

CENTER *for* CITIES & SCHOOLS



Hope VI Youth Leadership for Change Initiative

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Professional Report

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By
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HOPE VI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE INITIATIVE:
PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research is to assess whether and how participants from HOPE VI developments around the country benefited from involvement in the Youth Leadership for Change Initiative (YLC), a three-year effort to increase youth impact on HOPE VI redevelopment efforts. The highlight of YLC was a conference held in Berkeley, California in August 2002. Youth and adults from twenty-four housing authorities converged on the University of California campus to spend four days developing social enterprise plans and preparing presentations of their work using a selection of popular media tools. The goal of the conference was to develop the skills of all participants necessary for both youth and adults to effectively engage in improvement of their HOPE VI communities. Additionally, the conference curriculum hoped to increase the ability of youth and adults to collaboratively engage in social action together.

Housing authorities attending the conference were a self-selecting group. All housing authorities nationwide were invited to attend and of the approximately thirty to initially indicate interest in attending, twenty-four completed the series of pre-conference preparations outlined by conference organizers and eventually attended. The pre-conference preparations included a community mapping exercise and interviewing community members. These activities were meant to ensure all conference participants had a baseline understanding of their community's challenges and resident perspectives to draw upon during conference project development.

The HOPE VI program is important because it represents a new framework for public housing development in the United States. Not only do HOPE VI redevelopment projects focus on integrating public housing into surrounding neighborhoods, but a significant portion of the HOPE VI mandate includes provision of comprehensive community and social services. The goal is to not only improve housing but also improve quality of life of residents thereby increasing self-sufficiency of families and reducing dependence on public housing. The theory is that by providing better housing demand for public housing overall will decrease.

What is really at issue is that HOPE VI is the latest strategy for trying to “break the cycle” of perpetual living in public housing. The motivation was to critically think about what people need in order to increase their self-sufficiency, improve their economic opportunities, and therefore not have to (or want to) live in public housing in the future. Historically, public housing was meant to be transitional housing for working class families during hard times but it has transformed into a permanent housing option for multiple generations. The overarching goal of HOPE VI is to reverse this trend. YLC has the potential to further these goals of self-sufficiency for the next generation of public housing residents by empowering youth to seek a better future for themselves and their families.

One argument for how to “break the cycle” of life in public housing is by focusing on the youth, the next generation that has a better chance of graduating from high school, attending college, and experiencing real economic opportunities for future prosperity. It has also been argued that involving youth meets several objectives simultaneously. Youth engagement will improve the quality of HOPE VI redevelopment projects and the quality of life of everyone in the community, especially since youth are often blamed for crime and vandalism. Ensuring their input will mean HOPE VI accommodates their needs which is necessary for altering the negative perception of youth’s role in the community. Positive community engagement gives them something to do besides get into trouble. Therefore, youth involvement will improve present conditions of life in public housing. Youth engagement has been argued to influence a personal transformation in youth involved that improves their vision for an improved personal future and hence improved school performance and potential for receiving a higher education.

YLC has not been around long enough to have made these sweeping changes envisioned by the HOPE VI program, nor has a comprehensive evaluation been conducted on YLC to conclusively document improved quality of life overall in HOPE VI housing and improved economic standing of youth involved in YLC. However, change is happening in housing authorities that have been involved in YLC. This research provides a framework and indicators for evaluating the impact and outcomes of YLC thus far in the select number of participating housing authorities. This research speaks to the possibilities for YLC to have more comprehensive impacts if it continues to be funded and expands to include more housing authorities.

Research Questions

Have the efforts to engage youth really accomplished HOPE VI goals? Are HOPE VI redevelopment efforts better because of YLC? Are youth better off because of YLC? Are the social networks developed by YLC improving choices and opportunities for youth that will mean a general increase in self-sufficiency of residents in public housing? YLC is too new and evaluation has not been comprehensive or extensive enough to be conclusive, but this research looks at some of the components of these bigger questions. Indications are that YLC is having an impact on youth transformation and social capital, but it is not clear that HOPE VI redevelopments have been significantly impacted by YLC yet.

Development of social enterprise plans at the conference was meant to provide a way to engage youth in their communities in sustainable ways. Key questions this research will begin to address include the following:

- Was any of the learning at the conference translated into social action in home HOPE VI communities?
- Did the conference have an affect on youth themselves, including increasing the likelihood of college attendance?
- Did the conference further the goals and mission of the HOPE VI program?

This paper analyzes impact in four sub-categories:

- 1) Social Enterprise Project Development
- 2) Youth Development
- 3) Adult Development
- 4) Organizational Development

This research concludes that YLC should continue and be adequately funded because even during the relatively short implementation time of YLC, positive changes in HOPE VI youth are apparent. Youth most engaged in their communities are attending college and dreaming of a better future. Indications of improvement in their communities are also apparent even though this preliminary research is unable to generalize conclusions. Most importantly, there is evidence of hope of improved quality of life for themselves and their families.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

What is the HOPE VI Youth Leadership for Change Initiative?

Public housing is stigmatized as a concentration of the poor, drug dealers, and gangs. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) HOPE VI urban revitalization program has been touted by its advocates as an innovative solution to this nation's public housing crisis. HOPE VI grants have funded demolition of the most dilapidated public housing projects turning them into mixed income, New Urbanist communities, aiming to integrate the public housing community back into surrounding neighborhoods. This is happening because of the critical provision written into the original HOPE VI legislation to address "people and opportunities as well as bricks and mortar" (Naparstek et al 2000: iii). As such, a significant component of the HOPE VI program focuses on providing a substantial amount of community and social services in recognition that housing is not the only need of low-income residents (often up to 20% of total grants). Community-building is considered central to HOPE VI redevelopment.

There are three primary goals of HOPE VI according to a HUD report titled *HOPE VI: Community Building Makes a Difference*:

- 1) Shelter—to eliminate dilapidated, and in many dangerous instances, structures that serve as homes for hundreds of thousands of Americans
- 2) Self-Sufficiency—to provide residents in these areas with the opportunity to learn and acquire the skills needed to achieve self-sufficiency
- 3) Community Sweat Equity—to instill the belief that with economic self-sufficiency comes an obligation to self-responsibility and giving back to one's community

These goals are being achieved, according to HOPE VI literature, by transforming the:

- way public housing looks

- relationship between public housing and the community
- nature of public housing's compact with residents
- role of private and nonprofit sectors in public housing
- capacity of public housing to leverage private investment
- public housing agencies
- scale of public housing revitalization

As part of the Community and Social Services (CSS) requirements, HOPE VI sites are required to track dozens of indicators of resident status and economic improvement because there is a policy push to get people permanently out of public housing. This new campaign is referred to as “breaking the cycle.” The goal is to give residents the tools to break their dependence on the social safety net, and the cycle of poverty it represents, by doing better than the previous generation.¹ Interestingly, youth development indicators are not a component of the mandated reporting, though it is strongly suggested by the national HOPE VI CSS office. Housing authorities are not required to track high school graduation rates, for instance, and are not mandated to spend a portion of their CSS budget on youth programs.

Though youth have always comprised a high percentage of public housing residents, the Youth Leadership for Change Initiative is the first formal effort to incorporate youth into the structuring and implementation of CSS plans in HOPE VI developments. This report, and a larger evaluation of the whole national initiative, is the first evaluation effort to determine the impact of this initiative on HOPE VI sites, the public housing authorities, and the youth themselves.

Interestingly, while youth are barely considered in HOPE VI monitoring and reporting, the involvement of youth in the planning and implementation of HOPE VI projects are mentioned for the first time in the new HOPE VI Notice Of Funds Availability (NOFA) released in April 2003. Housing authorities now receive points in their application if their proposed plan will incorporate interests and participation among youth and senior citizens. This is an important mark of institutional recognition that youth live in public housing, yet the fact that YLC or other youth services are not mandated highlights a disconnect with enforcement mechanisms. There is a stark disjuncture between the “breaking the cycle” rhetoric, which is really about making sure kids growing up in public housing do not remain public housing residents as adults, and the resources allocated in a formal capacity to achieve this goal. Were it not for YLC, it would seem that youth were disregarded as valued participants in the HOPE VI community-building efforts.

In order to “break the cycle” residents must get better jobs. It is recognized by educators that “jobs that pay well seem to require a combination of knowledge and communication and problem-solving skills” (Steinberg et al 1999: xvi). YLC is

¹ “Breaking the Cycle” was developed by the previous administration and is currently under review and consideration by the new Assistant Secretary Michael Liu.

