the integrated model of employment training."

1996 — A study of CET by Edwin Meléndez for the Mauricio Gastón Institute of the University of Massachusetts, concluded

that CET has "demonstrated that, properly configured, short-term classroom training... can be effective in providing basic skills training, which, over time, could lead to steady gains in productivity and, consequently, to greater long-term earnings."

3. Lessons Learned

Addressing the Problems of Out-of-School Youth

In their April, 1997 report, Workforce 2020, Richard Judy and Carol D'Amico argued that the new technological economy will create wonderful new, high-wage jobs, but that workers without skills will never reach these "glittering destinations." Rather, they will be "stymied by the pitfalls along the road," and "their standard of living will stagnate or even decline."

Entering 1999, students come to CET because they need help finding employment in a booming national economy which is producing a surplus of jobs, almost all of them for skilled workers. This is exactly what CET was created and designed to do: provide people with the sills, then help them find the jobs. In addition to instructional staff and job developers, each CET center employs support staff to help participants to deal with problems which will impinge upon their ability to perform and stay employed.

Out-of-school youth in particular bring with them a number of problems which have the potential to make the goal of well-paid, long-term employment very difficult to reach. Almost 60% of youth entering CET are school drop-outs and almost all are poorly educated; 39% are parents - almost all of them single parents; some are homeless; some are addicts; some have already served time in prison; and most of them have multiple barriers to employment.

In addition, most of the young people coming to CET bring with them what is possibly the strongest and most complex barrier to success - they are very cynical about adults and the adult world in general, and especially the value of education and work. They do not believe, as their parents may have done, that education and hard work can actually "pay off." Often, their adult role models seem to confirm this belief, some

because they have never worked, others because they have struggled to succeed and fallen victim to depression, substance abuse and addiction. Even those adults who did make it through school, and who are working, may not live up to the expectations of a generation which looks to television for its economic role models.

Among the young people who come to CET, this cynicism about the traditional education system and the work world is often mixed with a youthful optimism which allows them to believe that they can still make it on their own, despite having poor reading and math skills, no work experience, and the burden of a young child. These students dream of Judy and D'Amico's "glittering destinations" but do not see the hard road that leads to them.

For many students, CET is simply the latest in a string of training and work experience programs, none of which have ever seemed to get them anywhere. Out-of-school youth, and drop-outs in particular, fresh from their perceptions of the apparent irrelevance of traditional schooling, must be convinced of the immediate value and relevance of the CET program if they are to stay in training and learn. It is absolutely essential, therefore, from the moment that these youth set foot in a CET training center, for staff to work hard to gain their trust, and establish that CET training is different from their other experiences. CET training addresses the needs of students by providing them with a realistic vision and destination, helping to remove or overcome their current barriers, meanwhile teaching them to navigate through future pitfalls which lie in the way. It is an indication of the success of the program, when students tell their instructors and advisors that CET is not like the other places, and that they feel like the CET staff really do care about them, and really can help them get ahead.

What Works

Successful strategies - The CET training model itself goes a long way to create a realistic vision for students. CET's self-paced, hands-on training, and the personal attention of the instructors and support staff enables students to gain the confidence in their own abilities to reach a turning point. Three elements are of particular importance to youth:

1. *Emphasis on hands-on training.* As soon as a student starts the program they are given a task to learn on a machine or piece of equipment which is immediately identifiable as relevant to the eventual job for which the student is training. Students are not required to spend initial days or weeks in a classroom studying theory, but can immediately feel they are making progress and moving toward their chosen goal.

2. *Training is self-paced.* Students who may well have been regarded as failures, and who were left behind in school, can work their way through the CET program at a pace which ensures that they not only gain the knowledge they need, but will feel comfortable performing the tasks demanded of them in their new jobs. And, they bear no stigma for "slowing down the class."

3. *Basic skills are integrated with vocational skills.* Having been failed by the traditional school system, many youth have very poor basic math and reading skills, and fear being exposed again in a traditional classroom. The CET training model incorporates basic skills training into the vocational skills component, teaching students the math, reading and writing they need in the context of the job, rather than training them for academic goals.

4. *Integrated classes.* Younger students are put into the same classes as older students, and welfare recipients who have never worked in their lives mix with dislocated workers with recent work histories. For youth, in particular, this is beneficial for several reasons. First, it further removes them from the traditional school classroom where everyone is roughly the same age and defuses the generational student/teacher divide; second, the more committed, focused attitude of older students helps young minds to concentrate and focus on the task at hand; third, the older students often act as mentors to the younger ones, sometimes receiving help with math or reading in return.

In other words, CET's training model is as far removed as possible from the traditional schoolroom, but instead mirrors the workplace; it avoids reproducing the past failures of students while keeping the focus firmly upon the future job; it gives them the skills they need to gain economic independence, and leaves strictly academic achievement up to the students themselves should they later choose to pursue it.

Other strategies which have proved useful, even essential in the training of youth include:

- *Visiting speakers* - Many of the youth entering CET have very few life skills. Many of these younger students have never learned how to budget their money, or to balance a check book - many have never had a checking account. Similarly, their knowledge of good nutrition, health and hygiene practices is often limited or highly inaccurate. In order to help them to overcome these additional barriers to long-term success, training centers use a series of guest speakers to address different issues, while CET support staff work with students individually. Speakers include local bank representatives talking about basic money management; nurses or doctors from local hospitals, or groups like Gay Men's Health Crisis, talking about preventive health care and issues such as HIV, tuberculosis and asthma which particularly affect the poor urban minorities; representatives of the local human services department discussing issues like welfare reform; and employers revealing the secrets of how get a job, or conducting mock interviews. These speakers allow CET to expose students to a much greater range of expertise than the staff alone can muster, as well as giving students the opportunity to interact with people in entirely different walks of life, and possibly to impress a potential employer. Finally, CET graduates often visit the centers as guest speakers in order to show current students that they can indeed attain their goals. In many ways these are the most important guest speakers of all.

- *Post-placement support* - Entry into the world of work can be an extremely frightening and stressful period for people whose self image has been formed in a community almost entirely dependent upon government programs and welfare payments. For those with children this transition can be even more traumatic. To combat the effects of this fear CET tries to provide as much post training support as possible, allowing graduates to return to any CET center to upgrade their skills, to get help with finding another job, or for simple moral support. One initiative which appears to be meeting with success is the creation of student support groups. These peer groups meet on a regular basis to discuss their mem-

bers' progress, to vent their frustrations and fears or celebrate their successes, and to share ideas about problems the members may encounter as they go to work.

- *Family involvement-* While not always easy to facilitate, the involvement of other family members in some way can often be beneficial for youth in training. At the most basic level this takes the form of students' family members visiting the center to see exactly what it is that their child or sibling does. This instills a sense of pride in the student, helps the family understand the students goals and responsibilities, and aids support staff who may need to deal with the family at a later date when conducting follow-up. In some cases CET staff have received the help from parents in keeping a disruptive or absentee student in training. Conversely, a rebuff from a student's family can also be a good indicator for support staff about possible opposition to training a student might be meeting at home - this is sometimes the case among young women from more traditional backgrounds or with a jealous husband or boyfriend

Adjusting the Program

For more than thirty years CET has received recognition as a very effective job training model for serving the needs of the unemployed and under-employed poor of the United States. This success has been due to the strength of the program model of competency-based, industry-focused, open-entry/open-exit training. This basic program design has remained largely unchanged over the years because it seems to work for all students.

Where changes have been made, they have been in the area of supportive services and activities complementary to the vocational/educational training. CET recognizes that it can not address all the issues facing its students, but must seek the help of others who are specialists in those areas, just as CET is a specialist in job training and placement. The CET training centers which have met with the most success with the youth population have been those which have been most effective in dealing with the non-vocational challenges which the youth carry with them. To this end, CET centers are now seeking cooperative agreements

with other local service providers and NGOs in order to be able to quickly respond to the needs of the students. These partnerships include low income housing providers, drug rehabilitation agencies, and shelters for abused women.

One group of trainees that has been causing CET some difficulty recently is single parents between the ages of 17 and 21. These young parents receive the same training as their fellow students, yet have a much lower placement rate than non-parental youth. These students are also more likely to drop-out of training or to be chronic absentees. This is a serious problem for CET since single parents make up a sizeable proportion of the overall population served. They do not appear to be failing because of a failure of the training model itself, but because of the whole complex of factors linked to their single parenthood with which the students must cope. As a result, CET is investigating ways in which to address this challenge, and has been especially seeking partnerships with child care providers and related support organizations nationwide.

Staff Selection and Training

While it is common in many non-profit social service organizations for employees to be expected to take on a variety of roles, this is particularly the case in CET training centers, and is important for the success of the youth training program.

The key staff member in any CET center is the vocational skills instructor. He or she sets the tone of the classroom and is the central figure in the student's life while they are at CET. Instructors are required to have been professionals or journeymen/women in their industry or trade for a minimum of three years, but preferably five years or more. They must also have a thorough knowledge of modern technology in the skill to be taught, and the ability to plan, implement and evaluate a skill training course. Beyond these basic requirements, the vocational instructors are expected to provide students with instruction in, and be a good example of the "soft skills" which are essential to retention of any job.

Like the instructors, every other member of staff has a specific job

description and required qualifications, and each has a specific role to play in the center. All employees are hired with that role in mind. However, a bureaucratic mind set can have no place in a center which hopes to be successful in training out-of-school youth. All CET employees, whether they are training, administrative or support staff are expected to be role models for the students. Any member of staff, from the receptionist to the center director, must be prepared to take an active role readying the student for the realities of the work world and the conquering of their individual barriers. Sometimes this is simply a matter of being a sympathetic listener, while at others it may involve making an extra effort to help solve a problem or to act as advocate for a student. Most often it is simply a matter of being a member of the team while ensuring that all students are acknowledged as valued individuals.

Staff are hired locally, often from the community which the center serves, and receive the bulk of their training on-site. However, in order to ensure a uniformity of purpose and method, new staff training is conducted by CET's corporate office in San José, in which new employees are introduced to the CET training model and mission by those who originated it. In addition, whenever possible, new staff members (especially training staff) visit other centers which offer similar training, and spend a week shadowing someone whose job most nearly matches their own. In this way, combining their own past experience with CET's formal training and observation of an experienced employee, incoming employees can be brought up to speed relatively quickly.

Replication

In the early 1990s, at the urging of the Rockefeller Foundation, and with a grant from the US Department of Labor, CET began to expand rapidly beyond its California base. Between 1993 and 1995, new centers run directly by CET were established in Chicago and on the East Coast from New York to Florida. While some of these centers did not perform well initially, those that survived are now performing as well as, and in some cases better than, their West Coast counterparts. It is clear that it takes time to establish relationships of trust with local employers and local support organizations and time to recruit and train an effective local team.

While some parts of the replication process are dictated by the CET model itself - such as adherence to the training design, and careful labor market research to ensure that the training is for well-paid jobs which are now, and will continue to be in demand - others have been learned along the way. These include the following:

- Funding sources must be reliable and/or diverse if a center is to have longevity.

- Local industry support must be acquired and maintained in order for the center to be effective in training students in up to date skills, and placing them in good jobs.

- A ready network of supportive services must be available or be quickly built in order to deal with the non-vocational/educational issues facing most students. Without effective supportive services, CET's training can be rendered almost useless.

- All staff must be well trained in the CET model to ensure that the replication remains as close as possible to the original, effective design.

4. Contribution of the "home" office

CET's corporate headquarters, and its largest training center is still located in San José. The other centers, while retaining a large degree of day-to-day autonomy, all report to San José. The corporate office provides management and administrative support such as curriculum development, staff training, human resources functions, payroll, fiscal and MIS. Corporate policy issues from the San JosÇ office. In addition the corporate office acts as clearinghouse for information from all CET centers nationwide and is able to bring that information to bear and provide technical assistance to deal with training or other problems in any training center.

Perhaps most importantly, the corporate office, and the Board of Directors, in particular, ensures that CET's goals and the program model remain intact and are not compromised by the exigencies of training hard-to-serve populations, and the struggles for funding and meeting contract performance requirements at the local training centers.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRIVE

by Lorenzo Harrison

1. Background Information

STRIVE's mission is to prepare, train, place and support inner-city youth and young adults in long term employment experiences. In addition, its aim is to demonstrate the impact of attitudinal training and post placement support on the long-term employment of that population.

Program History

STRIVE was incorporated in December of 1984 and saw its first participants in 1985. The braintrust and key program staff of STRIVE have remained intact almost since its inception. Rob Carmona, MSW, CSW currently the Chief Executive Officer, has led the organization since the summer of 1986; as such, he is often recognized as STRIVE's founder. Lorenzo D. Harrison, MPA, Executive Vice President, has been a key staff member since August 1988.[1] Lawrence Jackson, Director of Operations, has been on board since July 1986. Frank Horton STRIVE III Director and Director of Training for all sites, is a graduate of the first training cycle in May of that same year.

[1]Lorenzo Harrison was named Director of Youth Programs, department of Labor, ETA, in late 1998

STRIVE is responsible for the conceptualization, establishment, implementation, development and management of the STRIVE Employment Group (SEG), a consortium of NYC employment training and placement programs based on STRIVE approaches and concepts. These sites are independent organizations that have incorporated either the STRIVE model along with its principles or one of the following STRIVE program components: attitudinal training, job development, placement and graduate services.

The network includes a diverse portfolio of organizations committed to the helping professions. It includes local development corporations, settlement houses, multi-service organizations, a substance abuse treatment association, foster care agency and ex-offender service. The commitment of such diverse organizations to youth development and employment strengthens the capacity for comprehensive service delivery (i.e. remedial education, hard skills training, vocational counseling, family counseling, housing, etc.). SEG has the capacity of serving upwards of 3000 young men and women per year. SEG is primarily funded by a multi-million dollar challenge grant awarded to STRIVE by the Clark Foundation and $150,000 - $200,000 yearly from the United Way of New York.

Currently there are twelve SEG sites:

- The National Association on Drug Abuse Problems (NADPAP),
- Stanley Isaac's Neighborhood Center,
- The East Williansburg Valley Industrial Development Corporation (EWVIDCO),
- Midtown Community court,
- Grand Street Settlement,
- The Center for Children and Families,
- South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SOBRO),

- The Rockaway Development an Revitalization Corporation (RDRC), and

- The Partnership for the Homeless.

and three STRIVE program sites.

Program Description

The key elements to STRIVE's employment intervention are attitudinal training and post placement support. Attitudinal development is assessed and training rendered under the rubric of STRIVE's employment training workshop. STRIVE views its preparation as a heightened level of job readiness training. While STRIVE's approach may incorporate some of the attributes of traditional life skills training, the attitudinal training has been described as a highly interactive, sometimes confrontational and dynamic process.

STRIVE has been a pace setter in the employment training and placement community as it relates to the value of post placement support and follow-up. Essentially, follow up services function as a safety net for program graduates. STRIVE considers youth development and employment as ongoing learning experiences. In this way, STRIVE provides lifetime services to its clientele. The organization commits to a minimum of 2 years in which the onus is on staff to maintain contact with every graduate. After the first two years the onus in on the graduates to stay in touch with staff.

Specific services are comprised of case management, career development, counseling on housing and domestic related issues, alumni activities, replacement and upgrade services, personal development and educational advisement. Prior to being invited to the STRIVE program, an application form is completed and potential participants are interviewed and evaluated according to educational achievement, work history and the stability of their living situation. The application form is part of the intake and assessment process. During intake the participant is interviewed by a staff member to assess the needs, strengths and possible barriers to attending and completing the three week training session and finding employment. Once it is determined that there are no

obstacles that may prevent the participant from attending and completing the session, the candidates are invited to the workshop.

Program services start with a dynamic program orientation session (also known as "group interaction") which is the start of a three-week workshop to assist participants to improve their ability to communicate and to utilize constructive criticism to improve attitude and prospective on-the-job behavior. This session provides information to the participants on issues ranging from meeting the requirements of the dress code to effectively handling office politics. The core program follows the program orientation. In this three week program, seasoned instructors construct realistic role-play situations which provide a basis upon which participants are able to learn about the realities of work and how to successfully deal with employer expectations. The experiences are structured to foster confidence and to stress the need for preparation in order to be successful.

Videotaping is utilized in many parts of the program in order to allow participants to critique themselves as well as fellow participants. STRIVE also provides the resources and instruction for the motivated participant to acquire considerable computer training in the areas of word-processing and data entry while in the program. These skills are fast becoming workplace staples and also provide a further opportunity for participants to obtain an enhanced sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

Following the workshop, the STRIVE job developers work with the participants to both enable them to seek jobs on their own and to provide them access to jobs leads. Upon gaining employment, STRIVE offers every graduate support and alumni services to assist in job retention for 24 months.

Improvements in Program Design

STRIVE is known for its confrontational approach to training, which is initiated as early as group interaction. Most of the program dropouts result from this feature. Consideration has been given to toning down this aspect of the program. However, it has been argued that the "in your face" approach is the STRIVE trademark and this feature makes the

program effective. More importantly, what must be understood is that the program is not for everyone. The participant must understand that a commitment means hard work and that they will only reap what they sow. Those who return, do so because they fell they need attitudinal retraining and because they really want to work. Therefore, rather than tone down, we are engaging the participants' involvement in their own development. Moreover, we are working to ensure that they understand that our approach is intended as constructive rather than destructive. Finally, we are constantly looking at how the demographics of our population may change and adjust the model as needed.

Staff Selection Process

Historically, STRIVE staff have either been selected or recruited from within its client base — presently 43% of the staff are STRIVE graduates. The majority of other STRIVE staff are recruited from and referred from within our network of partners or satellite programs. Only 4-6% have been hired from outside the network.

Program Funding

The organization is privately funded. A sampling of the sources of support for STRIVE is as follows:

Corporations	*Foundations*
American Express	Achelis/Bodman
Bankers Trust	Barker Welfare
Blodgett Corporations	Booth Ferris
Chase Manhattan	Calder Foundation
Citibank	Clark
Con Edison	Diamond
Daily News	Cleveland Dodge
Dunn & Bradstreet	Dreyfus
Exxon	W.T. Grant
IBM	Hayden
Merrill Lynch	Hearst
Metropolitan Life	Heckscher
Morgan Stanley	J.M. Kaplan
New York Telephone Company	J.M. Foundation

Phillip Morris	DeWitt Wallace
Smith Barney	Paul Newman
SONY	N.Y. Community Trust
U.S. Trust	Public Welfare
Xerox	Tiger
J.P. Morgan & Co.	Annie E. Casey
Edna McConnell Clark	Ford Foundation

All of the above institutions have funded STRIVE regularly since its inception. Some have provided multi-year support. In addition, in recent years STRIVE has received government fee for service dollars for special initiatives amounting to approximately $400,000. One of the major contributors has been the Clark Foundation which has provided a $5,000,000 Challenge grant that runs through the year 2000. STRIVE also receives approximately $40,000 in annual support from various churches and individuals

Program Costs

Over the past five years, the budget for the prototype STRIVE program (STRIVE Central, East Harlem Employment Services) has grown from roughly 1.1 million per annum to 1.7 million per annum. This program serves approximately 500 youth and young adults for an average cost of $3400 per person. This average cost includes the STRIVE Employment Group which assists with the development of additional STRIVE program sites around the country. In satellite programs the cost per placement and post-placement services has hovered between $1500 and $1800.

Demographic Profile

The profile of STRIVE participants reflects a broad cross section of at risk youth: high school dropouts, kids phasing out of the foster care system, former substance abusers, public assistance recipients, single parents and ex-offenders, between 18 and 25 years of age. STRIVE prioritizes recruitment and intake for individuals who are most needy, especially for families in poverty and the working poor.

2. Outcomes

Definition of Success

In eleven plus years of service, STRIVE has placed upwards of 11,140 young men and women in unsubsidized jobs. Consistently, follow up evaluations have shown a 75 to 80% retention rate. On average, STRIVE loses approximately 18% of the new participants between the initial group interaction, which takes place on a Friday, and the following Monday. The Friday start date is specifically designed to provide the participant with an opportunity to come to a firm decision on whether the program fits their needs. Another 18% dropout during the three week training session. Therefore, if 100 people are interviewed, 64 will typically complete the three week training session.

STRIVE's service goals and success indicators are as follows:

Placement: To place in unsubsidized employment 80% of the workshop graduates (young people who successfully complete the training.)

Retention: To retain in employment 80% of the graduates who are placed on jobs.

Retention is measured aggregately. For example, if 100 individuals are placed and 80 are still working at the time the quarterly follow up is conducted, this constitutes an 80% retention rate. As reflected in STRIVE's mission statement, the agency's aim is to assist individuals in acquiring a solid work ethic and internalizing good work habits.

The types of jobs usually provided to graduates include:

Stock clerk

Retail sales

Cashier

Secretarial

Mailroom

Food Service

Construction

Average entry wage levels range from $7.50 to $8.62 per hour. Occasionally, some participants with minimal or no work history will receive minimum wages and conversely some participants who possess experience and have a work history can make as much as $10 an hour.

Data Collection System

Initial information about youth served is obtained from a conventional type application filled out by the participants themselves. Information is then entered into a database. The database functions as a management information system (MIS) for case conferencing, program marketing, evaluation, assessment, fund-raising, etc. Overall the MIS is instrumental to strategic planning. Data to determine outcomes is systematically gathered and performance measured. Inputs are made to the data system on a daily basis. Placement and retention reports are produced monthly and quarterly respectively.

Key areas that STRIVE is currently focused on in terms of improving its information gathering and system's review are:

Greater understanding of the retention measure: As mentioned, STRIVE's core program measures retention in the aggregate.. If 100 were placed and 80 are still working, its an 80% retention rate. Though this mode has extreme value in capturing an organization's overall effectiveness, it reflects a "snapshot in time" approach. A more qualitative measure would capture understanding how long individuals stay on given jobs, the reasons for changing jobs and what may be the implications in terms of the labor market. STRIVE has some gauge of its work in these areas, but more needs to be known.

Related Career Benefits: Ascertaining the frequency in which graduates are being promoted, making lateral moves and/or

enrolling in college or some other hard skills training institution will also provide a more qualitative look at program impact.

