The HOPE VI
Youth Leadership for Change Initiative

Formative Evaluation Report (2000 – 2003)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

> "*Democratic responsibility can be acquired only through practice and involvement. It does not arrive suddenly in adult hood through simple maturation; it must be fostered directly from an early age. I believe the environments we occupy as youth and the extent to which we feel involved in shaping them, or caring for them, is a particularly important domain for such learning.*"
>
> Roger Hart, City University of New York

The goal of the HOPE VI Youth Leadership for Change (YLC) initiative is to engage youth as critical participants in the revitalization process in their own housing developments, as well as in the local community. YLC builds on and amplifies ongoing youth programming efforts operative before and during the HOPE VI program. YLC models, encourages and supports increasingly active involvement by youth in the community revitalization process. YLC provides training, tools and guidance for youth and adults to grow, develop and institutionalize a process that allows their priorities, ideas, hopes and dreams to be further realized during and after the HOPE VI revitalization.

There are three key components of the YLC initiative:

(1) national leadership training conferences
(2) regional community forums and program development
(3) social action and enterprise projects at the local level, initiated and implemented by youth in partnership with adults

YLC began in 2000 as a partnership between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HOPE VI office, the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) and the University of California at Berkeley. Over the past three years, approximately 500 youth and adults from 54 US Housing Authority cities have convened at the national, regional and/or local levels through YLC. Youth and adults have worked together to learn skills, showcase ongoing projects, gain inspiration, and develop plans to catalyze work on policy issues and concerns in their neighborhoods.

During the first year, the YLC National Conference and related community projects focused on teaching youth and Housing Authority staff about the participatory design and urban planning processes. The aim was to equip them to effectively participate in the physical redevelopment of their communities during the HOPE VI revitalization process. Additionally, the conference focused on leadership development, and social enterprise planning.

The second and third years of the initiative focused on the implementation of the social enterprise action plans. At a second national conference, and in subsequent regional forums, youth learned about how to use multi-media tools (video, radio production, web and digital photography) and to implement social enterprise action plans. The aim again has been to support youth and adults to address local problems and to participate in

changing social and economic conditions and opportunities. In the third year, YLC has grown to include a greater network participating partners, including Temple University, and many community organizations.

This formative evaluation report provides a documented history of the development and ongoing implementation of the YLC initiative. The follow-up study assesses how participants from HOPE VI sites around the country have benefited from their involvement during the first three years of the YLC initiative. This study documents the degree to which participating HOPE VI sites have involved youth as active participants in the community revitalization process. It also identifies and examines the challenges HOPE VI sites face in sustaining ongoing authentic youth involvement in this process.

This study presents three central findings about the content and quality of that work:

(1) **In order for youth to be genuinely engaged as participants in the community revitalization process, adults must be involved and trained to facilitate this process.** PHA staff, parents, and youth development professionals all need to play a crucial role in this collaborative work. The YLC theory of change asserts that when adults are supported, involved and trained to offer guidance, youth involvement is more meaningful, authentic, and sustainable. Youth bring energy, optimism, and creativity into the equation, while adults bring experience, legitimacy and resources. Alone, neither youth nor adults are as able to create sustainable change. Together, their ideas and actions have the necessary potency to realize the comprehensive goals of HOPE VI YLC initiative.

(2) **Public Housing Authority (PHA) organizational development, capacity and flexibility to work with youth in HOPE VI requires sustained participation in local initiatives, augmented by involvement in national conferences and regional events**. Organizations that benefit the most from YLC participate in the national conferences and regional forums. This participation adds value to the ongoing work at the local level, and provides a meaningful framework for youth to participate in community revitalization.

(3) **The success of YLC social enterprise projects requires that participants, over time, formulate and follow a trajectory for action which includes three fundamental ingredients:**
   1. a plan (e.g., social enterprise planning guides)
   2. concrete skill training to implement plans (e.g., urban planning, architecture and design, video, photography, radio, web design, public speaking, presentation)
   3. opportunities to "practice the adult/youth partnership" over time, to propel project ideas forward after conferences, forums and workshops.

This report includes: (I) **Background** section including a detailed history, (II) **Project Description**; (III) **Methodology and Theoretical Framework**; (IV) **Findings; (V) Analysis and Discussion**; (VI) **Conclusions**; and (VII) **Recommendations**.

I. BACKGROUND

In 2000, Youth Leadership for Change was launched as a collaborative effort between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) HOPE VI Office, The National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED), and the University of California at Berkeley. During the past three years YLC has expanded to include partnerships with Temple University and other community-based organizations across the nation including Youth Radio, Youth Sounds, and One Economy. Regional YLC networks have also formed in three regions (Seattle/Tacoma, San Francisco/Oakland, Philadelphia/Newark).

(A) History: What is HOPE VI?

Downtown Philadelphia

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) HOPE VI urban revitalization program has been promoted by its advocates as an innovative solution to this nation's affordable housing crisis, and a way to address negative social perceptions of public housing. Over the past decade, HOPE VI grants have funded demolition of the most dilapidated public housing projects, reconstructing them as mixed income, mixed-use developments aimed at integrating the public housing community back into surrounding neighborhoods. "More importantly it has sparked the development of a new form of public housing—smaller scale, well-designed economically integrated, privately managed—that has, in turn triggered the revitalization of dozens of inner city neighborhoods once left for dead. (HOPE VI pursues) housing revitalization not as an end in itself but as a means to reform neighborhood schools, connect residents to employment opportunities, and rebuild local infrastructure, parks and libraries." (Cisneros and Katz, 2003).

A critical provision was written into the original HOPE VI legislation to insure that the new housing focused on "people and opportunities as well as bricks and mortar" (Naparstek, et al, 2000: iii). Therefore community-building is considered central to HOPE VI revitalization. A significant component of the HOPE VI program focuses on providing a substantial amount of community and supportive services (the average allocated to CSS activities in a typical grant is 8%).

As part of the Community and Supportive Services (CSS) requirements, HOPE VI sites are required to track dozens of indicators of resident status and economic improvement. The goal is to support residents to move beyond the cycle of poverty, public housing and dependence on the social safety net. Youth development indicators, however, are not a component of the mandated reporting. For instance, Housing Authorities are not required to track high school graduation rates, and are not mandated to spend a portion of their CSS budget on youth programs.

