Unfinished Business:

Further Reflections on a Decade of Promoting Youth Development[1]

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The central themes of youth development were articulated 10 years ago and the main accomplishment of the past decade has been giving them a name. The youth development language and philosophy have caught on, but progress is still needed. The policy uptake has been uneven at best, but the call for a "paradigm shift" from deterrence to development has generated a surprising amount of energy and enthusiasm in Washington, D.C., and across the country. If used strategically, this positive, normalizing language could foster a national conscience that propels us to do better by all our young people, especially those most likely to be forgotten.

The Call for a Cohesive Strategy for Preparing Young People for Adulthood

Within the span of a year, two commissions, The Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, and the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, issued reports that framed challenges for the next decades.

The Carnegie Commission's *Turning Points* (Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, 1989) asked:

> What qualities do we envision in the 15-year-old who has been well served in the middle years of schooling? What do we want every young adolescent to know, to feel, to be able to do upon emerging from that educational and school-related experience?
>
> Our answer is embodied in the five characteristics associated with being an effective human being. Our 15-year-old will be an intellectually reflective person, a person en route to a lifetime of meaningful work, a good citizen, a caring and ethical individual, and a healthy person.
>
> …The challenge of the 1990s is to define and create the structures of teaching and learning for young adolescents 10 to 15 years old that will yield mature young people of competence, compassion and promise. (p.15)

The Grant Commission's *The Forgotten Half* (1988) stated:

> Young people's experiences at home, at school, in the community, and at work are strongly interconnected, and our response to problems that arise in any of these domains must be equally well integrated….All young people need:
>
> - More constructive contact with adults who can help them guide their talents into useful and satisfying paths;
> - Opportunities to participate in community activities that they and adults value, especially giving service to others;
> - Special help with particularly difficult problems ranging from learning disabilities to substance addiction; and
> - Initial jobs, no matter how modest, that offer a path to accomplishment and to career opportunity. (p.3)

These commissions focused on different age groups and to some extent on different systems. *The Forgotten Half* helped focus the country's attention on a vulnerable population—noncollege-bound youth—simultaneously pushing age boundaries for support and challenging the adequacy of social, economic and vocational supports for those not in trouble but not in college. The Carnegie report focused on a younger age group and the systems that serve those youth—schools, health care institutions and community-based organizations. Both commissions offered lists of desired youth outcomes and critical community resources that spanned systems and levels. Both offered broad agendas calling for systemic and social reforms. And, most important, both focused on preparing young people for successful adulthood rather than solely preventing or ameliorating their problems. Important reports preceded these volumes, and other reports have followed. But these reports captured public attention and set the stage for a decade of work focused on building on youth potential.

There have been significant wins since those two reports went to press. With the assistance of funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), YouthBuild—a training and leadership program employing out-of-school young adults in housing rehabilitation—has been replicated nationally, and Boys & Girls Clubs have developed a foothold in low-income housing projects. Dedicated youth development taxes or youth authorities have been established in a number of cities from San Francisco to Savannah. The Youth Development Community Block Grant—a bill reallocating existing federal prevention funding into a dedicated funding stream—was introduced in Congress. Most recently, $454 million in federal funding has been earmarked for after-school programming through the 21st Century Learning Centers. And at the state and local levels, one would be hard-pressed to count the many programs, policies and initiatives addressing the challenges that have been proposed, started or expanded since the publication of those two reports.

But there have also been significant losses. Although the Youth Development Block Grant was introduced in Congress, it did not pass. Federal support for postsecondary education declined, reopening the gap that had been closed between minority and white college enrollment in the 1980s. Young people's rights to access reproductive health services continue to be challenged. And the last half of the decade has seen the enactment of "get-tough" juvenile justice legislation that runs counter to theories of youth development or young offender rehabilitation.

The phrase "youth development" is now fairly well ingrained in the U.S. policy lexicon, undergirded by the bumper-sticker phrase "problem-free is not fully prepared." But the overall impact of this language shift is uneven—the importance of it challenged by such stories as youth corrections programs that have been renamed "youth development programs" with no concomitant changes in philosophy, programming or staff practices. So, when all is tallied, what has really been accomplished in the last decade? What has not? What is needed in the next decade to make youth development not just a buzzword but a powerful public idea?

Making no claims of definitive historical accuracy (hence the word *reflections* in our title), we use the concept of creating a public idea as a lens through which to examine the successes and failures of efforts to promote youth development as an approach, a policy agenda, and a field. We do three things in this paper: First, we summarize the paradigm shift associated with the phrase "youth development," and offer reflections on the successes and shortfalls of efforts to promote the concept as a public idea. Next, we summarize and reflect on the range of emerging and recurring issues that need to be addressed by the field. Finally, we offer an agenda for forging a strong public idea about the value of investing in and involving young people, including a concrete example of where this work has been done successfully.

The Paradigm Shift: Youth Development as a Public Idea

The Paradigm Shift

"Paradigm shift" has become one of the many overused phrases of the 1990s. In this case, however, it is the appropriate term. The decade spawned the development of a number of frameworks put forth as either descriptive or predictive youth development models. Behind them all are an unflinching commitment to *broaden the goals* to promote not only problem-reduction but preparation for adulthood; increase the options for instruction and involvement by improving the quality and availability of supports, services and opportunities offered; and redefine the strategies in order to ensure a broad scale of supports and opportunities for young people that reach far beyond the existing status quo.

Broadening the Goals

What should young people accomplish? Since the Carnegie and Grant reports were issued, there have been numerous efforts to further specify a research-based list of desired youth outcomes that go beyond problem prevention to describe the types of attitudes, skills, knowledge and behaviors society should expect of young people and young people should want for themselves. Indeed, the number and diversity of lists have prompted funders and end users to call for either a consensus list or a translation guide. Confusion notwithstanding, the outcomes lists share a few underlying themes:[2]

- *Problem-free is not fully prepared.* There is something fundamentally limiting about defining everything in terms of a problem. In the final analysis, we do not assess people in terms of problems (or lack thereof), but potential. "Problem-free" does not represent the full range of goals most parents have for their children. And it does not reflect what young people want for themselves.

- *Academic competence, while critical, is not enough.* Success in adolescence and adulthood requires a range of skills. It includes intellectual competence, but it does not stop there. Numerous commissions, organizations and reports, including the SCANS report (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991) on employability skills, have defined a generic set of competencies that go beyond academic or cognitive competence to include vocational, physical, emotional, civic, social and cultural competencies.

- *Competence alone, while critical, is not enough.* Skills may go unused or be used in unproductive, antisocial ways if not anchored by confidence, character and connections. Gang members, for example, are often extraordinarily competent, confident and well-connected. Their character, however, is seriously questioned by adults and youth with a strong sense of social responsibility.

These three assertions are not meant in any way to trivialize the importance of problem prevention or academic preparation. Nor are they presented as "stiffer" selection criteria, suggesting that, because society needs young adults who are more than problem-free and literate, investments should be made only in those young people who have the most potential. On the contrary, the power of the paradigm shift, to the extent that it is fully understood, is that it reaffirms the need to help *all youth* achieve the goals parents set for their children and young people set for themselves.

We have collapsed a complex list of behavioral and psychosocial outcomes into the "4Cs" rubric used for close to a decade by the International Youth Foundation to define the broad tasks of adolescence: developing competence, confidence, character and connections (Pittman and Irby, 1996). We have recently added a fifth C, contributions, to underscore the fact that fully prepared is not enough—young people need to find ways to become fully engaged. This requires access to pathways to full participation in the community, the workplace, and the broader society.

Connell, Gambone and Smith, in "Youth Development in Community Settings: Challenges to Our Field and Our Approach," later in this volume, have updated the literature reviews done at the beginning of the decade (e.g., Pittman and Wright, 1991), and they propose that the short-term outcomes expected of adolescents can be summed up as three broad tasks: learning to be productive, learning to connect, and learning to navigate. They emphasize the importance of prioritizing "outcomes shown to predict success in adulthood," while avoiding "personality characteristics and other internal traits."

