

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

How Young People
Change Their Communities
and Themselves

An Evaluation of the Youth Leadership for Development Initiative

Executive Summary ■ December, 2003



Conducted by Social Policy Research Associates for the
Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development

Funded by the Ford Foundation



INNOVATION CENTER
for community & youth development

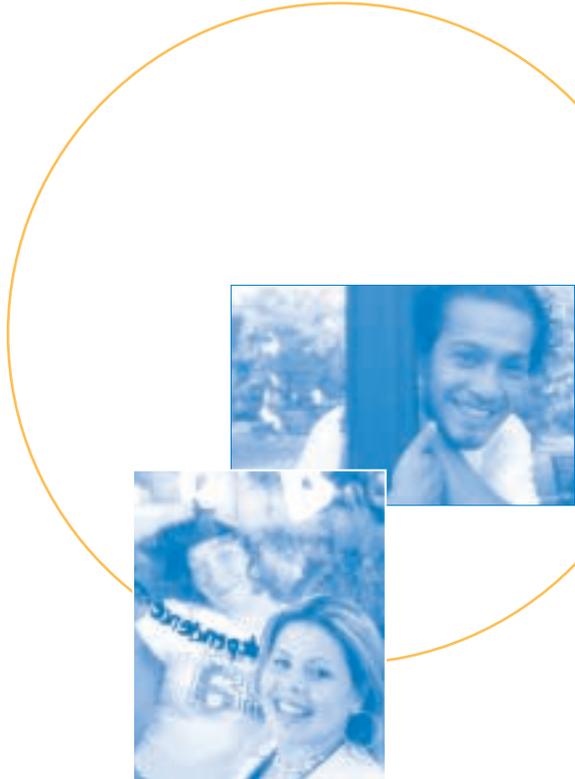
Lessons in Leadership is based upon the following report:
H. Lewis-Charp, H. Cao Yu, S. Soukamneuth and J. Laco. (2003)
Extending the Reach of Youth Development Through Civic Activism:
Outcomes of the Youth Leadership for Development Initiative.
Social Policy Research Associates.

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The success of the Youth Leadership for Development Initiative (YLDI) is a result of extraordinary partnership, vision, and dedication by adults and young people at organizations that range from community-based grassroots groups to large national establishments. YLDI organizations across the country shared their time and their programs. We thank the staff and young people at 21st Century Youth Leadership Movement, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth, C-Beyond, Leadership Excellence, Mi Casa Resource Center for Women, National Youth Advocacy Coalition, OUTRIGHT, Tohono O'odham Community Action, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Youth United for Community Action, and the Young Women's Project.

Social Policy Research Associates spent three years tirelessly tracking data, conducting interviews, and synthesizing information to produce a thorough and comprehensive evaluation. We thank Hanh Cao Yu, Sengsouvanh Soukamneuth, Heather Lewis-Charp, and Johanna Laco for their drive, attentiveness, and insight.

In 1999 the Ford Foundation saw an opportunity to explore ways to strengthen youth development through civic activism. We thank program officer Inca Mohamed and the Ford Foundation for their foresight and partnership throughout this endeavor. Without all of these people and organizations, this research would not have been possible.



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Acknowledgements

- 2 Introduction**
- 3 About the Youth Leadership for
Development Initiative (YLDI)**
- 3 Evaluation Design**
- 4 Findings**
- 8 Program-related Recommendations
for Practitioners**
- 9 Organizational Development
Recommendations for Practitioners**
- 11 Recommendations for Funders**
- 12 Conclusion**
- Appendix**

Introduction

"I've always had a will to do something about what's wrong with our society. I never had the means to do something about it before."

"Knowledge is power. Youth who have the knowledge have a responsibility to use it well."

Talk with any young person involved in activism and these are the comments you hear. They reflect a deep commitment, but more important, they convey personal accomplishment and growth. We've spent three years watching young people flourish as members of civic activism organizations. We've watched their skills and confidence grow as they have changed their communities or advanced their causes.

With this initiative, we set out to learn how young people grow through civic activism. We looked carefully at key factors that shape young people: identity, relationships with adults, leadership opportunities, community involvement, safety, and skill-building. We found that many young people find what they need at civic activism organizations. They are drawn by a cause or a vision of social change. They leave with a new sense of themselves and their futures.