While youth are not officially considered in HOPE VI monitoring and reporting, the involvement of youth in the planning and implementation of HOPE VI projects is positively valued recently for the first time, as evidenced 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 incorporates issues of importance to youth and senior citizens. HOPE VI grantees are expected to provide services to all major subgroups in the resident population, including youth, but youth participation, however, is not mandated in NOFA guidelines.

Although youth have always comprised a high percentage of the public housing population, the Youth Leadership for Change initiative is the first formal effort to incorporate youth into the structure of CSS plans in HOPE VI developments. This report examines the initial impact of the YLC Initiative on HOPE VI sites, on public housing officials and on youth.

(B) Why is Youth Participation Important in Community Development Work?

Youths presenting their ideas to adults

Education, citizenship, and community building, are inextricably linked. Involving citizens in the process of community revitalization helps establish a powerful collective vision and sense of community for the participants (Mullahey, et al 1999: 6). While there is growing recognition of the importance of youth participation in the community development process, youth perspectives for the most part have been ignored and omitted from major initiatives in most communities, including public housing. In the past youth

were rarely identified as a resource for understanding community problems and seldom acknowledged as legitimate stakeholders in efforts towards positive collective change.

Because they live the daily struggles in ways that may offer insight into complex social issues, youth are starting to be recognized as legitimate participants in community building initiatives. Adults are starting to understand how youth voices and perspectives add value to the strategies for community change. Youths' ideas about how to make their environment work for them can profoundly inform discussions and plans for larger community development (Hart 1997).

Simultaneously, involvement in work towards positive community change can play a powerful educative role for youth, empowering them to direct their energy and ideas towards productive outcomes. Feelings of powerlessness and alienation from decision-making can be contributing factors in youth crime, violence, and poor school performance (Pittman 2000). Conversely, youth can become better prepared for educational and professional pursuits if they have the opportunity to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills through legitimate community engagement. These skills may not be valued or cultivated in a traditional educational setting.

The traditional educational experience may not allow students to critically engage with "real world" community and social issues in a way that supports them to become effective participants in civic society. Education advocates explicitly critique the dichotomizing of "experience vs. learning" (Dewey 1938; Freire 1970). Learning through "doing" (also known as project-based learning or social action learning) is a way of integrating the importance of context—of community—into the educational process.

The trend towards educational standardization is in sharp contrast with emerging efforts to proactively engage youth in community building. However, educational institutions and community development organizations can (and should) inform and reinforce each other to help youth cultivate intellectual, social and political skills to increase their educational opportunities.

The HOPE VI Youth Leadership for Change initiative is designed to bring these realms together in a more authentic and meaningful way, to benefit both youth and the larger community. First, it aims to improve the lives of youth by making learning relevant while they gain skills to make better life choices, hopefully to "break the cycle" of poverty. The goal is to introduce youth to a range of skills to be used as resources and strategies as they learn about the theory and practice of social enterprise (McKoy 2000). They also learned about how to use media tools as resources and strategies to create positive change within communities. These concrete skills can open up opportunities that previous generations of public housing residents never had. Secondly, engaging youth in action also promotes the community-building goals of the HOPE VI program. The HOPE VI community building agenda is strengthened because youth voices are incorporated and translated into action. Thirdly, by bringing youth to college campuses, YLC starts to connect housing and community development with efforts to improve educational opportunities.

(C) Social Action: A Theoretical Framework for YLC

Youth involved in a park redevelopment project

The social action framework and methodology for working towards positive community change 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. Translating youth angst into positive social change empowers youth and gives them tools to actively engage in improving their own 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 the strengths of participants
- assumes people are experts on their 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

YLC's theory of change also asserts that when youth and adults in public housing communities are supported to share and lead the change process, transformation is possible.

(D) Social Enterprise Projects: A Central Vehicle for Social Action

The goal of social enterprise is to develop skills and projects that are innovative and sustainable. In theory, social enterprise facilitates development of important leadership and technical skills to increase access to future educational and job opportunities and turn youth into willing agents to "break the cycle." Social enterprise projects are particularly relevant for HOPE VI communities because they continue over the long term, even when original participants are no longer involved. Social enterprise projects build confidence and allow for independence rarely found in other adult-directed initiatives for youth.

Youth Leadership for Change

The three core components of social enterprise projects 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 adult "allies" in their public housing community;
3) they emphasize innovation, personal risk, and investment by all participants of the enterprise.

Developing an analysis of community needs

One powerful example of a youth-focused social enterprise project 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 compiled by youth in collaboration with adult allies. The book is a 150-page tribute to the history 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. This book recognizes youth voices in the community and it contextualizes contemporary struggles within the history of public housing living. This project served as a vehicle for youth to begin thinking about how to work towards a positive future, against the backdrop of a difficult past. The book is sold in local bookstores, and sustains the ongoing work of Voices, Inc.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

(A) Youth Leadership for Change initiative

> *"This program taught me about blueprints…. I learned to take action on my ideas, now I have a blueprint for my life."*
>   *YLC participant who started a computer enterprise in Chattanooga*

Learning about HOPE VI revitalization plans

In 2000, HUD Deputy Assistant Secretary Eleanor Bacon and HOPE VI CSS Director Ron Ashford, launched the Youth Leadership for Change initiative in 2000. Although at that time, youth constituted more than 50% of the public housing population, youth-orientated programs at HOPE VI sites were not mandated. The HOPE VI statute outlined the broad parameters of the CSS component required for each site, but youth were not specifically targeted for CSS funding. Because youth were never at the table, HUD recognized the need to engage them. The group started to develop a strategy to empower young adults in HOPE VI sites to become involved in the revitalization efforts, while developing leadership skills and community building capacities. Together the team launched the YLC initiative. This represented an important departure from previous public housing programs.

HUD contracted with the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) and the University of California - Berkeley to plan for a national conference. Architects and planners from the UCB team developed the conference curriculum. It was inspired and modeled on the Y-PLAN (Youth-Plan, Learn, Act, Now) a nationally recognized youth and planning program based at the University's College of Environmental Design. This award-winning program engages young people in projects focused on the built environment and community development. Each spring graduate students work with high school students over a period of ten weeks on a "real world" planning and design project. Youth are introduced to basic urban planning concepts then

guided through a planning process culminating in a presentation of final design concepts and ideas to a professional jury of city officials and other stakeholders at City Hall.