These two summary lists reflect the variations being circulated by youth development "experts." They are different but not dissimilar. For example, developing competence and learning how to contribute can translate into learning to be productive; developing connections translates into learning to connect; developing confidence and character translates into learning to navigate. Both reflect a desire to limit lists and to link them to outcomes that can be observed and measured. The utility is in the definition of clear behaviors and indicators.

Some of the most concrete work to date has been done not by researchers but by practitioners brought together by the Youth Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York. Starting with the assorted research-based lists, practitioners engaged in a structured process to develop observable indicators for short-term outcomes that can be linked to longer-term goals. For example, under the category of civic competency,[3] they identified potential indicators, including:

- Voter registration;
- Knowledge of civil and human rights embodied in the Bill of Rights and elsewhere;
- Knowledge of how to interface with and access government systems (police, fire, emergency medical services);
- Contributing to the community and believing you can make a difference;
- Bringing a group of people together; and
- Understanding specific codes of conduct within organizations and consequences for failure to abide by them (Networks for Youth Development, 1998, p.6).

In the end, it is this kind of work that has pushed the paradigm shift into practical use. And these are the kinds of outcomes that parents and policymakers could look for as evidence of effective programming.

Increasing the Options

What do young people need? What must communities provide in order to expect fully prepared youth? The lists of recommended resources, inputs and supports for youth are as numerous and varied as the lists of outcomes. America's Promise broke through the public awareness barrier with its pronouncement of five "fundamental resources" for youth: safe places, caring adults, healthy starts, education for marketable skills and opportunities to

serve. These are similar to those offered by the Center for Youth Development, the International Youth Foundation, and others (e.g., safe, stable places; caring, competent adults; basic health, human, and infrastructure services; role models; high-quality instruction and training; opportunities to participate and contribute; navigating resources and networks; high expectations and standards).[4] While there are many lists, the translations here are obvious.

Again, the Youth Development Institute demonstrates the importance of moving beyond abstract concepts to name concrete indicators of quality youth development organizations. For example, the following potential indicators are listed under "create safe environment":[5]

- Client rules, including the prohibition of violence, drug and alcohol use, and carrying weapons, are developed and established with input from the young people;
- Rules are published, distributed and periodically reviewed by staff and participants of the organization on a regular basis;
- Rules are enforced in a manner consistent with the philosophy of the organization;
- There is a security plan;
- Conflict resolution and mediation training is available to young people and staff; New staff must attend training; and
- Staff are trained in emergency procedures.

In the end, these lists of inputs needed to promote overall development are surprisingly similar to the lists of inputs found effective in preventing problems.[6] The conceptual work advanced throughout the last decade on developmental domains, key inputs, and desired outcomes that underlie youth development are summarized in Figure 1.

Broadening the Goals and Increasing the Options for Youth

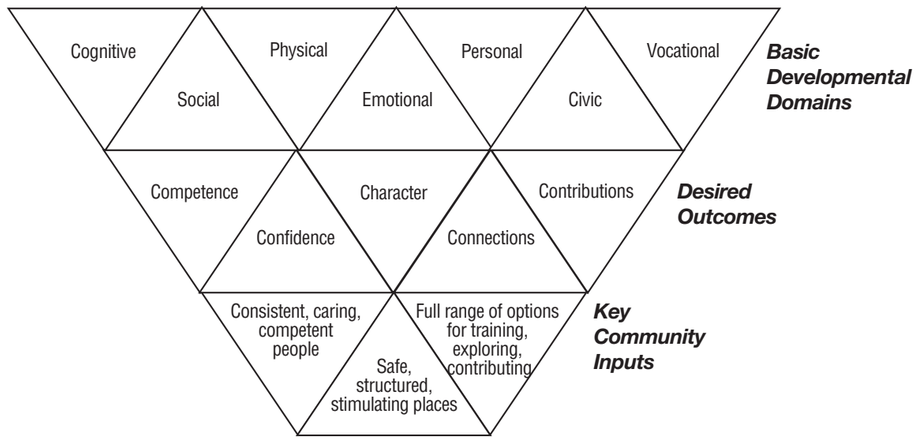


FIGURE 1

Redefining the Strategies

What should communities and policymakers do? Much of the power of the youth development argument lies in the simple statement, "How we define goals determines how we design strategies." The impetus for promoting development was, in large part, a desire to redefine the way services were conceived, funded and implemented. Many strategies were proposed over the decade. Stepping back, however, our collective answer seemed to be, "Do things differently." The shift from thinking in terms of deficit reduction to thinking in terms of full preparation forced acknowledgment of the reality that "programs"—the intentional interventions designed to change youth's *behavior*—had to be recast as intentional interventions to change youth's *environments.* Building upon the basic things we know about youth development, a series of challenges were laid out over the past decade—challenges that were, for the most part, presented as lists of things that must be done to move beyond the status quo. Succinctly stated, they were challenges to push:

- *Beyond prevention.* Again, problem-free is not fully prepared. Addressing youth problems is critical, but defining goals exclusively in terms of problem prevention is limiting. We should be as articulate about the attitudes, skills, behaviors and values we want young people to have as we are about those we hope they avoid. Academic competence is important but not sufficient. Social competence, health (emotional and physical), vocational and civic competence are all needed to be fully prepared. Competence in and of itself is not sufficient. Young people need skills, but they also need confidence, character and connection to family, peers and community, and they must contribute to those around them.

- *Beyond quick fixes.* Development does not occur in a vacuum, and it does not stop because program funds run out. Targeted, time-limited interventions may be needed. But, at a minimum, they should be offered with full knowledge that young people are attached to programs or environments that are not time limited and not targeted solely to a specific population of young people with problems. There is a general need to foster investment in long-term, sustained growth services, opportunities and supports. Having these as a base decreases the chances that short-term, targeted strategies will be needed and increases the chances that, when delivered, they will be effective.

- *Beyond basic services.* Young people need affordable, accessible care and services (e.g., health and transportation), safe and stable environments, and high-quality instruction and training. But they also need supports—relationships and networks that provide nurturing, standards and guidance—and opportunities to try new roles, master challenges and contribute to family and community.

- *Beyond schools and school buildings.* Schools are pivotal institutions in most young people's lives. But they are just one of many that affect youth development. Young people grow up in families, in neighborhoods, and with community-based organizations, service agencies, businesses and employers as well as schools. All of these are settings for interactions that can contribute to or undermine development. Equally important, all of these are real or potential coordinators of interactions.

- *Beyond the school day.* Adolescence is a time of significantly expanded interests and mobility. Young people want to (and have the mobility and skills to) seek relationships and experiences beyond the

family and school. The nonschool hours (evenings, weekends, summers) can be times of opportunity, risk or stagnation. Young people may be offered a range of attractive opportunities. They can venture out on their own and encounter significant risks, or, faced with the visits but not the opportunities, they can stagnate at home because of parental concerns for their safety.

- *Beyond youth professionals.* Adolescence is a time of relationship building. The work of youth professionals is important but not sufficient. Moreover, their numbers are not sufficient, and the relationships they offer, while critically important, are often insufficient unless they can demonstrate that they are involved not just because they are being paid, but because they truly care (i.e., go beyond the job description). Parents, neighbors, relatives, business owners, non-youth-focused professionals and older youth in the community who know local youth by name must be seen and cultivated as resources. Nonschool, and ultimately non-youth-work professionals must be encouraged to view the preparation and involvement of young people as a part of their responsibility.

- *Beyond recipients.* Young people need services, supports and training. But they also need opportunities to contribute. The best preparation for tomorrow is participation today. Further, young people's participation should not be seen only as contributing to their own development. Youth can and do play critical roles as change agents in their families, peer groups and communities.

- *Beyond labeling.* One way or another, all young people develop. Most need additional support in navigating choices and assessing options. A growing number are disadvantaged by a lack of services, supports and opportunities. All may be at risk, but the risks are not equal, and those risks do not their define potential. Targeting is fine; labeling is not. There must be ways to ensure that those who need extra resources receive them without being labeled "resource poor."