HOPE VI's effort to assist youth in public housing gain these valuable skills that open up opportunities the previous generation of public housing residents never had. The goal is to introduce the ideas of social enterprise and media tools as resources and strategies to create positive change within communities.

The research included in this report intends to inform key policy and decision-makers at HUD about the impacts of YLC so they can decide whether and how to continue funding the Youth Leadership for Change Initiative.

Why are Youth Important in Community Development?

While there is a growing recognition of the importance of youth participation in community development efforts, youth perspectives have historically been ignored in these processes. In fact, youth are often seen as antagonists of community-building efforts. Instead of being acknowledged as legitimate stakeholders in community struggles towards positive change, youth are collectively blamed for community problems ranging from petty vandalism to social ills far beyond their control. Feelings of powerlessness and alienation from decision-making have been acknowledged as contributing factors in youth crime, violence, and poor school performance (Pittman 2000), yet youth are rarely identified as a resource for understanding community problems that inspire misbehaviors.

It is clear in community development literature and practice that involving citizens in the process of determining a direction for the future of their community helps establish a collective vision and a sense of community (Mullahey et al 1999: 6), but very little literature discusses the importance of youth in this process. Youth are starting to be recognized as legitimate participants in community building initiatives because they live the daily struggles of their communities in ways that offer insight into complex community issues, and their ideas about how to make their environment work for them are invaluable contributions to community development discussions (Hart 1997). There are many examples of youth and community-building efforts in practice, but the lack of academic literature supports the need for this research.

Simultaneously, youth involvement in working towards positive community change can play a powerful educative role for youth, empowering them to direct their energy and ideas towards productive rather than destructive outcomes. In turn, youth become better prepared for educational, job, or career pursuits because of the critical thinking and problem-solving skills honed through legitimate community engagement. These are skills a traditional education does not necessarily teach or value. The reciprocal benefit for the community is the added value of youth voices and perspectives in how the community changes and evolves.

Contrary to a central goal of the American public education system to transform youth into effective participants in civic society, the traditional classroom does not teach students how to critically engage with "real world" community and social issues. Irrelevance of schoolwork is cited as one of the top reasons why students

drop out of school (Knapp 1995). Students' lives are so far removed from the curriculum they do not see the point of continuing. Popular education advocates explicitly critique this dichotomizing of experience vs. learning (Dewey 1938; Freire 1970). As schools have grown ever more centralized and bureaucratic, learning through "doing" (also known as project-based learning or social action learning) is a way of reintroducing the importance of context—of community—into the educational process. Education, citizenship, and by extension community-building, are inextricably linked.

These philosophies contrast sharply with the education model codified by federal, state and local education policies. This is related to the increasing standardization of education, exacerbated by the renewed focus on standardized testing under the current federal administration. Standardization disassociates education from life in a way that makes education irrelevant from the perspective of the students. Therefore, efforts must be made to connect learning to the lives of the learners. If it is not happening in school, it needs to happen elsewhere.

These trends towards standardization are occurring parallel to community development efforts to bring youth into the folds of community-building in a proactive way. This juxtaposition of education and community development trends highlights the gap between two processes that should be inseparable according to the popular education framework. Therefore, engaging youth in action promotes the community-building goals of HOPE VI in two ways. First, it improves lives of youth by making learning relevant and giving them the skills to make better life choices, hopefully "breaking the cycle." Secondly, it improves the community because youth voices are incorporated and translated into action.

Social Action: A Theoretical Framework for YLC

The social action framework (or methodology) for working towards positive community change (i.e. community-building) provides the bridge from individual growth and development to community transformation (Arches 2002). This is a particularly relevant framework for youth for this reason. Youth are in a constant process of identity construction and translating youth angst into positive social change empowers youth and gives them tools for actively engaging to better their communities.

The social action framework:

- develops critical consciousness of social structures affecting people's lives
- expands choices for behavior
- promotes collective action while building on strengths of participants
- assumes people are experts on own lives and focuses on translating personal experience into common concerns
- encourages participants to take ownership over processes and outcomes
- ensures decision-making power always remains with those directly affected by outcomes

One manifestation of this social action framework is a focus on urban planning and design projects. The urban built environment is a critical nexus in the development of identity of youth (Buss 1995). Therefore, an intervention into understanding the built environment is a useful place to begin focusing social action programs with youth. Social action efforts have taken the form of civic participation programs, peer education programs, job training efforts, and many others. Urban planning-related initiatives have been a key focus of many of these initiatives, partly because urban planning is a “catch all” discipline. It encompasses all of these components, including community development, design, policy analysis, social action, and civic participation.

Much of this focus on youth and urban planning and design in recent years has proved successful in gaining broader professional recognition of the importance of youth participation. For instance, the American Planning Association (APA), the primary professional organization for urban planners in North America, now has a youth and planning division. This is an important step for encouraging practitioners to engage youth in decision-making processes. The National Planning Conference held in Denver in March 2003 hosted several youth and planning workshops, trainings, and events.

Also, New Partners for Smart Growth hosted a conference in New Orleans in January 2003 that included a youth delegation and youth in planning sessions. For the first time, youth from around the country were invited to present their own stories about youth engagement in smart growth planning. Youth convened to share stories about the challenges and successes of working for positive change in their communities. Youth from HOPE VI sites that attended the Berkeley conference were also invited to apply for scholarships to attend the conference.

Social Enterprise Projects: A Central Vehicle for YLC Social Action

A large percentage of any community is comprised of youth, yet they are rarely consulted on the design and plan of that community even though their perspectives are often a fresh look at existing problems, unencumbered by the politics that often shape adult perspectives. Even so, one of the challenges of working with youth on community projects is how to retain their engagement. They grow up. Retaining a common memory, or institutional knowledge, about the work is difficult, and it is difficult to continually engage new youth as older ones move on. Therefore, sustainability of youth projects is difficult. One way of addressing these challenges is by engaging youth in positive solutions through social enterprise programs. Youth may not have power, money, or political resources, but they have ideas (McKoy 2000).

Social enterprise programs capitalize on ideas and direct them towards positive change in a sustainable, collaborative way. The three core components of social enterprises as defined by the Berkeley conference organizers are:

- 1) they address a need in the community as defined by the youth through the creation of a good or service (i.e. a peer mentoring project);

- 2) they are created and implemented by youth with the support of the adults (“allies”) in their public housing development;
- 3) they emphasize innovation, personal risk, and investment by all participants of the enterprise.²

Social enterprise programs are particularly relevant for HOPE VI communities because they are not just a way of engaging youth in planning charrettes or other adult-directed initiatives. Rather, social enterprises build confidence and allow for independence rarely found in other youth initiatives. The goal is to have a strategic plan for continuing the social action-oriented project into the long term, even when the original participants are no longer involved.

One powerful example of youth-focused social enterprise is the work being done by Voices, Inc., a non-profit in Tucson, Arizona. Youth living under the jurisdiction of the Tucson Housing Authority produced a book called *Don't Look at Me Different No Me Veas Diferente: Voices from the Projects, 1943-2000*. This bilingual book is an example of a social enterprise venture. It demonstrates the powerful narrative potential of personal stories brought together by youth in collaboration with adult allies. The book is a 150-page tribute to the history and stories of public housing residents seeking to break the stereotypes and stigma associated with “the projects.” Youth wrote and prepared the photographs, biographical vignettes, and personal testaments, all media forms useful for communicating powerful messages, and this book does just that. It simultaneously recognizes youth voices in the community as well as contextualizes contemporary struggles within the history of public housing living. Understanding history is important for understanding the future, and this project served as a tool for youth to begin thinking about how to work towards a positive future in light of a difficult past. The book is sold in local bookstores to sustain the continued work of Voices, Inc.

Youth solve problems and develop creative solutions everyday, but not necessarily with the positive outcomes that inspire respect and collaboration with other community members. Efforts to redirect this creativity in ways that become recognized in the job market are important. It would seem that social enterprise programs would be a perfect fit within the scope of HOPE VI CSS plans for this reason. The goal of social enterprise is to develop these skills and develop projects that are independent and sustainable. In theory, social enterprise facilitates youth development of important leadership and technical skills that will increase access to

² The core components are adapted from guiding principles for social enterprise action projects from the Center for Social Action's *Youthagenda* at De Monfort University, England. Principles include:

1. Young adults have the freedom to work toward solutions to problems relevant to them;
2. All members of a social enterprise are equal and valued participants and stakeholders—they are not instructed on what to do but arrive at innovative solutions to problems;
3. Members are supported by adults who are innovators and agents of change in their communities. They set their own timetable, identify resources, and negotiate for policy changes;
4. Young adults manage these social enterprises, evaluate their effectiveness, and are held accountable to carry them out;
5. Social enterprise strives to challenge inequality and discrimination in relation to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, disability or any other form of social differentiation.

future educational and job opportunities and turn them into willing agents in “breaking the cycle.”