Concurrently, NCCED assembled a team of youth leaders to co-facilitate the conference with the UC Berkeley team. The two teams worked together to develop the curriculum for the first conference, which was held in Washington DC (see below). It was followed up by ongoing work at the local level, a second conference, and regional forums.

Over the past three years, YLC has grown into an extended partnership between professionals and organizations. Sponsored by HUD, the program curriculum, and training augmented and amplified to include: UC Berkeley's Interactive University Project, Haas Young Entrepreneurs program, and the Institute of Urban and Regional Development.

(1) National Leadership Training Conferences

Conference I: *Youth Leadership by Design*

Participating in intensive design charrettes during the conference

The first national HOPE VI youth conference, *Youth Leadership by Design*, was organized during the summer of 2001 by UC Berkeley and NCCED. It was held in Washington D.C. in January 2001. Youth and their adult allies (Housing Authority staff) from 30 Housing Authorities converged for three days to report on ongoing youth development projects; to learn urban planning and design skills; and to develop leadership capacities and social action plans. Many of the participants had never flown on a plane before, or traveled outside their home cities.

Teams analyzed DC neighborhoods then created maps of their findings

The UCB planners/designers and the youth leaders from NCCED alternately led the conference workshops. Because HOPE VI, by definition, is about demolition, planning, design and construction, the workshops at this conference enabled young participants to demystify that process. The planners/designers encouraged them to look critically at the social and physical dynamics of communities, and to actively engage in design charrettes to visualize how their needs could be better integrated into HOPE VI revitalization plans. In workshops facilitated by the NCCED youth team, the participants learned leadership skills, and about how to use social action methodologies for community engagement.

Participating in teambuilding activities facilitated by youths

Conference II: *Youth Leadership for Change*

The second conference, *Youth Leadership for Change*, was held in Berkeley, California on the University of California campus for four days during the summer of 2002. Youth and adults from PHAs in 24 cities attended. This time the focus of the conference was on the development of media skills (video, photography, web design and radio), as tools to further augment and amplify social enterprise plans. This leadership summit also enabled the representatives of different sites to report on the

progress of their ongoing work, and to network and inspire each other to sustain that work.

Adults and youth worked together to learn how to apply media skills

The curriculum for this conference was developed through a partnership between UC Berkeley's Interactive University Project, the Institute of Urban and Regional Development; Haas Young Entrepreneurs program, HUD's HOPE VI staff, and NCCED. It was divided into modules for joint participation by youth and adults, with additional youth leadership and adult ally workshops.

Conference organizers asked each Housing Authority to undertake a series of pre-conference preparatory activities. The goal was to make sure participants had a frame of reference for discussing community change when they arrived in Berkeley. The pre-conference work enabled them to learn basic data collection and community mapping techniques to equip them for the social enterprise planning component. All attendees participated in a three-month community mapping process to learn more about their local neighborhood prior to the conference. Youth from each HOPE VI site presented their data (through maps, models, photos, PowerPoint presentations and videos) during plenary sessions at the conference. Prior to the conference, youth and adults from each site invested an enormous amount of time and effort preparing presentations to showcase their work to their peers. This was a very important dimension of the conference, as it allowed participants to "hit the ground running" when they arrived in Berkeley.

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. Each conference module had specific learning goals to ensure that each module built on the knowledge and technical skills learned during the previous module. The learning goals of the modules were translated into indicators used in this research to assess the impact of the conference on participants.

Additionally, adults met without the youth to explore the challenges and opportunities of being 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 focused on strategies for involving youth in decision-making and leadership. They discussed ways to more effectively listen to youth; to develop trust; to give guidance without dominating; to help youth develop and practice their skills; and to be honest and clear about power. It also provided adults an opportunity to strategize about how to structure participation and democratic decision-making while working collaboratively with youth to develop action plans.

Youth and adults worked together on social enterprise plans

These national conferences are the backbone of the YLC initiative. Fifty-four Housing Authorities with HOPE VI grants attended at least one of the national conferences. Many projects and community-improvement efforts have been conceived of, or enlarged by active participation in the conferences. Youth attendance is predicated on willingness to do pre-conference research and prepare presentations about work in progress. Participants are also expected to share the conference skills and knowledge with the rest of their community upon their return.

(2) Regional Forums

Following the second national conference, a series of regional networks and follow up forums were conducted to provide continued support and organizational capacity building for the participating Housing Authorities. Four additional PHA sites attended the regional forums. Regional follow-up YLC forums were held in three hubs: Seattle-Tacoma, Philadelphia, and the San Francisco Bay Area. UC Berkeley conducted two forums in the Seattle- Tacoma and Bay Area Regions.

Temple University's University Community Collaborative of Philadelphia (UCCP) conducted several follow-up forums called, *Ideas in Action*, where more than 100 youth from Eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey HOPE VI sites convened to envision, support and carry out community-based, youth driven initiatives. Again, youth who had attended the national conferences were a part of the leadership team, and were able to showcase or continue to work on their social enterprise projects at the forum. Students, faculty, and youth facilitated a series of workshops focused on leadership, technical media skills, and community project development.

Youth developing strategies at the San Francisco Bay Area regional forum

Regional meetings and forums extended the central themes of the national conferences. They included: a) workshops for adults and youth, separately and together, b) training in various media (video, photography, web, radio, blogging); and c) time to "practice the partnership" and to showcase the ongoing growth of work toward improving HOPE VI communities.

The regional meetings allowed youth from the regional Housing Authorities to come together and share the successes and challenges of implementing ideas generated by the national conferences. 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. These meetings were designed for youth and adults, and discussions were held jointly with adults and youth and separately.

Many PHAs reported that they were having difficulty sustaining participation locally during times of budget cuts and changing political priorities at the national HUD level. At the same time, many have persevered and have built upon and extended the work in extraordinary way. Many reported progress on implementing social enterprise plans (details provided in the findings section of this report).

(3) Local Social Enterprise Project Development

Youth learning how to build websites to support local projects

After each conference and forum, participants were asked to complete and implement their Social Enterprise Action Plans. While details of this process are described in the next section, what occurred locally is vitally important to the future success of YLC. The Youth Leadership for Change conferences and regional forums provided youth from Housing Authorities around the country to showcase their ongoing youth development work on a national stage; to present that work and get feedback from adults and youth; and to develop action plans to take that work to the next level of influence and elaboration.