- *Beyond pilots.* All young people need the services, opportunities and supports described. No one program or organization can or should be expected to deliver all supports to all youth in a neighborhood or even in a school or housing complex. Yet, to have a significant impact, these supports must be available to a critical mass of young people in a school or neighborhood. Too many programs remain at the pilot level, offering services and supports to a small fraction of those who need help. And too few neighborhoods weave these small efforts together to make a web of supports that are available to 70 or 80 percent of the youth population.

The "beyonds" language was effective in focusing attention on the need for new ways of framing the goals, presenting the options, and defining the strategies. But they were sometimes interpreted as a call for abandonment or vilification of the existing responses rather than a challenge to build on them. When taken not as "instead of" but as "in addition to," it is clear that the underlying themes of the calls for change were solid, combining to define what loosely could be considered the "above and beyond" principles for youth preparation and development. Restated, "beyond prevention" is really a call for problem reduction and full preparation for adult roles and responsibilities. This is a laudable and logical goal. Similarly, "beyond quick fixes" is a call for a balanced focus on deficit remediation, crisis response, problem prevention and ongoing attention to development. To summarize, each of the "beyonds" has been redrafted accordingly in Figure 2.

The paradigm shift took hold in programs and organizations, as practitioners and

Above and Beyond

Nine Principles of Full Investment and Full Involvement

THE GOAL:	Problem reduction *and* full preparation for adult roles and responsibilities.	**BEYOND PREVENTION**
THE FOCUS:	Deficit-remediation, crisis response, problem prevention *and* long term attention to development.	**BEYOND QUICK FIXES**
THE INPUTS:	Basic services (human, health, housing, economic) *and* a full range of ongoing supports and opportunities.	**BEYOND BASIC SERVICES**
THE SETTINGS:	Schools *and* homes and a full range of community settings including community centers, youth organizations, libraries, parks, malls, faith organizations, and businesses.	**BEYOND THE SCHOOL BUILDING**
THE TIMES:	24-7. During the school day *and* before and after school including nights, holidays, weekends, and summers.	**BEYOND THE SCHOOL DAY**
THE ACTORS:	Teachers, youth workers, *and* families, community members, volunteers, young people, and non youth-focused professionals.	**BEYOND PROFESSIONALS**
YOUTH ROLES:	Young people as recipients *and* as active agents in their own development and that of their communities and society.	**BEYOND RECIPIENTS**
THE TARGET:	Non stigmatizing efforts for all youth, those living in high-risk areas, *and* those with specific challenges and problems (e.g. dropouts, young parents, court-involved youth).	**BEYOND LABELING**
THE NUMBERS:	Pilot programs *and* an array of services, supports and opportunities that are affordable, accessible, and attractive enough that at least 80 percent of youth 10-22 are connected to something for at least 80 percent of their second decade of life and beyond.	**BEYOND PILOTS**

FIGURE 2

planners worked to address the "beyonds." But the most important implication of the paradigm shift was that the desired goals of overall youth development are difficult, if not impossible, to achieve within the bounds of a single intervention unless that intervention is, in reality, not a single program (even a comprehensive one) but a reasonably complex strategy to change young people's environments and opportunity structures.

Public Ideas—What They Are and Why They're Important

Like the Grant and Carnegie Commission reports, the preceding section dealt at length with the framing of our approaches to (and with) youth—focusing on the call to think in terms of the preparation of young people rather than solely on the prevention or amelioration of their problems. Is this distinction merely academic, or does it have real implications for policymaking and practice? Does it really matter how these reports and others frame our approaches to and with youth? Is changing the way an issue is framed a goal worthy of long-term, strategic effort?

In *The Power of Public Ideas,* Robert Reich (1988) writes:

> The core responsibility of those who deal in public policy—elected officials, administrators, policy analysts—is not simply to discover as objectively as possible what people want for themselves and then to determine and implement the best means of satisfying these wants. It is also *to provide the public with alternative visions of what is desirable and possible, to stimulate deliberation about them, provoke a reexamination of premises and values, and thus to broaden the range of potential responses and deepen society's understanding of itself.* (emphasis added) (pp. 3-4)

By reframing the goals in terms of development and by articulating a vision of what it takes to support youth, the Grant and Carnegie reports were, in essence, calling for a new public idea. At the time, many youth advocates were becoming acutely aware of the disconnect between policy approaches to youth and the opinions of the people who actually spent their days directly interacting with youth—youth workers and parents. While policymakers maintained a "problem fixation" mentality, focusing on defining and eliminating deficits, those on the ground focused on young people's current strengths and future potential. Policymakers focused on isolated problems to be "solved" by programs staffed by professionals, while any parent could tell you that children are complex beings raised in families and communities—by parents, relatives and neighbors. Policymakers spoke of services, while those on the ground began to speak about opportunities and supports. And the only public institution devoted to development (schools) did so within a narrow frame that limited them to promoting academic competence—yet those on the ground (including employers) know intuitively that academic competence in and of itself is not enough.

This discontent coincided with several research syntheses and policy analyses that in many ways confirmed what parents and youth workers already knew. Indeed, much of the early work of advocates of the youth development approach could be characterized as "footnoting common sense." Research documented that problems co-vary (youth at risk of teen pregnancy are also at risk of substance abuse, dropping out, etc.), reinforcing a call for more comprehensive programs that address root causes.[7] Evidence that targeted educational and service interventions had at best a weak impact which further underscored this call. Most important, research showed that problem behaviors are associated not only with each other but also with poor skills, poor motivation, poor connections, and poor options or perceived options (Berlin and Sum, 1988). These developments gave credence to calls for a focus on improving options as a prevention strategy such as

Marian Wright Edelman's famous quote: "Hope is the best contraceptive."

These analyses, coupled with the discontent, made it clear that the time was ripe for a new public idea that would, as Reich suggests:

- *Provide an alternative vision of what is desirable and possible*—a positive and affirming vision that seems to more closely reflect young people's aspirations for themselves, and parents' aspirations for their children;

- *Stimulate deliberation about the visions*—the outcomes we hope our children will achieve, and what it will take to help them get there;

- *Provoke a reexamination of premises and values*—for example, whether our core value is problem-free youth or fully prepared youth; whether it is appropriate to "fix" youth and to "deter" them from specific behaviors, but not to help them develop; and

- *Broaden the responses*—the range of options that policymakers, practitioners, communities, families and youth consider.

Reich argues that providing new public ideas such as this one can have powerful effects on our world, producing real, tangible change. We agree. Without a doubt, the last ten years have given rise to more programs—federally funded, nationally affiliated and locally grown—that have adopted the language and principles of youth development. But numbers are not really the issue. There were plenty of high-quality youth programs in 1988. In our opinion, the most significant change over the past decade has not been in the quality or quantity of programs or policies that promote youth development, although there have been improvements in both. Rather, t*he most significant change has been in the increased acceptance of youth preparation and development—not just problem prevention and deterrence—as broad goals requiring intentional monitoring and strategic action.*

As youth advocates, we could lower our sights as we look toward the next decade and focus only on the expansion of promising programs. But a decade ago, we embarked on a journey to create not only more and better programs but also an alternative vision. Progress has been made, but there have been wrong turns and missed opportunities. We need a plan. To create that plan we must look back objectively at what we have done—at both successes and failures. Systematic analysis is difficult—there is no central repository. But without attempting to be definitive or comprehensive, it is possible to offer some broad reflections on the advancement of youth development as a public idea, and on the shifts, drifts and gaps in action that may have affected the uptake.