Related Social Benefits: Determining impacts on welfare benefits for that segment of the graduate population who are working, the recidivism rates and other social impacts will also provide greater insight on the program's long-term results.

Program Evaluations

STRIVE program operations are formally and informally evaluated constantly. Formal evaluation activities were completed in January 1994 and October 1995 by NYU's Robert F. Wagner School for Public Service and the U.S. General Accounting Office, respectively. Informally, participant information and program outcomes are systematically tracked and reviewed on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

3. Lessons Learned

There are a number of lessons that STRIVE has learned in its work with young people. Primarily, three particular lessons stand out that are uniquely a part of the STRIVE model. They are:

- The role that initial access to and success in the entry level labor market plays in long-term labor market success.
- The utilization of work and work-like experiences to foster the growth in attitudinal perspective and acceptable labor market behavior.
- The importance of post employment follow-up and support for success.

STRIVE was founded on the strong belief that the problem of unemployment and under-employment for residents of depressed communities is the lack of access. In addition, STRIVE tailored its brand of attitudinal job readiness based on the view that inner-city youth possess survival skills and intangible skills that are transferable to the entry-level, semi-skilled labor market. What's essential to that transference is

attitudinal change. STRIVE's motto is "there is no better training for work than work itself". STRIVE's assessment process is very unconventional. However, attitudinal change (as it relates to workforce development attainment/skills acquisition) is reviewed during the course of the training process in a qualitative manner by observing the participant's demeanor, appearance, outlook, effort, attentiveness, sincerity, participation, dependability and cognitive skills. Post placement soft skills development is reflected in lateral and upgrade job movement. It is also supported by the incremental achievement of graduates such as the acquisition of a drivers license, enrollment in continuing education, a renewed commitment to parenting and becoming an active voting member of society. It has been STRIVE's experience that all of these intangible attributes are relevant to a young persons initial employability and subsequent ascension in the labor force.

In addition to the implementation of the sectoral job development approach, STRIVE seeks to stratify the job opportunities that are developed according to the graduate/employee's potential at acquiring additional marketable skills, work hours, full time/part-time schedules and whether the job is permanent or temporary. For example, it may be advantageous for a young person to only work part-time while preparing for their GED. Likewise, a young mother may find it more manageable to negotiate a temporary position because the flexibility enables her to maintain her ability to raise her child.

STRIVE makes a formative commitment to following up every graduate. Follow up is a STRIVE staple. Also, graduate services staff utilize communication with the employer to strengthen the post placement support process. In addition to weekly and monthly contacts via the telephone, ongoing evening and weekend workshop sessions are conducted, and face to face counseling sessions and home visits are made on an as needed basis.

A recent programmatic addition, ASAP provides extensive advanced attitudinal "soft skills" training and industry-specific "hard skills" training. Employers are regularly consulted as to what skills they are looking for in prospective employees, and ASAP modifies its training curricula accordingly. Exclusively developed for STRIVE graduates who have proven their commitment to staying in the workforce by maintaining

employment for six months to a year, ASAP provides free training to participants who are ready to take the "next step" in their career. The goal is to place successful ASAP graduates in jobs with growth and advancement potential that offer "liveable wages" of $20,000 per year or better.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE QUANTUM OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

The following information includes excerpts from the book, *Blueprints for Violence Prevention, The Quantum Opportunities Program*, available from the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado, Campus Box 442, Boulder, Colorado, 80309-0442, 303/492-8465. With special thanks to Benjamin Lattimore, OIC of America, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1. Background Information

The **Quantum Opportunities Program** (QOP) was developed and implemented on a pilot basis from 1989 through 1993 by the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America (OIC of America) and supported by an advanced funded grant from the Ford Foundation of $1,050,000, which was supplemented by an additional grant of $130,000. The QOP pilot study was an experiment to test whether youth from families receiving public assistance could make a "quantum leap" up the ladder of opportunity if an intensive array of coordinated services, coupled with a sustained relationship with a peer group and a caring adult, were offered to them over their four years of high school. The "opportunities" offered to the 125 participating youth called Opportunity Associates (hereafter called Associates) included *educational* activities (tutoring, computer-based instruction); *development* activities to learn more about health, alcohol, drug abuse, sex, family planning, arts, career, and college planning; and *community service* activities aimed at improving conditions in the communities.

The pilot project was implemented in five Opportunities

Industrialization Centers (OIC's)[1] in Philadelphia, Oklahoma City, Saginaw, San Antonio, and Milwaukee. In the fall of 1990, OIC of America concluded that OIC of Milwaukee lacked the commitment to effectively manage the QOP program. This decision was reached on the basis of extremely low levels of participation and on increasing signs that the provider had lost interest in improving the implementation. The active Associates were transferred to another local agency, Learning Enterprise, an alternative education program, which had a fully staffed and equipped basic skills lab.

The QOP model, which utilized a fully staffed and equipped computerized learning center, was implemented with 25 youths in each of the five sites, recruited from poverty neighborhoods and the high school nearest to the participating OIC. The high school produced a list of students who met the eligibility requirements, from which the 25 students were selected at random (random assignment was conducted in order to evaluate QOP outcomes). A Coordinator was designated in each site to work with the participating youth. The aim was to have a single adult responsible for the 25 Associates at each site for the full four years and beyond.

The concept and design of QOP were created by Benjamin Lattimore, director, OIC of America, and Robert Taggart, President, Remediation and Training Institute. The program designers recognized that a variety of education, training, employment, development, and service opportunities were already available to poor teenage youth through programs of government agencies and nonprofit organizations. These, however, were neither coordinated nor sequenced in a way that recognized the developmental needs of maturing youth. QOP tested whether comprehensive services could be sequenced effectively, whether a single coordinator could broker services efficiently, whether eligible youth would participate if such opportunities were offered, and

[1]"OIC of America" is used to refer to the national organization Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America. "OIC" is used to refer to a local affiliate of the national organization. OIC of America is a national nonprofit organization founded in 1964 by Reverend Leon Sullivan to help the poor help themselves.

whether this approach would have significantly positive impacts on the youths' life chances which would make the social investment profitable.

Within local sites, program staff operated as day-to-day partners with teachers and administrators at the participating school(s). This enhanced the legitimacy of the program and served to remind Associates that QOP is not an "alternative" to school. Rather, QOP strives to cultivate leadership qualities in youth to enable them to participate actively in their schools.

Highlights of the QOP Program Model

The primary goal of QOP is to increase high school completion and post-secondary attainment of high risk youth from economically disadvantaged families and poverty neighborhoods, primarily by improving basic academic skills.

There are a vast array of functional or performance skills required for success in the home, workplace, marketplace and community. These skills are developed by most young people as they apply their basic academic skills to solve problems they encounter as they interact with the world around them. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds lack development-enhancing experiences (e.g., travel, summer camp, extracurricular activities, theater, good restaurants) and, moreover, lack the basic skills to master the limited opportunities which are available. Hence, they may fail to develop the practical skills which are assumed to be necessary for everyone.

QOP is designed to mold the whole person both academically and developmentally. Activities are geared to stimulate knowledge of the world in which we live, each other, and behaviors that lead to successful adolescent development. Learning about behaviors that lead to success as well as behaviors that lead to failure are a fundamental part of the developmental component of QOP. The developmental activities are necessary in order to succeed at work, in the community, at home, and in life. Personal development activities are devised with the goals of improving health, preventing alcohol and drug abuse, learning about unsafe sexual practices, family planning, gaining knowledge and experience with the arts, careers, and college planning.

The QOP youth development model spans the four years of high school, working with small groups of disadvantaged youth beginning at ages 13, 14, and 15, before many young people get into trouble. This year-round, after school program utilizes a case management approach which is individually tailored to the youth's own needs and circumstances. It is designed to foster achievement of academic and social competencies. It consists of three activity components of 250 hours each for a total of 750 hours per year by a range of support activities. These activities are brokered by a Coordinator at each site. The activity components are combined in an integrated, holistic sequence. They include:

Education Opportunities. 250 hours per year of self-paced and competency-based basic skills study, tutoring and homework assistance outside of regular school hours. Reading, writing, math, science, and social studies are covered. Associates complete these extra hours of education in the existing OIC Learning Opportunity Center in their community. The curriculum used is known as the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP):

- Learning is broken down into "bite-sized" and sequenced steps. Learners are placed in each subject sequence wherever is appropriate, and move forward as rapidly or slowly as they are capable. They are not pressured by negative comparisons with other learners. They do not waste time covering things they already know. They are not frustrated by feeling rushed or behind.

- Learners can work any schedule an hour a day, part-time every day, a few days a week, on the weekends or evenings, in the summer or school year. Most teachers consider 90 minute sessions the optimum balance. If a scheduled session is missed, the learner just picks up where he or she left off. The learning center is convenient and inviting, so it is easy to attend. For instance, other family members (e.g., younger siblings) can be involved if necessary

- There are many instructional materials addressing the problems which otherwise intrude on learning. A learning center operates in a businesslike way so there is no shouting, no dictatorial control, and mutual respect of other learners. Tough problems can be spot-

ted and dealt with the minute they occur, because the instructor does not have to be directing the whole group.

- There are a host of functional materials which address skills of direct relevance to learners. Courses may be directly accredited by schools; they can also be used to prepare learners for the GED and the SAT. Courses can be sequenced and combined in any order to meet specific goals and outcomes of a learner.

Development Opportunities. 250 hours per year of cultural enrichment and personal development. Associates attend plays and concerts, explore the visual arts, visit museums and new locations, read and discuss current affairs and the Junior Great Books series, learn about their own rich history and culture, dine in restaurants, and "job shadow" with professionals. Associates receive a personal subscription to Time Magazine. They learn how to set goals, manage their time, and choose behavior appropriate for varying situations. They develop life skills needed in the home, at work and in the marketplace. They learn about themselves and how to get along with others. The activities include:

- ***Group Discussions.*** Associates are presented with situations or information about a topic either by the Coordinator or through a reading passage. Then, they engage in a guided discussion of the issue.

- ***Multimedia.*** Associates listen to an audiocassette book or watch a videotape, or complete a CD material, then report on or discuss what they learned following a guided format. Also included are complete self-study courses on CD called "electronic electives."

- ***Field Trips.*** Associates take a trip to a government agency, museum, library, or theater after background preparation. The field trip is followed by guided discussion or by writing exercises.

- ***Projects.*** One or more Associates are assigned a specific project in which he or she investigates a topic or completes a task, then returns with a completed output or report.

Each activity is presented in a similar format with an objective, a list of needed materials, a suggested time limit, a step-by-step procedure, and a group of questions to be used for discussion. The activities are organized by functional or performance skill domain such as: awareness skills, civics skills, community skills, computer skills, consumer skills, family, health and workplace skills, etc.

Service Opportunities. 250 hours per year of community service connect Associates to their communities. Service projects include tutoring elementary students, neighborhood clean up, volunteer work in hospitals, nursing homes, libraries, and human services agencies. Opportunities which are earned are more valued. Through volunteerism and service, disadvantaged youth can "pay back" some of the costs of education, development and support activities. But they will also "do well by doing good." Service learning enhances formal education. Service work teaches skills needed in the labor market. Service experience brings learners closer to community populations and needs.

Advantaged youth have many supporting institutions and resources which promote volunteerism and service. They do not have to worry about where the next meal is coming from or whether there will be a roof over their heads. They have the academic and applied skills and work habits which can make them useful to service organizations. On the other hand, educationally and economically disadvantaged youth live in impoverished communities which lack the rich infrastructure and support for volunteerism. They lack the skills and experience needed to fully contribute, and they frequently lack the resources and time to make a contribution.

By stipending service activities, QOP provides the resources and structures the time. By integrating education and development with service activities, it builds the needed skills to contribute to society. By organizing service activities, it makes up for the institutional deficits in poverty areas

The challenge, however, is to do more than just think up some projects or arrange a few placements at nonprofit organizations. Service per se is worthwhile, but the aim is to maximize the productivity and service impact, the learning from the experience, as well as the linkages to

the community.

Arranging 250 hours annually of service for 20-25 teens is a challenge. It is complicated by the fact that few disadvantaged teens have had any work experience. They lack basic behavioral, time management, and productivity skills to perform in any workplace. They know little about underlying social problems. Their limited basic skills complicate teaching and learning.

QOP gave me a chance to help those who were in need. I felt good just helping someone less fortunate. The money I've earned will help me take the next step on my educational voyage.

Over time, as capacities develop, the service opportunities will expand, but they must also become more individualized. Different youth will want and need different kinds of experiences. Where large-scale "fix-up" and "clean-up" projects might suffice at the beginning, advanced placements must consider each person's needs and abilities. Each one will require different institutional linkages, different supervision arrangements, different preparation, and different follow-through.

Support Activities. The simple truth of QOP is that the Coordinator meets young people "where they are" at the start of their high school years, points to a distant future of opportunity, equips them for their journey towards success, logs their achievements, and stays with them and guides them each step along the way. The challenges are many: planning and delivering a variety of services over multiple years, constant adjusting to the changing needs of developing youth, tracking each and every hour of service, being a caseworker to many, and maintaining purpose and energy through good times and bad.

The Coordinator and program manager have been a great inspiration to me. I say this because of the rough situations I've been through in the last two years in school. There were times when I just didn't want to go on anymore, when I just wanted to give up and do nithing with my life. But thanks to them, I gained courage and grew stronger and determined not to give up. I kept trying to be the best I can be. I love and thank them for being there for me, and being like a second mother and a father I never had.

The most difficult challenge is being a surrogate parent to a family of 20 or so young people, guiding them from childhood to adulthood. QOP Associates face the normal ups and downs, joys and heartbreaks experienced by all teenagers. There will be boyfriend and girlfriend crises, problems fitting in or making a team, good grades, poor grades, peer pressure, and "I'm the ugliest most unpopular person in the world" syndrome. The Coordinator will be challenged to meet individual needs, maintain a supportive group dynamic, and deal with outside group forces.

Incentives

In addition to the activities listed above, the pilot model included a unique set of *financial incentives* offered to Associates to encourage participation, completion and long range planning.

- **An hourly stipend** starting at $1.00 per hour and rising (over the four years) to $1.33 are given for each hour of participation in the education, development, and service activities.

- A **completion bonus** of $100 is given after completing 100 hours in any of the three activity components (for a possible total of $300 per year in bonuses).

- An **Opportunity Account** is created in which all hourly stipends and bonuses earned by the Associate are matched and invested for them in an interest bearing Quantum Opportunity Account for approved use, such as college or job training. The account is interest earning, so total accruals by the end of four years could be in excess of $5,000.

In my freshman year of high school, I didn't want to do any work because it wouldn't pay off in the end. The Coordinator began to explain to me how doing what I didn't want to would pay off. By doing community service, development, and educational work, I would be paid once a month, and whatever I made in that month would be put in the bank and accrue interest. The money caught my attention, but it wasn't about that. It was about helping others, and in the process earning money for my future.

These accrual payments may be made up to two years after program completion. If an Associate does not meet the program requirements for completion (i.e., does not attend college, a training program, or the military), s/he forfeits the funds in their accrual account. The Coordinators also receive incentives and bonus payments which are directly tied to the Associates' participation levels and completion of education, development, and service activities (i.e., their incentives and bonus payments are equal to the stipends and bonuses of the Associates). To cover service and administrative support for the program, each participating OIC also receives incentive payments at a rate that is twice that of the Associates and Coordinators. Financial incentives ensure that staff and local OICs have a stake in ensuring that youth participate in the program over the long term. The program also operates under a uniform management information system, reporting on hourly activities in detail and automatically tabulating stipends, bonuses, and matching accruals.

Key Features of the pilot program model include:

- ***Group Cohesion.*** By design, each group of 25 Associates remains constant through the four high school years. Students cannot be dropped from the group, even for non-attendance. An inactive student can return to the group at any time over the four years; the promise of opportunity is never withdrawn. New students are not admitted to the group.

- ***Continuity with a Caring Adult.*** At each site, the same Coordinator is theoretically supposed to stay with the group for the four years. (In practice there was turnover in some of the pilot sites.)

- ***"Front Line" Accountability.*** Each Coordinator is responsible for recruiting students, encouraging active participation, brokering all service activities, counseling students, communicating with families, assisting with college applications and aid, and tracking data.

Demographics

Public policies and programs with the goal of increasing high school completion rates, such as QOP, are typically aimed at socioeconomical-

ly disadvantaged youth. Findings from the 1979 and 1987 National Longitudinal Survey, using simple descriptive statistics, indicate that dropout rates are highest among Hispanic youth, followed by Black youth, with the lowest rates among Whites and Others (Sum and Fogg, 1996). However, using multivariate statistical techniques which take into account family background (family poverty status, mother's educational attainment, and family living arrangements), basic skills proficiencies, and selected personality traits, minority group members are significantly *less* likely than White and Other youth to drop out of high school. These findings show that the principal contributing factors to dropping out of school are *lower basic academic skills* and more *socioeconomically disadvantaged family backgrounds* (i.e., youth who are members of poor families, whose mothers have completed fewer than 12 years of schooling, and youth living with only one parent), not minority status.

QOP targets economically disadvantaged youth. The eligibility requirements include:

- entering the ninth grade;
- attending a public high school in a poverty neighborhood;
- living in a family receiving welfare payments.

Although minority status is not a criterion for program participation, a large percentage of the Associates in the pilot study were comprised of minority students, including 76 percent African American, and 11 percent Hispanic/Latino, Asian, or other. There is also no age criterion; however, in the pilot, 88 percent of the Associates were ages 14 or 15. Ages ranged from 13 to 17 at program entry.

Funding and Program Costs

As a pilot, OIC of America in conjunction with the Remediation and Training Institute and the Ford Foundation discussed the associated costs and benefits of a multi-year program geared to entering ninth grade students who were recipients of transfer payments. After almost a full year, the Foundation funded the pilot in the amount of $1,050,000

and later added another $130,000, because of higher than expected participation rates. The estimates for participation rates were obtained utilizing an attrition model based upon information from the National Longitudinal Study. Initially, it was estimated that 50 percent of those entering QOP would complete the program agenda (i.e., completion of high school and advanced skills training, college, military, own business). In actuality, over 76 percent of those entering the program completed the QOP agenda. This translates to a higher than expected participation in QOP hours, thus creating a shortfall in funds. The total cost of operating a model of fidelity for the four years was $10,600 per participant, or slightly over $2,600 per year.

Stipends and bonuses	$2,128
Opportunity Accounts	$2,128
Coordinators	$2,128
Program activities	$4,256
QOP 4-year total per participant	$10,640

This excluded administration costs which were funded solely by interest payments earned on investments. Remember that this program was prefunded by the Ford Foundation. The per participant cost for staff, activities, and administration averaged $1,500 annually.

Because QOP participant, staff and delivery organization payments were all based on activity hours and completions, the total per participant cost at Philadelphia (i.e., the most productive and successful site) was $15,000 for the four years, approximately a third above the QOP average.

2. Outcomes

Evidence of Program Effectiveness

Dr. Andrew Hahn and his colleagues at Brandeis University conducted an evaluation of the Quantum Opportunities Program throughout the years that Associates and a control group were in high school,

with a follow-up one year after QOP ended. Results indicate that Associates, especially those from the Philadelphia site, had more positive outcomes in terms of educational attainment and social achievement than controls. Associates also had fewer children than the control group

Educational Attainment

After the second year in high school, there was evidence of a positive effect of QOP, in that Associates' average scores for all 11 academic and functional skills examined were higher than control group scores (five were statistically significant). Additionally, average academic skill levels had increased more than three grade levels for 27 percent of the experimental group, compared to 14 percent of the control group. Similarly, average functional skill levels had increased by 20 percent or more for 38 percent of the experimental group compared to 16 percent of the control group.

In the year following the end of QOP, Associates were more likely to have graduated from high school, to be in a post-secondary school than control group members, and they were less likely to be dropouts. Additionally, there were statistically significant differences between the Associates and control groups in both four-year and two-year college attendance. The experimental group rate of four-year college attendance was more than three times higher than the control group rate, and their rate of two-year college attendance was more than twice as high.

Educational Expectations

There were also differences between the Associates and the control group with regard to their orientation toward and expectations for post-secondary education; specifically, Associates' education expectations were much higher than the control group members' expectations.

Children

There was also evidence that Associates were less likely to have children than control group members. Twenty-four percent of Associates had children compared to 38 percent of control group members.

Honors and Awards

One year after QOP ended, Associates and control group members were asked whether they had received any honors or awards during the past 12 months. The proportion of Associates receiving honors or awards was nearly three times higher than the proportion of control group members. Additionally, there were very large differences between Associates and control groups in the proportion of individuals who had performed some sort of community service. During the six months since finishing QOP, 21 percent of Associates had taken part in a community project, 28 percent had been a volunteer tutor, counselor, or mentor, and 41 percent had given time to non-profit, charitable, school, or community groups. The corresponding percentages for the control group were 12 percent, 8 percent, and 11 percent.

Arrests

At the end of high school, Associates were less likely than controls to report trouble with the police in the past 12 months. In a study conducted two years after the program ended (Taggart, 1995), Associates had half the arrests of controls (no significance tests performed). This was because fewer Associates had ever been arrested, and among those that had been arrested, they averaged fewer arrests. On average, the number of convictions were six times higher among male controls than male Associates.

Future Evaluation Research

Site staffs will continue to work toward full implementation of all QOP components. In the spring of 1999, a few months before the evaluation sample should graduate, Mathematica Policy Research will collect the data for the impact analysis. Data will be collected through an interview, an extract of school records, and an achievement test. The interview will cover demographic characteristics, attitudes toward school and toward the QOP program, career aspirations, childbearing, criminal activity, and substance abuse. The school records will yield data on graduation, grades, course taking, school attendance, and suspensions and expulsions. The achievement tests will indicate the youth's reading and math skills and post-secondary activity.

The primary outcomes which will be evaluated are high school completion and post-secondary enrollment. Secondary outcomes include issues related to grades, achievement test scores, childbearing, criminal activities, and substance abuse. The results of the final impact evaluation will be available June, 2000.