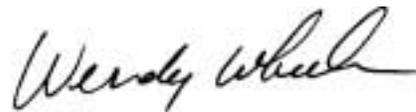
These civic activism organizations are not part of the traditional youth development world, so they are not always privy to the latest thinking or established best practices. Instead, these organizations rely on their own ingenuity and on listening to the youth in their midst to design their own approaches to youth development. The results are powerful. They have the potential to reshape the youth development field.

This project also gave us an opportunity to study collaboration and organizational development. The organizations are small, staffed by leaders who bring commitment, passion, and deep understanding of the issues, but often lack access to the tools and techniques of organizational management.

Through learning events that brought all YLDI partners together, we created opportunities to build healthy and sustainable organizations.

We worked closely with program officer Inca Mohamed and the Ford Foundation to launch, nurture, and evaluate YLDI, and ultimately to translate the results into resources that offer practical skills and know-how. Our collaboration with Ford can inform models for foundation-grantee relationships.

The Innovation Center's goal is to learn what works, use what we learn to inform the field, and translate it into practical tools that enable organizations to work more effectively with young people. A full version of this report and tool kits that offer resources and guidance to apply this research to daily work are available at www.theinnovationcenter.org or by calling (301) 270-1700.



Wendy Wheeler
President

Innovation Center for Community
and Youth Development



About the Youth Leadership for Development Initiative (YLDI)

In 1999, the Ford Foundation and the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development set out to explore how young people benefit from involvement in civic activism and to discover new strategies and practices that youth development organizations can learn from the field of youth activism. From this powerful vision, the Youth Leadership for Development Initiative (YLDI) was born.

The Ford Foundation funded 12 United States community organizations to be part of a three-year learning collaborative. The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development managed the initiative, selected sites with the Ford Foundation, offered technical assistance, and convened learning events with grantees.

The twelve organizations chosen to participate in YLDI reflect the diversity of the United States. They represent a broad spectrum of youth constituencies, including African American, Latino and Latina, Native American, Asian Pacific American, low-income white suburban, young women, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning, faith-involved, and low-income Asian immigrant women and children.

Their selection was based on several factors, including:

- a focus on addressing community and social issues;
- having been established or run by young adults; and
- a recognition of the relationship among youth leadership development, civic activism, and positive youth development.

A full list of organizations is included in the appendix.

The Ford Foundation also funded four international fellows from Kenya and South Africa to participate in YLDI learning. These fellows shared perspectives on youth development and activism from their countries and took new ideas and practices with them when they returned home.

Throughout the three years, the Innovation Center facilitated annual learning group meeting for the grantees. The Innovation Center also conducted annual site visits to provide individualized technical assistance on organizational development. A multi-year evaluation process (July 2001 – December 2003), conducted by Social Policy Research Associates (SPR), explored civic activism as an approach to youth development and assessed the needs and practices of civic activism organizations.

Evaluation Design

SPR used a mix-method qualitative and quantitative case study design. As in all case study research, this study is **theory producing** rather than **theory testing**. The following questions guided the research.

1. Is civic activism an effective approach for reaching youth not engaged in conventional youth development programs?
2. What is the contribution of YLDI projects to positive youth development outcomes, including the programs' effect on identity development and the ability of youth participants to engage in positive social change and civic life?
3. How does technical assistance from the Innovation Center contribute to YLDI organizations' ability to develop and nurture leadership skills for young adult workers and to sustain and expand their work in civic activism and youth development?

SPR gathered data on youth, organizational, and community outcomes. They also gleaned a detailed understanding of the organizational practices within the YLDI organizations that contributed to youth outcomes. They considered organizational vision and culture as well as effectiveness and sustainability.

- Qualitative analysis involved two rounds of site visits, lasting 2–3 days at each YLDI site, and extensive document review.

■ Quantitative analysis involved two waves of surveys to understand youth’s experiences within the organization. The surveys included Youth Development Strategies, Inc.’s (YDSI) measures of youth experience of supports and opportunities. SPR and YDSI also added measures of civic engagement, identity development, and coping to the survey.

In addition to data from the YLDI groups, the report drew upon data from some agencies that had used the YDSI supports and opportunities survey in their work. These data come from nine youth-serving organizations that had participants in the same age range as the YLDI sites. These data are not used as a traditional “comparison” group, but rather as a reference point to give context for the YLDI results. It offers a rough idea of how YLDI organizations compare with traditional youth-serving organizations.



Findings

The findings summarized in *Lessons in Leadership* offer a new vision for youth development, civic engagement, and activism. We hope that the research results and recommendations detailed below will be useful to policymakers, researchers, funders, and practitioners.