Promoting Youth Development as a Public Idea—Successes and Shortfalls

Also in *The Power of Public Ideas,* Mark Moore (1998) delineates the range of ways public ideas can have an impact:

> When ideas become dominant in *public policy* debates, when *an organization develops a strong sense of mission,* or when *a social norm mobilizes private actions* on behalf of public purposes and suppresses other possible approaches, ideas demonstrate their power to provide a context for public debate and action. (emphasis added) (p.75)

This "context for debate and action" is most robust when ideas have permeated the consciousness of policymakers, public and private actors and institutions, and the general populace. With youth development, a great deal of thought has gone into packaging and marketing the key concepts and basic approach within the sphere of philanthropy and among the nonprofit organizations that serve youth in the after-school hours. Many nonprofits, especially the large national

organizations, have a renewed sense of mission. Comparatively few resources, however, have been used to nurture this idea within the broader public. (Case in point: Although the authors often refer to "problem-free is not fully prepared" as a "bumper-sticker phrase," it has yet to have actually been put on a bumper sticker.) Further, because efforts to affect public policy have not been built on broad consensus, they have been neither strong nor strategic. And, although some attempts have been made to infuse a youth development approach into such public systems as schools and juvenile justice, the results and responses have been mixed. While there have been successes, it is clear that the overarching vision of the youth development approach—the public idea—has not been sufficiently honed and promoted.

Moore indirectly offers some insight into how our efforts could be strengthened. The passage quoted above was preceded by the following statement:

> …ideas simultaneously establish the *assumptions, justifications, purposes, and means* of public action. In doing so, they simultaneously authorize and instruct different sectors of the society to take actions on behalf of public purposes.…In this way ideas both motivate and direct action. (emphasis added) (p.75)

In all likelihood, Moore did not intend the four points on this list to be taken as non-negotiables. But they are useful. If the above summary of the major drifts is roughly accurate, then to some extent the youth development "public idea" missed the mark on all four of Moore's criteria:

- *Our assumptions were too vague.* We argued for too long that everything could be done for every young person. Having gained credence for a universal list of youth outcomes and needs, we were reluctant to argue for targeted efforts. Youth development experts offered insufficient guidance to communities, program planners and policymakers who agreed with the vision but wanted assistance in prioritizing the work. Some were left feeling guilty that they could not deliver "the works," while others felt that they had made a significant impact by haphazardly picking only one or two things from the list.

- *Our justifications were weak.* We confused logic with evidence. In part because the early youth development arguments were so well received, there was insufficient attention paid to fortifying the evidence base. Many individual programs and organizations declared themselves too complex to evaluate, and balked (as did funders) at the cost and difficulty of good evaluation. Community-planning efforts were often built on insufficient data about demand or supply and were started without baseline data on reasonable youth indicators. And the early work that began to "footnote common sense"—to develop the research arguments for the connections being made between proposed outputs and desired outcomes—declined rather than accelerated.

- *The stated purposes were not compelling.* We eschewed problem-reduction goals, losing public interest and drifting away from the youth who needed the paradigm shift the most. Again, we allowed the "beyond" arguments to be cast too heavily as "instead of" rather than "in addition to." Without solid anchors to the things we want our children to avoid, youth development messages often failed to excite the public and policymakers. To sell, investments in such areas as after-school programming have to be tied to goals people are prepared to invest in—academic achievement, safety, substance abuse and pregnancy prevention. Equally important, they must be seen as credible responses to the challenges faced and posed by young people who already have several strikes against them. As marketed, youth development programming was seen as either irrelevant or too insignificant to benefit the youth, families and neighborhoods most in need. This is ironic since much of the impetus for broader youth development messages stemmed from a specific concern about the options-limiting strategies being used with these populations.

- *The chosen means were viewed as insufficient.* We allowed the focus to drift from developing youth to developing youth-serving organizations, thereby overemphasizing one delivery system. Strengthening the capacity of the national and local nonprofits that have the preparation and development of young people as their primary if not sole mission is a critical part of the equation. But it is by no means the only part. To succeed, the youth development movement must be linked to the dollars, facilities, and professional and administrative services associated with public institutions. Subtly but steadily, the youth development movement had less to do with promoting broad, critical use of the paradigm as a way to align the efforts of the wide range of public and private actors engaged in improving the lives of young people. Instead, it became more about promoting nonprofit youth-serving organizations and their issues and strategies.

While the past decade has seen clear progress in promoting youth development as a public idea, the coherence of that idea and the momentum behind it have suffered as a result of the drifting priorities described above. These drifts are not surprising, and they are far from fatal. As noted, many good things have happened over the past decade. But the failure to fully correct these drifts slowed progress and, frankly, left room for others with somewhat different ideas to fill the void. Over the decade, unconverted policymakers, planners, practitioners, advocates and funders challenged our claims. We began to lose ground. But the good news is that each of these drifts has increasingly been addressed by planners, intermediaries, funders, and advocates within our ranks. We turn to their reflections and recommendations in the following section.

Emerging and Recurring Issues

As the 1990s came to a close, the authors spent several months asking those most deeply involved in promoting youth development to identify critical issues for the next decade. Those interviewed suggested a range of things that need to be done to strengthen the overall case for increased investments in youth. We have clustered these into 10 larger categories that range from the message to monitoring, from evidence to infrastructure (see Figure 3). Combined, their recommendations reaffirm our conclusion that we might have avoided at least some of these shortfalls if we had kept our focus on the primary goal: to secure youth development as a powerful public idea.

1. Clarify the Message

In the conversations we have held (or been a part of) over the past six months, there was unanimous agreement that the messages used to articulate the youth development approach have been fuzzy. One funder commented that promoting youth development is like "shoveling fog." Failure to clarify what is needed sparked a range of unproductive reactions. Responses to the argument that all young people need the full menu of services, supports and opportunities consistently fell into one of several categories: "They don't need everything," "We can't afford to provide everything," and "Providing everything wouldn't make a difference." Each of these responses and, equally important, their implications need to be addressed. Doing so requires that advocates get much better at specifying what should be offered, why it should be offered, how it should be offered, and to whom it should be offered.

What. In their chapter in this volume, Connell, Gambone and Smith note, "We have allowed youth development as an *approach* to remain far too broad….The inclusionary impulse has produced a mind-boggling melange of principles, outcomes, assets, inputs, supports, opportunities, risks and competencies…only loosely tied to what actually happens in the daily lives of youth." We agree. The public's hunger for specificity can be seen in its enthusiastic responses to sound but modest attempts to push beyond concepts to specify concrete deliverables, such as the previously mentioned five fundamental resources proposed at the President's Summit for America's Future and promoted now by America's Promise.[8]

Why. The if-then purpose statements needed to fuel public action are largely missing from arguments to invest in youth development. Many youth development enthusiasts decided early on not to yoke the calls for investment in primary supports[9] for youth to promised reductions in crime, pregnancy, and substance abuse, or increases in academic performance, supervision, and safety. While this decision was intentional and strategic, it left us without a clear, publicly understandable purpose for our proposals. The "your children have these" arguments helped people understand what we were talking about. But it did not convince them that it was necessary for all children.

How. Even when the proposed deliverables are clear, youth development advocates

EMERGING AND RECURRING ISSUES (Figure 3)

- **CLARIFYING THE MESSAGE**
  What: Getting to the specifics of youth development.
  Why: The necessity of a publicly understandable message.
  How: Engaging the public systems to help the majority of youth consistently.
  For Whom: The populations served by youth development efforts.

- **COUNTER NEGATIVE PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH AND OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**
  Understand and accommodate public opinion.
  Correct public misconceptions.
  Engage the communication professionals

- **BUILD VOCAL CONSTITUENCIES**
  Support youth organizing, governance, and leadership.
  Create grassroots citizen constituencies.
  Expand professional associations and unions.
  Nurture unlikely supporters.

- **CONNECT TO POPULAR ISSUES, INSTITUTIONS, AND STRATEGIES**
  Link with established "development" efforts.
  - Community development.
  - Economic development.
  - Family support and development.
  - Early childhood care and development.

  Link with hot issues.
  Link with emerging change and reform efforts.
  Close the loop between prevention and development.

- **STRENGTHEN AND INTERPRET THE EVIDENCE BASE**
  Conduct strategic evaluations.
  Foster university-based research and teaching.
  Engage the established research disciplines.
  Create an interdisciplinary cadre of "translation" professionals.