Challenges of involving youth in community change include the fact that youth are viewed as problems not resources, adults plan programs without involving youth in the process, adults do not share power, and youth do not view themselves as a group that can create change. Youth may have good ideas but may be unsure about how to implement them (Mullahey 1999). The goal of YLC is to address these challenges, improving youth participation as well as increasing the capacity of adults to guide this engagement in their communities to increase their collective hope for a better future.

Youth Leadership for Change Initiative

The Youth Leadership for Change Initiative was borne in the summer of 2000 from conversations between Dr. Deborah McKoy from University of California, Berkeley, Eleanor Bacon, the former Assistant Secretary of HUD, HOPE VI CSS Director Ron Ashford, and HOPE VI residents. No legislative or policy mandates dictate establishment of youth-oriented programs in HOPE VI sites, so this initiative evolved through a growing awareness by the previous administration of the importance of youth involvement. The HOPE VI statute outlines parameters of the broad CSS component required for each site, but youth are not specifically targeted for CSS funding. Therefore, YLC is an effort that must justify itself to policy-makers because no official mandates assure even a minimal level of resource commitment on the part of HUD. Youth in public housing are not tracked in a formal capacity, thereby rendering invisible the state of youth in public housing as well as the efforts and resources supporting their care and involvement.

The first national HOPE VI youth conference was organized in the summer of 2001. Youth and their adult allies (housing authority staff) gathered in Washington D.C. to learn urban design skills. The second conference commenced in Berkeley, California during the summer of 2002 as a youth leadership summit focusing on social enterprise. These national conferences provide the backbone of YLC because youth attendance at these conferences was predicated on their willingness to share the conference skills and knowledge with the rest of their community upon return home. Many projects and community-improvement efforts have stemmed from conference follow-up. However, there has been no comprehensive or coherent effort to collect and analyze information on these follow-up activities, nor have there been any formal efforts to gather qualitative feedback from the youth that attended these conferences to determine how the experiences impacted them and their communities. This research is the first attempt to systematically gather qualitative data on the YLC activities since its inception in 2000.

Because HOPE VI has a large design focus, recent efforts to engage youth in the design of their communities were particularly relevant. YLC was spearheaded in 2001 with a conference themed *Youth Leadership by Design*. The experience of HOPE VI, including demolition, relocation, and construction, were reflected upon critically through the project-based learning curriculum of the conference. This reflection was

meant to inform future youth activities consistent with the social action methodology for community engagement.

While this was an important step towards learning to see and engage in the community, the second conference in 2002 went a step further. The goal of this conference was to engage youth in social enterprise projects using media tools to direct youth energy towards sustainable action. Both conference topics are relevant and important, but the social enterprise focus had an added bonus. Social enterprise programs are supposed to be sustainable efforts, and create independence, and therefore have the potential to promote the multiple objectives of the HOPE VI program, especially “breaking the cycle.”

2002 Youth Leadership for Change Summit

Sponsored by HUD, the Interactive University Project, Haas Young Entrepreneurs program at UC Berkeley, and the National Congress for Community and Economic Development (NCCED), this second national conference transitioned from an explicit physical design focus to a focus on social enterprise program planning. Most housing authorities sent two youth and one adult ally to Berkeley to live in the dorms for four days and participate in the conference, culminating in final presentation of social enterprise plans at the Bernal Dwellings HOPE VI site in San Francisco. Tours of San Francisco and Berkeley after conference meetings allowed youth and adults, many of whom had never flown on a plane before or traveled outside their home cities, to see the diversity and sites of the Bay Area.

The curriculum was developed through a partnership between Dr. Shirl Buss from San Francisco State University, Dr. Deborah McKoy from UC Berkeley, Oscar Wolters-Duran, Director of the Haas Young Entrepreneurs program, Heather Hood from the Institute for Urban and Regional Development, and HOPE VI staff Tony Hebert and Ron Ashford. It was divided into modules for joint participation by youth and adults, with additional adult-only ally training during two evenings of the event.

The conference curriculum was inspired and modeled on the Y-PLAN (Youth-Plan, Learn, Act, Now) which is a nationally recognized youth and planning program based at UC Berkeley. Recently awarded the San Francisco Architecture Foundation Award for engaging youth in the built environment, the Y-PLAN celebrated its fourth birthday this year. Graduate students from the College of Environmental Design work with high school students over a period of ten weeks each spring on a “real world” planning project. Youth are introduced to basic planning concepts then guided through a planning process culminating in presentation of final design concepts and ideas to a professional jury of city officials and other stakeholders.

The conference was structured as a series of modules building towards a final project concept and culminating event, similar to the Y-PLAN. All participants were divided into eight teams (8-10 youth and 3-4 adults per group) and the eight teams

were divided into four media groups, two teams per media group. Each team was assigned a topic (affordable housing, homelessness, diverse communities, business development, digital divide, public space, safety, health) and then also assigned a media tool (photography, website, video, radio). The goal of the conference was for each of the eight groups to develop a social enterprise plan that would teach the skills and process for developing a plan and present it using their media form. This plan would serve as a model for each housing authority to use as a starting point for developing social enterprise plans specific to their HOPE VI communities when they returned home.

In order to start housing authorities thinking in terms of a better future, conference organizers requested each housing authority undertake a series of pre-conference activities. The goal was to make sure participants had a frame of reference for discussing community change when they arrived in Berkeley, as well as learn some basic data collection and community mapping techniques important in social enterprise planning. They were encouraged to undertake a three-month community mapping process to learn more about their local neighborhood. Several evenings of the conference were dedicated to allowing youth from each HOPE VI site to present information on their communities. Some housing authorities arrived with extensive community maps including photos, quotes, and other data. Others arrived with models of their neighborhood. An enormous amount of time and effort was invested by each site prior to the conference, and the conference presentations allowed them to show off that work. This was a very important addition to YLC because it allowed participants to “hit the ground running” when they arrived in Berkeley.

Conference Components

Each conference module was designed to meet specific learning goals by ensuring that technical skills of each module built on the knowledge of the previous module. This structure broke away from the traditional conference format of disconnected workshops and no clear final goal. The learning goals of the modules were translated into indicators used in this research to assess the impact of the conference on participants.

The conference was composed of the following modules:

Module 1: *Teambuilding*

Module 2: Media Training Workshops

Module 3: Berkeley Expedition

Module 4: Adult Training

Module 5: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities

Module 6: Presentation Preparation

Teambuilding exercises the first evening of the conference identified strengths of each group member and celebrated the importance of collective learning, support, and collaboration. The second module introduced the media tools in an effort to help youth develop appreciation of group critiques and constructive criticism, providing

examples for how youth can learn from and communicate with other community members. The third module, the expedition, was meant to engage youth in the Berkeley urban context as a way of learning how to frame an urban issue from a youth's perspective and grapple with the challenges of telling the story about their issue using media tools.

In the evening, adults gathered without youth to explore the challenges and opportunities of being youth allies in project development. The goal was to cultivate adult capacity to guide youth leadership and participation, a critical element to the success of social enterprise ventures. This module was really an effort to develop strategies among adult allies for involving youth in decision-making and leadership which includes listening to youth and developing trust, giving guidance without dominating, helping youth develop, cultivate and practice their skills, being honest and clear about power, structuring participation and democratic decision-making models, and framing diversity as an advantage. It also provided adults an opportunity to strategize collectively about how to develop action plans to use this information when working within HOPE VI developments.

Modules 4-6 were designed to bring together all the work thus far (expedition data, media tools, team relationships) in order to develop a social enterprise plan addressing the assigned social issues. This process included exploration of project development issues such as the importance of involving multiple stakeholders, how to make critical decisions about content, order, and point of view to transform data into an effective presentation, and how to make an argument using data to support it. Most importantly, by the end of the conference every participant had engaged in a complete process of social enterprise plan development.

The challenge, however, was how to teach an entirely new and complex skill set in only a matter of four days. Was a four-day conference worth it? Did it make a difference in the lives of youth and their HOPE VI communities? Were participants able to take these skills home and transform a conceptual plan into a concrete plan for working towards positive social change? Did the conference inspire already community-conscience youth to reinvigorate their efforts or did it inspire previously uninvolved youth to focus on change? Or, did it simply serve as an opportunity for youth, many of whom had never left their home city, to travel across the county, exposing themselves to new people, places, and knowledge? More specifically, how can these changes be measured? The research conducted for this report aims to address these questions.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Due to the lack of focus or attention to youth needs or development, no systematic documentation exists of "youth conditions" at these sites prior to YLC. Therefore, a formal pre- and post-intervention evaluation is not yet possible. Since no national or regional youth efforts were made before, documentation of participation and

perceived benefits from the last three years of activities will lay the foundation for future formal evaluations of activities in the future. This research will also allow for a further fleshing out of outcome and benefit indicators.