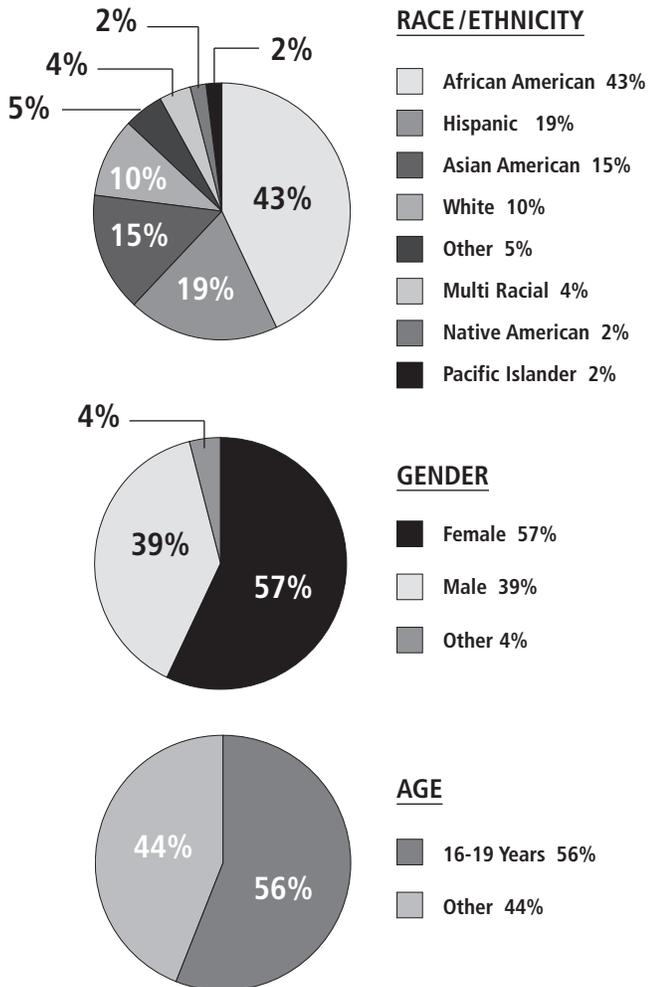
Building on the results of this research project, the Innovation Center is creating two tool kits that translate the lessons and experiences of YLDI into practical tools for community and youth development organizations. A tool kit on evaluating civic activism will help groups assess their needs for evaluation, design effective evaluations, and use the data to benefit their organizations. A tool kit for practitioners provides resources and training activities for using civic activism as a strategy for developing youth leadership.

FINDING #1

Civic activism is a powerful approach for reaching youth who are often not reached by conventional youth development programs.

YLDI organizations successfully recruited and retained older youth that traditional youth development organizations have a hard time reaching. The average age of YLDI youth is 16, and some youth were referred to YLDI organizations by the courts, foster care, and through group homes. Further, youth interviewed said that they struggled with negative public perception of their abilities, limited options for employment and support, ready availability of gangs and drugs, premature adult responsibilities, and financial pressures.

Demographics of YLDI Youth



The findings identify **three core reasons** that older, more “challenged” youth join civic activism organizations.

1. Civic activism organizations provide youth the space to focus on their own cultures and backgrounds.

Youth saw themselves reflected in the faces of peers and adult leaders, in the pictures and artwork that hung on the walls of the organizations, in the content of workshops and presentations, and in the issues that their group addressed. Young people engaged in an identity search to better understand their own identities and young people who had internalized negative views of themselves or their identity were especially motivated by this factor.

2. Civic activism provides a forum for youth to reflect on and address the day-to-day challenges faced by their families and communities.

Unlike many service-oriented settings that implicitly (or explicitly) blame young people or their families for making bad “choices,” YLDI organizations frequently encouraged youth to turn the microscope off of themselves and onto their institutions and the broader society. Youth were able to name some of the barriers facing their families and communities, such as inadequate school resources, overzealous or inadequate policing, polluted air and water, unsafe working conditions, lack of green spaces, and lack of youth facilities or activities. Many of the YLDI groups provided youth with the tools and resources to strategize and take action to address these barriers.

3. Civic activism provides applied vocational and leadership opportunities.

Although YLDI organizations would not describe what they do as “vocational training,” many youth gravitate toward civic activism because they have opportunities to apply themselves, extend their skills, and exercise their voice. Many YLDI groups even paid youth for their time. Although the pay is not high, it is a motivator. It signals to young people that they are taking on roles and responsibilities usually reserved for adults.