- **ENCOURAGE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT**
  Improve national indicators.
  Strengthen and diversify local monitoring and assessment tools.

- **DEFINE THE FULL RANGE OF ROLES AND ACTORS**
  Define the actors.
  Specify their responsibilities.

- **STRENGTHEN AND LINK PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR YOUTH**
  Strengthen the non-profit youth development sector.
  Engage the "remedial" public systems in promoting youth development.
  Link to schools, museums, libraries, primary health care and recreation.

- **BUILD SUSTAINABLE LOCAL & REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURES FOR FUNDING, PLANNING, TRAINING, ADVOCACY, NETWORK DEVELOPMENT**
  Build to the capacity of local capacity-building intermediaries.
  Support regional advocacy and coalition building.
  Create and strengthen institutions that do cross-system planning and funding.

- **SATURATE NEIGHBORHOODS WITH SOLID SUPPORTS**
  Effectiveness: Youth are provided with high-quality services, supports, and opportunities.
  Scale/ Saturation: Opportunities and supports are available for youth that need and want them.
  Sustainability: Services are available from year to year and sibling to sibling.

have tended to leave vague the hard questions of cost and funding and be too specific on the important questions of implementation and settings. In their chapter in this volume, Newman, Smith and Murphy note that we discuss the need for infrastructure and outcomes at length but "do not spend equal time on the dollars needed to help achieve the desired outcomes." We simply have not done a good job of demonstrating that we have adequate funding to deliver a partial but useful subset of the supports that affluent youth have. Nor have we built confidence that we have adequate systems. And as Connell, Gambone and Smith note in their chapter: "As applied in practice, youth development is defined so narrowly that it excludes key settings in which youth develop." Many nonprofit youth organizations have stellar track records in helping individual young people beat the odds. But most do not have the wherewithal—financial, political and human resources—to help the majority of youth consistently. Engaging the public systems is critical.

For whom. As noted, the youth development arguments were in many ways developed as a response to growing concerns that large segments of young people were being locked out of long-term options because they were being funneled into short-term solutions supported by an implicit double standard: fix those in trouble, develop those who are not. But the lessons of the past decade suggest that youth populations at the high ends of the age and risk continue—older youth (especially those 18 to early 20s, but even the 14- to 17-year-olds) and "high-risk" youth (those young people already out of school, engaged in high-risk behaviors, or involved with the courts)—were not as well served by the paradigm shift.[10] By advancing normalizing language ("all youth are at risk, all youth need supports") to gain broader appeal, we may have had the least impact on those we were trying to help the most. Recent data, for example, confirm the risks associated with disconnected youth.[11] Long-term disconnection (during three or more of the transitional young adult years) can lead to high poverty rates for both men and women, and higher incarceration rates for men. Data like this help make the case for interventions in high school with marginal youth. But this will not happen unless we intentionally prioritize this population. It is critically important that we find ways to target without trapping, but we also must reach beyond "creaming."

2. Counter Negative Public Perceptions of Youth and of the Core Youth Development Messages

Running parallel to the belief that the messages were fuzzy was the conviction that the response to them was poor. That people did not receive the message or did not receive them clearly was not the only issue; they did not like what they heard. The messages did not coincide with their perceptions, and that paved the way for the "prevention is pork" arguments that were flung freely during key congressional debates. Clarifying the message and boosting their power may help those who were unreached or reached but confused. The tougher task, however, is reaching those who are skeptics. Those interviewed suggested three immediate options:

Understand and accommodate public opinion. Too many youth investment campaigns are based on the reality of the organizers. They define the issues and determine the strategies. But the broader public also has opinions that are based on a reality. The Public Agenda polling done in 1997 (Farkas et al., 1997), for example, found that adults of all backgrounds agree that youth today are "undisciplined, disrespectful and unfriendly." Two-thirds of Americans (67%) immediately reached for negative adjectives, such as "rude," "irresponsible," and "wild," while only 12 percent used positive terms, such as "smart" or "helpful." They believe this about teens and about younger children. They recognize that it is tougher today raising or being a teen, but they blame parents for abdicating responsibility. They think that the issues are more about discipline, morals and community organizations than about government programs that address health or poverty. And they believe that young people can be turned around but are not sure how they as individuals can help. This information does not change our bottom-line beliefs, but each nugget of understanding clearly should influence how our messages are delivered and who we ask to deliver them.

Correct public misconceptions. As disheartening as the Public Agenda findings are, contain a fundamental truth that cannot be ignored. Many of the things that youth development advocates would argue young people must have (e.g., relationships and guidance) and must build (e.g., character and connections) are supported by the general public. But there are long-standing misconceptions about what young people and their families want, need and can do that must be addressed. Some of these misconceptions are tied directly to race, ethnicity and gender. Others reflect long-standing biases in media reporting on youth and their families that highlight the negative and underreport the positive—painting young people as problems or recipients more than as resources and stakeholders, and painting parents as incompetent or insignificant. Focused efforts must be undertaken to counter these myths, misconceptions and misrepresentations.

Engage the communication professionals. One of the loudest messages was that communication is serious business, and that youth development advocates have simply gone too long without strategic advice on message, positioning and polling. The sophistication and success of such initiatives as the Benton Foundation's Campaign for Kids (recently renamed Connect for Kids) is evidence of the benefits of intentional development of messages, messengers and mechanisms.

3. Build Vocal Constituencies

Public opinion is the sibling of public will. Vocal constituencies can change public opinion, increase public will (especially when organized at all levels), and, ultimately, change public and private policies. Ongoing efforts to build four key constituent bases must be strengthened:

Support youth organizing, governance and leadership. Young people must have vehicles for organizing and speaking for themselves about issues that affect them directly and issues that affect the larger community and society.[12] Many organizations, governments and initiatives have focused on the goal of getting young people into decision-making positions. But these positions are often only as powerful as the constituencies behind them.

Create grassroots citizen constituencies. Organize "a Sierra Club for Youth" as Richard Murphy, director of the Center for Youth Development often suggests. Make it clear that young people are a valuable resource to be protected and promoted as much as the environment. Such a broad-based constituency could include those who are actively involved in youth work, as well as those who are simply interested in the well-being of youth. Just as the Sierra Club includes many members who are not actively working to protect the environment in their day-to-day lives, a "Sierra Club for Youth" could involve everyone from a concerned grandmother to a local business owner. Organizations like Baltimore's Safe and Sound Campaign,[13] the Center for Youth Development, the Search Institute, the Benton Foundation and the National Network for Youth are already making progress in this area. Much more, however, needs to be done.

Expand professional associations and unions. Some issues cannot be addressed by professional associations without the risk of appearing self-serving, and other issues may not be addressed because they are controversial. But many issues will remain untouched or unchallenged unless the people and organizations that work with youth organize within and across professional boundaries. The National Collaboration for Youth, for example, has demonstrated strategic successes. It

still has a long way to go, however, to establish the level of clout claimed by other well-known collaborations and associations.

Nurture unlikely supporters. Sometimes the message is most powerful when it comes from an unexpected but respected source. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids—a national anticrime organization led by police chiefs, police officer organizations, sheriffs, prosecutors and crime survivors—has a focused and positive mission: to encourage those in the justice system (and victims of injustice) to speak out on behalf of early and sustained investments in development and prevention. As their brochure states: "No weapons in the war on crime are more important than the investments that keep kids from becoming criminals in the first place—investments which help all children get the right start they need to become responsible adults." Such messages may go further to convince nonbelievers than our own advocacy work. These types of "unlikely" constituencies must be intentionally developed and strengthened.

4. Connect to Popular Issues, Institutions and Strategies

The youth development movement is in some ways like a tractor trailer full of furniture with no truck. We keep waiting for the driver to show up to pull the whole trailer across country, all the while missing opportunities to get pieces shipped for free on other folks' runs. In articulating the challenge as all things for all kids, we unnecessarily distanced ourselves from the systems, programs, professionals, policymakers and even funders who controlled most of the traffic. We also failed to link with established development efforts, hot issues and ongoing reform efforts.