Throughout the four years of program operations, Berkeley Planning Associates, under subcontract with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct the implementation evaluation, will conduct six waves of site visits. Based on the information collected in these visits, it will analyze the implementation and operation of QOP at each site. Berkeley Planning Associates will release implementation analysis results in June, 2000.

The evaluation of the QOP pilot to date has shown that this program was effective for entering, largely minority, high school students from families who received welfare payments living in impoverished neighborhoods who lacked the resources to enter and remain in college. The designers of QOP state that the program could be suitable for any population beginning in grade school through college, however, the model has not been evaluated for any of these other populations, so it is not known how effective it might actually be with a different group of students.

3. Lessons Learned

Implementation Problems

There were several problems faced by the QOP sites in the pilot study:

- ***Establishing Relationships with the Sending Schools.*** Although all of the implementing OICs had good relationships with the schools, QOP represented a program that required up-to-date information on students, parents, addresses, financial information and whether or not the family unit received welfare payments. Schools were concerned over the issue of confidentiality. Although some schools allowed the OIC to review their records, in other sites, school personnel were utilized to review the

records, and the OIC made a small payment to the school to cover costs.

- ***Incentives.*** The notion of paying incentives to students to participate in a long term program caused delays in the implementation of the program. Some school systems saw QOP as undermining their goals. Others played the "welfare card" to slow down the implementation of QOP in that it threatened to monitor payments and report those payments to the local welfare office, thus reducing the amount of entitlements entering a student's home. The payment issue was handled through dialogue with the school that suggested that QOP was developed to help the student and provide small monetary rewards to help Associates get to and from program activities. No one wanted to accept the responsibility for this action against a program designed to benefit students.

- ***Evaluation.*** State Departments of Education, superintendents, and school evaluators at several of the sites were concerned about the evaluation and the need for random assignment to experimental or control groups. Random assignment was viewed as a process that screened out students rather than allowing more kids into the activity. The resolution to this problem was through dialogue that explained the importance and the process of random assignment in an experimental design.

- ***Parental Consent.*** QOP faced the challenge of presenting a multi-year written contract to parents who were unable to read or refused to acknowledge the fact that reading was not fundamental to them. QOP mastered this challenge by recording the contents of the contract and presenting each family with written and verbal versions

- ***Management Buy-in.*** There was an absence of buy-in at several pilot sites. The Coordinator at one site reported feeling locked into a rigid model. Key to implementing a program like QOP is to have *full* buy-in from site management. This entails forging a unified vision of youth development among those key persons responsible for implementing QOP. Since unresolved differences can undermine the integrity of the program, philosophical differ-

ences should be acknowledged and dealt with up-front. The only way to avoid problems such as this is for potential program sites to have extensive discussions with OIC of America about the operating principles of the program before making a commitment to implement a QOP-like program and to forge a collaborative alliance from the beginning.

- ***Staff Turnover.*** Despite the financial incentives, there were problems with staff turnover in several of the sites. Since a key component of QOP is establishing stable and enduring relationships with the youth it serves, discontinuity in staffing can produce debilitating effects. There is little that can be done once a key staff member leaves the program, except to make the transition to a new staff person as quickly and as smoothly as possible. However, prior to program implementation, great care should be taken in hiring persons who will work directly with Associates. Potential applicants should be fully informed of the dedication that is required in the job, and potential staff members should be willing to make a commitment to a four-year endeavor. Staff burnout is a problem when operating a program such as QOP which essentially becomes 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Teens have no particular setting on their clocks when their needs, real or imagined, become a crisis for all involved. Training staff to balance the responsibility of an intensive program, yet maintain control over their own existence is critical to program success.

- ***Staff Attitudes.*** QOP stresses competence, grade gains, completion, and success in the future. It is not a day care center. Staff often feel that they must win students over and that the hard approach turns young people off. From the onset of the program, it must be stressed that there are program goals and objectives in place, behaviors that are not acceptable and acts and language that do not coincide with the essence of QOP. The goals and objectives of QOP should not be compromised to win the favor of students. The philosophy of QOP is that it is the structure that is missing from many of these young people's lives, and even though they may not acknowledge it, youth actually desire such structure.

- ***Transportation.*** Transportation arose as a problem at one pilot site. Associates reported that staying after school to attend QOP meant taking three buses home, which took 1-1/2 hours, as opposed to the one-half hour that it took on the school bus. Bus schedules may also present a problem if buses stop running too early in the evening. Programs may need to provide alternative transportation to enable Associates to attend meetings with ease.

Replication Issues

The U.S. Department of Labor aspired to identify and test alternative approaches for helping youth complete high school and move into post-secondary education. Coincidentally, the Ford Foundation announced the early results from the pilot test of the QOP model to federal agencies, other foundations, and youth practitioners hoping to interest potential partners in a replication effort to garner further evidence of the model's effectiveness. The two organizations, (DOL and Ford), agreed to support a demonstration designed to test QOP under a variety of local conditions at several sites across the country.

DOL funds program operations in five sites, and the evaluation of all seven sites. DOL has provided a grant to the service delivery area in each demonstration site for the operation of the program. DOL has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to evaluate the demonstration. The Ford Foundation has provided a grant to OIC of America to provide technical assistance to all seven demonstration sites, as well as to operate the program in the two Ford-funded sites. While there is no formal contractual arrangement between DOL and the Ford Foundation, the two organizations have maintained a close partnership in the design and planning of the QOP replication.

The five DOL sites are in: Cleveland, Memphis, Fort Worth, Houston, and Washington, D.C. The two Ford-funded sites are: Philadelphia, and Yakima, Washington. The local grantee in each DOL-funded site is the local public agency which administers the Job Training Partnership Act program in the metropolitan area, referred to generically as the Service Delivery Area.

The QOP replication/demonstration was designed to further measure the effectiveness of the QOP model in achieving its goals. The demon-

stration includes two types of evaluation: (1) an impact evaluation, designed to estimate the impact of the QOP program on several measures of academic success and also on a variety of youth behaviors shown by previous research to be negatively correlated with career success; and (2) an implementation evaluation designed to assess how well the QOP model is implemented and operated in a variety of inner city communities across the country, and to identify barriers to implementation.

Changes and Modifications

The QOP model implemented in the pilot was identical in broad outline to that of the replication/demonstration, however, the two differ in six major ways.

a. Scale

One difference between the pilot and the demonstration is that each pilot site had a maximum of 25 Associates, for a total of 125 Associates and an equal number of controls. In contrast, each DOL-funded demonstration site has approximately 100 Associates, and each Ford-funded site has approximately 50 Associates. Thus, the scale of the demonstration is several times that of the pilot. Hence, another difference is that the demonstration requires more staff, thus Counselors have been added to the QOP staff. A Coordinator in each site organizes and administers the overall program and oversees the work of the Counselors. The Counselors work with a single group of 12-25 Associates, which stays the same throughout high school.

b. Basic Education Component

The most important difference between the pilot and replication/demonstration was in the basic education component. In the pilot, the basic education component consisted of the Comprehensive Competencies Program and tutoring. Each pilot site had a CCP learning center, consisting of 10-15 personal computers in a large room with desks and chairs. An Associate engaged in educational activities by executing the CCP software on one of the personal computers and by completing a printed workbook. In contrast, the education component of the

replication/demonstration contains both computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and course-based tutoring. The two Ford-funded sites (Philadelphia and Yakima) use CCP as the CAI sub-component. The DOL-funded sites use CAI software other than CCP.. Course-based tutoring is distinct from CAI primarily in that the participant interacts with a person, typically the Counselor, rather than a personal computer. In addition, the tutoring is designed to help the participant succeed in her/his current high school courses, whereas many CAI programs emphasize basic reading and math skills (CCP contains modules that cover several high school subjects in addition to basic reading and math).

The education component of the replication/demonstration also differs from that of the pilot in its individualized education plan for each participant. In the demonstration, the Counselor develops an individual education plan customized to the participant's educational needs, as indicated by standardized testing and by consultations with the participant's high school teachers. The plan is designed both to improve the participant's basic reading and math skills and to improve the participant's success in her/his high school courses. In the pilot, the individual education plans were oriented toward CCP modules and less oriented toward high school courses. The pilot education plan was designed primarily to enhance the participant's basic reading and math skills, and was not designed to assist the participant with specific high school courses.

c. Time Commitment and Compensation of Staff

A third difference between the pilot and the replication/demonstration is the time commitment and compensation of Coordinators and Counselors. In the pilot, Coordinators were drawn from existing staffs of OICs. In general, the selected staff members performed their QOP duties in addition to whatever duties they had prior to the QOP program. This staffing plan had two implications. First, Coordinators attended to their QOP duties at most half of a full time equivalent. Second, much of their time spent on QOP was "overtime" in evenings and weekends after they completed a full, or nearly full, business day of non-QOP duties. The compensation received by Coordinators for performing QOP duties was consistent with the "overtime" nature of the work. The entire com-

pensation was an incentive payment, as opposed to a fixed hourly wage or annual salary. Specifically, a Coordinator received $1.33 for each hour spent on QOP activities by each of the Associates for whom the Coordinator was responsible. A Coordinator's compensation and, indeed, the revenue of the site, was similarly based on Associates' hours spent on QOP activities.

In contrast, Coordinators and Counselors in DOL-funded demonstration sites were, with a few exceptions, hired specifically for the QOP project, and have few, if any, non-QOP duties. Thus, most of the staff at the DOL-funded demonstration sites work full time on QOP. Consistent with QOP being a full-time job, such staff receive fixed annual salaries, rather than incentive payments (one DOL-funded site, Cleveland, uses both a salary and an incentive payment to compensate Counselors). The Yakima site uses a staffing and compensation approach similar to that of the pilot. The Counselors receive a full-time salary funded by programs other than QOP. In addition, each Counselor receives an incentive payment from OIC of America equal to the total amount of stipends of the Associates he or she is responsible for. The Yakima Coordinator also receives compensation from QOP. Her payment is deducted from the OIC of Yakima Valley's compensation for participation. The Philadelphia site staff receive a full-time salary, covering both their site operations and technical assistance activities. In addition, Philadelphia Counselors receive an incentive-based compensation equal to the total stipend amount of all the Associates whom s/he is responsible.

d. Finance and Money Management

The fourth difference between the pilot and the replication/demonstration involves finance and money management. In the pilot, the entire Ford grant, covering the four years of the pilot, was paid to OIC of America at the beginning of the pilot. OIC of America invested the grant funds in a portfolio of securities through the Philadelphia office of Merrill Lynch. Each month, OIC of America computed the amount of the contribution to the Associate's accrual account. OIC of America provided a statement to the Associate indicating the contribution and the balance, although it did not segregate the accrual account funds into a separate account. Since the funds were not segregated, Associate accru-

al accounts were invested in the same portfolio of securities in which the grant funds were invested. A portion of the investment earnings of the accrual account was paid to the Associate. OIC of America distributed accrual account funds jointly to the Associate and his/her parent, or to an educational institution, depending on the Associate's family situation.

Federal agencies are not permitted to forward fund multi-year programs. Thus, DOL has $200,000 available for each DOL-funded site in the demonstration at the beginning of each program year to cover the site's expenses for that year. Each month throughout the year, DOL draws down that sum to reimburse each site for actual expenses during the preceding month. Further, DOL is not permitted to invest program funds, so the unspent funds do not accrue investment earnings during the year.

DOL has instructed grantees to establish a trust-like accrual account for each participant at a local financial institution. Each month, the grantee will deposit the appropriate contribution to the participant's accrual account. The grantee will then invoice DOL for the amount of the contribution, and DOL will reimburse the grantee for the expense. The grantee will be responsible for keeping records and for disbursement to the participant. Ford-funded demonstration sites will accumulate accrual accounts as was done in the pilot.

e. Summer Activities

A fifth difference is summer activities. The Coordinators of the pilot sites did not attempt to find summer jobs for Associates. Instead they continued to emphasize Associates spending time in the CCP learning lab and attending remedial courses in summer school, especially for Associates who were not promoted to the subsequent grade. The DOL, on the other hand, has emphasized providing summer jobs to Associates, and has recently specified that the summer jobs should be part-time in order to provide time for the participant to continue educational activities through the summer months. The Ford-funded demonstration sites will continue the pilot's emphasis on summer school and learning lab activities.

f. Governance

A sixth difference between the replication/demonstration and the pilot is in the governance of the program. In the DOL-funded sites, the Community-Based Organization service provider has authority to make many decisions about program design and implementation. DOL specified the general outlines of local program design in its request for grant proposals in the spring of 1995, requiring programs to include education, development, and community service components, but did not prescribe how these components should be implemented. It required that Associates receive an accrual account contribution, based on hours of program activities but did not specify that a stipend be paid to Associates. It required sites to provide summer jobs for Associates. Finally, the grant announcement specified the program eligibility requirements.

Beyond these general design parameters, DOL left the development of many details of program design to the local community-based organization service provider. The QOP program training by OIC of America in September 1995 provided the DOL-funded sites with many details about the QOP model and program design. However, the training was presented to DOL-funded sites as suggestions for sites to consider, rather than requirements for sites to implement. Further, DOL has never sent materials on the formal QOP model to the sites, although OIC of America provided the sites with extensive documentation of the pilot model and operations. This resulted in both significant deviation from the QOP model and significant variation in program implementation among DOL sites. DOL is monitoring and documenting these variations, but they have not required a replication of all elements of the original model.

The key to starting a new replication of QOP is to determine up-front whether there is management and staff buy-in for the model, control the replication process, utilize the cornerstones of QOP, pay particular attention in the selection of staff, and remember that smaller versions of QOP are more manageable and offer a much more caring environment.

CHAPTER SIX

JOB CORPS

by Mary Silva

1. Background Information

Job Corps was created in 1964 as one of the weapons in President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty." The program, originally authorized under the Economic Opportunity Act, was based on the concept of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's and has been revised to serve the needs of the time. The plan was to remove young people from negative inner city environments and rural poverty and provide them food, clothing, a safe and clean living environment, and health care to enable them to benefit from the education and training they needed to enter the work world. From its inception, Job Corps has operated as a public/private partnership involving corporations, labor unions, trade associations and national volunteer organizations committed to serving at risk youth.

Job Corps began operating under the Office of Economic Opportunity, headed by Sargent Shriver, with an appropriation of $280 million. The program was originally intended to serve young men, but Congresswoman Edith Green took issue and was adamant about providing the same opportunities for young women. In January, 1965, the first Job Corps Center opened at Camp Catoctin, Maryland for young men. The first women's center opened in Cleveland in April of the same year. By the end of 1965, 87 residential Job Corps centers were in oper-

ation throughout the country serving approximately 17,000 young people.

Since that time, Job Corps' expansion has been sporadic. President Richard Nixon tried to dismantle the program in 1969; he transferred the responsibility for the administration of Job Corps to the Department of Labor and succeeded in closing more than half of the 106 centers which were in operation. The program remained in operation with about 55 centers until 1977, when the appropriation for Job Corps was doubled by President Jimmy Carter. The program is currently enjoying another period of expansion with four new sites selected in 1994 and an additional four sites selected in the current year.

Job Corps continued to operate as a national program authorized under Title IV-B of the Job Training Partnership Act. Authorization continues under Title I-C of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which retains Job Corps as a national, primarily residential, program carried out in partnership with States and communities. The program is administered by the Department of Labor through a national office and 9 regional offices. There are currently 115 Job Corps centers in operation, enrolling approximately 69,000 disadvantaged youth annually. The Department contracts for recruiting and screening of students, operation of most Job Corps centers, and placement of students when they leave the program. 86 Job Corps centers are managed and operated by private for-profit companies and nonprofit organizations under contract with the Department of Labor. The remaining 28 Job Corps centers, called Civilian Conservation Centers, are operated on public lands by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior through interagency agreements with the Department of Labor.

Job Corps center operators are responsible for managing and administering an integrated, comprehensive program of support services, education, and training in a residential environment to address the multiple barriers to employment faced by disadvantaged youth. Their responsibilities include hiring and training staff; providing a safe and secure learning and living environment for students; delivering basic education, vocational and social skills training, counseling, health care and related support services; accounting for and supervising students; administering student incentive and discipline systems, including a zero

tolerance policy for drugs and violence; maintaining center facilities and equipment; and maintaining positive community connections.

Job Corps has operated for 35 years essentially as a franchise model with the government providing the facilities. It operates with standard policies and requirements which each Job Corps center must follow, yet it allows the flexibility for programs and services to be tailored to meet local needs, including gearing vocational training to local labor markets, providing training off-center to meet the needs of individual students or employers, and working with employers to provide work-based learning opportunities for Job Corps students who are participating in school-to-work activities.

Job Corps centers do not operate in isolation. There is a "Job Corps community" network of service providers. Students are recruited and screened for eligibility by outreach and admissions contractors, and eligible applicants are assigned to Job Corps centers under guidelines issued by the Department of Labor. In addition to the vocational training provided by the center operator, national labor unions and trade associations provide vocational training at many Job Corps centers. Placement contractors help students find a job, return to school or enter the Armed Forces upon leaving Job Corps. Support contractors, through a national network of volunteers, help former students locate suitable housing, arrange for transportation to newly acquired jobs, and provide other short-term support.

Job Corps centers also operate in partnership with a network of other providers, including State and local workforce systems, one-stop career centers, welfare-to-work programs, public schools and community colleges. Thus while Job Corps center operators must coordinate and work with each component of the Job Corps system, they must also maintain viable connections with local communities, employers and workforce systems to ensure that students have access to the broadest possible range of services to meet their needs.

Job Corps has faced budget fluctuations through the years, but has always remained focused on providing quality services to students and maintaining a strong accountability system. Emphasis is placed on forming mutually beneficial linkages between Job Corps centers and

other existing Federal, state and local programs to expand and enhance services for students. For example, Job Corps has worked with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Head Start Bureau to promote linkages between the two programs since there is an overlap in the target populations needing services. As a result, nine Job Corps centers currently have on-site Head Start programs which enroll children of students and children from the surrounding community. Six of these programs serve children of nonresidential students; the remaining three enroll children who live on the Job Corps center campus in special dormitories with their parents. Job Corps is working with DHHS to facilitate additional program linkages to benefit both Job Corps students and the community at-large.

Job Corps is currently authorized under Title IV-B of the Job Training Partnership Act, with 100% of its funds appropriated by Congress. The 1998 appropriation (for the Program Year July 1, 1998 - July 1, 1999) is $1.2 billion. This funding level provides for the full operation of the Job Corps program, including recruiting, training, educating and placing students; student medical care, allowances and transportation costs; construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of center facilities; initial funding for the establishment of four new Job Corps centers; and maintenance and administration of national data systems. The cost per slot for program Year 1997 was $26,347. Since students were enrolled for an average of 7.3 months, the cost per new enrollee was $15,749.

Demographics

To be eligible for Job Corps, young people must be between 16 and 24 years of age, economically disadvantaged, a high school dropout or in need of additional education or training to obtain employment, not be on probation or parole unless the court does not require personal supervision, be free of serious medical or behavioral problems, and sign a commitment to remain free from violence and drugs. Eligibility factors for enrollment in Job Corps are somewhat different under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), but still focus on at-risk young adults aged 16 - 24. Under WIA, Job Corps youth must be low income (i.e. economically disadvantaged) and basic skills deficient, a dropout, homeless or a runaway, a parent, or in need of additional education or

training. Other eligibility criteria remain the same as those currently in place.

The typical Job Corps student is an 18-year-old high school dropout who reads at a seventh grade level, comes from an economically disadvantaged family, is a member of a minority group, and has never held a full-time job. Almost 80% of Job Corps students are high school dropouts and two-thirds have never held full-time employment.

The 115 Job Corps centers range in size from 168 to over 2,000 slots; the average center has about 400 slots and serves 600 students a year. With the recent announcement of sites for new Job Corps centers in Rhode Island, Delaware, Connecticut and Los Angeles, there will be Job Corps centers in every state with the exception of Wyoming and New Hampshire.

The purpose and goal of Job Corps has not changed over the years, although the strategies are continually assessed and revised as appropriate. As indicated in JTPA, the purpose is "to assist young individuals who need and can benefit from an unusually intensive program, operated in a group setting, to become more responsible, employable, and productive citizens..." The recently passed Workforce Investment Act retains this purpose and maintains Job Corps as a national program "carried out in partnership with States and communities." Indeed, increasing partnerships with States and communities is a pervasive theme of Job Corps' continuous improvement initiative. It is one of the five principles of quality performance that are the framework for this initiative, and is vital to the success of the other four. The five principles are: R.E.S.P.E.C.T: 1) Retention of students in the program so that they have the opportunity to gain the education, skills and personal development they need to enter jobs or further education; 2) Employer involvement on the national, regional and local levels to increase training and placement opportunities for students; 3) School-to-work principles' integration to increase a student's chance for quality placement and retention; 4) Placement quality efforts so that by the year 2000, 75% of Job Corps graduates will earn at least $8 an hour at a full-time job six and twelve months after graduation; and 5) Expanded Community Ties so that at least half of all students will participate in community service projects, all Job Corps centers will be working with

one-stop career centers by the year 2000, and Center Directors will be actively participating in Local Workforce Investment Boards through membership on the new Youth Councils.

2. Outcomes

Job Corps maintains a centralized student data base which tracks the progress of each student through the program until the time they are placed in a job or further education. Job Corps has been operating a performance based accountability system for over a decade. Accountability for retention in jobs or school 13 weeks after placement was added in Program Year 1997. This data base is the core of Job Corps' management information system and is used for analysis for making program enhancements, awarding contracts, and for program management in assessing the performance of outreach and admissions contractors, Job Corps centers, Job Corps center operators, placement contractors, and the program as a whole.