FINDING #2

YLDI organizations made a positive contribution to young people’s development. Evidence suggests that they provide support for young people at a rate comparable to or higher than traditional youth-serving organizations.

Overall, a high percentage of young people within YLDI organizations are consistently getting the types of supports and opportunities they need for healthy growth and development in building caring relationships, skills, safety, and community involvement. Moreover, evidence suggests that YLDI organizations are successful at a rate

comparable to or higher than that of other adolescent-serving youth development organizations. These results are particularly remarkable given the challenges faced by the population that they serve. For instance, 69% of YLDI youth report consistently **high-quality relationships with adults** and youth within the organization. This is nearly **twice** that reported by youth within the other youth-serving organizations (35-40%). In the areas of safety and skill building, the YLDI sites' results were comparable to that of the other youth-serving organizations.

Fourteen percent of YLDI youth were getting consistent opportunities for participation and leadership. Youth involvement in decision making closely mapped to the decision-making structure of the organization: youth-led organizations had the highest levels of youth decision making (42%) while adult-led organizations had the least (8%). While all YLDI organizations value youth leadership, the structure of adult-led organizations often impede sustained and well-supported decision-making roles for youth.

Youth outcomes among YLDI groups varied depending on the particular strategy or approach they used to engage youth.

- Half of the YLDI organizations engaged youth in organizing — a focused strategy for achieving community change. Youth organizing practices include political education, campaign development, and direct action.
- The other half of YLDI organizations focused primarily on creating safe spaces for youth to develop positive identities, such as those based in race, ethnicity, immigrant status, and/or sexual orientation. Practices to support identity include engaging community adults as mentors, critical education on the history of the identity group, celebration of culture and identity through art, dance, spirituality, and other forms of expression, workshops on power and oppression, and community education and advocacy on identity-specific issues.

Each of these sets of practices had its own unique strengths.

- When compared to identity support practices, youth organizing practices were associated with:
 - Higher numbers of youth reporting they get consistent opportunities for decision making (37% compared to 12%)
 - Higher numbers of youth reporting they get consistent opportunities for leadership (26% compared to 3%)
 - Higher numbers of youth reporting they get consistent opportunities to build their knowledge of their community (71% compared to 42%)
 - Higher numbers of youth reporting they get consistent opportunities to “give back” to their community (69% compared to 46%)
- When compared to youth organizing practices, identity support practices were associated with:
 - Higher numbers of youth indicating they are consistently “interested” in program activities (50% compared 40%)
 - Higher numbers of youth indicating they are consistently “challenged” by program activities (52% compared to 38%)
 - Higher numbers of youth reporting feeling consistently physically safe (48% compared to 38%)

FINDING #3

Several civic activism practices offer new models for working with young people.

Civic activism is characterized by an emphasis on group processes and consensus building. Youth and adult leaders within YLDI organizations emphasized that leadership is embodied in the ability to listen, empathize, and cooperate. Leadership, within a civic activist context, is not so much about individual achievement as it is

about learning how to participate in group processes, build consensus, and subsume personal interests and ideas to those of the collective. This dimension of leadership has not been fully explored within the youth development literature.

Research also highlighted the importance of community-change outcomes to these organizations, particularly to youth organizing groups. SPR identified a number of intermediate community-change outcomes achieved by YLDI groups, such as increased youth involvement in their community decision making, increased press or community attention to a key campaign issue, and changes in policies, rules, or regulations.

Civic activism practices include:

Popular education and the identification of personal and civic challenges.

One of the assumptions of civic activism is that young people are experts in their own lives (not “empty vessels”), and that the starting place for all new learning is their day-to-day experiences. Many YLDI organizations philosophically draw from a tradition of popular education, where every learning process begins with eliciting young peoples’ experiences and knowledge. Popular education sessions often sought to make connections between youth’s day-to-day lives and larger social issues, centering on issues such as racism, policing, school quality, environmental justice, and immigrants’ rights.

Hands-on immersion and exposure to history.

One of the most innovative and powerful strategies that characterized the work of YLDI organizations, was their use of intensive “immersion” workshops to engage youth in history. Through “visualization” and “role-play” workshops and exercises, young people were exposed to what it was like to be in another time or place, and this helped them come to a visceral understanding of history and/or social issues and roles. These types of workshops depend upon a high level of emotional and physical safety within the group, but when done well, they help open up avenues of discussion that more didactic approaches would not.