Twenty-four housing authorities from fifteen states attended the YLC conference in Berkeley in August 2002. Regional follow-up YLC forums were held in three hubs: Seattle-Tacoma, Philadelphia, and the California Bay Area. The goals of these meetings were to see how social enterprise planning and implementation was proceeding, to increase on-going access to technical assistance, and to build local networks to continue to support and grow this work. Additionally, a new media tool was introduced at the regional forums: web-logs. These meetings were designed for youth and adults, and discussions were held jointly with adults and youth and separately. Housing authorities involved in these regional forums were not included in the sample for these follow-up interviews because in addition to this report, there are case studies being conducted at the three YLC hubs to document their successes and challenges.

The research included in this report is meant to assess success and challenges within fifteen housing authorities that are geographically isolated from these regional efforts (approximately half of all conference participants) and inform future technical assistance, research, and development. In addition, this research documents the amount of activity underway.

In order to ascertain the level of implementation of social enterprise plans in these cities that have not had the added advantage of follow-up forums, one adult ally from each of these fifteen housing authorities was initially contacted for interviews. Additional adult allies were interviewed if adults attended from separate HOPE VI sites within the same housing authority. Five housing authorities provided contact information for their youth to be interviewed (Gary, El Paso, Kansas City, Washington DC, Dallas).

Fourteen adult interviews were completed representing ten housing authorities (Gary, Detroit, Kansas City, Washington DC, Phoenix, St. Petersburg, El Paso, Dallas, Birmingham, and Los Angeles). Four had staff from separate HOPE VI developments attend the conference or be actively involved with youth programs at the development so they were both interviewed. Three housing authorities never responded to multiple requests for interviews. Two housing authorities relocated and contact information for them was never provided by HUD so they were unable to be contacted at all. See Appendix A for a list of youth and adult interview participants.

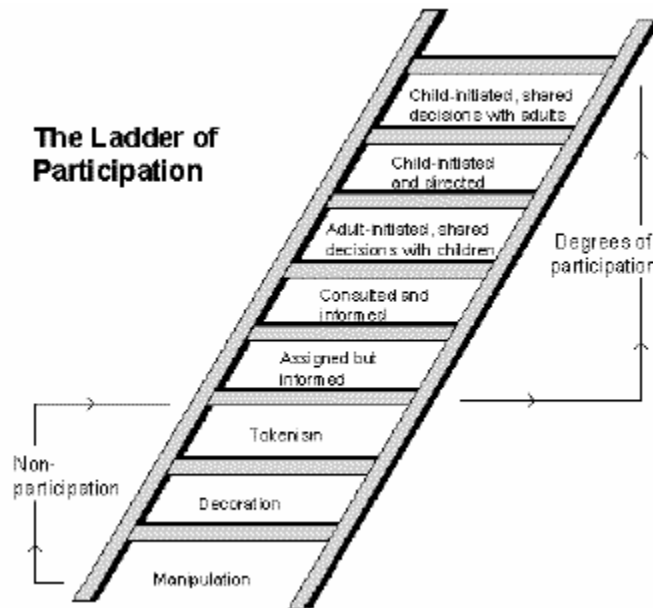
Interviews with adults generally lasted between 45-60 minutes (see Appendix B for the adult interview schedule). Questions were developed to assess change since pre-conference interviews were not conducted.

Seven youth interviews (out of a possible eleven) were completed representing four housing authorities, including youth from both HOPE VI sites in Washington DC

which are analyzed separately. Two youth from El Paso and one from Gary were unavailable for interviews due to logistical difficulties related to school schedules. The phone number for one youth in Washington DC was disconnected and no other means for communication was available.

Interviews with youth generally lasted between 20-30 minutes (see Appendix C for the youth interview schedule). Questions were developed to assess how youth perceive their role in community activities relating to development of personal goals for employment and higher education.

The qualitative interview data was categorized and indexed into ordinal data sets for each housing authority based on an adaptation of the Ladder of Participation originally developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and popularized by Roger Hart in his book *Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development*. This is a useful framework for analyzing degrees of effective collaboration between adults and youth. It is based on the assumption that collaboration initiatives evolve through a series of steps before achieving the optimal level of adult-youth collaboration: shared decision-making. This is the optimal working relationship because it means a maximization of youth participation in a process yet they benefit from the support, resources, and influence of adult allies.



The Ladder details a range of youth engagement beginning with manipulation, the ultimate degree of non-participation, to youth-initiated, but shared decisions with adults. This is a useful framework for evaluating the impact of the capacity-building efforts of the conference, but is not detailed enough in itself to capture the nuances of activities within housing authorities and their impact on the overall policies of HOPE VI. Instead, the Ladder framework inspired development of a four-pronged

framework for analysis that addresses all components of post-conference activities and players. The four overall themes of analysis under this scheme are:

- 1) Social Enterprise Project Development
- 2) Youth Development
- 3) Adult Development
- 4) Organizational Development

Within each of these themes, degrees of youth and adult participation are evaluated based on a condensed Ladder of Participation scale discussed in more detail in Chapter Four and Chapter Five preceding reporting of findings. Matrix scores are averaged by category and by housing authority for comparison and analytical purposes. This framework is also being used for the regional evaluation study being completed by Dr. Deborah McKoy and Dr. Shirl Buss.

Note that these findings apply only to those who participated in the 2002 Berkeley conference and are not necessarily generalizable to the larger group of HOPE VI sites that participated only in the previous conference in Washington D.C. or other YLC events over the past three years.

CHAPTER 4: ADULT FINDINGS

This chapter outlines the findings from fourteen adult interviews representing ten housing authorities. The matrix in Table 1 shows the framework used to analyze and rank housing authority activity within the four themes of analysis. Discussion under each category describes the criteria used for ranking determinations.

Housing Authority:	Gary	Detroit	Kansas City	Arthur Capper DC	East Capitol DC	Phoenix	St. Petersburg	El Paso	Dallas	Birmingham	Los Angeles	
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT												
Developed Social Enterprise Plan 1 = no plan 2 = draft/outline 3 = operational plan	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	1.73
Engaged in Action 1 = one time 2 = series of events 3 = ongoing project/s	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	1	2.27
Ladder of Participation 1 = adult driven 2 = youth driven 3 = shared decisions	1	1.5	2	2	1	1.5	1	2	1	3	1	1.55
Average	1.67	1.50	2.33	2.67	1.33	2.17	1.00	2.67	1.67	2.33	1.00	1.85
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT												
Training / Job Readiness 1 = no preparation 2 = introduction to skills 3 = career path development	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	2	3	1	2.09
School and College Connections 1 = none 2 = connection w/academia 3 = strong pathways to college	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	2.64
Civic Engagement and Leadership 1 = none 2 = within HA 3 = within larger community	3	3	2	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	1	2.36
Average	2.67	2.67	2.33	3.00	2.00	2.33	1.00	3.00	2.33	3.00	1.67	2.36

Table 1: Adult Findings

Housing Authority:	Gary	Detroit	Kansas City	Arthur Capper DC	East Capitol DC	Phoenix	St. Petersburg	El Paso	Dallas	Birmingham	Los Angeles	
ADULT DEVELOPMENT												
Staff Skill Development w/ Youth 1 = directing 2 = allowing youth to lead 3 = shared decision-making	1	1	1.5	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	1.41
Guidance of Skill Development 1 = none 2 = sporadically 3 = consistent	3	1	2	3	1	2	1	3	3	3	3	2.27
Collaboration with Community 1 = none 2 = within HA 3 = within larger community	2	1	2	2	2	3	1	3	2	3	1	2.00
Average	2.00	1.00	1.83	2.33	1.33	2.00	1.00	2.67	2.00	3.00	1.67	1.89
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT												
Infrastructure to Support Youth 1 = none 2 = some youth activities 3 = sustainable programs	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2.36
Connections w/ HOPE VI Redev. 1 = none 2 = some input 3 = sustainable involvement	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1.18
Connections w/ Local Powers 1 = none 2 = some involvement 3 = sustainable engagement	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1.27
Impact on Policy 1 = none 2 = local boards/task forces 3 = national boards/task forces	3	3	3	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2.00
Formal Communication Structure 1 = none 2 = within HA 3 = within larger community	1	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1.82
Average	1.60	1.80	2.00	1.80	1.20	2.00	1.20	1.80	1.80	2.20	1.60	

Table 1 continued...