Some ongoing social enterprise activities at the local level include:

- a youth owned and operated business selling bubble tea in King County, Washington, where youths work with adults, local banks, and community organizations to develop their business plan, and to expand business opportunities for themselves. Their project has been highlighted in PHA newsletters and local newspapers.

- a CASA Community Health youth group in Seattle won a Telly Award, recognizing non-network and cable commercials, for their anti-smoking video, "Breathless."

- youth involvement in the planning and design for local park redevelopment projects in Oakland and Newark.

- a youth radio internship program developed by youth and affiliated with a local radio station in Wilmington.

- a high school Leadership and Asset Teams in Seattle, where youth are run through a 'hard core' curriculum and work on various projects focused on community issues such as violence, safety, health and family relations.

- a youth initiated and youth-led Literacy Project in Atlantic City.

- Tacoma and King County Housing Authorities are using the HOPE VI mandate to improve the whole neighborhood, and as justification for creating linkages between HOPE VI and local schools.

- one group in Phoenix 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.

- A HOPE VI youth in Kansas City is using the social enterprise skills she learned at the conference to improve her own school, by spearheading a School Improvement Club with other youth at her high school.

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. These projects also create infrastructure, cultivate resources, and help to build momentum for ongoing autonomous community building efforts as HOPE VI projects transition to the next stage.

(B) Partnerships and Resources

Teambuilding activity at the San Francisco regional forum

The YLC initiative's national conferences and regional forums are supported by a number of partners:

- University of California at Berkeley serves as the host for regional and national meetings.

- Temple University's UCCP program is working with youth and Housing Authorities in the Eastern Philadelphia, Delaware, New Jersey corridor to support their YLC projects, and hosts regional summits.

- Local Housing Authorities participating in YLC invest their HOPE VI funds to support and develop youth initiatives.

- The American Legacy foundation provided support to the 2002 conference by hosting a Truth Campaign event and providing youth with information on tobacco prevention.

- ▪ Youthsounds (Oakland, CA), Youth Radio (Berkeley, CA), Voices (Tucson, AZ), and One Economy (Washington, DC) trained youth at the 2002 YLC national conference and will continue their involvement with the YLC initiative as trainers at future conferences and regional forums.

- ▪ Youth Empowerment Service's Digital Arts and Media Lab is continuing to work with youth from the UCCP regional forums, to create a video.

III. METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"Why have so few studies asked or answered the broader question – what impact does engaging young people in meaningful leadership and action roles have on neighborhoods, communities, schools, or organizations? … Whatever the reasons, we will not have a full picture of the importance of youth action until more researchers consider its benefits both in terms of how it enhance individual youth development and its potential for transforming communities."

Council for Youth Investments

This research is the first attempt to systematically gather data on the YLC activities since 2000. This evaluation is a formative analysis. It looks at what was accomplished during the first three years of the YLC initiative and what structures were most useful for the growth and sustainability of youth participation in HOPE VI revitalization projects. This research was provided reflective opportunities to analyze what is happening at the local level, and to move the work forward.

Prior to this study, there was no systematic documentation of "youth conditions" or youth participation at the HOPE VI sites participating in YLC. Therefore, a formal pre- and post-intervention evaluation was not possible.

Since no national or regional youth efforts existed prior to YLC, documentation of participation and perceived benefits from the last three years of activity will lay the foundation for formal evaluations of activities in the future. This research will also allow for a further amplification of outcome and benefit indicators.

(A) Research Objectives

The national conferences generated energy and excitement among the participants and workshop leaders. Conference evaluators from NCCED also confirmed that the goals for the conferences were met, in terms of involvement, workshop success, and active participation by attendees. However, no systematic or in-depth evaluation examined the longer-term effects of the conference experiences.

This study was designed to assess the effectiveness of the HOPE VI Youth Leadership for Change initiative and begins to determine the impact it may be having on HOPE VI

communities in the aftermath of national conferences and regional forums. Prior to this report there had been no comprehensive or coherent effort to collect and analyze information on these follow-up activities, nor had there been any formal efforts to gather qualitative feedback from youths who attended the conferences to determine how the experiences impacted them and their communities.

The research conducted for this report addresses this question and begins to measure the qualitative and quantitative changes stimulated by the conferences and regional forums. Evaluators set out to understand the 'trajectory of transformation' set into motion by the conferences, forums and local project levels. Researchers analyzed national data collected from conference feedback surveys and reports. They also conducted interviews with public housing officials and youth from participating Housing Authorities to identify best practices and indicators of success for the future implementation and growth.

This evaluation seeks to understand program effectiveness among the following stakeholder groups: participating youths; adult allies; and policy makers in individual Housing Authorities and at HUD national HOPE VI office. The evaluation began in December 2002 and concluded in September 2003.

(B) Research Methods

This project employed two primary avenues of data collection. One was the interview process conducted by a researcher not involved in the design of the YLC initiative. Her goal was to assess the impact and sustained effect of the YLC initiative on participants, local residents and communities. She collected data to determine and analyze "what action was taking place" at each site, and what was the sustained effect of the YLC.

The second avenue of data collection was more qualitative. At regional meetings and regional forums adults and youth were engaged in a critical reflection on the process of post-conference implementation. This data was collected and assessed by both the independent researcher and participant observers who were also involved in the design of the YLC initiative. The participant observers role was also to engage participants in critical reflection to help move the process forward.

Fifty-eight Housing Authorities with HOPE VI Grants from fifteen states attended the YLC conferences in Washington DC and Berkeley, California or regional meetings representing approximately 51% of all HOPE VI communities.

For this study, researchers interviewed twenty adults, representing 19 Housing Authorities (the majority of whom participated in the 2002 conferences and meetings as well a earlier events). Interviews with adults generally lasted between 45-60 minutes. The questions were designed to assess how participation in the YLC initiative impacted and amplified genuine youth involvement in ongoing projects at the local level.