Exploring oppression through “political” and “critical” education.

One of most universal strategies used by civic activism groups was political and/or critical education. This approach enabled youth to learn about social movements, political processes, and current events. Through political and critical education, civic activism groups hoped to support critical thinking skills and develop values and attitudes that would help youth deal with and take action against injustice.

Popular youth culture as a medium for political analysis, expression, and identity.

YLDI organizations used art forms like Rap, Hip Hop, and poetry as mediums for discussion, critique, expression, and to help create a shared sense of identity. These mediums were useful because they have meaning to young people, they chronicle life stories, and they often highlight the dynamics of social class and race in the United States. The use of music and art as a medium for resistance was particularly powerful.

Direct community engagement.

YLDI organizations engaged youth in education, advocacy, and community action. Youth presented at conferences, spoke in front of city councils, and contacted community leaders. Young people often spoke about such opportunities as chances to come into their “power,” and exercise a sense of voice. These efforts not only built young people’s knowledge, they contributed to real community change.

FINDING #4

Technical assistance from the Innovation Center supported YLDI organizations’ ability to develop and nurture leadership skills for young adult workers and to strengthen their work in civic activism and youth development.

The role of the Innovation Center sheds new light on the contributions of intermediary organizations.

This initiative was powerful because:

- the role of the intermediary was constant in a context characterized by high staff turnover;
- YLDI organizations could renegotiate grant objectives as they honed in on their actual programmatic and organizational development needs; and
- common values of youth leadership were promoted across diverse organizations through technical assistance.

Throughout the project, the Innovation Center offered a combination of group learning and individualized follow-up. Group learning led to important knowledge gains and attitudinal shifts. Individualized follow-up reinforced and extended the knowledge gains so that participants could apply them to their own organizations.

The learning partners emerged from YLDI highly committed to civic activism, youth empowerment, and social justice principles, and appreciative of the importance of organizational capacity building.

With increased knowledge of models, theories, and practices of civic activism and youth leadership, a number of organizational leaders were able to better articulate their program's theory of change. With this newly articulated theory of change, they were better able to communicate the essence, urgency, and importance of their work with marginalized youth.

Through technical assistance, YLDI organizations came to value strategic planning, developing a theory of change, self-evaluation, financial systems, and documenting best practices, policies, and procedures.

Documentation and evaluation became very important to these groups. These mechanisms allowed the YLDI leaders to build institutional memory and to ground their organizational and program planning in accurate and useful data.

Through technical assistance, many YLDI organizations expanded their programming capacity and coordination ability.

Through group learning sessions, organizations inspired one another to rethink how they promote youth leadership and also exchanged practices on political education, direct action, and identity specific interventions.

Program-related Recommendations for Practitioners

Use the core youth development framework as a foundation for all organizations that work with young people.

After years of refinement, the youth development field is reaching consensus on the core supports and opportunities that young people need for healthy development (National Research Council, 2002). YLDI research indicates that these supports and opportunities are important for all youth-serving organizations, even those that define themselves as civic activism organizations rather than youth development organizations. They act as a necessary base or foundation for program-specific approaches such as youth organizing or identity support.

Make identity support a crucial focus of youth development.

Through healthy identity development, young people build an autonomous yet socially integrated and connected sense of self. The YLDI organizations are at the forefront of defining the intersections between identity formation and youth development. Identity work is often seen as tailored to youth with "special" needs. This research shows that identity support has an important place in the standard practice of all organizations that touch youth's lives. All young people need access to information on their histories and backgrounds. They need adult role models. They need a space where they can explore their identities safe from the threat of stereotyping, harassment, or rejections.

Use youth organizing strategies to engage young people as leaders in their communities.

The findings show that youth organizing is a practical approach to grassroots community change. The YLDI youth organizing groups adopted a social justice orientation that helped youth channel their anger and energy into productive civic action. Their accomplishments demonstrate that, if provided with a structure and framework for identifying challenges in their communities, developing a change agenda, and taking action, youth are interested and enthusiastic about taking on community-change issues. Although not all youth-serving organizations can adopt youth organizing practices, strategic alliances between youth development and youth organizing groups are effective at exposing youth to social justice issues.

Create formal and well-defined decision-making roles for youth.