Link with established "development" efforts. As we refocus on the approach, we need to aggressively seek ways to learn from and link with efforts to strengthen and engage families, residents, citizens and communities. To advance, the youth development movement has to find its way into a broader set of movements and efforts to support families and rebuild communities. Four such efforts come to mind:

- *Community development.* Experts in community-building strategies—community development, community organizing, neighborhood revitalization, and family support—are steadily increasing their interest in and commitment to providing youth services and engaging youth leaders. Community organizers, especially in immigrant neighborhoods, are increasingly engaging young people as valuable partners.[14]

- *Economic development.* Many experts are wooing young people as the next wave of entrepreneurs. And there are a growing number of efforts to rekindle civic pride and community ownership by engaging the younger generations.

- *Family support and development.* Family support efforts have grown stronger over the years, but have kept their primary emphasis on families with young children. Conversations at the beginning of the decade focused on how these efforts could be linked with youth development efforts. Many are now saying once again that it is time to connect efforts to support youth with efforts to support the families that raise them.

- *Early childhood care and development.* Now ten years older than the youth development movement, with a focus on young people ten years younger, the early childhood movement stands as an important model of what needs to happen in the youth development movement. As the early childhood field pushes its age boundaries up from five to eight, there is an opportunity to link and join forces.

Link with hot issues. The same advice given for linking with other development efforts applies to youth development advocates' connection to popular issues and strategies prominent on federal, state and local agendas. Advocates need to be prepared to "hitch their trailers" to issues that address positively stated needs and opportunities (e.g., mentoring, after-school programming and community service) as well as issues that address risk behaviors (e.g., teen pregnancy, smoking and violence prevention). Linking with hot issues has obvious risks. Advocates may contribute to the drift rather than reduce it if they are not absolutely clear about the goals and the strategies being proposed. Links with hot issues must be forged both opportunistically and responsibly. In his chapter in this volume, Gary Walker says:

> Tight as the restrictions are, they do not deny any opportunity for action at the national level: they simply define a narrow avenue for successful strategy. That avenue requires that we view public interest in activities like "mentoring" and "after-school programming" not as narrow, modest items that are too limited and oriented to negative behavior to warrant an all-out effort, but as-good-as-they-come opportunities to gain public support for the very basic developmental supports that all youth need.

Link with emerging change and reform efforts. Perhaps the place in which the lack of linkages is most apparent is in reform efforts that engage adults to change the status quo. Young people grow up in communities and spend enormous amounts of time in school. Clearly, these two settings have a profound effect on youth development. Yet neither basic youth development tenets nor young people themselves are often represented "at the table" as decision-makers in school or community reform efforts. More damning is the fact that their presence is seldom missed. At best young people are seen as service recipients or valued customers but they are rarely viewed as key informants, and they are often considered as part of the problem. In fact, the tenets of youth development (e.g., the importance of relationships and safe and stimulating places) are often left outside the boardroom, even by those who have been through the trainings.

Close the loop between prevention and development. The statement that prevention and preparation are two sides of the same coin seems almost too obvious to make, especially in light of a host of programmatic examples that illustrate the power of this combined approach. But more than 10 years after arguments for investments in youth development (not just problem prevention) tensions still divide the researchers, policy advocates and practitioners who promote youth development and those who promote problem prevention. These tensions persist, in part, for three reasons:

- *Unmet needs.* The youth-serving organizations and efforts that have capitalized most on the "youth development paradigm shift" have not consistently addressed the needs of young people who are dealing with or are most at risk for poverty, school failure, family crises and problem behaviors.

- *Weak links.* The organizations and efforts that were strongest in attending to the overlooked components of developmentally sound youth programming—relationship building, personal and social skills development, program and community participation, arts and recreation—were, in fact, often weak in the areas most closely associated with problem prevention and poverty reduction. They often failed to make strong links to health services, education and employment.

- *The community tightrope.* The tensions were often exacerbated at the community level. Community-wide initiatives found it difficult to strike a balance between the "all youth" and "the high-risk youth" targets as well as between the "youth development" efforts (which tend to be focused on the softer components of a sound youth development package) and the prevention and remediation efforts.

These tensions are ironic because, as noted, "all youth are at risk" arguments were crafted specifically to combat the compartmentalizing and "dumbing down" of programs offered to youth deemed "high risk." Nonetheless, the tensions still exist. Closing the loop between prevention and development—in policy, program, practice, and basic premises and philosophy—must be a priority. The public still resonates with the prevention of problems.

5. Strengthen and Interpret the Evidence Base

The evidence base to counter misconceptions and to advocate for the youth development approach remains weak. The youth development movement had neither solid program evaluations nor compelling scientific models to support interventions like Midnight Basketball for populations like gang-involved youth. Many have suggested ways to best address this void. We note three themes:

Conduct strategic evaluations. A decade of investment in youth development programming has yielded an unusually small number of evaluations. The marketing value of good, objective evaluations with robust results is clear.[15] While every program cannot and probably should not be evaluated, a critical mass of strategically funded program evaluations could bring enormous credibility to broader efforts. Unfortunately, good evaluations are few and far between. A recently completed meta-analysis of over 400 highly recommended programs, commissioned by the Department of Health and Human Services, yielded only a handful of programs that demonstrated significant results using rigorous evaluation methods (Catalano et al., 1999). The situation is only slightly better for demonstration projects and initiatives. Evaluation percentages are higher, but the outcomes and the lessons are long in coming and are not always as instructive as we would like.

Foster university-based research and teaching. Research on youth problems, academic achievement, and recognized youth institutions such as schools is thriving in academia. But as Benson and Saito note in their chapter, "a disproportionate ratio of the scientific work [related to youth development] (research and evaluation) is conducted by intermediary nonprofits (e.g., Search Institute, P/PV, AED) or university-affiliated centers of applied research (e.g., Chapin Hall)." They correctly conclude that there is "little evidence of the kind of systematic inquiry necessary to guide, shape, refine and fuel the [youth development] approach. The potential power of the youth development paradigm is not matched by a like commitment to and investment in research."

Engage the established research disciplines. As Costello, Toles, Spielberger and Wynn note in their chapter, it is important to get those working in existing fields (e.g., education, social work, public health, and psychology) to engage in understanding and applying the youth development approach. These professionals have to be able to explain where their work fits into our overall picture of what it means to be an adolescent, and what services, opportunities and supports young people need to become fully prepared adults. This kind of uptake is often propelled by research that links currently accepted definitions of goals and practices to new ones. Ironically, some of the strongest evidentiary arguments for investing in the types of high-quality supports and opportunities that have come to be associated with youth development have been made by researchers tracking problems. On this front, it would be wise to mend fences with the preventionists, a ready bridge into academic research, professional training and public funding. As Benson and Saito note in their chapter, "This work claims (arguably) a deeper research base than does youth development" and consequently "takes the scientific and moral high road in policy discussions of 'what works.'"

Create an interdisciplinary cadre of "translation" professionals. Creating a new academic discipline called "youth development" may not be necessary. In fact, it might well be disastrous to try to do so. The basic concepts that anchor both the goals and the approaches associated with youth development (prevention and preparation, academic and broader social education, formal classroom instruction and supportive guidance and opportunities, classrooms and neighborhoods) have been and still are tenets of education, social work, public health, juvenile justice, and urban planning. But it is absolutely critical that we nurture an interdisciplinary cadre of action researchers, practitioners and policy advocates who cannot only speak across topics (e.g., education, housing) but who can also influence the full range of strands that define a mature field (e.g., direct service, planning, research, advocacy and monitoring, policy development and administration). These "ambassadors" need to learn the language and logic of the youth development approach so that they can naturally take it into the broadest range of conversations.