Job Corps measures success in terms of student outcomes. These currently include 30-day retention in the program, academic achievement (reading and math gains, and achievement of a high school diploma or equivalency), vocational training completion, and placement in a job or further education. Job placement outcomes are also assessed based on the average starting wage and the number of students placed in jobs related to the training they received. In addition, a 13-week employment follow-up measure is being implemented, and 6 and 12-month follow-up will be initiated under the Workforce Investment Act. Expected levels of performance are established for each Job Corps center, outreach/admissions, and placement contractor, and their performance is measured against their standards. Decisions on the award of contracts are heavily influenced by performance assessments which take into account a contractor's outcomes against performance standards, as well as on-site federal assessments of quality and compliance.

Within the context of the outcome measurement system, some Job Corps centers perform better than others. Variations in performance can be attributed to a variety of things . Differences such as the quality of applicant screening, the quality of center management staff, the capability of the center operator and staff in delivering required services to

students, the condition of facilities, the strength of the connections with employers and local communities, the ability of the center to attract and retain qualified staff, and the availability of center operator (corporate or agency) support, can have a positive or negative impact on performance. Variations of labor markets, both in the local area of the Job Corps center and in the communities students return to, also affect student outcomes — particularly those which are related to length of stay in the program and placement in jobs. When the economy is good, students tend to be enrolled for shorter periods of time and may be more likely to be placed in jobs. When unemployment rates are high, students tend to remain enrolled for longer periods of time and it may be more difficult to place them in jobs.

A major third-party evaluation of Job Corps was issued in the 1980's. In September 1982, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. issued their "Evaluation of the Economic Impact of the Job Corps Program." The evaluation was based on follow-up of Job Corps students and a control group over a four year period. The Executive Summary of the report indicated that, "in terms of size and statistical significance, some of the most noteworthy effects of the behavior of former participants are" an increase in employment of over three weeks per year; a very substantial increase in the probability of having a high school diploma or equivalent, higher college attendance, better health, a reduction in the receipt of financial welfare assistance by over two weeks per year, and a reduction of unemployment insurance of nearly one week per year. The study further quantified these outcomes by saying that for every dollar invested in Job Corps, $1.46 was returned to society in terms of reduced expenditures on welfare and increased tax contributions.

In recognition of the need to update these findings, the Department of Labor implemented a new longitudinal study in Program Year 1994 which will follow-up with and compare the experiences of a sample of Job Corps students with a randomly selected control group over a four year period following enrollment. This study is expected to show similar results since the immediate program outcome measures have held steady or improved since the earlier study and Job Corps has followed a policy of continuous improvement which resulted in numerous program enhancements over the past decade. The results of the first phase of this study will be available in early 2001.

3. Lessons Learned

Over the 35 year history of the program, Job Corps has learned much about the challenges faced by out-of-school youth. These young people often have encountered failure in traditional school programs, do not have positive adult role models, do not have a stable family life or other support system, do not have access to recreation or structured leisure time activities, are homeless at least part of the time, perceive few alternatives or options available to them, and face multiple barriers to further education and/or employment. We all can learn from these young people by listening. Speaking personally, I do this when I spend the night on campuses, living in the girls' dorms.

Job Corps provides a safe, stable environment and opportunity for young people to get education and training at their own pace in a non-competitive, non-threatening setting. One of the key components of the program is availability of staff to students at all times — the overall ratio is one staff for every three students at a Job Corps center. Class sizes are small, averaging about 1 to 10 in basic academic areas and 1 to 15 in vocational training areas.

Through small class sizes, a variety of recreational activities, availability of residential advisors around the clock, a zero tolerance for violence and drugs policy, and an enrollment period of up to two years, Job Corps provides a nurturing environment in which relationships of students with caring adults and fellow students can develop. Many Job Corps alumni report that the involvement, caring and commitment shown by one or more staff members and support from other students were key to their success in the program and in turning their lives around.

We have learned that it is important to listen to our customers — students, communities and employers — and to focus on continuous improvements to ensure that we continue to provide quality services.

Job Corps has learned that the key to success is providing integrated, comprehensive services that remove the barriers of hunger, safety and security needs so that students can focus on personal, academic, vocational and social growth. While Job Corps has traditionally done this by

removing at-risk students from a precarious environment, Job Corps has learned that this strategy is most effective when strong, extensive support networks are available to help students transition back to their communities. Under the Workforce Investment Act, Job Corps will continue to support students through provision of services, including counseling, to graduates for 12 months after they have left the program. We expect that maintaining this level of adult involvement and support for former students — by Job Corps center and placement staff, support contractors, one-stop career centers, and local workforce systems —will facilitate their transition back into their home communities and entry into and retention in jobs and/or higher education.

The focus of the entire Job Corps program is on workforce preparation so that young people can become economically self-sufficient— helping students develop the personal qualities, academic, social and occupational skills they will need in the workplace. Job Corps center operators are encouraged to integrate academic and vocational training programs or otherwise tailor programs to meet the needs of individual students. Progress of each student through the program is assessed on a regular basis and discussed with the student to see if he or she is obtaining the desired benefits and if modifications to class schedules or activities are appropriate.

Job Corps students participate in simulated workplace conditions in vocational shops, hands-on vocational skills training projects, and in community and center projects. Vocational instructors often post pictures and stories in the classroom about former students who have obtained jobs to motivate other students. In addition, Job Corps is integrating school-to-work principles in programs and activities at Job Corps centers. It is anticipated this will have a significant beneficial impact on students through their participation in integrated academic and vocational training as well as work-based learning and their experiences with employers — where their "first job" experience is occurring while they are still enrolled and have center staff support as well as workplace mentors.

In addition, while Centers currently have Community Relations Councils and Industry Advisory Councils, Job Corps is already working to implement the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

which require centers to work even more closely with local communities and employers, as well as with employers in students' home communities. For example, the WIA requires Job Corps centers to establish Industry Councils, composed of local business and labor representatives and current and former Job Corps students, to analyze labor-market data, identify job opportunities and the skills needed for those jobs, and recommend changes in center vocational training programs to the Department of Labor. Job Corps centers will also be coordinating activities with local one-stop centers to ensure students have access to a wide range of information and services. Having access to additional community and employer networks and resources will extend the ability of Job Corps centers to meet the specific needs of individual students and to transition them from Job Corps into stable employment or further education and training in their home communities.

Enrollment in Job Corps can be considered one option for At-Risk / Out-of-School Youth. Outreach and admissions contractors help young people make an appropriate choice among the available options. The Job Corps program itself provides a variety of options for students — residential or nonresidential participation, choice of vocational training, and transition into a job, advanced training or college, for example. The program includes incentives for student achievements, including items such as pay bonuses, t-shirts, certificates, recreation trips, weekend home visits, "student of the month" awards, student government and leadership opportunities, graduations, and employment. What makes Job Corps work is the sense of community that is developed on each of the Job Corps campuses. In each Job Corps center through the integrated, comprehensive approach to education, training, social skills and youth development that forms the core of the Job Corps program.

One current challenge to Job Corps is retaining skilled staff. Job Corps maintains minimum requirements for key staff positions, but it is up to each contractor to select, hire, train and retain staff. High staff turnover rates in some positions such as teachers and dormitory staff have led Job Corps to evaluate the current center salary structures, which may not be competitive with local school systems and other similar employers in some parts of the country. The nature of many center jobs is also different from jobs in traditional schools and similar employers. For example, Job Corps is a full-year, 24-hour a day pro-

gram, staff including teachers do not work on a public school schedule but must work year-round and for full days; dormitory staff must work on evenings, nights and weekends. Over the next year, Job Corps will be working on strategies to address this challenge.

Some youth do not succeed in Job Corps. The program has experienced a dropout rate of almost one-third of new students during their first 90 days of enrollment ever since the program started. We know that some students leave early due to homesickness, particularly if they have never been away from home before; some leave because of family responsibilities, often due to loss of child care arrangements, and some cannot adapt to center rules or to living in a group setting. Many Job Corps centers successfully use peer counselors or "retention teams" to work with students who are at risk of leaving before they have obtained significant benefit from the program, but this approach has not been successful everywhere. Job Corps is implementing a project to try to identify what makes students successful so that problem areas and students' needs can be addressed before they feel they have no recourse other than to drop out.

Nationally, 40% of Job Corps students are 16 - 17 year olds, and centers and placement contractors have found this age group to be more difficult to serve as they have less maturity and experience than older students, and it is more difficult to place them in jobs because of laws and regulations governing hours of work, type of equipment, liability, etc. Job Corps has just initiated several pilot projects to test different ways to serve this age group. The pilots vary in their approach, but generally include lower student to staff ratios and special programming and recreation activities. Any significant techniques or services identified through the pilot projects will be disseminated throughout the Job Corps community.

While the original design of the Job Corps program has not significantly changed, the program itself has been significantly enhanced through continuous improvement efforts. The enrollment rate of young women has increased from 30% to 42% over the last decade. New Job Corps centers are designed to be coeducational, and almost all former all-male and all-female centers have been converted to coeducational programs. Life skills is provided at all centers. On-site child develop-

ment programs have been established on the campuses of twenty-three Job Corps centers to allow young parents to pursue their education and training. Greater emphasis has been placed on providing a safe, secure living and learning environment. A zero tolerance for violence and drugs policy is in place at all centers, and specific violations of the policy result in automatic dismissal from Job Corps. Student surveys reflect this has had a very positive impact on center life.

In addition, Job Corps works with employer and industry advisory groups to identify the skills and competencies which students in specific occupational areas need to obtain entry level employment. Job Corps revises and updates vocational training curricula and equipment based on their recommendations. Job Corps has also streamlined program requirements to provide centers with greater flexibility in meeting individual student, employer, and community needs. We are working more closely with states, communities, employers, and other youth-serving programs through initiatives such as integration of school-to-work principles in Job Corps center operations.

Through center student governments, Job Corps provides students with opportunities for leadership and decision-making. Through self-paced academic and vocational instruction, team leadership in project-based learning, and participation in dorm councils and elected student government positions, and leadership training, students develop leadership, decision-making and self-management skills. They have real input into how the center is operated and how student government functions within the center, and they thereby gain governance and decision-making skills which will assist them in other areas of their lives.

Former students can receive support in arranging for housing, transportation, child care, etc. in their home communities through a network of volunteers who are affiliated with Job Corps national support contractors. We anticipate that students may have access to additional support resources through one-stop career centers and partnerships with State and local workforce investment systems and we are working to better connect with those systems.

There are two different types of "home" office in the Job Corps community: Federal (national and Regional Department of Labor offices),

and corporate/agency offices of center operators and other contractors. The Federal home offices issue regulations, establish overall policy and requirements for the operation of the Job Corps program; develop, test and implement academic, vocational and social skills curricula; allocate funds; award and administer contracts; oversee financial management and general program accountability; ensure program integrity; collect data and report student outcomes. The corporate/contractor home offices are responsible for hiring and training staff, day-to-day administration of centers, outreach and/or placement activities in accordance with Federal regulations and requirements, ensuring the safety of students and staff; providing technical assistance to centers or contractor activities which are having performance problems; developing and implementing pilot projects, testing new curricula, etc. These two frequently come together in workgroups targeting specific areas of the Job Corps program such as policy development, curriculum revision, pilot projects to test new approaches and strategies to improve services to students, and at national and regional conferences.

Job Corps continues to strive to improve its program, drawing on its 35 years of history with almost 2 million students, as well as the experiences of others in the fields of youth development and youth training and the ever important input from employers and the students themselves. The challenge is ours!

CHAPTER SEVEN

YOUTH FAIR CHANCE

By Pamela Smith

1. Background Information

Youth Fair Chance (YFC), authorized by the 1992 amendments to the Job Training Partnership Act and administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (DOL-ETA), was a multi-site, community-wide initiative designed to provide a comprehensive, integrated system of services to all teens and young adults (ages 14 - 30) in high-poverty areas of urban and rural communities. The YFC project design included both in-school youth and out-of-school youth core components. YFC grew out of another DOL-ETA initiative — Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU), directed by local Service Delivery Areas and Private Industry Councils. YOU began operating in 1990 as a three-year demonstration in seven communities nationwide, and added four communities in 1992. The initiative established community-based governance structures, and encouraged links among education, workforce development, juvenile justice, social services, recreation programs and other community-based activities. YOU was designed to provide services to ***all*** youth, ages 15 - 19, living within a specific geographic area characterized by high rates of poverty, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and crime. The approach emphasized a strong commitment to positive youth development, recognizing that young people progress through a sequential stage of development, as well as focusing on their capacities and strengths rather than their

deficits. Another innovative characteristic of YOU was the direction provided by DOL-ETA for the communities themselves to define broad outcomes for the local initiative.

With the JTPA Reform Amendments, the initiative became Youth Fair Chance. While maintaining the key elements of YOU (community governance, an integrated system of comprehensive services to all youth, and broad outcomes), YFC expanded the definition of youth to include young people ages 14 - 30, and emphasized school-to-work transition as the primary approach for the in-school core component. YFC also required the development of Learning Centers, a physical facility for the provision of educational, occupational and employment-readiness services, and well as access (through referral or on-site availability) to various support services, such as case management, stipends and wages, life skills training, child care, transportation and assistance in resolving personal/family crises, etc. Although the Learning Centers were established for providing services to out-of-school youth, all youth in the community could access the resources and services available through them. Additionally, DOL provided for substantial technical assistance for the YFC communities, a support that was not included in the YOU initiative.

Sixteen grants were awarded in 1994 through a competitive process; one site was added later that year on a non-competitive basis[1]. Each YFC community was to initially receive an average of $3 million for the first 18 months, with up to 31/2 years of additional support ($1 - 2 million annually) to develop programs and services, establish interagency collaboration and support, and create an infrastructure for sustainability.

The demographic profiles of each community varied widely. For example, the family median income for all YFC sites was $17,362, ranging from a low of $6,616 in Memphis to a high of $25,415 in Seattle; the average percentage of families below the poverty level was 25% with a low of 12% (Ft. Worth)) and a high of 69% (Memphis); and

[1]Baltimore, MD; The Bronx, NY; Cleveland, OH; Cochise County, AZ; Denver, CO; Edinburg and Fort Worth, TX; Fresno and Los Angeles (2), CA; Hazard, KY; Indianapolis, IN; Memphis, TN; New Haven, CT; Racine, WI; Seattle, WA; and Tahlequah, OK.

while the average percentage of youth (16 - 19 years of age) not in school or working was 21%, Edinburgh had the lowest percentage (12%) and Memphis experienced the highest (30%). Similar variations were experienced relative to race/ethnicity, employment, and educational attainment. According to Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), the evaluator of the YFC initiative, approximately one-third of young people in the seventeen YFC target areas - about 2,000 youths - had either dropped out of high school, were unemployed high school graduates, or were high school graduates working at jobs that paid less than $5.00 per hour. Figure 1 (from the interim report prepared by MPR) illustrates the characteristics of Youth Fair Chance target areas.

Figure 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH FAIR CHANCE TARGET AREAS*

	Average for U.S.	All YFC Areas	Baltimore, MD	Bronx, NY	Cleveland, OH	Denver, CO	Douglas, AZ	Edinburgh, TX	Ft. Worth, TX	Fresno, CA	Indianapolis, IN	Knox County, KY	Los Angeles, CA	Memphis, TN	New Haven, CT	Racine, WI	Seattle, WA
Income and Poverty																	
Family Median Income (Dollars)	35,225	17,362	16,153	13,002	16,761	17,235	18,573	21,343	17,224	16,615	19,492	15,424	15,793	6,616	20,433	17,581	25,415
Families Below Poverty (%)	10	36	41	46	36	33	36	31	34	39	25	35	37	69	34	33	23
Households Receiving Public Assistance (%)	8	25	37	42	26	20	19	19	18	37	15	22	15	47	24	26	19
Labor Force Participation (%)																	
Employed	61	46	42	39	45	49	41	52	46	39	49	40	61	29	48	53	58
Unemployed	4	8	9	9	8	8	9	7	9	7	9	6	9	11	8	9	7
Not in Labor Force	35	45	49	52	47	43	50	41	44	55	42	55	30	60	44	38	35
Proportion of 16 to 19 Year Olds Not in School or Working	11	21	29	14	27	20	17	12	17	26	21	28	22	30	14	17	16
Education Attainment (%)																	
Not Completed High School	25	48	56	55	53	41	50	42	48	58	49	51	73	57	38	43	31
Completed High School Only	30	25	15	22	19	33	30	38	22	20	31	28	13	27	31	28	29
At Least Some College	46	25	15	22	19	33	30	38	22	22	20	21	14	17	32	29	40
Race/Ethnicity (%)																	
White	76	28	2	1	74	21	17	12	12	23	33	99	5	3	21	34	58
Black	12	35	96	26	6	50	1	0	74	4	66	1	1	97	52	49	10
Hispanic	9	31	0	73	15	26	81	87	14	46	1	0	87	0	25	15	8
Native American	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	5	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	26	0	0	7	0	2	0	21
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing

*The Cherokee Nation is not included in the table. Numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

From: *A Positive Force: The First Two Years of Youth Fair Chance*, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., April 1997

Youth were not "enrolled" in the Youth Fair Chance initiative *per se*; rather they received multiple services through many collaborative partners. Data relative to enrollment, services, and length of participation in various programs within the initiative are still being compiled and will be available in the final evaluation report.

YFC's stated purpose was to provide all youth living in the designated target areas with improved access to the types of services and support necessary to help them acquire the skills and knowledge they needed to succeed in the world of work and to participate fully in society. The YFC legislation specified six broad objectives:

- To saturate small (not more than 25,000 residents) neighborhoods or communities with services;
- To guarantee access to appropriate education, training and supportive services for all youth residing in the target communities;
- To guarantee access to comprehensive services combined with outreach and recruitment efforts to increase participation of previously unserved or underserved youth;
- To integrate service delivery, including systems of common intake, assessment, and case management;
- To increase rates of school completion, enrollment in advanced education or training, and employment; and
- To determine the feasibility of offering these services nationwide.

Three elements of the YFC design contributed to an innovative approach to service provision. First, by calling for a *comprehensive, community-wide strategy*, the initiative broke from the tradition of funding individual programs that were too often unconnected. This encouraged communities to explore new ways to organize and structure service delivery, provide necessary supports for youths in the target areas, and to govern the initiative based on local conditions and circumstances. Second, the *saturation strategy*, whereby all youth in the target area were eligible to receive services, alleviated a major barrier to col-

laboration that is often associated with "eligibility-driven" programs. Schools and other youth programs, whose missions are to serve the general population, could bring their resources to the initiative without the need to restrict services to only those youths eligible for a particular "program". Universal eligibility also served to remove the stigma often associated with programs for economically disadvantaged populations. Last, YFC was a concentrated effort to *integrate the most recent research and policy developments on effective practice.* Studies indicating the ineffectiveness of short-term, single-strategy programs[2] contributed to the comprehensive service strategy of the YFC design; lessons from multiple initiatives[3] led to the recognition that community-wide strategies which emphasize comprehensive solutions to youth issues can pull together a variety of resources and lead to changes in the way institutions address the needs of young people; realization that the United States was facing a rapidly changing labor market and that non-college-bound young people were often not prepared for the rigors of successful employment and career advancement, as well as the work of cognitive educational researchers, such as Lauren Resnick ("Learning In School and Out,: *Educational Researcher*, 16: 13-20), contributed to the inclusion of school-to-work transition as an approach within the initiative; and the increased understanding that young people move through sequential developmental stages led to incorporating a positive youth development approach within the YFC design.

The YFC "model" contained several distinctive components. Primary among them was *local governance* through a community resource board - an interagency "umbrella" whose role was to identify needed services and design a service delivery plan broad enough for all

[2]*Dilemas in Youth Employment Programming: Findings from the Youth Research and Technical Assistance Project.* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Labor, 1992). Prepared by Brandeis University and Public/Private Ventures.

[3]Beginning with the *Boston Compact* in 1982, and continuing with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *New Futures* initiative, the Rockefeller Foundation's *Community Planning and Action Project*, Ford Foundation's *Neighborhood and Family Initiative*, Brandeis' *Teenage Parent Self-Sufficiency Project*, Public/Private Venture's *Community Change for Youth Development*, New York's *Neighborhood-based Initiative*, and DOL's *Youth Opportunities Unlimited.*

youths and young adults residing within the area. The community resource board structure emphasized local decision making, thus providing communities with the flexibility to customize the initiative in response to local conditions and circumstances. The boards were comprised of people from the target area - residents, business owners, youth, parents, etc. - and represented individuals with a stake in developing and building their community and the young people within it. The local Private Industry Council or Service Delivery Area served as the *lead agency*, directing and coordinating the initiative in collaboration with various public and private-sector partner agencies and the community. The "lead" designation served primarily for administrative and/or fiscal purposes - planning and implementation rested with the Community Resource Boards.

Second, the Youth Fair Chance design also required *state and local commitments for a range of supporting services and programs* - from recreation and sports, to transportation and day care, to crisis counseling. The key was creating a system that would provide youth and young adults in the target area with guaranteed access to needed services.

Last, YFC required a *school-to-work transition* approach within youth employment and education programs. This is of particular interest, as this requirement highlights the importance DOL placed on the need to build better links between what is learned in school and the skills needed for success in the workplace. Combined with the comprehensive set of services that young people could access, it was a departure from traditional short-term, single-strategy interventions and emphasized the significance of the need to develop program strategies for youth that provide an appropriate mix and sequence of services over time in order to achieve long-term impacts.

It was anticipated that these components, combined with effective strategic planning and thoughtful implementation would lead to the development of a community-driven infrastructure built on interagency collaboration and services. This infrastructure would not only be able to effectively respond to the existing needs of youth from the target area, but contribute to sustainability beyond the grant period.

Sustainability became an issue sooner than expected. After a second

round of funding (approximately $1 million per site) in 1995, the 104th Congress eliminated continued funding for YFC. This action forced communities to revise their implementation plans, often reducing the depth and scope of available services, and to accelerate their efforts to become self-sustaining.

2. Outcomes

Several discrete objectives were subsequently added to the initiative's original broad objectives. YFC communities were expected to achieve the following identifiable outcomes:

- increased high school completion rate or its equivalent among youth in the targeted community;
- ncreased entrance into postsecondary institutions, apprenticeships or other advanced training programs;
- reduction in the unemployment rates (job placement);
- reduction in welfare dependency;
- reduction in the teenage pregnancy rate; and
- reduction in the crime rate

Overall data across all sites are not available at this time. The final report for Youth Fair Chance will address the impacts YFC had on participating communities, the extent to which YFC programs were able to guarantee youths access to appropriate services, and the feasibility of nationwide implementation.