Formal and independent structures for youth leadership, such as independent youth councils, were more successful at promoting youth decision making than were structures that relied on youth input into adult processes. Putting two or three young people on an adult board may teach them about board functions and lend a youth perspective, but it doesn't provide young people with authentic decision-making power or influence.

However, research does show that young people can successfully participate on adult boards. For youth to succeed on adult boards, organizations must do intensive training and orientation and institute changes in procedures, as many of the youth-led organizations have done, to overcome power imbalances between youth and adults.

Teach adults to step back without tuning out.

For youth decision making to work, adults need to step back and have faith that, if given the responsibility, young people will make sound decisions. At the same time, adults must avoid tuning out. They play important support and advisory roles in youth decision making. Adults must learn to provide a high level of support to youth decision makers without taking over and usurping their authority.

Make time for youth decision making and input.

Lack of time was an impediment to youth involvement in decision making. Youth-led organizational processes tend to occur more slowly in order to accommodate and respond to young people's learning curve. Organizations that want increased youth involvement in decision making must be willing and able to slow down their processes so that youth can play an authentic role.

Use a focused approach with a targeted set of young people to yield the strongest results.

Organizations often overextend themselves in order to meet funders' expectations by serving large numbers of youth. In contrast, the YLDI organizations carefully targeted who and how many young people they wanted to reach. This targeting allowed them to develop a population-specific curricula and to build close, stable mentoring relationships with youth.

Organizational Development Recommendations for Practitioners

Link organizational development to programming goals.

Organizational development worked best when it was focused on enhancing the capacity of YLDI organizations to conduct civic activism programming. Strategic planning, documentation, evaluation, etc. were not done in the abstract, but rather were integral steps toward achieving the goal of better support for core civic activism work with youth. For instance, much of the documentation effort centered on effective curriculum and best programming practices that enabled YLDI leaders to train new staff and youth leaders to engage in civic activism and social change.

Make organizational development sustainable by focusing on it parallel to – not in the place of – programming work.

YLDI "paid" program leaders to "pause" and consider issues of organizational development and sustainability. In retrospect, organizations that

focused exclusively or even primarily on organizational development goals for an extended period of time, experienced low staff morale and high staff turnover.

A few key lessons emerged from this. First, programming work must be the organization's first priority and must continue alongside organizational development work. Second, when doing staff-intensive organizational development work, it is important to take extra steps to ensure staff buys in to organizational changes by listening carefully and attending to their emotional and professional needs.

Carefully structure leadership and staff transitions to maintain organizational stability and capacity.

A few organizations within YLDI struggled under the weight of repeated staff and leadership transitions, often losing key pieces of institutional history and capacity with each successive departure. Two YLDI organizations, however, managed to transfer leadership smoothly, and their experiences have helped frame our understanding of best practices. First, in each of these cases, the executive directors who were leaving the organization were invested in supporting a smooth transition and were committed to continue working at the organization until their successor had come on board and felt equipped to lead. Second, great care was taken in selecting a successor whose values and approach were a good match to the organization. Third, transition plans were put into place, which served as an invaluable roadmap for incoming staff.

Tie program evaluation to the civic activism program theory of change and strategic/continuous improvement planning process.

Over the course of YLDI, organizational leaders learned the importance of making decisions on program and organizational improvement that are *data-driven*. Through collaborating with SPR to customize components of the YLDI youth survey, leaders gained an increased understanding of the significance of using standardized dimensions tied to research-based youth development and civic activism frameworks. Further, through the use

and analysis of the YLDI youth survey, leaders were able to get feedback from youth in their programs on the relative power and effectiveness of their programming strategies. Thus, it is crucial that practitioners gain insight into how evaluation can be used for program planning and improvement.

Document each step of the process to minimize institutional memory loss and promote best practices.

Much of what was discussed, exchanged, and developed prior to and during the initiative was documented by the YLDI learning partners. They took pains to record their innovative workshops, trainings, and best practices, so that when leaders and key staff leave the organization, all valuable knowledge is not lost. This process is key to long-term sustainability because as organizations grow and expand, manuals, guides, and curricula play an important role in orienting new staff to the program philosophy and concrete strategies to engage youth.

Offer stipends and/or hourly pay for youth in leadership positions to help with recruitment and retention of youth.

Many of the YLDI organizations paid youth a stipend or hourly wage for their time. Although the wage was often quite small, it represented conscious investment of scarce organizational resources. Stipends, or hourly pay, helped legitimize the role of young people within the organization, created a basis for the organization to hold youth accountable, formally recognized the value of young people's time and commitment, and increased the visibility of youth leaders.