6. Encourage Monitoring and Assessment

Throughout the decade, advocates have lamented that the lack of data on positive indicators has made their jobs especially difficult. They have had difficulty both defining the goals and specifying the unmet need. In their chapter of this volume, MacDonald and Valdivieso concluded that our current data on young people "are at best inadequate and often misleading; that, in fact, our dominant approach to data collection—learning what is wrong with young people—is fundamentally flawed because it fails to investigate the factors in a young person's life that we know lead to healthy development." Their assessment and others suggest two parallel tracks for action:

Improve national indicators. Whatever the quality of indicators, the youth development cause would be served if the public could catch on to the idea that, in every basic category (e.g., education, health, economic well-being), resources (e.g., available college scholarships, clinics, dentists) connect to status conditions (e.g., enrollment, poverty, immunization) that connect to behaviors (e.g., test scores, pregnancies). In the long run, new indicators will be needed. In the short run, better use of existing national survey data could, for example, make it more obvious that there is a relationship between poor children, lousy schools, and poor academic achievement. Creative use of data could begin to suggest similar relationships between poor children; insufficient spaces and places for physical, creative and vocational activity; and poor overall preparation for adult responsibilities, including, but not limited to, involvement in dangerous and damaging activities.[16]

Strengthen and diversify local monitoring and assessment tools. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 10-year investment in the Kids Count databooks has given states, counties and large cities a powerful tool to track and compare progress against common goals. But its reliance on nationally collected, publicly available data limits its utility for tracking progress in positive youth outcomes (beyond academic attainment) and primary community supports. In the long run, we need to advocate for the development of common indicators or at least common categories that can be used across neighborhoods, communities and jurisdictions. In the short run, however, we must encourage jurisdictions to use as many forms as possible to amass the information needed to paint a local picture of resources, status conditions, environments, interventions and behaviors.[17]

7. Define the Full Range of Roles and Actors

There are still many persistent questions about which individuals, which professionals, and which organizations are engaged in youth development or are included in the term. Families? Schools? Only nonprofits? Only those working to improve youth's personal, social or civic outcomes? Only those directly involved with youth? And these are

not either-or options. We must refine and translate what is known about youth development into the basic philosophy and practices of the full range of people, programs and organizations that touch the lives of young people—ranging from those who have only occasional interactions with them to those who have formal, public responsibility for their well-being. We must find ways to promote the youth development approach among the full complement of individuals, professionals, programs and organizations that interact with youth and their families while continuing to strengthen the nonschool, voluntary programs and organizations that have traditionally addressed young people's nonacademic, nonhealth needs. We suggest two:

- **Define the actors.** One way to break the log jam is to group players not only by their attributes (hours of operation, public or private status) or their focus (academics vs. recreation vs. health) but also by the intensity and intentionality of their efforts:
  - *"Steady hand" actors:* organizations, programs and individuals that have the mission, mandate and (ideally) resources to have an impact on some aspect of young people's development in an intentional, intensive and ongoing fashion (e.g., families,[18] schools, nonprofit youth-serving organizations, faith-based organizations).
  - *"Light touch" actors:* organizations, programs and individuals that have intentional contact with or responsibility for youth, but whose relationships are relatively infrequent, low intensity or short-term (e.g., distant relatives and soccer coaches).
  - *"Peripheral" actors:* organizations, programs and individuals that have unstructured or infrequent interactions with, or responsibilities for, young people (e.g., businesses).
- **Specify their responsibilities.** Expectations for action and results could then be defined accordingly. Collectively, our challenges could be defined as:
  - *Influencing* public and private "steady hand" institutions and organizations—those with enough presence to have a significant impact—to broaden their goals and strengthen their practices so that they are doing maximum good.
  - *Supporting and training* "light touch" professionals, organizations and programs in the basics of youth development so that they can do more good.
  - *Convincing* "peripheral actors," including planners, policymakers and the general public, of the importance and relative ease of working with youth in ways that do no harm and do some good.

8. Strengthen and Link Public and Private Support Systems for Youth

The proposed $454 million in federal funding for after-school programming has once again put the spotlight on the tension between public and private supports for youth (in this case, school and community-based organizations). Nonprofit youth organizations insist that at least some of these new dollars should flow directly to them, not through the schools. Their administrative infrastructure is arguably much weaker, but their track record in delivering high-quality after-school activities far outstrips that of the schools. This debate is important, but it needs to be part of broader discussions about who is responsible for improving youth outcomes, who is involved (regardless of whether they assume responsibility) and, equally important, how these actors can work together.

Strengthen the nonprofit youth development sector. At present, the youth development field is generally defined as those organizations, programs and professionals that operate primarily in nonschool settings, in the nonschool hours, and with a focus on building nonacademic competencies and connections. While not true of every individual organization or network (e.g., the Scouts, the Ys), as a group, these organizations are in desperate need of funding, accountability, visibility and marketing. The same is true of the professionals and volunteers who work within them. The distinction between "light touch" and "steady hand" programs, organizations and individuals is critical within the self-named youth development field, which includes the full range of "touch" within its ranks and often within an individual organization. This broad range of programs and organizations faces two challenges: First, they must begin to self-regulate—to find ways to ensure that those in the field do no harm, to define the type of "good" they are trying to do, and to declare how, and if, they want to be held accountable. Second, they have to continue efforts to build organizational and professional capacity.

Engage the "remedial" public systems in promoting youth development. Strong elements of the youth development message are present in many of the juvenile justice, child welfare and youth employment initiatives and policies developed over the past decade.[19] But as both Zuckerman and Schwartz note in their chapters in this volume, these highlights are often on the periphery. Costello, Toles, Spielberger and Wynn note in their chapter that "few child welfare or juvenile justice organizations involve young people in program development, planning or implementation. Young people in these sectors are much more likely to be viewed as individuals whose behavior needs to be controlled than individuals whose input could be valuable in developing intervention strategies." Everyone, including those on the inside, acknowledges that these systems are slow to change. But the systems are where the young people and the resources are. We need to reinvigorate early efforts to tailor the presentation and language of the youth development framework to these institutions and work with them as they engage in their own reform efforts. Youth development advocates should bear the costs and responsibility of translation. Otherwise, when these systems and professionals pick up the youth development gauntlet, they may do it in ways that do not fully reflect the basic tenets.

Link to schools, museums, libraries, primary health care and recreation. The youth development tenets are admittedly hard to sell to the systems that are offering second and third chances to young people who are not in school, not employed, on drugs, or involved with the law. But it should not be such a stretch to imagine a well-stitched, if not seamless, web across the public and private institutions that offer primary supports to youth in education, health and recreation. Creating such a web requires a sense of shared (if not equal) accountability for improving youth outcomes and youth environments and a sense of shared risk when trying new strategies.

9. Build Sustainable Local and Regional Infrastructures for Funding, Planning, Training, Advocacy, and Network Development

While there is a long-term need for a vibrant infrastructure at all levels, in the end, much of the paradigm shift must to be orchestrated locally and regionally, where the bulk of the energy and the need is. A successful paradigm shift requires stronger local and regional capacity to repeatedly unbundle and rebundle a seemingly endless set of tasks—from advocating for school buildings to remain open to educating the public about the comparative costs of early and sustained investments to building a network of local nonprofits that have the capacity to meet the increased demand for more supports, during more hours, offered in more places and in more neighborhoods.

Build the capability of local capacity-building intermediaries. Local inter-

mediaries for youth development often juggle a number of roles as catalysts and facilitators of positive change on behalf of (and often with) local youth.[20] They often focus efforts on a number of levels, seeking to support youth workers, programs, organizations and communities. They take on a number of tasks, including creating networks for professional development, providing training and technical assistance, conducting policy advocacy, and providing analysis and research.[21] One of the key strengths of these organizations has been in translating theory into practice, or as Community Networks for Youth Development (San Francisco) writes: "bridging between people talking about theory and agencies working in practice with youth" (Needle, 1994, p.3). In several places they have played an important role in community change initiatives. We need to understand this layer of functioning better (e.g., which roles are compatible within a single organization, which require separation, what type of supports intermediaries need) and to support its growth within cities and counties. Measured growth will come primarily when public and private funders help organizations and communities define and evaluate the roles that intermediaries play, create stable funding mechanisms, and help intermediaries determine effective geographic and functional divisions of labor.