Researchers also interviewed fifteen youth, representing ten Housing Authorities. These interviews generally lasted between 20-30 minutes. Questions assessed 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" articulated by Dr, Roger Hart in his book *Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care.* 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 maximizes authentic youth participation in a mutually beneficial democratic process with adults. Hart qualifies the use of this paradigm by saying, "Though somewhat simplistic for explaining a complex subject, this metaphor has been useful as a basis for discussion on how adults can support the involvement of children (and youth) to the maximum of their desire and capacity."
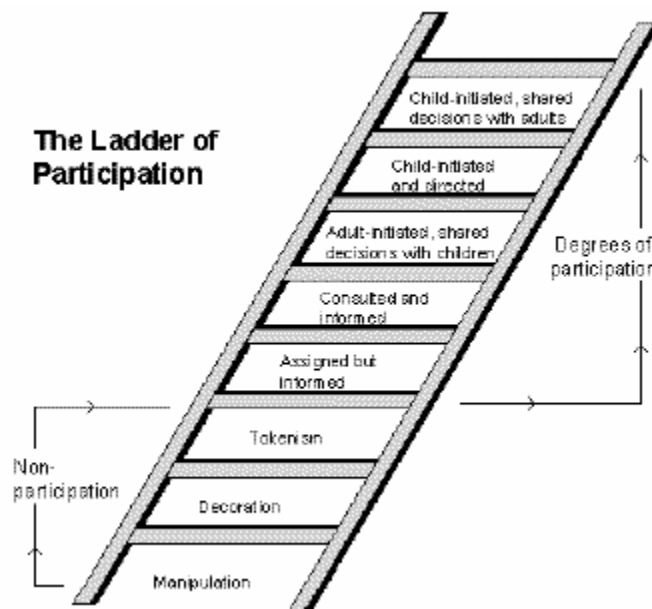
The Ladder details a range of possibilities for youth engagement beginning with manipulation, decoration and tokenism, which Hart argues are effectively non-participation by youth. True participation by youth starts when they become more informed about the content and the process of a project or an enterprise. As they move up the Ladder, youth are increasingly involved in decision-making and genuine collaboration with adults. Within this paradigm, projects that are youth-initiated, but require power-sharing and joint decision-making with adults have the highest value. Hart maintains that youth who collaborate with adults on a project that they themselves initiated "feel sufficiently competent and confident in their role as members of the community..."

This is a useful framework for evaluating the impact of the capacity-building efforts of the YLC conferences and regional forums, but is not detailed enough in itself to capture

the nuances and impact of the YLC initiative on the Housing Authorities at the local level. The Ladder framework inspired development of a four-pronged framework for analysis that addresses all components of post-conference activities and players. The research team outlined four overall themes of analysis to articulate how youth and adults are moving up the Ladder. These dimensions help to analyze if and how movement is being made toward the top of the ladder at the local Housing Authority level. The four overall themes of analysis are:

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

These four themes of analysis start to capture and analyze a sequential process of effective youth participation in the community revitalization process. This framework helps to uncover the mechanisms and processes that enable youth to authentically participate in the community-building process. Within each of these areas, degrees of youth and adult participation are evaluated based on a condensed Ladder of Participation scale. Matrix scores are averaged by category and by Housing Authority for comparison and analytical purposes.

IV. FINDINGS

(A) Data

This report outlines the findings from interviews with twenty adults and fifteen youth from twenty-five Housing Authorities Chart I (page 22A). Follow-up data has been collected for nine of the ten Housing Authorities that participated in both conferences and regional forums (Camden, Patterson, Wilmington, Seattle, Tacoma, King County, San Francisco, Oakland, and Richmond) and are compared with data from the other PHAs participating in only national conferences. The matrix in Table I (page 22B) shows the framework used to analyze and rank Housing Authority activity within the four themes of analysis.

<u>Below is a summary of the data extracted from the interviews:</u>

(1) Youth Development
- 80% of Housing Authorities have youth engaged and showing leadership in development of their larger communities beyond the boundaries of the Housing Authority..
- 65% of Housing Authorities engage in activities related to career path development, and 20% participate in activities that provide an introduction to important job skills.
- 55% have engaged youth in activities that provide a strong pathway to college and all but one of the rest connect their work to school performance and academics.
- Overall, 45% of Housing Authorities received the highest possible ranking in the category of youth development, demonstrating that youth are engaged, showing leadership in making their communities better places, and on their way towards higher education.

Youth development is the overall category that ranks highest, showing that Housing Authorities have been successful in engaging the youth in their communities in social enterprise and community action in some capacity, a key goal of the YLC initiative.

(2) Adult Development
- 55% of Housing Authorities report shared decision-making with youth and adults. 20% of Housing Authorities are allowing youth to take the leadership role in decision-making (San Francisco, Oakland) and another 20% are still engaged in activities directed by adult mentors (Tacoma, Richmond).
- 65% of Housing Authorities show evidence of consistent adult guidance of youth skill development, a crucial component of youth leadership development. These are the same Housing Authorities that demonstrate shared decision-making. This is consistent with the ideal model of adult-youth engagement and interaction.
- All but one Housing Authority is engaged in community collaboration activities with the community beyond the boundaries of the Housing Authorities.

This speaks to an increased role of Housing Authorities within their neighborhoods, a key goal of the HOPE VI program. It also speaks to the success adults have had in generating partnerships with other key community organizations to help move youth development work forward.

(3) Organizational Development
- 55% of Housing Authorities have sustainable program infrastructure to support youth, most often by partnering with local youth program providers.
- Only 20% of Housing Authorities have a sustained connection between youth action and the HOPE VI revitalization process. 40% report that youth have had some input in the HOPE VI revitalization process but 30% have had no connection with revitalization.

- 40% of Housing Authorities report a sustained connection with local powers related to youth development. The other 60% report only minimal involvement if any at all with local political and decision-making bodies.
- Only 20% of Housing Authorities have been engaged nationally in YLC efforts by their youth participating in the national youth council established at the conference. 30% of Housing Authorities show youth participating in local boards and task forces, often as part of their local tenant council or youth council. However, 45% of Housing Authorities feel they have no impact on policy either locally or nationally.
- A formal communication structure with the larger community exists for 45% of Housing Authorities. 30% have formal communication structures within their Housing Authority but not with the larger community, and two Housing Authorities report none at all.

It appears that YLC had the least impact on organizational development among participating PHAs. Even for Housing Authorities like King County, Seattle, and Patterson that have shown remarkable success in engaging youth to improve their communities, organizational development has proven to be much more difficult to move forward. In situations where youth and adults have been able to develop productive and fulfilling working relationships resulting in exciting community engagement, organizational support and recognition for these efforts has not necessarily followed.