Social Enterprise Project Development

The goal of this category of analysis is to assess if conference participants were able to use what they learned about social enterprise as a vehicle for social action within their own communities. In addition, this category is meant to document what

activities youth are engaging in, how often they are engaging, and who is initiating the work.

A scale from 1-3 was used to guide assessment. Housing authorities were given a one ranking if they had no social enterprise plan, only engaged in action one time, and the activity was adult driven. A two score applies to housing authorities that drafted an outline of a social enterprise plan, organized more than one event, and if they were youth driven activities. A three ranking refers to an operational social enterprise plan, a series of ongoing activities, and shared decision-making between youth and adults.

The most significant findings are:

- 50% of housing authorities engage in ongoing projects. All but two of the rest have organized a series of events.
- 50% of the housing authorities have draft outlines or operational social enterprise projects.
- These are not necessarily correlated. Birmingham, Phoenix, and Kansas City are engaged in ongoing projects but do not have operational social enterprise plans. Nevertheless, they are engaging in action. Many of the participants interviewed indicated that the conference motivated new action or reinvigorated existing programs and activities.
- Only one housing authority has engaged in shared decision-making (Birmingham), but three demonstrated youth driven initiatives (Kansas City, El Paso, and Arthur Capper DC),³ and two others are moving towards youth driven activities (Phoenix and Detroit). Detroit is an anomaly because there are adult driven activities, separate youth driven activities, but no shared decision-making between them.
- El Paso and Arthur Capper DC tied for the highest ranking in the overall category of social enterprise plan development.

Youth Development

The goal of this category of analysis is to assess if YLC has positively impacted the personal development of youth involved, measured by increased engagement in civic action and leadership positions. This category is also meant to assess if youth have experienced an increase in employment and academic opportunities due to YLC activities that are imperative for increasing their future life choices.

Housing authorities were given a one ranking if their activities have no relationship to job training or preparation, no connections to schools/academia, and involved no civic engagement or leadership by the youth. A two score applies to activities that involve an introduction to job skill development, provide a connection to

³ The Washington D.C. housing authority is interesting because two HOPE VI sites attended the same conference (Arthur Capper and East Capitol), but each are at very different levels of social enterprise plan development. One has an operational plan and the other has no plan at all. In order to more accurately reflect the activities of each site they are considered separately for analysis purposes. They are referred to throughout this report as Arthur Capper DC and East Capitol DC.

schools/academia, and involve youth civic engagement and leadership within the housing authority community. A three ranking refers to activities linked strongly to career path development, that provide strong pathways to college, and involve youth engagement and leadership within the larger community beyond the scope of the housing authority.

The most significant findings are:

- 75% of the housing authorities are involved in activities that provide at least an introduction to job skills, and three have activities strongly related to career path development (El Paso, Birmingham, Arthur Capper DC). Only St. Petersburg has had no preparation for jobs.
- 75% of the housing authorities are involved in activities that qualify as strong pathways to college, and all but one (St. Petersburg) at least have activities related to school and academia. Most of the housing authorities that have strong pathways to college organize college tours for youth. Birmingham also has an internship program in the HOPE VI office, and the two youth that attended the conference intern there and are now in college.
- Over 50% of the housing authorities have youth engaging within the larger community, not just within their HOPE VI development, and all but two are taking on leadership roles at least within their own housing communities.
- El Paso, Birmingham, and Arthur Capper DC are tied for the highest ranking housing authority in the overall category of youth development.

Adult Development

This category is meant to gauge the relationship between adult allies and youth and assess the capacity of the adults to guide youth action in an effective and valuable way. This category also tries to determine if adults are utilizing all available resources to assist their youth by collaborating with the community to move the work forward. Especially in this time of tight budgets and shrinking social services, engaging individuals as well as other organizations is key to sustainability of programs.

Housing authorities were given a one ranking if adults are directing activities, not guiding the skill development of youth, and not collaborating with the community. A two score applies to housing authorities where adults are allowing youth to take the lead on activities, guiding some skill development, but not consistently, and collaborating within the local housing authority community. A three ranking refers to sites where adults and youth participate in shared decision-making, adults consistently guide the skill development of youth, and adults collaborate within the larger community beyond the boundaries of the housing authority.

The most significant findings are:

- Birmingham was the only housing authority to show signs of shared decision-making between adults and youth. Two housing authorities (El Paso and Arthur Capper DC) allowed youth to take the lead. In Kansas City a youth tenant council operates without any adult involvement at all but because there

- is no coordination between youth and adult activities the effectiveness of either is unclear.
- More than 50% of housing authorities showed signs of consistent adult guidance of youth skill development.
 - Adults at over 25% of housing authorities collaborate with the larger community, and 75% collaborate at least within their housing authority.
 - Birmingham, El Paso and Arthur Capper DC are the top three ranked housing authorities for the overall category of adult development.

Organizational Development

The goal of this category is to assess if youth and social enterprise activities have impacted policies or affected institutional change. This category also gauges if communication or other structural mechanisms are in place to facilitate future positive impacts. This category has five factors for analysis rather than the three evaluated in the previous three categories.

Housing authorities were given a one if they have no infrastructure to support youth, have no connections with the HOPE VI redevelopment process, have no connections with local powers, have had no impact on policy, and there is no formal communication structure in place between youth and those with power and resources. A two score applies to housing authorities that have some youth infrastructure (activities) in place, have had some input in HOPE VI redevelopment, have some engagement with local powers, have participated in local boards or task forces, and there exists a formal communication structure between youth and the local housing authority. A three applies to housing authorities with sustainable youth infrastructure, sustainable involvement with HOPE VI redevelopment, sustainable engagement with local powers, participates on national boards or task forces, and has a formal communication structure between youth and the larger community.

The most significant findings are:

- Every housing authority has at least some youth activities and 35% of these are sustainable programs.
- Many of the housing authorities are currently in the process of relocation of residents in preparation for HOPE VI demolition, but only Birmingham has laid the groundwork for sustained involvement of youth throughout the process. Birmingham's two youth that attended the conference publish (write and produce) the newsletter that is sent to all relocated residents. Phoenix has also engaged in redevelopment by trying to improve the local school as part of their neighborhood impact mandate.
- 25% of housing authorities have some involvement with local powers, mostly by capitalizing on the opportunities of the conference by presenting their community mapping findings and post-conference ideas to boards and task forces throughout their cities.
- 75% of housing authorities have youth impacting policy through their participation on local tenant boards or task forces, many of which established

local youth councils upon returning from the conference. 25% of those are youth participating in the national youth council established at the conference. Gary is not involved in local task forces, but their youth are involved at a national level anyway. In DC and Detroit efforts are being made to establish citywide youth task forces which will bring together youth from many HOPE VI sites in the city.

- 75% of housing authorities have established formal communication structures with youth within the housing authority. Phoenix and El Paso have regularly scheduled meetings with the youth. The rest operate on a more ad hoc basis. In addition, Kansas City has established communication structures within the larger community.
 - Birmingham, Phoenix, and Kansas City are the top three ranked housing authorities for the overall category of organizational development in comparison to other housing authorities.
-

CHAPTER 5: YOUTH FINDINGS

This chapter outlines the findings from seven youth interviews representing four housing authorities. The matrix in Table 2 shows the framework used to analyze and rank housing authority activity within the four themes of analysis based on discussions with youth. Discussion under each category describes the criteria used for ranking determinations.