An interim report, *A Positive Force: The First Two Years of Youth Fair Chance*, was published by Mathematica in April 1997. The report reached several preliminary conclusions about the YFC design and how it might be a model for other communities wishing to implement similar conceptual frameworks. For the evaluation, Mathematica compared the service environment in the YFC communities with the service environment in a set of comparison communities similar to the YFC sites.

First, YFC "substantially increased the level of resources spent on services for out of school youths compared with the level in the comparison communities" relative to the amount of JTPA Title II A and C funding dedicated to the target areas. JTPA spending in the target areas ranged from 1.5 to 17 times the estimated expenditures.[4] As a result, the number of youths served in the YFC sites and the level of education and employment and training services for out of school youths also increased significantly.

The report also indicates that the Learning Centers incorporated in the YFC design changed the nature of services and service delivery for out of school youths. The availability of a range of comprehensive services, often accessible directly at the Learning Centers, allowed immediate access to a variety of programs and supports that, in the comparison communities, were only available through a fragmented system of referral. Perhaps a participant involved in the Los Angeles YFC initiative expressed most eloquently the positive impact of this structure:

> *"...not only do I receive education and job skills from Youth Fair Chance. I also get the love and support that I need to succeed in life. Sometimes when you don't get love and attention at home, you have to build your own support systems. And Youth Fair Chance is my support system. I participated in numerous activities, events and trips. I get one-on-one counseling, not only about my goals, but also about serious personal and family issues.*

Case management was one of the most "positive forces" of Youth Fair Chance, characterized as the "linchpin" in the Mathematica report. Case managers not only matched youths with appropriate services, but also provided support throughout the program as the multiple needs of out of school youth were addressed. Mathematica also described case management as "the main intervention" for many participants, and highlighted the critical aspects of the supportive and trusting relationships formed between the case manager and youth. These relationships encouraged young people to discuss personal issues that presented barriers to both participation and completion, and laid the foundation for

[4]A Positive Force: The First Two Years of Youth Fair Chance, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., April, 1997

goals setting and decision making. As one participant stated,

> *...case managers "try to be your best friend as well as family members at the same time. And that really helps because sometimes there's certain issues that you can't talk to everyone about and they try to be there for you."*

Case managers served many functions in addition to formal "case management" within the YFC system. They networked with other service providers to access resources and services for participants, and many were responsible for running life skills classes, developing support groups and establishing mentoring programs. At some YFC sites, case managers moved from client-level case management toward a system-level approach - coordinating provision of other services and establishing common goals across institutions.

Finally, *A Positive Force* identified two primary impacts of the Community Resource Board structure of the initiative. The interim evaluation found that the boards "pushed for a new kind of program accountability" through maintaining a community focus - reminding management and service providers that it was not "just another government program", providing input and guidance on appropriate services, judging contractor performance, and providing a forum for community residents to offer ideas and suggestions. Boards also assumed the primary leadership role to sustain the initiative beyond the funding period. Many formed committees to evaluate and determine which program components should be enhanced and continued, and to explore local funding for sustainability.

Boards had different levels of involvement from community to community. At a minimum, boards provided opportunities for residents, local agencies, employers and other stakeholders to give input and guidance to YFC service providers. Some boards were actively involved in holding providers accountable for YFC activities, hands-on governance of the initiative, and pushing for local funds to support the effort. The Mathematica report also characterized the process of "pulling together and creating roles" for the boards as potentially "difficult and draining. Issues arose around who should be on the boards and around what the boards should do." In many communities, the initial make-up of the

Community Resource Boards required that they be reconfigured to enhance the role of residents. The pay-off, however, was a sense of ownership and commitment to sustainability.

3. Lessons Learned

As indicated earlier, the Department of Labor made a significant commitment to technical assistance to support the communities during the YFC implementation process. Many of the "lessons learned" come from the knowledge gained through that technical assistance effort, as well as generalizations from program implementation itself. This section describes several of the messages resulting from the planning and implementation process around Youth Fair Chance.

YFC presented a unique opportunity for a *new way of thinking and a new way of doing*. It was a major initiative that provided a framework around which communities could organize governance, service delivery and universal access to services. It emphasized existing and potential assets the communities could bring to bear on the issues associated with poverty, joblessness and social ills. In short, YFC was an initiative that demanded community change - that challenged communities to re-think how they structured, financed and provided services to their young people.

The new emphasis on youth development, school-to-work transition, collaboration and the community governance structure clearly defined a changing set of values and way of doing business. The "New Way of Thinking and New Way of Doing" demanded by these changes also required a different approach to the provision of technical assistance. The technical assistance team (KRA Associates with the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University, Abt Associates and the Institute for Educational Leadership) realized that the job of moving from vision to practice would require a substantial investment in articulating, reinforcing, and supporting the values, beliefs, and research-based mindset underpinning the YFC initiative, and therefore developed a strategic technical assistance plan directed toward:

- ensuring that the governance systems serving youth were home-grown by local leaders with whom community residents identified, and

- building a ***system*** of delivery that provided comprehensive and coordinated services to youth within the community

Figure 2 is included as an illustration of the scope and intensity of the plan and is presented as one of the "lessons learned" from YFC implementation. As communities begin to think about the process involved in moving from a traditional, often isolated program mix to a comprehensive, community-wide strategy, it provides a framework for thinking about the stages involved to affect the changes that will need to occur.

Figure 2

Strategic Technical Assistance Investments: Setting The Stage For a New Way of Thinking and a New Way of Doing

	Moving From	Through	Moving To
GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	• Focus on community deficits and narrow definition of "problem" • Top down decision making for the community, prescriptive programs, limited ownership among implementers • Programs accountable to funder • Rubber-stamp boards, resists change, ignores diversity	Community Wide Approach • Community resource councils representing "community voice" in governance of YFC • Formal mission and value-based partnership development with employers • Resource (asset) mapping and public awareness campaigns (social, political, cultural, and economic aspects)	• Focus on community assets • Community-centered collaboration & decision making to all youth service agencies • Programs accountable to the community and participants as well as the funder • Program design builds on needs and strengths of community • Serves board, encourages risk-taking, capitalizes on diversity among staff, clients and students
SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM BUILDING	• Lack of interagency collaboration or school-business-community partnerships. Single agent budgets • Fragmented, categorical programs with little or no connection between academic education, workforce preparation, career exploration, and support and recreational services for "poor" youth • Serve same youth • Emphasis on short-term skill gains is often last stage of intervention • Expect to "fit" people into existing services to fill "slots" • Ad hoc case management to supportive services • Outcomes driven by funder; changes frequent but includes job placement "ready or not; our job is jobs" • Passive classroom teaching of basics usually in groups. Philosophy is "school is school, work is work" • Questionable credentials for youth with little relevance • Limited MIS capacity, categorical tracking constraints on follow-up or using data for decision making	Comprehensive Services School-to-Work Transition System Youth Development Approach • Lack of interagency collaboration or Community learning centers • STW reform with two secondary schools in community • Employer involvement with standards and curriculum • Coordinate mix of education, employment, recreation activity (system-level case management)	• Shared resources; leveraged institutional change • Community-wide learning system for all youth, including school based and work based learning opportunities for both in-school and out of school youth aged 14-30 years • High standards of workforce preparation and post-secondary aspiration • High value on system-level case management • Establishment of appropriate interim and final outcomes for youth depending on age, stage of development and personal biography • Commitment to match youth with appropriate service and education based on age, stage and personal biography. Commitment to connecting activities. Lots of project-based learning • Year-round activity: learning work environments, functional/meaningful content culturally reference when appropriate for population • High value on adult/youth relationships; one-to-one, task based • High value on data for decision making – MIS system building • Improved credentials; portable employability or mastery certificates (SCANS and Skill Standards)

From the *Youth Fair Chance Technical Assistance Report: Toward a Community-Wide Learning System*, KRA Corporation with The Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University, Abt Associates, and the Institute for Educational Leadership, December 1996.

As with any program or initiative, developing clear and measurable progress indicators was also critical to effective planning and implementing. At an early meeting of the YFC Project Directors, it was determined that a framework for each site to evaluate its own internal progress, based on actual experiences in the field, would be an essential tool for goal-setting, implementation and improvement. The technical assistance team, together with the sites, generated a set of progress indicators that provided communities with concrete examples that demonstrated how program design principles were being implemented. The indicators served as benchmarks to ensure that any necessary corrective action could be taken in time to achieve the goals of the initiative. They are presented in Figure 3 as another YFC lesson to illustrate how one might document the process involved in major community change, as well as benchmark toward goal attainment.

Figure 3
YOUTH FAIR CHANCE PROGRESS INDICATORS

A. PROGRAM AND SYSTEM BUILDING

This area concerns the project's infrastructure for organizing and leading the community towards YFC development and implementation. Major progress indicators and corresponding activities are:

Community Resource Board (Mechanisms for Ensuring Community Input and Control

- Identify a diverse group of individuals from various disciplines and representations, e.g., parent, youth, business, industry, education, community-based organizations higher education, government, neighborhood association, religious institutions.
- Identify function and operational infrastructure, e.g., bylaws, of community group to form a formal board or council.
- Investigate whether the board will incorporate as a 501(c)3.
- Identify committees of the board and formal lines of communication, e.g., institutionalization, education, health, employment and training, and fund raising.
- Clarify the board's role regarding oversight, guidance, direction, policy, expansion, scope and range of program services, institutionalization, identification of other funding, relationship to the lead agency, identification of volunteer goods and services, lead agency staff, and partner agencies.
- Develop and identify forums for community involvement, input, decision making, and addressing client needs.
- Identify the board's role in the social and economic development of the community.
- Identify a diverse group of parents to plan parental and neighborhood activities that train, inform, support, and empower parents.
- Plan activities that increase parental knowledge of nutrition and nurturing, e.g., growth and development stage.
- Establish a program to increase parental literacy.
- Establish an intergenerational literacy program.
- Plan and execute workshops and service to empower parents regarding available services at the local, State, and national levels, e.g., medical, housing, and child care.
- Plan and execute a program that will encourage parental involvement in the education of in-school and out-of-school children, youth, and young adults.

Program Administrative Infrastructure

1. Multiagency Collaborations

- Develop joint common goals and objectives to guide the process.
- Define and discuss the expertise or specializations of each collaborator.
- Discuss how the collaboration process will be fostered in all levels of the organization.
- Clarify lines of authority.
- Identify how the responsibilities for obtaining the goals and objectives will be met.
- Plan and execute activities that enhance consensus-building. Identify technical assistance to facilitate and guide initial agency meetings.

2. Development of Written Agreements

- Identify written goals.
- Identify written measurable objectives.
- Develop a list of clearly defined agency expectations.
- Clarify policies, procedures, and roles at all administrative and service delivery levels.
- Identify reporting expectations.
- Plan regularly scheduled meetings that include responsible individuals from all departments.
- Identify clear beginning and ending dates of the agreement.
- Affix the signatures of all accountable individuals.

3. Staff and Management Capabilities

- Select managers who have experience operating large, complex, human service projects.
- Develop written job functions and qualifications.
- Employ staff with appropriate credentials and who reflect community diversity.
- Orient staff to YFC's and DOL's vision.
- Provide staff with specialized training and TA.

Figure 3 (continued)
YOUTH FAIR CHANCE PROGRESS INDICATORS

A. PROGRAM AND SYSTEM BUILDING
Program Administrative Infrastructure *(continued)*

4. Management Information Systems

- Ensure that MIS collects information on all participants (in-school and out-of-school).
- Ensure program managers use reports from MIS on a regular basis to assess the effectiveness of various program components.
- Ensure that reporting requirements for the national evaluation have been established and are being addressed.
- Share data with community resource board/other community members.
- Use MIS data in short-term and long-term planning.

5. Systems-Level and Client Case Management

- Ensure administrators have a strategy for coordinating provision of services from other agencies.
- Ensure case managers know what they can and cannot promise to clients.
- Ensure that the case manager can requisition services and resources across institutional lines.
- Ensure that referral procedures and service delivery are client-centered.
- Ensure that the case manager monitors, verifies, and records client progress with service providers.
- Develop an agreed-upon working definition of case management.
- Develop job descriptions, e.g., case manager, supervisor, etc.
- Select appropriate case management staff.
- Plan and execute training for all case management staff.
- Identify and assess human service agencies/institutions to participate.
- Assess quality and quantity of services the agencies have provided.
- Develop a broad list of services available from each agency/institution.
- Develop formal written interagency agreements.
- Arrange meetings with participating agencies/institutions.
- Plan and execute training for staff of the participating agencies/institutions.
- Define the working relationship with the agencies/institutions.
- Identify broad outcomes for the clients.
- Develop training that will empower the clients to access the system.

School-To-Work Component (In-School)

- Obtain review and discuss your State and local school-to-work plan with all appropriate individuals.
- Obtain review, and discuss the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1993 and Goals 2000: Educate America Act with all appropriate individuals.
- Develop and execute a plan that will make employers full partners in the process.
- Develop and implement a plan that will identify and actively involve post-secondary educational institutions, private and public employers, labor organizations, government agencies, community groups (including religious institutions), and parents/youth in linking school and work.
- Plan in-service training with all school faculty.
- Plan all aspects of the school-based, worked-based, and connecting activities.
- Develop standards that will assist students in obtaining above-average academic and occupational standards of performance.
- Investigate and obtain information on programs such as tech-prep, career academics, school-to-apprenticeship, cooperative education, and business education compacts.
- Recruit youth and young adults who have not obtained a high school diploma or GED to enroll in an alternative education program.
- Ensure that the work-based component includes (a) planned program of job training and experience, (b) mastery of skills relevant to a career major, and (c) issuance of skills certificates.
- Ensure that the school-based component includes (a) career exploration and counseling, (b) student identification of a career major by 11th grade, (c) mastery of academic skills, (d) issuance of skills certifications, and (e) regularly scheduled evaluations.
- Develop a component of connecting activities.

Figure 3 (continued)
YOUTH FAIR CHANCE PROGRESS INDICATORS

School-To-Work Component (Out-of-School)

- Identify students/clients who will participate in YFC.
- Develop and implement multiple recruitment strategies.
- Plan and execute orientation with written information packages.
- Develop a standard operations procedures manual.
- Identify and develop all components of the program:
  - Intake
  - Assessment (basic education/literacy, pre-employment, work maturity, occupational skills, life skills, barriers, interest, and goals
  - Counseling/coaching
  - Skills training
  - Literacy (curriculum identification)
  - Job readiness
  - Job development
  - Job placement and follow-up
  - Support services: Housing, child care, living assistance, drug and alcohol programs, parenting, and pregnancy prevention.
- Create individualized employment development plan.
- Identify appropriate evaluation measures (summative/formative).
- Develop and issue skill standard certifications.

Community Resource Center

- Inform the community through public meetings of the intended use of the facility.
- Identify a facility that is in a safe/neutral zone.
- Identify a facility that is easily accessible by public and/or private transportation.
- Contact and meet with the local transportation authorities.
- Identify the outside of the facility with the appropriate YFC logo.
- Identify a facility that requires minimum renovation.
- Identify a facility that will meet local zoning requirements.
- Identify a facility that has reasonable rental/purchasing requirements.

Connecting Activities (Sports and Recreation Programs)

Identify a safe place(s) for the activities.

- Plan activities that extend beyond the traditional days and hours.
- Identify activities that encourage male/female participation.
- Identify activities that encourage team-building.
- Identify activities that will encourage the building of positive self-esteem.
- Identify activities that will encourage positive development of work habits.

B. COMMUNITY ACCESS AND AWARENESS

- Identify agencies to assist in the ongoing positive promotion of YFC, e.g., television, newspaper, and video.
- Prepare printed flyers, community inserts, billboards, and posters to promote YFC.
- Develop an ongoing strategy for information to be shared in the community, e.g., small and large successes of the program.
- Conduct a series of town meetings and focus groups to gather information and input from the community.
- Develop a program logo that is used on all materials and clearly identifies the YFC facility and van.
- Plan and execute tours and open house activities.
- Plan a schedule of community meetings, ceremonies, and other events to be hosted at the YFC facility.

C. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINMENT

- Map community resources and incorporate existing resources to support YFC programs - YFC funds are used to leverage existing funds.
- Pursue outside funding sources, both locally and nationally.
- Collaborate with related Federal and State initiatives for education reform.

Other generalizations that can be made that provide "lessons learned" through YFC focus on the change process, leadership and strategic planning. First, the process of implementing change within each community (as could be expected) varied, depending very much on local conditions and circumstances. Communities that decided early on (or had governance structures in place) how decisions would be made were more successful. The involvement of people who resided and operated businesses in, or otherwise had strong ties to the target area resulted in a more effective effort to develop and leverage resources, identify and target specific community needs, mobilize human resources, bring pressure to bear on the grant recipient to respond to the community voice and to seek solutions to regulatory conflicts/barriers.

Communities with strong local leadership, effective targeting of services, community involvement and networking were also more likely to sustain the effort following the elimination of funding. By attaching a voice to the issue, the presence of community boards was often a positive factor in attracting additional funding. Even with the elimination of funding and the decrease in the expected duration of the initiative, this became key to the potential for sustainability and growth.

We must also realize that major initiatives require extensive strategic planning, and that this planning takes time. Too often, real or perceived pressure for rapid implementation creates an atmosphere of rushing to begin before essential implementation elements are in place. As an example, lead agencies in several YFC communities moved forward with service provision before community boards were in place. Once boards were developed and became active in the decision-making, the direction of the initiative often conflicted with what was already being implemented. In addition to creating tensions between critical partners, communities were forced to re-group, which created delays in full implementation.

Community change is a process rather than an event. Effective strategic planning is critical to establishing an environment for that change to occur. Restructuring grants to include a ***planning and development period***, with specific benchmarks, milestones and timelines, would encourage more thoughtful and deliberate implementation.

Experience also tells us that for change to occur, ***investment must be made in change agents***. The inclusion of technical assistance in Youth Fair Chance was recognition of that need. However, communities need much more specific information on ***how*** to affect change. They need to engage in an intensive journey that is at once about personal development, as individuals begin working together in new ways, and public change, as they engage as agents for systemic and sustainable reform. A continued investment in technical assistance is essential to the growth and sustainability of these efforts.

Closely related to technical assistance is the need to build in ***support networks*** for communities involved in the initiative. The benefits of peer-to-peer support, sharing ideas, identifying what is and is not working (and why or why not), validating the effort, appreciating the positive, and drawing on lessons learned cannot be overstated. Individuals and communities need to know that they are not alone in their efforts, and that they have the support of a larger community, so to speak.

In many communities, the geographical designation of the target area was an issue. Target areas were designated by census tracts, which often drew lines through neighborhoods. These lines were sometimes viewed as arbitrary, causing misunderstandings and creating tensions. ***Flexible delineation of target areas*** should be explored, allowing communities to accommodate natural neighborhood boundaries and enhance implementation based on local circumstances.

Communities also need to ***strategize early for sustainability and growth.*** They need to be proactive from Day 1 to prepare for unexpected cuts in funding and to minimize reacting to forces outside one's control. History tells us that funding for social programs and initiatives can often be tenuous, and local areas must realize this early on. Reliance on outside funding also creates a "program mind-set" - one in which continuation of the effort is contingent on resources from outside the community, and when funding ceases, the initiative dies. The development of alternative fiscal resources and the assumption of services and roles within existing institutions and organizational structures must be a key and measurable requirement of any initiative that promotes change of this magnitude and importance.

Closely aligned with planning for sustainability is the need ***to continuously assess and improve on the effort during planning and implementation.*** Outside evaluation is extremely important relative to accountability and in determining effective strategies. These evaluations, however, often tend to provide us with that information only at the end or mid-point of the initiative. It is important for communities to build into their planning a ***process for developmental evaluation and continuous improvement*** by establishing measurable quality indicators, documenting progress and assessing where they stand in relationship to those benchmarks. We cannot afford to wait until the initiative is over to discover what worked and what didn't. Resources are limited and we need to make the best use of them. Therefore, it becomes even more critical to ensure we are documenting the lessons and learning from them as we go along, so we can improve before the funding ends.

We should also continue to ***emphasize research that focuses on comprehensive services to youth.*** What differences do comprehensive services make? What factors influence improving the quality of life for children, families and communities? How do communities coordinate services, leverage resources, and involve stakeholders most effectively? While there is an initial body of research that begins to respond to these questions, much is still needed in order to provide guidance and direction to communities as they enter unknown waters and navigate often difficult seas.

Overall, Youth Fair Chance has reaffirmed our understanding that case management and task-based relationships with competent, caring adults play critical roles in working through the multiple needs of out of school youth. It has also provided us with the knowledge that the flexibility to tailor the choice of services to local needs is an important factor in the success of a national initiative, and that integrating services becomes less difficult with community involvement and learning centers. Initiatives proposing to affect system change - that ***demand*** rethinking how we structure, finance and provide educational services to out of school youth - ***take time, commitment and community will*** to have long-lasting affects.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE COMMUNITY CHANGE FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (CCYD) DEMONSTRATION

by Bernardine Watson

1. Background Information

P/PV began developing CCYD in the early 1990's in response to three developments in youth and social policy fields. First, there was the growing realization in the youth field that most of the youth programming of the 1970's and 1980's namely short term interventions aimed at "treating" specific youth problems (i.e. pregnancy, dropout, and drug abuse prevention programs) were not producing better outcomes for low income youth. Increasingly, program developers, researchers and funders were beginning to recognize that these short-term, deficiency-oriented programs were no match for the problems low-income youth faced and they began to place much more emphasis on the need to address the long term, overall developmental needs of young people when possible within the context of their communities. Second, a number of studies conducted during the 1980's and 1990's provided strong evidence that the availability of certain supports and opportunities can contribute to better youth outcomes. For example, P/PV's own 1995 study of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program showed the value of adult support for increasing youth's school performance and reducing nega-

tive behaviors such as alcohol and drug use and physical violence. And other studies have shown that youth who spend their free time (after school and summers) in structured activity, engage in fewer risky behaviors. Third, the social policy field had begun experimenting with comprehensive community initiatives, which attempted to build on human and institutional resources within communities, to deal with a broad range of needs including physical infrastructure, employment development and social services.