(4) Social Enterprise Development
- Almost 80% of the Housing Authorities participating in regional forums reported that they have started to develop an operational social enterprise plans, 10% have draft outlines of plans, and only one Housing Authority has not engaged with youth development work since the conference.
- 65% of Housing Authorities are engaged in ongoing projects, 10% have engaged in a series of events, but not necessarily as part of ongoing efforts (Patterson), and 20% have at least engaged in a one-time event.

- 66% of Housing Authorities that participated in regional forums received the highest possible ranking scores in the overall category of Social Enterprise Development compared with the Housing Authorities that did not have the benefit of participating in regional forums where none of them received the highest score of three.

Researchers collected more data from Housing Authorities at regional forums. The additional information from these PHAs revealed that they were able to significantly engage youth in social enterprise actions after the conferences and forums. As evidenced by their higher scores, Housing Authorities participating in regional forums seemed to benefit from the increased access to technical assistance, and therefore were able to achieve a greater degree of social enterprise development in a shorter period of time.

V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

"Participation in the conferences and forums has allowed me to be special. I am now known for more than being the man that plays basketball or my grandmother's grandson. Now I am someone who has a role with youth in the community."

<div align="right">"Clyde" from Newark PHA</div>

Young leaders presenting their project analysis

Data from interviews, site visits and evaluation documents reveal that "action is happening" at many PHAs participating in the YLC initiative. Many PHAs are developing and implementing social enterprise projects. They are also involving youth in new and critical ways in a range of programs. Housing Authorities participating in the regional forums and the national conferences on average ranked higher in all four categories of the evaluation matrix than Housing Authorities that did not have access to regional technical assistance and support networks.

Researchers compared Housing Authorities that participated in regional forums with ones that did not. Housing Authorities with access to technical assistance and support from regional meetings have had significant success in engaging youth in their communities in a productive way with adults who support and collaborate in these efforts; more so than Housing Authorities not involved in regional forums. However, this is not to devalue engagement and activities that are happening at non-attending PHA sites.

The data seems to indicate that with technical assistance and networking support, Housing Authorities have the potential to do more in a shorter timeframe, benefiting more communities and more youth.

Many of the participating PHAs were pre-selected by HUD CSS staff to attend conferences because they were within regional hubs where there were a critical mass of sites, and where several of the sites had existing youth programs or strong youth program staff. The differences could also be a result of pre-existing site characteristics. High-performers across the scales may have been high performers before the conferences and regional forums, and therefore the results may reflect that bias.

(A) Key Highlights:

Nurturing emerging young leaders:

"These conferences— the way that they approached us with workshops— hooked my attention. And for the adults from HUD to be so interested in what we think makes me want to give them my thoughts— and I know that they can use my ideas."

"Kenesha" after the Berkeley national conference

Many youth were already leaders in their community when they began participating in YLC. Attendance at the conferences was an effective way to focus and direct their energy, motivation, and leadership in more productive ways. In several interviews young people stated that they had organized programs before, but they had never learned to think through and act on the process in a strategic way. At the conferences they learned to take their organizational skills to a higher level: to prepare a proposal; to present ideas to policy-makers; to get feedback and support; etc. Prior to their involvement in YLC, youth and adults reported that their community activities were sometimes organized on a more ad hoc basis. They reported that their efforts since the conferences and forums have had a more formal structure. There are indications that these programs are therefore more sustainable.

Professional Skill Development:

"Being in these meetings and things makes me want to be a part of housing-help out my community and be a part of it- executive director or something."

"Tracina" after the Philadelphia regional forum at Temple University

Participating youth expressed the sentiment that the conferences and forums showed them how to "do things" in a more professional way. The youth learned to present their ideas in new ways and support those ideas with evidence. The conferences increased their skill base and their capacity 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.

Even youth who had been actively involved in community development activities prior to attending the conferences said that at the conferences they got experience and learned skills they hadn't learned elsewhere. Young participants reported that self-confidence and public speaking skills were the two most common personal development characteristics they acquired from the conferences. They noted that many of the skills learned at the conferences were not skills that they were able to acquire in school. However, learning these skills improved their confidence and performance in their other schoolwork. Many youth reported that prior to the YLC conferences they rarely spoke or participated in the class, but now they are the first to raise their hand when teachers ask

questions or solicit students to read out loud. One student said he had always had the potential to do well in school but now he actually is doing well.

Creating a trajectory of change and engagement:

> *"I never knew I was so outspoken. Before I only had to stand in front of people and not talk, but now I am very comfortable getting in front of people and speaking out."*
>
> <div align="right">"Patrice" at the regional forum in Philadelphia</div>

Youth have risen to meet higher expectations set by YLC during pre-conference preparation and post conference follow up. Almost all youth interviewed returned from the conferences and presented their experience, often in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, to local community groups and task forces. This underscores the importance of creating a trajectory for youth engagement in the process of social enterprise work: they prepare presentations prior to conferences and forums; they present during these gatherings; and they follow up with presentations to their local communities after conferences and forums. This continuum allows youth (and adults) to build on their success, as they present their ongoing work in a public setting.

College and career preparation:

> *"Everything prepares me for college. It makes me want to strive to graduate from college. In addition to being a youth leader, I now have skills to help build other youth leaders."*
>
> <div align="right">"Rondell" from Philadelphia PHA</div>

Youth report that through YLC they are learning skills and ways of thinking crucial to success in the job market. This speaks of the failure of many urban public schools to adequately prepare youth for the future but also of the possibility for YLC to support HOPE VI youth succeed in the context of a limited public school system. Interviewed youth also report learning other valuable strategies for success in their careers. For example, several youth said 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 them. Adults added that because of YLC and spending time on a college campus (UC Berkeley and Temple University) they realized the importance of preparing youth for college as part of their CSS activities.

All the youth learned how to work with media technology (video, radio, internet, web, digital photography, PowerPoint, tape recorders, computers) at the conferences and forums. The ability to work with technology is a key skill required in the contemporary job market. All of the attendees have used at least one of these forms of technology since the conferences and indicate increased comfort and understanding with the media. Many have been involved in constructing websites at the regional forums.

Broadening perspectives:

> *"The conference opened up a lot of opportunities for me. I joined the national HOPE VI board and became the chairperson of communications. I learned how to be a leader. I like to be a role model and take charge and do things in my community. A lot of youth look up to me because of all the things I am involved in."*
>
> "Whitney" from Patterson PHA

One of the most common lessons youth and adults reported learning at the conferences is that other communities around the country face similar challenges and obstacles to community improvement. Some of the youth said what they realized during these presentations, and in talking to peers at the conferences, was that many communities are facing much more difficult struggles than they are. The conferences 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 conferences or forums to their home HOPE VI sites. Everyone interviewed indicated that the conferences inspired him or her to engage in their communities or it re-motivated them to improve existing efforts if they were already involved.