Housing Authority:	Kansas City	Arthur Capper DC	East Capitol DC	Gary	Dallas	
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT						
Developed Social Enterprise Plan 1 = no plan 2 = draft/outline 3 = operational plan	3	3	2	3	2	2.6
Engaged in Action 1 = one time 2 = series of events 3 = ongoing project/s	3	3	2	3	2	2.6
Ladder of Participation 1 = adult driven 2 = youth driven 3 = shared decisions	2	2.5	2	2	1	1.9
Average	2.7	2.8	2.0	2.7	1.7	2.4
ADULT DEVELOPMENT						
Staff Skill Development w/ Youth 1 = directing 2 = allowing youth to lead 3 = shared decision-making	2	2.5	2	2	1	1.9
Guidance of Skill Development 1 = none 2 = sporadically 3 = consistent	2	3	1	2	3	2.2
Collaboration with Community 1 = none 2 = within HA 3 = within larger community	2	2	1	2	2	1.8
Average	2.0	2.5	1.3	2.0	2.0	2.0
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT						
Training / Job Readiness 1 = no preparation 2 = introduction to skills 3 = career path development	3	3	3	3	2	2.8
School and College Connections 1 = none 2 = connection w/academia 3 = strong pathways to college	3	3	3	3	3	3
Civic Engagement and Leadership 1 = none 2 = within HA 3 = within larger community	3	3	2	2	2	2.4
Average	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.7	2.3	2.7
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT						
Infrastructure to Support Youth 1 = none 2 = some youth activities 3 = sustainable programs	2	3	2	2	2.5	2.3
Connections w/ HOPE VI Redev. 1 = none 2 = some input 3 = sustainable involvement	1	1	2	1	1	1.2
Connections w/ local powers 1 = none 2 = some involvement 3 = sustainable engagement	1	1	1	2	1	1.2
Impact on Policy 1 = none 2 = local boards/task forces 3 = national boards/task forces	3	3	1	2	1	2
Formal Communication Structure 1 = none 2 = within HA 3 = within larger community	2	2	1	1	2	1.6
Average	1.8	2	1.4	1.6	1.5	

Table 2: Youth Findings

Social Enterprise Project Development

The goal of this category of analysis is to assess if youth conference participants were able to use what they learned about social enterprise as a vehicle for social action within their own communities. In addition, this category is meant to document what activities youth are engaging in, how often they are doing them, and who is initiating the work.

A scale from 1-3 was used to guide assessment. Housing authorities were given a one ranking if they had no social enterprise plan, only engaged in action one time, and the activity was adult driven. These rankings are from the youth perspective. A two score applies to housing authorities that drafted an outline of a social enterprise plan, organized more than one event, and if they were youth driven activities. A three ranking refers to an operational social enterprise plan, a series of ongoing activities, and shared decision-making between youth and adults.

The most significant findings are:

- 60% of housing authorities have operational social enterprise plans. The other 40% have plan outlines and are making efforts to implement plans.
- The same 60% of housing authorities with operational social enterprise plans are engaged in ongoing projects. The rest have organized a series of events.
- Activities of 60% of housing authorities are youth driven (Kansas City, East Capitol DC, and Gary). Dallas activities are adult driven.
- Arthur Capper DC is the only housing authority on the verge of a shared decision-making relationship. Interviews reveal that activities are youth driven, but youth also report a dependence on the energy and coordination of adult staff to maintain structure for action. It is unclear if this is shared decision-making or youth driven action with adult logistical support.
- Arthur Capper DC, Kansas City, and Gary tie for highest ranking in the overall category of social enterprise project development as perceived by the youth.

Youth Development

The goal of this category of analysis is to assess if YLC has positively impacted the personal development of youth involved, measured by increased engagement in civic action and leadership positions. This category is also meant to assess if youth have experienced an increase in employment and academic opportunities due to YLC activities that are imperative for increasing their future life choices.

Housing authorities were given a one ranking if their activities have no relationship to job training or preparation, no connections to schools/academia, and involve no civic engagement or leadership by the youth. A two score applies to activities that involve an introduction to job skill development, provide a connection to schools/academia, and involve youth civic engagement and leadership within the housing authority community. A three ranking refers to activities linked strongly to career path development, that provide strong pathways to college, and involve youth

engagement and leadership with the larger community beyond the scope of the housing authority.

The most significant findings are:

- 80% of housing authorities are involved in activities strongly related to career path development. The rest demonstrate activities that provide at least an introduction to skill development.
- 100% of youth interviewed are on a strong pathway to college. Every single youth reported they are either in college now, starting college in the fall, or applying to attend college when they graduate from high school in a year.
- 100% of youth are civically involved or engaged in leadership roles at least within their housing authority, and 40% are engaged within the larger community. Engagement within the larger community is most often articulated as working towards improvement of their local school or recreation center.
- Kansas City and Arthur Capper DC are tied for the highest ranking in the overall category of youth development with a maximum ranking of three in all categories.
- The overall category of youth development ranked highest of all four categories in analysis of youth interview data.

Adult Development

This category is meant to gauge the relationship between adult allies and youth and assess the capacity of the adults to guide youth action in an effective and valuable way. This category also tries to determine if adults are utilizing all available resources to assist their youth by collaborating with the community to move the work forward. Especially in this time of tight budgets and shrinking social services, engaging individuals as well as other organizations is key to sustainability of programs.

Housing authorities were given a one ranking if adults are directing activities, not guiding the skill development of youth, and not collaborating with the community. A two score applies to housing authorities where adults are allowing youth to take the lead on activities, guiding some skill development, but not consistently, and collaborating within the local housing authority community. A three ranking refers to sites where adults and youth participate in shared decision-making, adults consistently guide the skill development of youth, and adults collaborate within the larger community beyond the boundaries of the housing authority.

The most significant findings are:

- Arthur Capper DC is the only housing authority on the verge of shared decision-making, but this is not a conclusive determination. 60% of housing authorities indicate that youth are leading action.
- 40% of housing authorities (Arthur Capper DC and Dallas) show signs of consistent adult guidance of youth skill development. Staff consistently meet

- with youth. 40% show signs of sporadic guidance, and the remaining 20% show no signs of skill development (East Capitol DC).
- No housing authorities showed signs of adults collaborating with the larger community but 80% have adults collaborating with the housing authority community.
 - Arthur Capper DC is the highest ranking housing authority in the overall category of adult development.

Organizational Development

The goal of this category is to assess if youth and social enterprise activities have impacted policies or affected institutional change. This category also gauges if communication or other structural mechanisms are in place to facilitate future positive impacts. This category has five factors for analysis rather than the three evaluated in the previous three categories.

Housing authorities were given a one if they have no infrastructure to support youth, have no connections with the HOPE VI redevelopment process, have no connections with local powers, have had no impact on policy, and there is no formal communication structure in place between youth and those with power and resources. A two score applies to housing authorities that have some youth infrastructure (activities) in place, have had some input in HOPE VI redevelopment, have some engagement with local powers, have participated in local boards or task forces, and there exists a formal communication structure between youth and the local housing authority. A three applies to housing authorities with sustainable youth infrastructure, sustainable involvement with HOPE VI redevelopment, sustainable engagement with local powers, participates on national boards or task forces, and has a formal communication structure between youth and the larger community.

The most significant findings are:

- Every housing authority has at least some youth programs and approximately 40% of these are engaged in sustainable programs.
- None of the interviews prompted discussion of HOPE VI redevelopment and only one youth mentioned it spontaneously in the interview saying that he thought their community would be able to maintain cohesiveness during relocation. The other 80% of housing authorities did not mention a connection to HOPE VI redevelopment.
- One housing authority reports some involvement with local powers through collaboration with the neighborhood community group. Youth that attended the conference in Berkeley presented their experience to this group and solicited support for their activities. The remaining 80% of housing authorities did not indicate any connection with local political powers.
- 40% of housing authorities have youth involved on the national youth advisory council established during the conference (Kansas City and Arthur Capper DC). Involvement in this group has included development of a national HOPE VI youth website and regular conference calls. Gary reports

- involvement on local boards, and the remaining 40% indicate no impact on policy.
- 60% of housing authorities have regular meetings between youth and adult allies. The rest have no formal communication structure, but they are housing authorities that reportedly have youth driven action (East Capitol DC and Gary). No housing authorities have a formal communication structure in place within the larger community.
 - Arthur Capper DC and Kansas City are the highest ranking housing authorities in the overall category of organizational development.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Themes

Four key themes emerged from this research:

- 1) Action is Happening—YLC is making a positive impact on youth and their communities. Learning from the conference translated into action in HOPE VI communities. Every housing authority is motivated and interested in engaging youth in action even if youth or staff do not have the capacity or resources to capitalize on this excitement. In almost every case youth returned from the conference with noticeably more self-confidence, an increased sense of responsibility to their HOPE VI community, and improved career skills such as comfort with public speaking and use of technology (internet, PowerPoint, video).
- 2) Active Youth Attending College—the select group of youth interviewed are the most involved youth in the housing authorities considered in this study and every single one of them is currently attending college or college-bound. The goal-oriented nature of participating in community action for positive change appears related to youth reporting increased focus and attention on schoolwork and increased confidence with public speaking resulting from YLC. Public speaking at the conference was specifically mentioned as the reason for increased confidence engaging in the classroom. There are indications of a relationship between youth being able to envision a better future for their community and being able to envision a better future for themselves through the goals of receiving a higher education resulting in a professional career.
- 3) Adult Capacity Insufficient for Sustainability—even in instances where both youth and adults were motivated for action, if adults did not have adequate facilitation, leadership, and mentorship skills, social action was stalled. There is an important conceptual difference between adults providing recreational opportunities and other similar programs for youth, and engaging with youth as equal partners in social enterprise projects. There is a need for greater investment in housing authority staff so they see themselves as “allies” as

opposed to just program managers, and truly understand what that role implies. This includes promoting networking among staff at sites doing similar work so they can provide mutual support around these efforts.