The design of CCYD took these new directions into account. CCYD is not a program it is a strategy for helping communities take a long term approach to the healthy development of their young people (age 12-20) by increasing the number of opportunities, choices and supports available to them. The goal of CCYD is to change the environment in which young people are growing up, and over the long term, change the young people themselves. However, we also added elements that we believed would allow us to test an approach we did not see being fielded in other youth or community comprehensive initiatives, and therefore provide useful information for the development of new social policy. First and most importantly, CCYD offers participating communities a "framework" consisting of five core concepts that communities can use to organize activities, and prioritize and guide their attempts for supporting healthy youth development. The concepts are:

- ***Adult Support and Guidance*** - increasing the number of adults in the neighborhood who interact with youth on a regular basis;

- ***Gap Activities*** - increasing the number of positive activities available and accessible to youth during non-school hours;

- ***Work as a Developmental Tool*** - increasing the number and variety of work experience opportunities for youth throughout their teen years while ensuring connections between school and work;

- ***Youth Involvement*** - increasing opportunities for young people in the neighborhood to be involved in shaping their own environment; and

- ***Support through Transitions*** - increasing support youth receive

as they move through critical transitions such as from middle school to high school and from school to work.

We believed that a guiding framework was critical since most of the community initiatives we saw being operated at that time had been given little substantive direction by their funders and developers and seemed to be bogged down in endless process about what to do. This interfered with the pace of change, as well as with any attempt to document and assess whether or not change was actually happening. Second, in addition to the core concepts, we also believed that certain "critical components" are necessary if communities are to provide their neighborhoods with the supports and opportunities that lead to change including: 1) an understanding of the core concepts and how they should be implemented; 2) the development of resources for implementing new supports, activities and opportunities; 3) the involvement of residents both youth and adults in the decision-making; 4) local leadership that is beyond the neighborhood that supports the change process; 5) an effective governance structure that includes a lead agency and neighborhood residents working together; and 6) the effective use of resources and technical assistance. Third, our operational strategy was influenced by the idea that the up-front planning period should be time-limited, with an emphasis on using the initiative framework to push toward and guide implementation; and that outside technical assistance and financial resources, should be limited and offered strategically so as not to prescribe or overly subsidize local action but to support the community's internally generated change agenda. Finally, we laid out a research strategy designed to answer three specific questions: first, is CCYD happening in the target communities?; second, how is it happening?; and finally, is it changing young people's lives in the short-term and ultimately in the long-term?

The Project Sites

Since 1996, CCYD has been implemented in six communities including:

- ***Area C in Savannah, Georgia*** - where the lead agency is the Savannah-Chatham County Youth Futures Authority (YFA);

- ***Childs Park in St. Petersburg, Florida*** - with leadership from the Pinellas County Juvenile Welfare Board;

- ***Blue Hills, Forest Avenue and Linwood in Kansas City, Kansas*** - with the YMCA of Greater Kansas as the lead agency;

- ***East Austin in Austin, Texas*** - with the City's Community Services Division providing leadership;

- ***Lower East Side in New York City*** - with Grand Street, University and Henry Street Settlements sharing lead responsibility; and

- ***Stapleton/Clifton on Staten Island, New York City*** - with the You Participate in Solutions (YPIS) organization as the lead.

These sites were selected based on our assessment of their capacity to give the CCYD approach a fair test. We were looking for sites with a certain threshold of human and institutional capacity to build upon sites with: 1) a target neighborhood where physical deterioration was not overwhelming; 2) the poverty rate was no more that 40%; and 3) an existing "leadership infrastructure", including a strong lead agency to support the entire effort, active neighborhood residents and other institutional partners inside and outside the target area. We thought it particularly important that lead agencies demonstrate an appreciation of the core concept framework as a way to prioritize resources for youth activity and have the capacity to bring broader community resources to bear to support the community change effort.

The Savannah, St. Petersburg, Austin, Kansas City, and New York-Lower East Side sites all participated in a 6-12 month planning period and have been operational for 2-3 years. Stapleton/Clifton is the newest site having completed a planning period in April, 1998 and begun its first year of operations in June of that year. Savannah, St. Petersburg and Austin are considered "lead sites" since they have been the major focus of P/PV's research and technical assistance efforts based on their greater "readiness" to implement the CCYD approach at the onset of the initiative. The lessons form CCYD presented in this paper are based on the operational experiences of these three sites.

Project Budget and Funding

Since each community is implementing the CCYD strategy based on an individualized locally generated plan, budget size, funding sources and amounts vary. In Table I, the budgets for the Austin, Savannah and St. Petersburg sites are listed for 1996 - 1998. For these three years, P/PV provided small seed grants of $175K annually, a portion of which we designated had to support a dedicated project coordinator; the remainder could be allocated locally to cover project activities. During this time, P/PV's financial contribution accounted for approximately 1/3 or less of the Austin and Savannah budgets. In St. Petersburg, the P/PV financial contribution was approximately 50% of the local project budget for all three years.

Table 1
Community Change for Youth Development Budgets

		1996	1997	1998
Austin	P/PV funds	$17 5,000	$17 5,000	$1 75,000
	Local	$50 6,200	$62 1,193	$8 32,906
Savannah	P/PV funds	$17 5,000	$17 5,000	$1 75,000
	Local	$40 0,575	$32 0,000	$4 18,500
St. Petersburg	P/PV funds	$17 5,000	$17 5,000	$1 75,000
	Local	$17 0,000	$17 0,000	$1 70,000

P/PV also provided non-monetary support to the sites. A senior field officer was assigned to each site and visited the site monthly; technical assistance was provided on specific issues related to project operations; "cross-site conferences" were held annually where sites could share operational experiences, and P/PV funded three staff from each site to attend; and the sites received extensive feedback from P/PV on their local progress in on-site quarterly reviews and through detailed memos after visits from the research staff.

Demographics

The best way, at this point in the initiative, to get a picture of the CCYD participants is to look at the characteristics of the target neighborhoods and the youth who live there, particularly since CCYD is a strategy to strengthen supports for all youth in the neighborhood between the ages of 12 and 20.

The youth in these neighborhoods are primarily African American (Savannah and St. Petersburg) and Hispanic (Austin). Many come from households that have only one parent and received public assistance. Dropout rates varied among the sites; a significantly higher percentage of East Austin youth (28%) than those in Childs Park and Savannah (both 10%), reported having dropped out of school at some point. This high dropout rate in East Austin mirrors a national trend among Hispanic youth. (Table 11 shows Youth Demographics for the CCYD Target Area).

CCYD's Basic Operations and Project Objectives

The objective in each CCYD site is for the lead agencies and local governance councils dominated by neighborhood residents (although representatives for local youth serving agencies also sit on the Councils), to work together to plan and oversee activity which reflects the five core concepts and eventually provides a community-wide structure of supports from which all youth benefit. The lead agencies provide administrative and staff support for the initiative; the purpose of the "resident-driven" Councils is for this group to make key budgetary and programmatic decisions and be "the voice of the neighborhood". In Savannah and St. Petersburg, detailed memoranda of agreement have been developed outlining the roles, responsibilities and relationships between the lead agencies and the local Councils; and the Austin site is working on a similar agreement. The lead agencies and governance councils work together to contract with neighborhood groups and institutions to deliver activity that responds to the neighborhoods' CCYD plan and meets the five core concepts. (It should be noted that "resident-driven" governance has been a key challenge for the sites and the functioning of these Councils in a decision-making role has been uneven. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the "lessons learned" sec-

tion of this paper.)

While we did not establish set numerical objectives for CCYD or a time frame in which "change" in these communities should occur, we set the end of 1997 after two years of operations, as the time when we would begin to look for signs of positive change in the level and number of supports available to youth. Table 2 describes the baseline demographics for the target areas in the first three sites.

Table 2

1996 YOUTH BASELINE DEMOGRAPHICS FOR CCYD TARGET AREA

	AUSTIN	ST. PETERSBURG	SAVANNAH
Sample size	643	1,001	860
Race/Ethnicity (%):			
White	1	6	1
Black	3	90	97
Hispanic	95	2	1
Age Group (%):			
12-14	38	40	33
15-17	34	38	37
18-20	28	22	30
Education (%):			
In School	76	87	82
Ever Dropped Out	28	10	10
Average Household Size:	6.1	4.6	4.6
Family Structure (%):			
One-parent	25	44	50
Two-parents	58	46	36
Public Assistance (%Yes):	40	44	53

Source: Support for Youth: A Profile of Three Communities. (P/PV Spring 1998)

2. Initiative Results to Date

Research and Data Collection Strategy

This initiative was designed to answer questions about whether and how the CCYD approach changes communities and whether it ultimately makes a difference in outcomes for youth. Since methodologies for researching community change initiatives are still being developed, conducting the research on CCYD was very complicated. The research strategy we used included: on-site researchers in each of these sites to document "up close" the process of change in the communities as well as what was happening on the ground; periodic collection of information, through mapping and interviews, about changes in resources available to youth in these neighborhoods; and a community-wide survey of youth which was conducted at baseline and will be conducted again in the next two years (pending funding) to determine youth outcomes. At the beginning of 1998, after two years of program operations, we began attempts to document (through on-site observation and by having sites submit monthly activity sign-in sheets) youth participation in local CCYD activities.

Indications of Community Change: Core Concept Activity

After only two years of program operations, it is much too early in the community change process to begin to say anything about the overall effectiveness of this strategy. A follow-up to the baseline study will be necessary to address youth outcomes and as mentioned above, we hope to raise funds to conduct this in the next two years. However, we can talk about some of the types of activity the communities have undertaken and the numbers of young people who are involved. Even so, a few words about the numerical data presented here are necessary. As mentioned earlier in this paper, we began attempts to systematically "count" youth participation in core concept activity in January 1998 and the information presented here represents data (submitted to us by the sites through August 1998) on youth that we have been able to verify are eligible (i.e.: in our target age range 12-20 and living in the target neighborhood) for CCYD participation. The information comes from two sources: monthly activity reports completed from attendance sheets collected at local activities, and in some cases, on-site observations by P/PV researchers.

These data are extremely preliminary and likely to be updated in subsequent reports on the project. That said, based on our observations and the data we have been able to collect through the summer of 1998, we believe that we are beginning to see evidence of increased supports for youth in the CCYD neighborhoods in East Austin; Childs Park, St. Petersburg; and Area C in Savannah.

Much of the activity in each site during this initial phase of CCYD has focused on expanding the number of "gap" activities available to youth after school, on weekends and in the summer. The sites initially built on existing neighborhood-level activity and programming developed and delivered by residents and small neighborhood organizations. As the local initiatives have grown, the governance groups and lead agencies have worked to develop partnerships with public and private institutions in order to gain access to additional resources for CCYD activity and to increase the number of youth participants. All three sites have attempted youth involvement strategies, and over the past year, have begun to develop work/learning activities. So far "adult support and guidance" and "help with transitions" have been addressed in other core concept activities. Examples of the sites core concept activities follow.

The Savannah Youth Futures Authority (YFA) is a comprehensive youth agency focusing on "all youth" in the Area C neighborhood; YFA has adopted CCYD as its youth development approach for adolescents and has used the framework to dramatically expand programming for this group. One of the highlights of the Savannah site's first year of activity was a mini-grants program which awarded 20 small seed grants for neighborhood-based activity such as: cheerleading, college tours, block beautification programs, church-operated mentoring programs, essay contests, and arts and crafts projects. CCYD funds were also used to contract with two recreation centers run by City Leisure Services to operate summer camp activities and with Youth Employment Strategies/Services (YESS), a resident-operated employment program to offer summer employment for Area C youth. In 1997, the site continued to operate these gap programs and added a mentoring program for juvenile offenders. Savannah also funded additional slots in the YESS program and expanded opportunities to use "work as a developmental tool" by implementing an eight-week summer Vocational

Exploration Program (VEP). In 1998 the Savannah site greatly expanded it's CCYD " gap period" and job training and employment activities. According to our observations and data submitted by the site, over 1000 youth were involved in a variety of activities.

In St. Petersburg, CCYD activity has in large part been responsible for the revitalization of the Childs Park Recreation Center, an important cultural institution in the Childs Park neighborhood. The partnership between the Childs Park community and the Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB) to implement CCYD, was the impetus for the City Recreation Department focusing its attention on the Park. Prior to CCYD, residents describe the Park as a neglected haven for drugs and crime. The City's renovations have made it a suitable practice field for the Childs Park Youth Sports Initiative, the initial and central component of CCYD which is built on existing neighborhood sports teams including basketball, tennis, track and field, and cheerleading. In fact, the Center is also now considered a "safe" gathering place for all kinds of neighborhood activity. In 1997, the site implemented the Youth Sports Academy (YSA), which added an educational component to the sports activity. Through a relationship with Childs Park Outreach, a local non-profit, public school teachers were hired to conduct an after-school, summer enrichment and tutoring program in three local churches; and an effort was made to make tutoring mandatory for youth with poor grades participating in YSA.

Also in 1997, the site began to focus on implementing other "gap" activities such as summer enrichment camp, and on activities that use "work as a developmental tool". It partnered with Career Options of Pinellas County, Inc., the local employment and training provider, to hire a part-time work-and-learning outreach counselor, specifically to serve youth between the ages of 14 and 20 in the Childs Park area; developed a summer jobs program that placed those youth in jobs throughout South St. Petersburg; and provided workshops using a Junior Achievement Business curriculum to youth enrolled in the City of St. Petersburg Recreation Department's Summer Teen Camp. In 1998, St. Petersburg began to expand and solidify institutional partnerships in order to increase the range of activities and opportunities offered to youth and the numbers of young people that could be involved. Our observations and data submitted by the site indicate that

at the writing of this report, over 500 youth from Childs Park had participated in CCYD activities. In addition to sports activities, youth participated in drug education, tutoring and career exploration. Childs Park Outreach continued to provide after school tutoring and operated a summer enrichment program. A full-time staff person was hired this year, specifically to help the site focus on developing work/learning activities. So far, emphasis has been on career exploration activities for 12-13 year olds and strengthening the relationship with the local public employment program (Career Options), to ensure that Childs Park youth continue to be targeted for summer employment.

An initial goal of the Austin site was to increase parental and general community awareness of the issues facing the young people in the East Austin Community and to solicit input and participation in CCYD activities. Early on, a great deal of effort was put into organizing parents to take part in potluck dinners, community walks, neighborhood meetings, and outdoor fairs. After this initial outreach and organizing, the site began to implement a range of recreational, educational and work programs, many through institutional collaborations. In 1996 and 1997, the initiative collaborated with 4H, the Parks and Recreation Department, and City sponsored programs for high-risk youth, to implement a variety of "gap" programs including: environmental/water camps that combined recreation and learning activities; a rowing club; volleyball and basketball leagues; and dances for neighborhood youth. In 1997, the site began to focus on work/learning strategies including a series of job readiness workshops and a career fair in the Spring that led to summer jobs for a number of East Austin youth. AmeriCorps funds were used to provide stipends for neighborhood youth to do community service projects, tutoring and outreach work for target area youth attending Austin High. Also, a partnership was developed with the Austin Independent School District to develop a six-week, work/learning program for academically disadvantaged youth entitled "Summer Success". Finally, in response to neighborhood concerns about the high drop-out rates among neighborhood youth, the local CCYD coordinator began working with staff at Austin High to identify and support, with tutorial and social services, East Austin youth who were truant or at-risk of not graduating.

In 1998 the site has built on these collaborations and developed new

ones. The initiative began to strengthen its ties to the Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD). PARD (now a member of the initiative's governance board) also implemented a "Roving Leaders" program which provides outreach workers to help link neighborhood youth particularly those who are traditionally hard to reach to area programs and activities. Work/learning activity expanded through stronger links between the initiative and the City's Summer Youth Employment Program; and the "Summer Success" collaboration with the School District was implemented for the second year with increased emphasis on plans to "follow -up" with youth once they return to school in the fall. Also, in a partnership with neighborhood parents, the CCYD initiative provided partial scholarships to summer school for youth who needed to attend. Overall, our data indicates that in 1998 close to 500 youth participated in the above activities.

As mentioned earlier, for the most part, all three of these sites have included youth involvement, adult guidance and support during times of transition as part of gap period and work/learning activities. For example, across the sites, additional support for youth has generally been provided by the project staff hired to work directly in program activities. Each of the sites have tried to involve youth in the governance of the initiative by including youth on the initiative governance councils. All of the sites have developed "youth councils"[1] whose membership and level of activity has fluctuated throughout the pilot but whose goal is to provide a forum for the youth of the community and to plan and participate in youth activities such as talent shows, dances, and community service. Other youth involvement opportunities have been available to a limited number of youth through their roles as teacher's/coordinator's aides or team leaders in work/learning and gap (particularly sports) activities.

Austin is the only site to develop activity specifically to address youths needs for support during times of transition. The local governance group and the schools played an early role in working to develop activities which help East Austin youth and their families adjust to the

[1]It should be noted that these councils are not the same "youth councils" described in the recently enacted Workforce Investment Act, which have a different purpose and function.

transition from neighborhood and primarily Hispanic elementary schools to larger, less familiar and heavily Anglo junior high and high schools that are outside the neighborhood.

3. Lessons Learned

Based on these early experiences we can begin to answer two of the questions on our research agenda: Is change happening?; and how is it happening?

- ***The CCYD Framework Appears to Have Value***

Experience from the initial phase of CCYD indicates that the core concept framework is a useful tool to help residents and institutions work together to: relatively quickly organize and prioritize resources; communicate with and generate positive attention and support for youth from many segments of the community; build on existing activities; and develop new plans for strengthening youth supports. The clarity and flexibility of the core concepts, which offer communities a general framework and not a blueprint for change, seems to make it an especially useful approach for working with communities. In all of the sites, the lead agencies have used the framework to introduce a "developmental" approach to working with youth to a wide variety of organizations. In fact, at the request of the lead agencies, P/PV has conducted trainings in each of the sites for staff from a wide variety of youth agencies, thereby extending the reach of the initiative and increasing the likelihood that the CCYD approach will become institutionalized. Both St. Petersburg and Austin are using the core concept framework to introduce youth development approaches to other neighborhoods beyond the current CCYD target area

- ***Having a Framework Does Not Eliminate Implementation Challenges***

Clearly the core concept framework has proven to be a good tool for guiding communities on what to do to support their youth. However, the presence of the framework did not eliminate implementation issues and problems. Sites were able to develop initial CCYD activity fairly quickly and easily by building on existing neighborhood programming.

However, other core concept activity, such as "work as a developmental tool", "youth involvement" and "supporting youth through transitions"; which in large measure require the development of new relationships between target neighborhoods and institutions, broader institutional resources, and new behaviors by youth and adults have been harder to implement particularly on any scale. For example, "using work as a developmental tool" requires a systematic approach to thinking about work/learning opportunities for youth and a commitment from both the public and private sectors to be responsive. Supporting youth through difficult transitions requires institutional staff and involved residents to pay special attention to youth at critical junctures and deliberately build specific supports into activities. Youth involvement strategies require that activities be constructed carefully to assure that youth have opportunities to make decisions and take on leadership roles; and that adults see youth involvement and leadership as important to healthy youth development. All of these issues presented real challenges for both staff and residents in the sites, since dealing with them often required additional time, the development of new relationships and entirely new ways of thinking about and working with young people. Also, the quality of the activity implemented was sometimes an issue in the sites. The drive to get programming underway, or simply a lack of experience with the youth development approach, sometimes meant that activities were not implemented with an eye toward the quality of adult-youth interaction or with attention to how well the activity addressed the core concepts.

- ***So Far, CCYD Activities Have Tended to Attract Youth at the Lower End of the Target Age Range.***

Our initial data from the sites indicates that the vast majority of the youth who have participated in local CCYD activities have been age 16 and below. The reasons for this are inter-related. As mentioned earlier, the sites have tended to focus on programming which appeals to younger adolescents i.e.: "gap" activities and lower end "work/learning" opportunities such as career exploration and summer employment and not to older or out of school youth. Both of these types of programming seem to be easier for the sites to implement because they build on existing activities systems and relationships in the community. Also, younger teens are generally more accessible, (because of their

school attendance) and more apt to naturally respond to the type of adult support and guidance that the CCYD approach promotes. In fact, a key issue in each of the sites has been the degree to which the CCYD activities tended to attract youth below the target age range youth we could not count as part of our research. This situation mirrors the lack of supports and opportunities for youth over the age of 15 reported in P/PV's baseline study of the CCYD target communities. It also indicates a need in the sites for more deliberate attempts both programmatic and through outreach to attract and support older youth.

- ***In-spite of CCYD's Initial "Non-targeted" Approach, Communities Still Implemented Strategies to Include Troubled Youth in CCYD Activities.***

CCYD is designed to strengthen supports across a neighborhood so that all youth benefit rather than target any particular group of youth or focus on "fixing" particular problems. While the sites have generally adopted this approach, two of them Savannah and Austin have sought ways through CCYD to specifically address the communities concern for troubled youth. For example, Savannah decided to include its Community Alternatives to Detention (CAD) program under the CCYD umbrella. CAD is an initiative which attempts to divert troubled youth from the justice system by providing them mentors and offering their families case management and other social supports. The goal was to make sure that CAD participants were included in CCYD activities. Austin made the most significant effort to see that troubled youth were included in the CCYD initiative. According to baseline data collected for the site, the Austin target neighborhood has a larger percentage than the other sites of youth who have had some trouble with the law as well as the highest dropout rate among the three sites. The partners in the local Austin initiative felt they had to make an effort to target these youth for special support. Therefore, City funding for high-risk youth programs was used to support the CCYD initiative, assuring that these youth would benefit from the supports CCYD provided. Also, additional staff support was added to the project to provide specific outreach and support to high-risk youth who do not easily join activities. Social workers were hired to work directly with truant youth and their families in an attempt to reconnect the youth to school.