Recommendations For Funders

The findings on YLDI collaborative and organizational outcomes can inform funders about the needs of civic activism organizations and the effectiveness of key capacity-building strategies. The following is a summary of the overarching recommendations.

Build capacity through the use of intermediaries and local technical assistance providers.

For a large national initiative of relatively small organizations, the use of an intermediary was pivotal in sustaining the relationships and cohesiveness of the group. The Innovation Center was able to provide organizations with a national (and even international) perspective, helping to link them to physically distant organizations and resources, while also brokering relationships with local technical assistance providers who could offer more hands-on and individualized support.

These types of relationships and networks, between foundations, intermediaries, and local providers, have great potential to facilitate information sharing and provide a support infrastructure for community-based groups. Such networks are, however, still under-developed. Funders could build and support similar training and information infrastructures to connect leaders of community-based organizations with accessible and affordable professional training, resources, and organizational development.

Sponsor collaborative learning communities to enhance networking and field development.

Several design elements contributed to the success of the learning group structure of the YLDI initiative. First, the structure of the learning group meetings reflected a collaborative paradigm of organizational learning, emphasizing that all participants are teachers and learners. Second, the Innovation Center and the Ford Foundation emphasized the need for executive directors *and* one other high-level staff to attend each meeting. This contributed to the overall capacity of the group and encouraged the transfer of knowledge back to the organization.

It was clear that the learning and professional development of these practitioners was not done when the initiative ended. Many of these organizations were ready for another round of more advanced and continued group learning. Funders can support learning networks at the local, regional, and national level to share knowledge and build capacity.

Build in project deliverables that help advance organizational goals rather than just report project outcomes.

YLDI deliverables were negotiated with the Innovation Center and the Ford Foundation at the onset of the grant and included training and curriculum manuals, handbooks, and documentation reports. Deliverables helped contribute to the exchange of information and expertise across groups, and advanced the organizational capacity-building goals of the grantees. They also enabled the Innovation Center to monitor grantees' progress over the course of the grant.

Stabilize funding streams for civic activism work, including youth organizing and identity support strategies.

At the sunset of the YLDI project, many organizations still lacked a coherent and stable funding base. Their fundraising efforts were complicated by the ongoing perception that civic activism is "radical" or "contentious." Funders can dispel myths about civic activism to their boards and communities. They can make investments that will help stabilize and legitimize civic activism within the fields of youth development and community organizing. Beyond issuing direct grants to civic activism organizations to support staff retention and direct programming, funders can support capacity building in civic activism groups.

Support further research on civic activism.

Ongoing research is needed in order to test YLDI findings, expand and improve emerging measures of civic activism, and explore intriguing questions about the applicability and efficacy of civic activism in different settings.

Conclusion

In many ways, this initiative is a turning point in the youth development field. The pendulum has swung back a bit from a romanticized notion of programs for “all” youth, to a renewed recognition of the challenging contexts that confront many youth of different races, cultures, ethnicities, and sexual orientations. At the same time, **civic activist organizations have raised and continue to raise the bar for what youth can do.** Youth within these programs are seriously engaged in critical reflection about themselves and their society, uniting with their peers in positive collective action, and engaging community leaders to see uncommon and innovative alternatives to chronic problems in our society. Community organizations can strengthen themselves by creating, learning from, replicating, and supporting civic activism programs so that youth determine for themselves how to make our society a better and more just place to live.

APPENDIX: YLDI Partners

Domestic

Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA)
Oakland, CA

C-Beyond
Concord, CA

Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth (CAPAY)
Boston, MA

Leadership Excellence
Oakland, CA

Mi Casa Resource Center for Women, Inc.
Denver, CO

National Youth Advocacy Coalition
Washington, D.C.

OUTRIGHT
Portland, ME

Tohono O'odham Community Action
Sells, AZ

21st Century Youth Leadership Movement
Selma, AL

The Young Women's Project
Washington, D.C.

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice
Bronx, NY

Youth United for Community Action
East Palo Alto, CA

International

Joint Enrichment Project
Marshalltown, South Africa

Kibera Community Self Help Programme (KICOSHEP)
Nairobi, Kenya

Slums Information Development and Resource Centres (SIDAREC)
Nairobi, Kenya

Youth Development Network
Marshalltown, South Africa





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