- 4) Lack of Organizational Support—the most common sentiment expressed by staff is they are spread among too many responsibilities and too many sites. Either youth are only a portion of their overall caseload, or they are responsible for so many sites that they do not have the time at any one site to build relationships with youth necessary for moving forward in social action. Housing authorities consistently lack financial or technical assistance resources to improve the necessary infrastructure for youth participation.

Discussion

Focusing on youth development is one strategy for increasing self-sufficiency of public housing residents. YLC as a means for youth development is working in many ways. It is not definitive if the conference is the reason for action. It seems that youth were all leaders in their community to begin with but attending the conference in Berkeley was an important and effective way to assist in directing their energy, motivation, and leadership in more productive ways. One thing mentioned in several interviews with youth was that they had organized programs before but had never thought through it in the way they learned to do so at the conference (prepare a proposal, present ideas to policy-makers, get feedback and support, etc.). Basically, community activities before were on a more ad hoc basis, but efforts since the conference have a more formal structure and there are indications that these programs are more sustainable for this reason.

Another common sentiment of youth is the conference showed them how to do things in a professional way. Learning to design PowerPoint presentations for the last day of the conference raised the bar of quality, clarity, and professionalism for presenting ideas and supporting those ideas with evidence. The conference increased the skill base and capacity for youth to think through their ideas and present them in a more powerful way to garner support from adults and other stakeholders. It also raised expectations about the quality of work youth could and should produce.

Youth have risen to meet these higher expectations. Almost all youth interviewed returned from the conference and presented their experience, often in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, to local community groups and task forces. All the youth said they were much more comfortable public speaking after presenting their community mapping pre-conference findings to all attendees during the evening sessions of the conference. This points to the importance of asking housing authorities to undertake pre-conference work. It built in success to the conference because all youth could present and be proud of their work and their communities in a public setting.

This also had an additional impact in that one of the most common lessons youth and adults reporting learning at the conference is that other communities around the

country face similar challenges and obstacles to community improvement. Some of the youth especially said what they realized during these presentations and talking to peers at the conference was that a lot of communities are facing much more difficult struggles than they are. The conference helped youth put their own struggles in perspective and in most cases youth showed signs of hopefulness.

This hopefulness may have contributed to the fact that both youth and adults reported being more motivated to make their community better when they returned from California to their home HOPE VI sites. Everyone interviewed indicated that the conference motivated them to engage in their communities or it re-motivated them to improve existing efforts if they were already involved. Adults reported seeing youth as agents of change more than before. There are indications of a difference at some housing authorities in how adults perceive what their role is for youth. The conference framework tried to communicate the fact that youth, adults and communities are better off if adults and youth engage together on projects that improve the community. A Public/Private Venture report recently released clearly articulates a shift in the youth paradigm over the last decade from “problem fixation” to thinking how to best maximize opportunities and supports for youth (Pittman et al 2000). An important role adults can play in this process is to provide an alternative vision for youth of what is desirable and possible, reflecting youth’s aspirations for themselves, and stimulate deliberation of these visions and broaden youth responses to challenges. This is what is going to affect real, tangible change.

Many of the housing authorities show signs that adults understand this new role for themselves in relation to youth. Even though only one housing authority showed signs of shared decision-making between youth and adults, several housing authorities now have social action that is youth driven which is a step in the right direction. This shows an understanding of the difference between simply organizing programs for youth (with the understanding that even this is a huge challenge in many HOPE VI developments that do not have any budget for youth activities) versus facilitating youth engagement in action as legitimate participants in their communities on projects important to them. A lot of the youth leaders that have been very active in their communities said the first thing they did when they got back was talk to youth in their communities to find out what they wanted to see happen because no one had ever done that before.

However, just because housing authorities want to engage youth and are motivated to do so, many do not have the capacity to follow through. Staff report frustration that they are not mandated to provide youth programs so funding for youth programs is often the first to go during budget cuts. This is related to the fact that youth development is not part of the official resident tracking procedure for CSS reporting. Even if youth are graduating from high school at higher rates, no data within the HOPE VI program captures the improvement.

Staff also expressed frustration that it is difficult to get youth to attend meetings to start projects in their community. Even though all youth and adults reported

“getting youth to show up” as one of the biggest challenges in their work, housing authorities where youth have initiated programs they want (like a regular movie night in Kansas City) seem to have a higher youth retention rate. Even in the case of Kansas City, however, a small core group of youth got the project going which built momentum. As other youth saw the fun and success of the core group, more youth chose to involve themselves. The initial stages of even legitimate youth engagement are still challenging for this reason which highlights the important role staff can and should play, especially in the initial phases of social action.

In housing authorities like St. Petersburg where there is motivation to do projects but youth are not showing up for initial planning meetings, there seem to be two factors at play. First, this generally is occurring in housing authorities where the conference was the first time staff were introduced to the idea of engaging youth as participants, not just as recipients of pre-determined programming. Staff members are usually not trained youth development workers (Phoenix is the only housing authority to have a caseworker focusing on youth). Second, this occurs in housing authorities where youth are new to the idea that they can influence what happens to them and their community. This means capacity-building for both youth and adults is needed, but for the adults in particular. If the adults learn improved ways of establishing the infrastructure (establishing democratic meetings, feedback systems, processes to follow to communicate ideas) to allow youth to think about what they want for their community and how they want to spend their time, then youth will learn to proceed under the adult guidance and structure.

Even youth who had been actively involved in community development activities prior to attending the conference said that at the conference they got experience and learned skills they never learned elsewhere. Increased self-confidence and significantly improved public speaking skills were the two most common personal development characteristics youth acquired from the conference. These are things they did not learn in school. However, learning these skills and feeling more confident contributed to improved confidence and performance in their other schoolwork. The most common thing youth said is that before they never spoke or participated in class but now they are the first to raise their hand when teachers ask questions or solicit students to read out loud. One student articulated it by saying he had always had the potential to do well in school but now he actually is.

It is unfortunate these are not skills youth learn in school because they are skills crucial to successful performance in the job market. Youth also report learning other valuable lessons that are important for success in their careers. For example, several youth said the biggest lesson they have learned through YLC is they used to think one person had to do it all but now they understand how important it is to work with a group and have people support you. Key skills in the contemporary job market include the ability to work with technology, especially computers. All the youth learned how to work with media technology (video, radio, internet, and digital photography, PowerPoint) at the conference, and all of them have used at least one of these forms of technology since the conference and indicate increased comfort and

understanding it. Comfort with the technology used at the conference has also been expanded to include website construction in subsequent months. Youth involved in the National Youth Advisory Council (established at the conference) are in the process of establishing a HOPE VI youth website. Youth have been in charge of deciding on both the content and design of the website. This is a very important and necessary skill for future career growth.

A big question remains unanswered. Does this mean YLC is furthering the goals and mission of the HOPE VI program? The scope and breadth of this initial study is insufficient to conclusively answer this question, but this study does indicate that long-term YLC efforts have the potential to dramatically affect improved educational and career opportunities for youth living in public housing. This is key to meeting HOPE VI goals of “breaking the cycle” of dependence on social services and public housing for low-income families. The fact that youth are learning skills and ways of thinking crucial to success in the job market through YLC efforts and not through their formal schooling is telling of both the failure of urban public schools to adequately prepare youth for the future but also of the necessity for YLC to continue in HOPE VI to truly “break the cycle” in the context of a failing public school system.

This study is also insufficient to conclusively determine a causal or correlated relationship between youth involvement in their communities and college attendance, but all the youth interviewed for this study were identified by their housing authorities as key players in their community and they are all going to college. Future research should explore this relationship. What this study does do is make youth action visible. Even though the HOPE VI program seeks to end dependence on public housing for the next generation, the fact that it does not mandate or track youth performance seems to contradict their mission. This research shows that youth are doing great things in their community and have big plans for future successes. HOPE VI should support these efforts as much as possible. Youth have a vision of a better future and a longer term investment in their efforts would allow HOPE VI to determine if this vision can be realized and dramatically impact the future of public housing provision.