- ***Strong Lead Agencies Play a Key Role in Community Change Efforts***

Lead agencies with credibility inside and outside the target neighborhood and with administrative and financial resources have been an essential anchor for local CCYD efforts. These organizations have interpreted the CCYD initiative to the community; organized local, human, institutional, and financial resources for core concept activities across the various partners; and worked with the target neighborhood to help guide the local governance and implementation processes. In each of these sites, the lead agencies have also contributed significant financial and administrative resources to the local CCYD efforts. All contributed staff and systems (financial, record keeping, etc.) to the local projects and matched P/PV's site grants generously. The strong involvement of the lead agencies in these local efforts has had a number of clear benefits for the CCYD neighborhoods namely the generation of outside attention and resources which was beyond the neighborhoods' capacities to generate alone; a solid partnership with a powerful agency which can help facilitate broader activity implementation; and the development and strengthening of neighborhood level leadership.

- ***Resident Leadership Is Important for Community Change and Youth Development but Should Be Balanced by Strong Institutional Involvement***

The decision to make strong resident involvement and leadership critical elements of the CCYD design was based on a number of factors. First, we wanted to test an assumption that involving large numbers of residents in community change efforts would help to achieve and sustain the change. Second, the idea of resident-driven leadership and governance in community initiatives currently has a great deal of support from funders as a way to test an alternative to the failure of institutions to solve problems in poor communities. Most foundation-funded community change initiatives have a strong resident governance component. Finally, resident leadership is a powerful idea in local communities. In CCYD, residents saw it as a way to assure they had a voice in any strategy being implemented in their neighborhoods; and lead agencies saw it as an opportunity to test the development of a "neighborhood sector" they could partner with to improve organizational effectiveness.

In each site and throughout the initiative, residents have played an active role. Early on during the planning phase of CCYD, residents acted mainly as advisors to the lead agencies, helping to develop ideas for project implementation. During early implementation, they played a key role in delivering activities. This early resident involvement served to increase "buy-in", publicize CCYD at the neighborhood level, and foster "adult-youth interaction" one of the major goals of the initiative.

As the initiative progressed, residents began to seek more leadership of the initiative and the lead agencies helped organize resident-dominated governance groups whose role was to plan and oversee implementation of CCYD activity, including making programmatic decisions, monitoring the budget and assessing the quality of activities. A significant amount of lead agency support and P/PV's technical assistance to the sites has been dedicated to developing the capacity of these resident groups. Across all three sites, the groups have struggled with their roles and responsibilities and their capacity to be real partners to institutions in the community change process. About halfway through the pilot, it seemed that much of the energy in the sites was being devoted to the development of resident governance, sometimes at the expense of activity implementation.

Currently, after a great deal of effort in all three sites to reformulate the groups and find workable organizational structures, each site has a fairly stable governance group of approximately 20 members, with some capacity to carry out the tasks outlined above. The majority of the groups' members are residents; however, the groups have become stronger with the addition of institutional members who bring administrative skills and can deliver the programmatic resources of their institutions, and/or the increasing recognition that the lead agencies have a critical role to play, in helping to broker and manage the relationships and resources necessary to achieve fundamental community change.

4. Implications of the Lessons Learned

- ***CCYD and Out of School/High-Risk Youth***

It is a well known fact in the youth field that out of school and high-risk youth are attracted to initiatives that meet their need for work and

career development. Therefore, if the CCYD sites or any other community attempting to use this framework expects to attract these populations, they will need to focus more intentionally on the work/learning core concept and its application for the upper end of the CCYD target age range.

In the next phase of CCYD, a major emphasis will be on work/learning strategies designed to attract disconnected and older youth, and on connecting the initiative with institutions such as schools, post secondary educational institutions, public employment and training organizations, juvenile justice systems, and the private sector that can help expand the scale and scope of local efforts. This is the only way we will be able to judge CCYD's value as an approach for supporting all youth or whether its utility is limited to younger, less troubled adolescents.

- ***Implementing the Core Concepts***

It has been mentioned several times in this paper that during this initial phase of CCYD, the core concepts have been implemented unevenly, with sites primarily addressing those concepts that could be more easily implemented by building on existing activity, and existing institutional relationships. It appears that sites need more help and direction in developing and implementing (quality) core concept ideas particularly in the areas of work/learning, youth involvement and supporting youth through transitions. In fact, they may need to be provided with sound workable program models that fit their agenda. P/PV was not very directive early in the implementation process, because of the initiative's focus on local control and local decision-making. However, a more balanced approach between respect for local autonomy and guidance will likely enhance implementation.

- ***Resident and Institutional Involvement***

The original goal for resident involvement in the CCYD approach was to increase the amount of human capital available to youth in their neighborhoods. The focus on governance almost eclipsed other roles that residents can play in changing their community such as outreach, communication, advocacy and volunteering in youth activities. More focus should be placed on developing these equally important roles,

particularly given the time and capacity issues involved in developing "resident driven" governance and the other local forces that affect community change efforts.

P/PV originally did not push the involvement of public institutions in CCYD given our efforts to make change happen quickly. We did not want CCYD to get caught in a long process of "institutional change". The CCYD communities, particularly the neighborhood residents, resonated with that position since they generally felt that change and innovative ideas about what could happen in their communities needed to come from the ground up. It seems clear now that there has to be a role for institutions in the community change process one that does not depend entirely on fundamental institutional change, but on identifying areas where communities and public institutions can find common ground around the needs of youth. This will be a big piece of the CCYD agenda going forward.

- ***CCYD and Replication***

The CCYD initiative has not actually been replicated in other communities. As indicated at the beginning of this paper, this approach is being implemented in three other communities - Kansas City, the Lower East Side of New York City and on Staten Island, New York City, based on their local plans and circumstances. As we continue to focus our research on the Austin, St. Petersburg and Savannah sites, our goal is to share what we are learning about the process of implementing community change, with these other sites. For example, in Kansas City and the Lower East Side, we have helped the sites consider other options (than governance) for resident involvement. The Lower East Side has decided on a resident advisory group which provides input into the Settlements' youth programming decisions, and has even gone after foundation funding for programming it wanted to see implemented. The Kansas City YMCA and the residents of the Forrest Avenue, Blue Hills and Linwood Neighborhoods are considering a similar option.

The newest CCYD site, Stapleton/Clifton on Staten Island, is benefitting from the lessons learned from both our resident involvement and core concept implementation experience. From the start, the initiative's governance board has a balance of resident and institutional members;

and based on the experiences of the other sites, each group appears to have a healthy respect for what the other brings to the table. Also, Staten Island has started its core concept implementation with "work as a developmental tool" through a partnership with one of the largest employers on the island. This site has also developed an early focus on helping youth make difficult educational transitions by borrowing from the Austin sites' experiences in this area; and with plans for an employment institute which will help older youth transition from school to work.

CHAPTER NINE

EARLY FINDINGS FROM THE KULICK YOUTH OPPORTUNITY AREA DEMONSTRATION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

by Andrew Sum, Neeta Fogg, Sheila Palma

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1. Background Information

Among the most severe, socially destructive, and structurally rooted labor market problems in the nation over the past two decades are the high levels of joblessness and underemployment prevailing among young adults in many high poverty neighborhoods of central cities and impoverished rural areas. These high levels of joblessness have been viewed by some social scientists, such as William Julius Wilson, as the primary economic problem prevailing in high poverty neighborhoods and the underlying cause of the poverty, dependency, alienation, social disorganization, and family stability problems encountered by residents[1]. Concerns over concentrated poverty problems during the past

[1]See: (1) William Julius Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987; (ii) William Julius Wilson, When Work Disappears, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1996.

decade have led to renewed research on the impacts of neighborhood economic and social conditions on the schooling, labor market, and childbearing behavior of young adults and the changing geographic structure and concentration of poverty problems.[2] Ethnographic studies of the daily lives of youth and adults in these inner city poverty neighborhoods and in declining working class areas have shed further insight on their labor market and schooling behaviors, daily life experiences, and outlook on life.[3] Several of these studies have revealed the fatalism of some teens in these neighborhoods, including those connected to the drug trade.[4]

In response to these deep seated and multifaceted labor market problems in high poverty neighborhoods of the country, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration in 1996 launched the Youth Opportunity Initiative, primarily aimed at out-of-school youth living in concentrated urban and rural poverty neighborhoods. The grants which supported the effort were known as Kulick grants in memory of Don Kulick, a longtime employee of the Employment and Training Administration who had just passed from the scene. The initiative began with a pilot test in six sites Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, New York (Bronx), and Eastern Kentucky, assuming that a larger and more diverse effort would follow thereafter which would profit from the test area experience. In 1998, Congress authorized a full scale $250 million Youth Opportunity Initiative as part of the

[2]See: (1) Paul E. Peterson and Christopher Jencks, (Editors), The Urban Underclass, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1991; (ii) Paul A. Jargowsky, Poverty and Place, Ghettos, Barrios, and the American City, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1996.

[3]For examples of such studies,
See: (1) Michelle Fine and Lois Weis, The Unknown City: The Lives of Poor and Working-Class Young Adults, Beacon Press, Boston, 1998; (ii) Le Alan Jones and Lloyd Newman with David Isay, Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago, Scribner, New York, 1997; (iii) David Simon and Edward Burns, The Corner: A Year in the Life of An Inner-City Neighborhood, Broadway Books, New York, 1997.

[4]One local drug dealer in South Chicago commented on his life chances in the following manner: "I ain't gonna be alive in ten years because I'll be selling my drugs and they're gonna pop my ass. No one's gonna be alive in twenty more years."
See: Le Alan Jones and Lloyd Newman, op. cit. p. 45.

new Workforce Investment Act of that year. At present, only Houston, Chicago and Los Angeles have sufficient experience to provide useful lessons and those are described and analyzed in this chapter.

The Nature of the Pilots

The Youth Opportunity pilot projects were designed to provide comprehensive, locally designed sets of formal education, academic remediation, job training, mentoring, work experience, job development and job placement, sports and recreation and follow-up services. These were to pursue enrollment of all 16 to 24 year old out-of-school youth living in locally designated high poverty neighborhoods in a relatively compact area (typically five to six contiguous census tracts in a central city or an impoverished rural county or counties). All age eligible youth living in the designated target area (which also are parts of an existing Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community) can enroll in program activities regardless of their family income or public assistance status. The primary objective of the demonstration programs is to considerably improve the employability, employment rates, and earnings prospects of out-of-school youth in these target areas over the course of the three year program.

The full-scale Youth Opportunity initiative will differ somewhat from the pilot sites in that it will be open to in-school as well as out-of-school youth, provide grants for five years instead of three, most likely serve larger geographic areas with more funds, and be open to high poverty areas that are not Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities. Funding for the full initiative will be restricted to 14-21 year olds, but DOL expects sites will serve 22-24 year olds with other sources of funds.

The Goals of the Youth Opportunity Pilot Demonstration

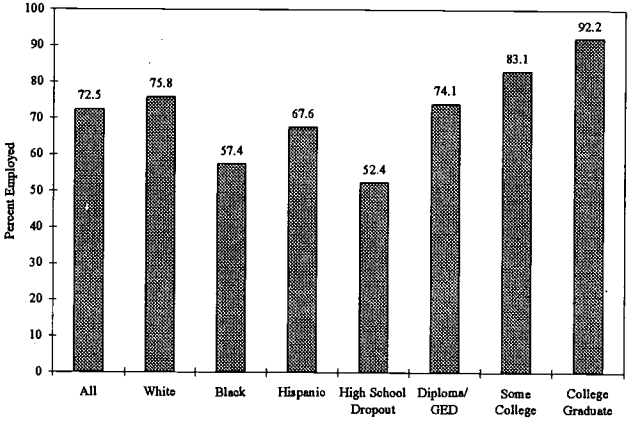
The primary goal of the Kulick demonstration programs is to substantially improve both the quantity and the quality of employment opportunities for age eligible, target area youth (16-24 years old). The most specific and challenging objective involves raising the employment rate of out-of-school youth in each of the areas to 80 percent by the end of the demonstration program.[5]

During the first quarter of calendar year 1998, just under 73 percent of the nation's 16-24 year old out-of-school youth were employed. (See Chart 1).[6] Employment rates for these youth varied considerably by race-ethnic group and by educational attainment. Nationally, only 57 percent of Black youth were employed compared to two-thirds of Hispanic youth and three-fourths of White youth. Employment rates of these youth ranged from a low of 52 percent among high school dropouts to a high of 92 percent among four year college graduates. The simple average of the employment rates for high school graduates and those completing 1 to 3 years of college was just under 79 percent. The primary employment objective for the Kulick demonstration program, therefore, is to raise the overall employment rate for under-educated youth in these poverty-impacted target areas to a level only recently achieved by the nation's out-of-school youth who completed 12 to 15 years of schooling. Given the low employment rates prevailing among out-of-school youth in the six demonstration sites at the time of the baseline surveys, the attainment of the core employment objective would require an extraordinarily large increase in the employment rates for most target area youth over the course of the demonstration.

[5]This employment measure is often referred to in the labor statistics literature as the employment-population ratio. Its value is calculated by dividing the number of employed in a given demographic group by the number of persons in the civilian, non-institutional population.

[6]These estimates are based on the findings of the national CPS household surveys for the months of January, February, and March of 1998. The estimates represent three month averages and are not seasonally adjusted. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, February to April 1998, Washington, D.C., 1998.

Chart 1:
Employment/Population Ratios of Non-Enrolled 16 to 24 Year Olds by Race/Ethnic Background and Educational Attainment, U.S., First Quarter 1998



A second set of objectives for the demonstration programs involves improving the quality of the jobs obtained by target area youth. A number of qualitative indicators will be used to track progress in this area, including an increase in full-time jobs, in higher skilled occupations, in mainstream firms in the local economy, and in higher wage positions. The baseline household survey conducted in each target area at the beginning of the demonstration was used to capture information on the hours of work, hourly and weekly wages, industries, and occupations of jobs held by employed youth, and the specific firms in which they worked. The management information system maintained by each site will track the characteristics of the jobs obtained by youth during the course of the demonstration, and a neighborhood followup survey will be conducted in each site approximately two years after the start-up of the project to estimate changes in the employment status and job characteristics of employed target area youth.

A third objective of the demonstration programs is to develop a comprehensive, unified service delivery system for out-of-school youth in

the target neighborhoods that will last beyond the demonstration program. This service delivery system will hopefully include educational programs (alternative high schools), learning centers to bolster residents' reading, math and writing proficiencies, school-to-work transition programs in local high schools, dropout prevention programs, job training programs, job brokering services, and expanded sports and recreational programs for target area youth. Each site was asked to work with existing educational institutions to bolster dropout prevention programs to improve the future high school graduation rate for target area youth. Young dropouts nationally, and especially in the target areas continue to face the most severe labor market problems, and they have experienced steep declines in their real weekly and annual earnings over the past two decades.

The Kulick Demonstration Sites

The first round of competitive grants took place in 1996. Approximately 50 proposals were received by the U.S. Department of Labor, in response to which grants were awarded to three large central cities: Chicago, Houston, and Los Angeles. The target neighborhoods in each of these three cities were characterized by extraordinarily high poverty rates, high dropout rates among teens and young adults, and high levels of joblessness at the time of the 1990 Census. The proposed target area in Chicago contained six Census tracts which in 1990 had a combined poverty rate of 55 percent. The Chicago site was part of the city's Southside Empowerment Zone and included both the Ida B. Wells housing project which was being partly dismantled by the city's public housing authority and surrounding neighborhoods which were characterized by substantial deadly gang warfare at the time of program implementation.

The Houston demonstration site also consisted of six Census tracts which in 1990 had a combined poverty rate over 40 percent. The proposed target area covered two distinct neighborhoods: a poverty stricken, largely residential Black neighborhood with few retail, commercial, or industrial facilities and a predominantly Hispanic area bordering one of the city's downtown business districts. This latter area has been characterized by in-migration of Mexican and Central American immigrants. Nearly 70 percent of Houston's out-of-school population were

high school dropouts at the time of the 1990 Census. However, close to half of the out-of-school youth were employed versus only one-fourth of the youth in Chicago. The Los Angeles site was located in the Watts area of the city. It consisted of five Census tracts and contained several low income public housing projects historically dominated by poor Black residents, but now increasingly occupied by an emerging Hispanic population characterized by high levels of immigration from Mexico and Central America. The local high school serving target area youth had one of the highest dropout rates in the city.

The second round of competitive grants in 1997 led to awards to targeted neighborhoods in the cities of Boston and New York and two rural counties in Eastern Kentucky. However, the experience in these sites has been too short for useful analysis at this writing.

Demographics-The Baseline Household Surveys

Data from the 1990 census were used in preparing the initial proposals. However, data with respect to the demographic characteristics, school enrollment status and employment rates of 16-24 year old youth in the census tracts comprising the designated target areas for the demonstration program was by then seven to eight years old. Therefore, once the sites were selected, the U.S. Department of Labor funded a baseline household survey in each of the six demonstration sites. Key findings for Chicago, Houston and Los Angeles are summarized below.

The Youth Opportunity pilot programs are designed to improve the employability and earnings prospects of 16-24 year old, out of school youth who reside in the target neighborhoods.[7] At the time of the baseline surveys, approximately 32 percent of the out-of-school youth were teens, another 28 percent were between 20 and 21 years of age and the remaining 40 percent were between 22 and 24 years of age. The median age of these out-of-school youth was 21 years. JTPA youth programs

[7]For a more detailed examination of the background characteristics of the target area youth,
See: Andrew Sum, Neeta Fogg, and Sheila Palma, A Demographic and Socioeconomic Profile of Age Eligible Youth in the Demonstration Sites at the Time of the Baseline Survey, Report Prepared for U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 1997.

funded under Title II C of the Job Training Partnership Act have focused on economically disadvantaged youth under 22, while the Summer Youth Employment Program overwhelmingly serves younger teenagers, many of whom are only 14 to 16 years old. One of the key questions to be addressed by the demonstration program is whether the older, out-of-school young adults 22-24 years of age can be attracted to enroll in the program.

Hispanic youth accounted for a majority of the age eligible youth in Houston (73 percent) and Los Angeles (72 percent) while Black youth accounted for nearly all of the out-of-school youth in the Chicago target area.

The fraction of out-of-school target area youth failing to complete at least 12 years of school across all six demonstration sites was nearly two and one-half times the national average. For the three sites under discussion, 54 percent of those in Chicago, 73 percent in Houston, and 60 percent in Los Angeles were high school dropouts. Many of the high school dropouts who applied for program services during the first two years of the demonstration were found to have very limited reading and math proficiencies.

The overall employment rate for target area youth in the six demonstration sites at the time of the baseline survey was 43.5 percent, nearly 30 percentage points below the estimated employment rate for all out-of-school, 16-24 year old youth in the nation over the same time period. For the three sites examined here, employment rates were 24 percent in the Chicago, 42 percent in Los Angeles and 48 percent in Houston. High unemployment rates rather than low labor force participation was the primary cause of low employment rates. Full time employment was even rarer among target area youth. As might be expected, both employment to population ratios and unemployment rates were highly correlated with educational attainment. Though nationally, nearly 56 of every 100 out-of-school youth held a full time job during 1997, that was true of only 18 percent in Chicago, 29 percent in Los Angeles and 39 percent in Houston.

One-third of the Houston youth had been born outside the United States compared to one-half in Los Angeles and essentially none in

Chicago. In the aggregate, foreign-born immigrants were more likely to be employed than their native born counterparts, especially among men. Both groups, however, had employment rates well below the 80 percent target rate for the demonstration program.

The sample of age eligible youth was about evenly divided between men and women in Chicago and Los Angeles, but the women's share was only 44 percent in Houston, probably for reasons attributable to immigration patterns. Despite their youth, 58 percent of the out-of-school women across all of the six Kulick sites were mothers at the time of the baseline survey 68 percent in Chicago. Nearly two-thirds of these mothers were unmarried, and a majority of them were receiving cash public assistance income at the time of the baseline survey. Close ties between the Youth Opportunity pilot programs and Welfare-to-Work programs would likely be needed to boost the employment prospects of these young TANF recipients. Slightly over 30 percent of the out-of-school men in the six demonstration sites were fathers, and only one-third of these men were married and living with their children at the time of the survey.

Recruitment and Enrollment of Youth

Demonstration programs for out-of-school youth in Chicago, Houston, and Los Angeles were announced in the late spring of 1996. Detailed implementation plans were developed that fall. Enrollment activities began in Houston in the fall of 1996 but Chicago and Los Angeles did not begin active recruitment of enrollees until the winter of 1997. By the end of September 1997, nearly 800 out-of-school youth had been enrolled in the out-of-school demonstration, with the number of enrollments ranging from a low of 100 in Chicago to a high of 524 in Houston. In the latter site, several experienced community- based contractors and alternative high schools were able to enroll a substantial number of youth from the target area during the first year of the program, and a number of former dropouts had been enticed to return to their regular high schools.

Chicago experienced more formidable difficulties in recruiting youth, partly due to delays in hiring a full-time director and other management staff for the program. Among other obstacles, many of the

local agencies funded to provide the requisite case management and mentorship services that were integral to the QOP model that had been proposed, were inexperienced at serving out-of-school youth from the target area. Also, there was no learning center available initially to serve the educational needs of jobless youth. The recent selection of a site for the new learning center was influenced by the need to have area youth feel safe in going to and from the learning center which will be located on the campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology. Gang warfare in the target neighborhoods handicapped personal door- to- door recruitment in the early months of the program. As mentioned above, drafters of the proposal for the Chicago site opted to follow the out-of-school Quantum Opportunities Program model but found it far more difficult to implement than was envisioned.

Enrollment activities accelerated during the second year of program operations, especially at the Los Angeles and Chicago sites. By the end of September 1998, cumulative enrollments had increased to 2,063, ranging from 371 in Chicago to nearly 900 in Houston (Table 1). Recruitment activities were still ongoing in each site in the late fall of 1998.