Everybody learns:

> *"I see our young people changing things… youth have taken on leadership… a youth council is in development and we are adding a youth member to the tenant association. Adults need to learn from what young people are doing, because some youth already are doing prevention, and adults need to learn from that."*
>
> "Janet" at the San Francisco Bay Area regional forum

Many of the adults in this study reported that they now see and understand that youth can be agents of change. Many indicated that they are redefining their perceptions of the role that youth can play in developing and implementing social enterprise projects as part of the community revitalization process. What adults said they learned was to value what each group - adults and youth - brought to the equation. The adults said they learned more about how to guide learning processes without over-directing. They also gained a better understanding of the importance of forming a plan together (including engaging all members of the Housing Authority and broader community) to sustain and build on their ongoing work.

Many of the Housing Authority adults are starting to understand this new role for themselves in relation to youth. Even though only one Housing Authority in this study is fully sharing decision-making between youth and adults, several Housing Authorities now have social action projects that are youth-driven. This shows an understanding of the

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difference between merely organizing programs for youth and facilitating youth engagement in a more profound way. The latter engages youth as legitimate participants on projects of importance to them (with the understanding that even this is a huge challenge in many HOPE VI developments with no budget for youth activities). Many of the youth leaders who 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.

PHA staff and policy makers/leadership also began to recognize the insightful ways youth can genuinely improve HOPE VI revitalization. For example, youth shared a deep understanding of the challenges faced during relocation and what types of programs are important to help residents realize the goal of self-sufficiency during this process. To formalize this, several Housing Authorities invited youth to serve on the HOPE VI Task Force, and they committed staff and resources to working with youth.

(B) Key Challenges

The YLC initiative also poses many challenges for PHAs, organizers, youth and allied organizations. This work raises a series of questions about the meaning, viability and sustainability and of youth-adult collaborations in ongoing HOPE VI community revitalization efforts.

PHA conditions at the local level: Conditions in HOPE VI communities, representing many of the most "distressed" neighborhoods in the nation, make sustaining change difficult. Many youth reported feeling insecure and fearful of the pace of change, especially during the HOPE VI relocation process. Despite the best efforts of many housing staff, residents' fears and skepticism about progress (based upon a history of difficulty in addressing issues of importance to low-income communities) made sustained participation difficult. This fear and insecurity was not limited to youth, but was shared on a deep level by adults. Many PHAs experience frequent turnover of staff and executive management, often disrupting or stalling progress. The feelings are being exacerbated by political changes that are now unfolding at the national and local levels. As described below, further research is needed to better understand how to address these challenges, and to find ways to build on what is being learned about engaging youth in the community revitalization process

Realities of teenage life: Staff also expressed frustration that it is difficult to get youth to attend meetings, or to start projects in their community on a consistent basis. All youth and adults reported "getting youth to show up" regularly as one of the biggest challenges in their work. Housing Authorities with ongoing youth-initiated programs (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 before the momentum started to build. As other youth saw the fun and success of the core group, more youth became involved. This highlights how important it is for the adults to play a

role in the initial stages of a social action project, to help youth (even a core group) to leverage genuine involvement of larger numbers of youth.

At some sites, like St. Petersburg, there is motivation to do projects, but youth are not showing up for initial planning meetings to give their input. Adult staff members at these sites are trying to make the transition from offering pre-determined programming, to engaging young people as active participants in project development. PHA staff members are usually not trained youth development workers (Phoenix is the only Housing Authority to have a caseworker focusing on youth) and the youth at these sites are new to the idea that they can influence what happens to them and their community.

PHA capacity to follow through: Even though many Housing Authorities interviewed want to engage youth and are motivated to do so, they often do not have the capacity to follow through. PHA staff report frustration that they are not mandated to provide youth programs. They say that funding for youth programs is often the first to go during budget cuts. This is only reinforced and exacerbated by youth indicators not being part of the official resident tracking procedure for CSS reporting.

Another issue identified during this research is that YLC programming often depends on one or two individual staff members who are not directly connected to daily PHA operations. Many staff assigned to YLC are contracted for short periods of time or belong to other organizations under contract with a PHA. While HOPE VI seeks to break down the deep divide between "hard side" (construction and development, etc.) and "soft side" (social services) of PHA operations, staff who work with youth appear to be even more removed from the PHA leadership and decision-making processes.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Youth presenting their plans and designs for a park to the local community

This formative evaluation report provides an initial understanding of whether and how participation in YLC benefited participants. The study assesses how participants from HOPE VI developments around the country have benefited from their involvement during the first three years of the YLC initiative and challenges they faced. This study

also documents how participating HOPE VI sites have been actively working to involve youth in the community revitalization process.

This report also captures a sampling of the important social action projects now underway in HOPE VI communities across the country. A formative study such as this cannot conclusively determine a causal or correlated relationship between youth engagement in the YLC process and HOPE VI improvements in the community. What this study does do is deconstruct and document the YLC process making youth action visible. This research shows that many youth are involved in meaningful actions in their community and have plans for future successes.

In summary, this study presents three central findings about the content and quality of participation in the Youth Leadership for Change initiative:

(1) In order for youth to be genuinely engaged as participants in the community development process, adults must be involved and trained to facilitate this process.

PHA staff, parents, and youth development professionals all need to play a crucial role in this collaborative work. The Youth Leadership for Change theory asserts that when adults are supported, involved and trained to offer guidance, youth involvement is more meaningful, authentic, and sustainable. Youth bring energy, optimism, and creativity into the equation, while adults bring experience, legitimacy and resources. Alone, neither youth nor adults are as able to create sustainable change. Together, their ideas and actions have the necessary potency to realize the comprehensive goals of HOPE VI YLC initiative.

Meaningful youth engagement in HOPE VI revitalization efforts is predicated upon the connection to adult "allies". To become allies, adults must be trained, supported locally, and provided the resources to genuinely support and partner with the young leaders. Adults need to be provided the time and preparation as to HOW to engage youth in the change process rather than simply be told to "involve youth". Adults must also make a conceptual shift from "providing recreational opportunities for youth" to engaging them as partners in social enterprise projects.