Recommendations

In response to these issues, the following recommendations are ways to improve youth and adult engagement in positive social action in their HOPE VI communities:

- 1) Increase YLC funding and resources at all levels (within HOPE VI sites, within housing authorities, and within HUD). These resources should target communities with the interest and some infrastructure to sustain these efforts.*

- 2) *Increase formal links between housing authorities and technical assistance resources. These should include links to HUD technical assistance as well as local youth development agencies. This should also include improved facilitation of networking among housing authority staff engaged in similar work.*
- 3) *Formalize youth reporting requirements to HUD in a way that facilitates critical engagement and reflection on successes and challenges of youth social action (setting milestone goals, for example) to inform future action.*
- 4) *Prioritize adult capacity-building for collaboration with youth on par with youth capacity-building opportunities to promote shared decision-making and effective guidance of youth action. Since youth are often not seen as legitimate participants in community-building activities it is important for their work to be supported by adult allies who can provide guidance, support, and access to resources or political influence that youth often do not have access to independently. Adult allies provide legitimacy to youth actions.*

Recommendations for Future Research

The two biggest shortcomings of this research are that: 1) pre-YLC data was not available for a complete pre- and post-intervention evaluation to be conducted and 2) interview samples for both youth and adults were self-selecting. Additionally, these findings apply only to those who participated in the 2002 Berkeley conference and are not necessarily generalizable to the larger group of HOPE VI sites that participated only in the previous conference in Washington D.C. or other YLC events over the past three years.

In order to produce more generalizable and conclusive data, the following issues should be considered in further research opportunities:

- 1) Long-term tracking of youth activities and school performance, including extensive pre- and post-YLC qualitative data collection, would allow for more accurate analysis of a possible correlation between school performance and community work.
- 2) A larger sample of housing authorities should be used in the data collection to provide a control group of housing authorities that have not been involved in YLC efforts.
- 3) All youth that have participated in any part of YLC activities should be interviewed, not just the ones that have been the most active and the most committed. It is as equally important to find out why youth are not participating in increased social action in comparison to their more active peers. This will require significantly more time and research funding since even the most committed youth were very difficult to coordinate with in a timely way.

- 4) In order to answer the question of whether YLC improves the HOPE VI redevelopment process, a study that compares activities in housing authorities standardized by where they are on the redevelopment timeline would be useful. The small sample size in this study combined with the diverse stages housing authorities are at within the HOPE VI redevelopment process makes it difficult to determine to what degree YLC impacted the quality of the redevelopment process. Redevelopment was completed for many of the housing authorities interviewed for this study so this issue was not relevant for them and was not discussed in the interviews. Other housing authorities are experiencing the struggles of relocation, but have not been able to improve this situation for youth in a meaningful organizational way. The most common sentiment expressed in this regard is that transportation struggles and logistics are just too expensive to maintain youth connections during relocation.

Conclusion

It is interesting that even housing authorities that did not respond to requests for interviews have emerged in other conversations because of their interesting work with youth. For instance, Tampa Housing Authority is coordinating a regional meeting in Florida modeled after the YLC conference in Berkeley. Tampa did not return a single phone call or email for interviews but obviously not because they do not care about youth development. Staff from the Chattanooga Housing Authority, who also did not respond to requests for interviews, is in conversations with Birmingham Housing Authority to organize a conference this summer to discuss issues of educational empowerment among other topics. Youth engagement is happening on many levels, and this research captures only an initial sampling of the important social action that is occurring around the country in HOPE VI communities.

Not only does the youth data indicate a relationship between school performance and social action but, in addition, several housing authorities are using the HOPE VI mandate to improve the whole neighborhood as justification for creating linkages between HOPE VI and local schools. Phoenix, for instance, is engaged with the elementary school across the street from the HOPE VI development trying to work through their CSS efforts to support the school and figure out why the drop out rate is so high. One of the youth in Kansas City spearheaded development of the School Improvement Club with other youth at her high school. She is using the social enterprise skills she learned at the conference to improve her own school that is poorly funded and in need of substantial renovations.

Youth *are* improving their communities.

However, the fact that only one housing authority is at a point of shared-decision making, the ideal form of collaborative engagement, speaks to the difficulty and capacity necessary to accomplish this mutually beneficial form of interaction. A lot of capacity-building for youth and adults is still necessary to begin to see the most

benefits of YLC, but considering the limited resources that have been available to housing authorities for youth activities until now, the outcomes are remarkably good. Youth that have engaged in significant ways are more self-confident, performing better in school, and have goals of embarking on successful professional careers after college.

It is this intersection between community engagement, “real world” skill-building, and future opportunities for youth that makes youth leadership efforts inherent in YLC compelling for the HOPE VI program. According to youth development literature, participation “should not only give young people more control over their own lives and experiences but should also grant them real influence over issues that are crucial to the quality of life and justice in their communities” (Mullahey 1999: 4). YLC is facilitating this type of participation with youth and should continue with the full financial and technical support of all agencies involved.

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APPENDIX A: ADULT AND YOUTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Birmingham Housing Authority

Juandalyn Givan
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Telephone: 205-521-0781

Dallas Housing Authority

Joyce Johnson
Development: Roseland Homes
Telephone: 214-824-7092

Ivery Callicut (youth)
HOPE VI site: Roseland Homes
Age: 15

Detroit Housing Authority

Latricia Nelson
Position: Resident Initiatives Coordinator
Development: Jeffries (only HOPE VI site, but works at other properties also)
Telephone: 313-833-1037

El Paso Housing Authority

Arlene Alarcon
Position: Community Builder
Development: Kennedy Brothers
Telephone: 915-872-2955
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Steven Styles
Position: Computer Service Technician
Development: Kennedy Brothers
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Email: sstyles@hacep.org

Gary Housing Authority

Andre Clay
Position: Case Manager
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Telephone: 219-881-6449
Email: kappadre@aol.com

Timothy Holder (youth)
Age: 19

Kansas City Housing Authority

Bryan Love
Position: Adult and Youth Program Manager/Resident Liaison
Development: Public Safety Department
Telephone: 816-777-2907
Email: blove@hakc.org

Deborah White
Position: President, Tenant Association
Development: Guinotte Manor
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Rafael Foster (youth)
HOPE VI site: Guinotte Manor
Age: 16

Tamilah Kirkendoll (youth)
HOPE VI site: Guinotte Manor
Age: 18

Los Angeles Housing Authority

Christine Sanchez
Position: Director, Impacto (private service provider)
Telephone: 323-881-1770

Phoenix Housing Authority

Tammy Rivera
Position: Caseworker
Development: Mathew Henson
Telephone: 602-534-1549

Zona Pacheco
Position: Community and Supportive Services Coordinator
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St. Petersburg Housing Authority

Cynthia Crosby
Position: Resident Services Coordinator
Development: Jordan Park
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Washington D.C. Housing Authority

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Position: Community Relations Specialist

Development: East Capitol
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DeAngelo Wingfield (youth)
HOPE VI site: East Capitol
Age: 18

Shenique Everett
Position: HOPE VI Specialist for HA
Development: Arthur Capper
Telephone: 202-698-3425

Floria Belk (youth)
HOPE VI site: Arthur Capper
Age: 17

Mario Herring (youth)
HOPE VI site: Arthur Capper
Age: 16

APPENDIX B: ADULT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- 1) Tell me what is happening in your housing authority related to youth?
- 2) What was your social enterprise plan from the conference?
- 3) Has something been implemented based on the plan?
- 4) Who has been involved?
- 5) What types of projects and activities are you engaged in?
- 6) What do you like most about these projects? The least?
- 7) What have been the biggest challenges in doing these projects?
- 8) What resources have been available to you for these projects?
- 9) Is your housing authority supportive?
- 10) Have you perceived personal changes in your youth? If so, what?
- 11) How many hours per week do you spend on youth activities?
- 12) What changes would you like to see at a policy level related to youth?

APPENDIX C: YOUTH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- 1) Tell me what you are doing at school this year?
- 2) What about in your community?
- 3) What was your social enterprise plan at the conference?
- 4) Has something been implemented based on the plan?
- 5) Who has been involved?
- 6) Why do you think you were chosen to attend the conference?
- 7) What do you like most about these projects (your work in the community)?
- 8) What have you liked the least about these projects?
- 9) What have been the biggest challenges you faced doing these projects?
- 10) What resources have been available for your work in the community?
- 11) Who is your biggest support?
- 12) Did you feel different when you got back from the conference? (leadership, speaking skills, confidence, comfort with technology, employed, responsibility to community)
- 13) What lessons did you learn at the conference?
- 14) What do you like about school?
- 15) What else do you do when you are not in school?
- 16) Do you want to go to college?
- 17) What do you want to be when you grow up?
- 18) Did you attend the conference the year before in Washington D.C.?
- 19) Have you used the media tool you learned at the conference since then?