These high cumulative levels of youth enrollments in the demonstration sites suggest a fairly high level of interest in program services among target area youth. At the time of the baseline survey in the Winter of 1997, it was estimated that there slightly more than 3000 age eligible out-of-school youth in the three demonstration sites combined, with the estimated eligible population ranging from just under 800 in Chicago, to nearly 1200 in Los Angeles. The Chicago target area had experienced a loss of population since the 1990 Census because of the dismantling of one of local public housing projects and a very high vacancy rate in the Ida B. Wells project.

Table 1:
Cumulative Numbers of Enrollments in the Original Three Demonstration Programs as of September 1998 and the Estimated Population of Out-of-School Age Eligibles at the Time of the Baseline Survey

Program Site	(A) Cumulative Enrollments	(B) Estimated Population of Out-of-School Youth	(C) Enrollments/ Original Population
Chicago	371	768	48.3%
Houston	892	1,080	82.5%
Los Angeles	800	1,164	68.7%
Total	2,063	3,012	68.4%

Comparisons of the levels of cumulative enrollments in the demonstration programs with the estimated size of the out-of-school youth population in each of the three target areas at the time of the baseline survey indicate that the enrollments through September 30, 1998 were equivalent to two-thirds of the estimated eligible population (Table 2, Column C). This ratio is biased upward as a measure of program enrollment intensity for several reasons, including the fact that a subset of the enrollees in several program sites (10 to 15 percent) were residents of neighborhoods bordering the target area but not technically within the Census tracts comprising the target area. In addition, over the course of the demonstration additional 16-24 year olds entered the age eligible out-of-school population. Nevertheless, it seems likely that close to 50 percent of age eligible, target area youth participated in one or more program activities under the demonstration program in its first two years of operations. These are very high and quite promising enrollment rates, indicative of a high level of initial interest in program services.

At the end of each month, program sites complete a uniform monthly enrollment form that provides information on the number of new enrollees during the month, the cumulative number of enrollees since the beginning of the demonstration program, and selected demographic

and educational characteristics of enrollees. Findings on the percentage distribution of enrollees in the three original demonstration sites across gender, age, race-ethnic, and educational attainment subgroups are displayed in Table 2. The findings pertain to the cumulative number of enrollees in these three sites through September 30, 1998. Similar data are provided on the percentage distributions of the age eligible population across demographic groups in these same three sites at the time of the baseline survey

In each of the three program sites, women accounted for a majority of the enrollees. However, their shares of cumulative enrollments through September 30, 1998 ranged from 53 percent in Houston to 66 percent in Chicago. A variety of factors are probably responsible for these results. First, out-of-school women in the target areas were considerably less likely than men to be employed at the time of the baseline survey. Only 25 percent of the women held a job versus 44 percent of the men. Employment and training programs for both economically disadvantaged youth and adults in the nation have been more successful in recruiting unemployed and other jobless individuals than in attracting employed persons for participation. Second, poor young female dropouts have traditionally been more willing than men to participate in educational programs to obtain a high school diploma or a GED certificate. Third, in sites such as Chicago, gang membership among men is likely to serve as an additional barrier to participation in employment and training programs. Several sites, including Houston and Los Angeles, have developed working relationships with parole officers and juvenile justice agencies to refer target area youth to the youth opportunity pilot programs in their areas..

Table 2:
Demographic Characteristics of Enrollees in the Three Original Demonstration Programs and Those of the Out-of-School Age Eligible Population at the Time of the Baseline Survey
(Enrollments as of September 1998)

Demographic Group	(A) Percent of Enrollees	(B) Percent of Out-of-School Youth	© Percent of Enrollees/ Percent of Out-of-School Youth
Gender			
• Men	43.5	51.5	84
• Women	56.5	48.5	116
Age			
• 16-17	16.4	7.9	207
• 18-19	34.3	23.9	143
• 20-21	29.5	25.3	117
• 22-24	19.7	42.9	46
Race/Ethnic Group			
• Black, not Hispanic	69.5	45.8	151
• Hispanic	29.7	53.0	56
• White, not Hispanic	.7	.9	78
• Other	.1	.1	100
Educational Attainment			
• Less than 12	59.2	62.7	94
• 12 years, no College	34.6	30.7	112
• 13 or more years	6.0	6.5	92

Teenagers accounted for approximately one half of the cumulative number of enrollees in the original three demonstration sites. Only 20 percent of the enrollees were 22 to 24 years old at the time of entry into the program. The younger the age group, the greater the likelihood that they were over-represented in the program, while 22-24 year olds were represented at a rate slightly below half of their estimated share of the age eligible population. Again, several factors appear to have influenced these age patterns of participation. First, employment rates of out-of-school youth varied widely by their age, with younger teens, especially dropouts, being the least likely to be employed at the time of the baseline survey and, thus, in greater need of assistance in finding a job. Program administrators and job placement staff in several sites advised that 16-17 year old dropouts are the most difficult to place, with many employers requesting that referred youth be at least 18 years old and possess a high school diploma. To attract greater numbers of older youth (22-24 year olds), the program likely will have to provide substantive job training and job placement services capable of upgrading the skills and wages of these older eligibles. Second, younger dropouts are more readily enticed back into regular high schools or alternative high schools. Older dropouts (20 and above) find it more personally difficult to return to school with younger students and are more likely to seek GED preparation or adult basic education services in evening hours when they are free from work. Yet, alternative education programs in most sites are not open in the evening hours.

Nearly all of the enrollees (99 percent) in the three demonstration sites have been either Black or Hispanic, reflecting the overall minority share of the age eligible population in these target areas at the time of the baseline survey (99 percent non-White or Hispanic). Black youth accounted for approximately 70 percent of the cumulative number of enrollees through September 1998 while Hispanic youth, overwhelmingly of Mexican and Central American descent, accounted for another 30 percent. All of the Chicago enrollees were Black as was the population of the area from which they were drawn. Black youth were, however, over-represented relative to their share of the age eligible population while Hispanic youth in both Houston and Los Angeles were under-represented (at only 56 percent of their share of the age eligible population). Explanations for the under-representation of Hispanic youth were somewhat varied. Both sites employed Black and Hispanic case

managers and outreach staff and bi-lingual staff were present in most program intake offices. Nearly one-half of the Hispanic youth living in the target area were immigrants into the U.S., with half of them having arrived in the U.S. in the 1990s. Some of these more recent immigrants may have been undocumented immigrants who are ineligible to participate in the youth opportunity demonstration. Limited-English speaking abilities of recent, legal immigrants may serve as a barrier to their active participation. However, most of the Hispanic youth enrolled in the program were reported to be English-speaking. A second explanation for the under-representation of Hispanic youth is their greater success in finding jobs on their own. In both Houston and Los Angeles, employment rates of male Hispanic youth, including immigrants, were considerably higher than among male, Black youth at the time of the baseline survey. Jobless Black youth would, thus, be more likely to view the program as a potential source of assistance in finding employment. During the fall of 1998, both Houston and LA were continuing to recruit additional numbers of youth, with active outreach efforts being undertaken in the Hispanic neighborhoods in the Houston target area. Program administrators in Houston were hoping to recruit another 100 to 150 youth before the end of the demonstration.

A clear majority (59 percent) of the cumulative number of enrollees in the three original demonstration sites were high school dropouts, having completed fewer than 12 years of school. Another 35 percent reported that they had completed 12 years of school, and only 6% had competed one or more years of post-secondary schooling. In contrast, during the winter of 1998, approximately 40 percent of the nation's 16-24 year old out-of-school population had completed some post-secondary schooling.[8] Only 32 percent of the enrollees had obtained a high school diploma although another 9 percent of them held a GED certificate at time of entry.

The educational characteristics of the enrollees closely matched those of the age eligible population in these three target areas. Youth with 11 or fewer years of schooling were represented at a rate equal to 94 percent of their share of the age eligible population while those youth

[8]U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, February, March, and April 1998, tabulations by the authors.

completing exactly 12 years of schooling were slightly over-represented among the ranks of the enrollees. In each of the three sites, high school dropouts accounted for 50 percent or more of the nrollees, with nearly 70 percent of those in Chicago having failed to complete 12 years of school. The basic academic skills of many of the Chicago enrollees also were considerably limited, with over half of the enrollees being found to have reading proficiencies at or below the sixth grade. Weak reading and math proficiencies combined with the limited formal schooling and work experience of many enrollees severely complicate the task of finding jobs for many of these participants.

2. Outcomes-Job Development, Placement Activities and Placement Results

The primary objectives of the demonstration projects are to bolster the employment and earnings prospects of target area youth, with the ultimate objective of achieving an 80 percent employment rate by the end of the demonstration. To increase employment opportunities for out-of-school youth, each of the original sites had planned to fund a somewhat different set of education, training, and job development/placement strategies to improve job prospects for participants. During the course of the demonstration, sites tended to modify their job placement and training strategies as they gained more experience with both the employability problems of target area youth and the capabilities of the service deliverers that had been originally built into the implementation plan. For example, the original QOP program design in Chicago called for the funding of 25 QOP case managers/mentors who would recruit target area youth for the program, assess and counsel them, refer them to appropriate education, training, and job placement services as needed, and provide continuous supportive services over the entire course of the demonstration program. The QOP case managers were not expected to be directly responsible for the job placement of the youth in their caseload, but instead would refer them to job placement agencies who were funded by the program (including local community-based organizations, STRIVE, and Jobs for Youth) and training agencies, who would be responsible for the placement of youth after the completion of the training program. These original arrangements have been modified substantially during the past year. The original case managers had a difficult time developing effective

working relationships with the job development agencies, few target area youth were placed in jobs by these agencies, and case mangers had to play a much more active role in the job placement of the youth on their caseloads. Traditional conflicts between case managers and job developers over the "job readiness" of target area youth were a factor in the poor performance of the job placement agencies. A number of the contracts with local CBO's and job placement agencies were terminated, and new agencies were brought into the delivery system, including the Boys and Girls Club and Workforce Solutions—an employer-oriented job placement agency serving individual Chicago employers that was part of the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training. Job placement agencies are now allowed to directly recruit target area youth rather than simply rely on formal referrals from the case managers.

In the Los Angeles site, a variety of strategies have been employed to place target area youth in jobs. Given the dearth of retail, commercial, and industrial establishments in the local target area, youth must find employment outside of their neighborhoods. The LA program employs a set of job developers who are stationed at a center established in the target area and also works with a number of training institutions, colleges, urban conservation corps, summer jobs programs, and large individual employers to obtain jobs for target area youth. The job development staff conduct job clubs twice per week on site. The LA program has developed a new relationship with a university program to obtain jobs in the retail trade sector for target area youth. It collaborates closely with Job Corps staff to enroll interested youth in either the non-residential Job Corps Center in LA or in residential centers outside the state. Only a few youth in the three sites have enrolled in the Job Corps program, despite very good working relationships in Los Angeles and active recruiting efforts in Houston. Program administrators report the youth are reluctant to leave the community for an out-of-state Job Corps center.

The program also has developed working relationships with a number of firms serving the Los Angeles airport. It has worked with Universal Studios and LA Youth Works to create summer jobs for target area youth and has recently negotiated a contract with the Watts Labor Council for job placement services and on-the-job training. Similar to the Chicago experience, a few contracts were dropped for

poor performance, including one with a state university for developing jobs in the retail trade and social services sectors. In addition, job placement expectations from the Los Angeles Conservation Corps had to be scaled down, and staff have had to spend more time than expected to overcome the job readiness problems of some target area youth. Active drug testing by local employers also has served as an obstacle to the employment of some target area youth.

The Houston program has been the most successful in obtaining employment for target area youth. By the end of September 1998, over 470 Houston target area youth had obtained employment since the beginning of the demonstration. A number of different types of job development and placement services were made available to target area youth in Houston. Similar to Los Angeles, a major part of the target area was residential with few retail or commercial establishments, but unlike Los Angeles there are no large public housing projects. The primary contractor for the demonstration program, Employment and Training Centers, Inc., employed a number of job developers who worked actively with employers and target area youth to match available workers with available jobs. Two job fairs per month were held with area employers to encourage them to hire target area youth. Staff also have spent more time (an average of 80 hours) than expected on pre-employment services for target area youth to prepare them for work.

A number of local companies have hired multiple youth, including grocery chains, warehouses, computer manufacturing firms, and roofing companies. A number of these companies basic orientation and introductory skills training to interested applicants. Houston has found that successful job placements help recruit other local youth into the program via word of mouth among area residents. Occupational training programs, including welding and truck driving, also provide job development and placement services for program completers. *The average placement wages for training program completers are reported to be several dollars higher than those of job placed youth without training.* The average wage for all job placed youth in Houston was recently estimated by the program director to be $7.46 per hour, or approximately $.83 higher than the mean hourly wage for all employed youth at the time of the baseline household survey. The Houston program recently has been conducting a number of job fairs for youth who were

being released from the juvenile justice system and the adult criminal justice system. The objective was to build direct job linkages for those incarcerated and institutionalized youth about to be released back into the target neighborhood.

Each month, all program sites are asked to prepare a Monthly Report on Youth Entering Employment. This report provides data on the number of target area youth entering a job during the month and the cumulative number of youth who are known to have obtained employment since the beginning of the demonstration. The numbers of youth entering employment are further divided into those for whom the placement is their first job since entering the program and those who have been placed multiple times. Findings on the numbers of youth entering employment in the first three demonstration sites through September 30, 1998 are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3:
Cumulative Numbers of Youth Entering Employment Through September 30, 1998, Total and by Program Site[1]

Number of Youth by Times Placed in Jobs	(A) All Three Sites	(B) Chicago	(C) Houston	(D) Los Angeles
Total	805	96	473	236
• First time placement	569	35	323	211
• Two or more placements	236	61	150	25

Note: The Chicago entering employment data are cumulative through August 31, 1998.

By the end of the September 1998 reporting period, a total of 805 target area youth had obtained one or more jobs since enrolling in the demonstration program. The cumulative number of youth who obtained a job was equivalent to just under 40 percent of the cumulative number of enrollees. Not all of these youth were still employed at the end of September 1998. As will be noted below, only 613 youth were reported to be employed at the time of the September quarterly followup survey, but this group was equal to nearly 77 percent of those who had obtained employment at some time since entering the program.

The number of youth who obtained jobs varied widely across the three program sites, ranging from a high of 473 in Houston to a low of 96 in Chicago. The Houston job placement performance was also quite strong as measured by the share of enrollees who obtained employment. Through September 1998, over 56 percent of Houston enrollees had entered employment versus 30 percent of those in Los Angeles and only 26 percent in Chicago.

3. Early Lessons Learned

Nearly 30 percent of all the youth who obtained employment had been placed two or more times, with some youth reported to have been placed in as many as four to five different jobs since joining the demonstration. Voluntary job changing for young adults under 25 years of age has been found to be a key mechanism for improving their wages and promoting occupational mobility and, thus, should be encouraged when it helps to achieve such desirable labor market outcomes. Program staff indicated that many job changes were positive in nature in that they allowed youth to move from part-time to full-time jobs and to obtain access to more highly skilled occupations after completing training programs. Still, other job changes were involuntary in nature and often followed dismissal for excess tardiness, absenteeism, or poor work performance. A larger work experience component may have allowed more target area youth to build appropriate work habits before being placed in unsubsidized jobs. *Given the lack of substantive work experience among many of the younger jobless youth in these target areas, future program operators may well wish to allocate a greater share of their grants for operating subsidized work experience programs. Close ties between such work experience programs and job placement services for youth exiting such programs must be maintained to improve employment opportunities for youth with limited work experience.*

Program Services Received by Participants

Each of the original three program sites proposed to provide an array of education, job training, work experience, and job placement services for participants during the course of the demonstration. The specific mix of education, training and work experience slots was expected to vary across program sites based on differences in their original program

design. Some program sites, including Houston and Los Angeles, proposed to provide combinations of education and work experience opportunities for youth through participation in YouthBuild and Urban Conservation Corps programs. The educational services were expected to cover a variety of activities, including alternative education for high school dropouts, GED preparation, enrollment in community colleges, and enrollment in four-year colleges and universities.

One of the unique features of the Youth Opportunity Pilot Program was a requirement that each individual enrollee be continuously tracked during the entire course of the demonstration program. Once enrolled, a youth would be followed up by case managers or other program staff on an ongoing basis with results reported back to the U.S. Department of Labor. Each site prepares a quarterly followup report that describes the employment, schooling, and training status of each individual participant whose followup status was known at the time of the survey. Findings of the followup survey for the reporting period ending September 30, 1998 are displayed in Table 4 for the first three demonstration sites. A total of 1735 participants were able to be successfully followed up for this reporting period. Of this group, 613 or 35 percent were reported to be employed at the end of the followup reporting period. This group includes a large fraction (75 percent) who were only working, as well as a subset (25 percent) who were combining work with school or training. In addition to those that were working, another 426 were enrolled in school and 288 were enrolled in a training program. The total number of enrollees who were occupying a positive status at the time of the follow-up survey was equivalent to slightly more than three-fourths of the group that was successfully contacted. The types of educational and training activities in which participants were engaged at the time of the follow-up survey varied across programs. Of those enrolled in education programs, nearly 82 percent were either enrolled in an alternative high school, a regular high school or a GED program. The remainder were enrolled in either community or four year colleges and universities.

Table 4:
The Employment, Schooling, and Training Program Status of YOA Participants in the Original Three Demonstration Sites at the Time of the September 30, 1998 Followup Reporting Period, Total and by Program Site

Followup Status	(A) All Three Sites Combined	(B) Chicago	(C) Houston	(D) Los Angeles
All	1735	376	764	595
Employed	613	153	323	137
• Work only	464	124	243	97
• Work and school or training	149	29	80	40
• In-school, not working	426	62	198	166
• In training, not working	288	10	128	150
Neither working nor in-school	408	151	115	142
• Looking for work	322	117	77	128
• Not looking for work	86	34	38	14

Percent

Follow-up Status	(A) All	(B) Chicago	(C) Houston	(D) Los Angeles
Employed	35.3	40.7	42.3	23.0
• Work only	26.7	33.0	31.8	16.3
• Work and school or training	8.6	7.7	10.5	6.7
• In-school, not working	24.6	16.5	25.9	27.9
• In training, not working	16.6	2.7	16.8	25.2
• Neither working nor in-school or training	23.5	40.2	15.1	23.9

Of those enrolled in training, the bulk of the training was provided by community-based organizations or by vocational/technical schools, including private training schools. Six of the training participants were enrolled in a Job Corps program, but, of these six, five were enrolled in a Job Corps program in the Los Angeles area.

The follow-up status of program participants varied across the three program sites. The fraction of youth employed at the time of the September 1998 follow-up survey ranged from 23 percent in Los Angeles to a high of 42 percent in Houston. In Los Angeles, nearly three of every four participants were engaged in some type of employment, schooling or training activity as were 85 percent of those in the Houston area. A large fraction of those youth enrolled in school or training, however, were not simultaneously employed. On average, across the three sites, only one in six young persons enrolled in school or training were also working at the time of the followup survey. Future activities in each of these sites are being directed at efforts to bolster work opportunities for those engaged in school or training, including the assignment of case managers and job developers to alternative high schools and local high schools to assist students in gaining employment while they are enrolled in school.

Findings from the follow-up surveys for those young persons who were employed have revealed that a fairly high fraction are no longer residing in the target area. An estimate by the Houston site suggests that as many as a third of those who are working have left the target area, partly to secure more adequate housing for themselves and their families. Follow-up activities for youth leaving the target area will continue by each of the contractors during the remainder of the demonstration program. However, it is important to note that the tendency for those who are employed to leave the target area will have the effect of reducing the estimated employment rate for target area youth that will be found by the follow-up surveys of residents within each demonstration site.

One of the major challenges for each future demonstration site will be constructing opportunities for students in alternative high schools and regular high schools to obtain access to work-based learning opportunities during the course of their participation *The simultaneous*

enrollment of target area youth in employment and schooling activities would substantially improve both the short-term employment outcomes for the program and the longer-term employment objectives, since young people who secure employment during high school find it easier to transition to the unsubsidized labor market after leaving high school. These school-to-work linkages, however, are not readily constructed and will require special efforts by all local program operators in the future to guarantee that more young high school students are able to gain access to work while they are completing their high school education.

Future Research and Program Implementation Activities

As noted above, each of the three original sites Chicago, Houston and Los Angeles— is still actively recruiting new participants. Many youth are still enrolled in education and training activities, and job placement and follow-up services are being provided. The available data on participant background characteristics, their program activities, job placements, and follow-up status are being analyzed to identify the types and intensities of program services received by target area youth. The background traits of those placed in jobs, the characteristics of their jobs, and the factors influencing the schooling and labor force status of participants at various points in time are still being investigated. To improve our understanding of the employment barriers faced by remaining jobless youth, an individualized assessment of their employment experiences since entering the program and perceived barriers to their current employment is being completed by local case managers. A community-wide follow-up survey of the schooling and labor market status of age-eligible youth is underway to identify changes in the educational, training and employment activities of the target area youth over the first two years of the demonstration program.

However, to date, these three initial sites have demonstrated the substantial potential that a carefully targeted set of program services can offer to out-of-school youth, even in less than promising inner city settings. Program services have been closely attuned to the social and economic realities of the youth in the communities. The younger members of the target population have been easier to recruit than the older ones, among eligible out-of school youth and adults. Nevertheless, the over-

all enrollment rates have been substantial. Job placement and retention have differed widely among the sites, reflecting more the programmatic mix of services and the social, rather than the economic, scene. Final results remain to be seen in all six Kulick sites. Youth Councils to be established under the Workforce Investment Act will want to study carefully the full reports as they become available, as will especially the recipients of Youth Opportunity Grants under that Act. But overall, the Kulick demonstration grant experience is reassuring. The labor market problems of out-of-school youth in poverty-stricken areas will not go away any time soon, but they can certainly be alleviated, and the individuals served can have their life prospects notably improved, by carefully crafted and well executed developmental services delivered in a labor market context by competent and caring adults.

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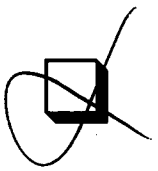

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