Adults often come to youth conferences expecting to be chaperones, and therefore are not equally engaged as participants with information and experience to share. YLC provides a unique training methodology where adults and youth learn about the theory of change as they develop skills to implement that change in their community. At the YLC conferences and regional forums, there are many opportunities for youth and adults to share experiences and work together. Additionally, adults have opportunities to also work separately, where they were freer to be learners and not just "in charge".

(2) Public Housing Authority (PHA) organizational development, capacity and flexibility to work with youth in HOPE VI requires sustained participation in local initiatives, augmented by involvement in national conferences and regional events.

Organizations that benefit the most from YLC participate in the national conferences and regional forums. This participation adds value to the ongoing work at the local level, and provides a meaningful framework for youth to participate in community development. Training the public housing staff, many of whom never worked with youth previously, improves significantly the organizational capacity of Housing Authorities to engage youth in meaningful ways in the physical revitalization process as well as the community development process. Adults and youth who attend the conferences and regional forums are more likely to take the momentum and inspiration from the conferences back home. Using existing resources, and seeking out additional partners and resources, they began to translate the ideas inspired by the conference into action.

Both youth and adults need capacity building. If the adults learn improved ways of establishing the infrastructure (establishing democratic meetings, feedback systems, and processes to follow to communicate ideas) they will be able to allow youth to think about what they want for their community. In turn, youth will learn how to proceed with adult guidance and structure.

(3) The success of YLC social enterprise projects requires that participants formulate and follow a trajectory for action, which includes three fundamental ingredients:

- a plan (e.g., social enterprise planning guides)
- concrete skill training to implement plans (e.g., urban planning, architecture and design, video, photography, radio, web design, public speaking, presentation)
- opportunities to "practice the (adult/youth) partnership" over time to propel project ideas forward after conferences, forums and workshops.

This participation adds value to the ongoing work at the local level, and provides a meaningful trajectory for youth to participate in community development. PHAs most involved in preparing the youth prior to the conferences and attending regional forums have the greatest degree of success in genuinely engaging youth in the HOPE VI community redevelopment process. The pre-conference preparation is an essential prerequisite. It enables to youth and adults to more fully utilize the resources at the conference. It also helps them to sustain the work after the conferences and forums.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A big question remains unanswered. Is YLC engaging youth in ways that will be sustainable and integrated into the powerful structures supporting the new HOPE VI vision of public housing for individuals, families, and communities across the nation? The scope and breadth of this initial study is insufficient to conclusively answer this question, but this study does indicate that participation in YLC has the potential to positively affect improved leadership and educational opportunities for youth living in public housing. To ensure that this potential is realized in the future, the following recommendations are provided. These recommendations are organized along the four areas of this report's analysis and discussion: youth development, adult development, organizational development, and social enterprise development.

(1) Youth Development

The 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 increasing the capacity of adults to guide this engagement in their communities to increase their collective hope for a better future. However, in order for this to occur, PHAs must be provided the support and direction from HUD. Several specific recommendations include:

- **Youth must become a central area of focus for HOPE VI Community and Supportive Services.** This can be accomplished though both programmatic opportunities and greater focus on formal monitoring and evaluation. All youth who participated in any part of YLC activities should be interviewed, not just the ones that have been the most active. It is as equally important to find out why youth are not participating in increased social action in comparison to their more active peers.

- **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 development work.

- **Formalize HOPE VI 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.

(2) Adult Development

Prioritize adult capacity building for collaboration with youth on par with youth capacity-building opportunities to promote shared decision-making and effective guidance of

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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. Specific recommendations include:

♦ **Further develop networks of local housing authorities** to provide opportunities for staff and HOPE VI community partners to share experiences, challenges and innovative ideas. In this era of limited funding, looking to staff and individuals locally who already hold several years of HOPE VI experience could be cost effective and essential both to quality, sustainability and morale.

♦ **Increase formal links between Housing Authorities and professional youth technical assistance resources**. This should include links to HUD's identified 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) Organizational Development

In order to address or support HOPE VI comprehensive goals for Community and Supportive Services (CSS), greater awareness and capacity building at all levels of PHA administration must be considered. Specific recommendations include:

♦ **Include youth development training in annual HOPE VI trainings** for staff, especially for new HOPE VI grantees. This will enable PHA leadership to better understand the value and contribution youth can make toward improving public housing.

♦ In this time of limited funding, **train PHAs, especially CSS staff, to diversify funding**, resources and partnerships to develop and support organizational infrastructure around the goals of YLC. This will be necessary to sustain these efforts and to reduce dependency on HUD HOPE VI funds that are time-limited and diminishing.

♦ **Additional research is needed in order to answer the questions How does YLC improve outcomes for youth, and improve youth participation in the process? How does YLC improve Housing Authority capacity to work with youth? How does YLC address community problems, thereby improving the HOPE VI process in very specific ways?** A study that compares activities in Housing Authorities standardized by where they are on the revitalization timeline would be useful. 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.

(4) Social Enterprise Project Development

Youth, adults and communities are better off if adults and youth engage together on projects that improve the community. A Public/Private Venture report 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). Social enterprise projects allow for adults, youth, and other members of the community to come together for a common purpose – to create a better life for themselves, their families and friends.

♦ **Youth need to see their ideas have value in tangible, concrete and meaningful ways**. An important role adults can play in this process is to provide an alternative vision for youth of what is desirable and possible, to reflect youth's aspirations for themselves, and to stimulate deliberation of these visions and broaden youth responses to challenges. This is what is going to affect real, tangible change.

♦ **HUD and Local PHAs should support the growth and development of existing social enterprise projects**, such as Seattle's Bubble Tea business, Oakland's Park Redevelopment, Wilmington's local radio station. Working in partnership with adult allies, such projects not only contribute to the realization of HOPE VI community building goals but also provide models and inspiration for other youth and PHAs to develop similar innovative projects.

At the last regional meeting, "David", a YLC participant for two years, said,

> *"Why is it when something violent happens in public housing the TV and news crews are there in full force. But when we accomplish something positive in the community no one shows up?"*

YLC has the potential to answer this young HOPE VI resident by challenging assumptions about youth's value and contribution to revitalization processes by providing positive models and showcasing youths' ideas and creations. This will, however, require significantly greater funding, focus and administrative support.

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