Support regional advocacy and coalition building. Networks and coalitions that support service providers (public or private) play a key role in strengthening the base of community supports and opportunities for youth. But we also need organizations or coalitions that focus primarily on issues, not on providers. These could (and probably should) be independent advocacy groups that come together to define and advocate for changes within their ranks and beyond. Intermediary networks can have difficulty being tough advocates for change when they are, or are perceived to be, part of the problem or, even worse, part of the pool of organizations that might benefit from change.

Create and strengthen institutions that do cross-system planning and funding. Nonprofit or public-private intermediaries can build networks, address training and capacity-building needs, improve public education and in some cases disperse funds. But in the end, they are not the institutions that have the clout or the positioning to do the type of cross-system monitoring, planning, policy development and financing needed. New York continues to be the only state with an established (albeit chronically underfunded) system of youth bureaus designed to play this role at the county level.

10. Saturate Neighborhoods with Solid Supports

Perhaps the most important concern raised was that of institutionalization. Without good monitoring tools; clear definitions of what, why, how and for whom; stable infrastructures for funding, planning and capacity building; and healthy doses of evidence, opinion and advocacy, effectiveness, innovation and activity garnered more attention than systematic planning to saturate places. Little was done to ensure that in the end more young people in more neighborhoods have more and better supports and opportunities more of the time. We normally eschew "disease" analogies, but youth development advocates and researchers might want to consider the public health concept of thresholds. Contagious diseases are not contained until at least 80 percent of the population is inoculated. And they are not controlled unless the inoculations are sustained at the same level of implementation quality. Three critical goals have to be balanced:

Effectiveness—*Ensuring that those youth reached are provided with relevant, high-quality services, supports and opportunities.* Effectiveness is obviously important, but too many programs and initiatives are held hostage to this challenge. A program's sustainability and reach capacity become so tied to annual measures of effectiveness that organizers cannot plan for growth or improvement.

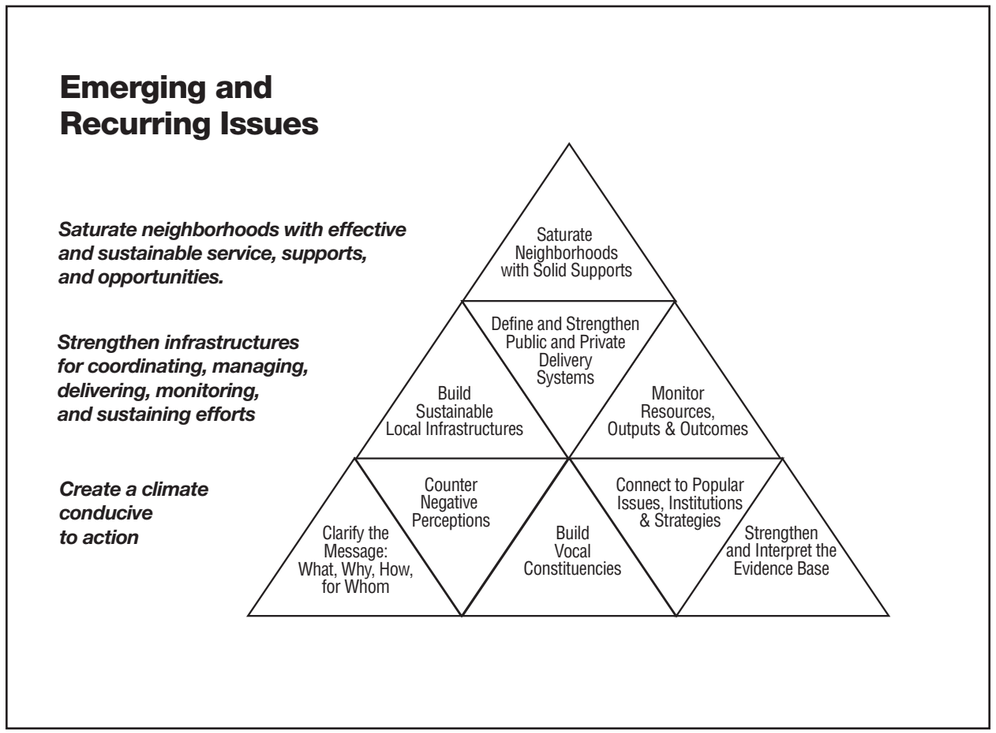
Scale and Saturation—*Ensuring that* the opportunities, services and supports offered are available for a critical mass of those young people who want or need them (building on the public health idea of thresholds). There is nothing about the saturation goal that suggests that individual programs must get larger. In fact, setting this goal for a neighborhood forces recognition that meeting that goal will require far more than expanding selected "brand name" organizations, of which there are far too few to approach the goal of serving 80 percent of youth.

Sustainability—*Ensuring that the opportunities created are sustained from year to year and sibling to sibling*. Sustainability is by far the most pressing problem in expanding programming and opportunities that support young people's nonacademic development, whether the funding or implementation is public or private.

Framing the Emerging and Recurring Issues

Clearly, there is work to be done, and work being done, by a full range of actors at all levels to define and address obstacles to increasing youth investments and youth involvement. The daunting agenda laid out above clustered specific concerns into ten large areas to focus on, but the more we reviewed and discussed the list, the more it was clear that there is a pattern in these ten larger issues as well. They are symptomatic of our failure to think strategically to (1) saturate neighborhoods with effective and sustainable services, supports and opportunities for youth; (2) strengthen infrastructures for coordinating, managing, delivering, monitoring and sustaining efforts; and (3) address the underlying perceptions, messages, interests, evidence and commitments that combine to create climates conducive for action (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4



Shaping an Agenda for Action—Promoting Youth Development as a Public Idea

"Youth development is not a happenstance matter." This simple statement, made more than a decade ago by the Youth Committee of the Lilly Endowment, sums up the progress that has been made in the last decade in focusing attention on the need to promote healthy youth development. If the youth development approach is going to take hold as a powerful public idea, however, it has to land in a full range of places, as Mark Moore discussed, from the general public to organizations to public policy.

Cementing the paradigm shift begun in the late 1980s will require attention to far more than training nonprofit professionals and building nonprofits' organizational capacities. We believe that a major reason we continue to struggle with the issues raised in the previous section is that we let our efforts become too narrowly focused. We targeted most of our energy and resources on strengthening one delivery system instead of taking into account the full range of actors needed to shape and move a public idea. While there is not a clear one-to-one match, by surrounding each of the nagging issues with the institutions or organizations best suited to address it, a broad range of actors emerges (see Figure 5): youth and families; professionals and volunteers; public and private delivery systems and organizations; partnerships and collaboratives; capacity builders; advocacy organizations; movers, shapers and monitors of public opinion; philanthropic organizations; public policymakers; and researchers and evaluators.

To advance youth development as a public idea, we must consider the full range of actors. But, in addition to being *intentional* about engaging the full range of actors, we must also be *strategic* in choosing where to focus our efforts, and we must *monitor* progress on each of these fronts.

The specific issues plus the key actors, organizations and institutions combine to create an agenda for action. They give us specific tasks to accomplish and suggest that the agenda must be built by and with a full range of players from pollsters and funders, to advocates and practitioners, to youth and families. Further, we must recognize and link to expertise we don't possess. For example, rather than attempting to address public opinion solely by ourselves, we must build links to the pollsters and communications experts who have been specifically trained to do this.

The agenda for action is clearly too large for any one organization to tackle, regardless of its resources. Therefore, the key is to begin with the complete picture, monitor progress along all fronts, and base decisions intentionally and strategically along these lines. In other words, we cannot build toward a large-scale effort haphazardly.

While the agenda appears daunting, it may help to realize that in a sense, it mirrors the role of parents, who, concerned about their child's development across the domains, exemplify the need to monitor the big picture. Parents need to be supported in that ongoing process by communities that share a similarly broad-based vision of what young people need. Communities, however, often

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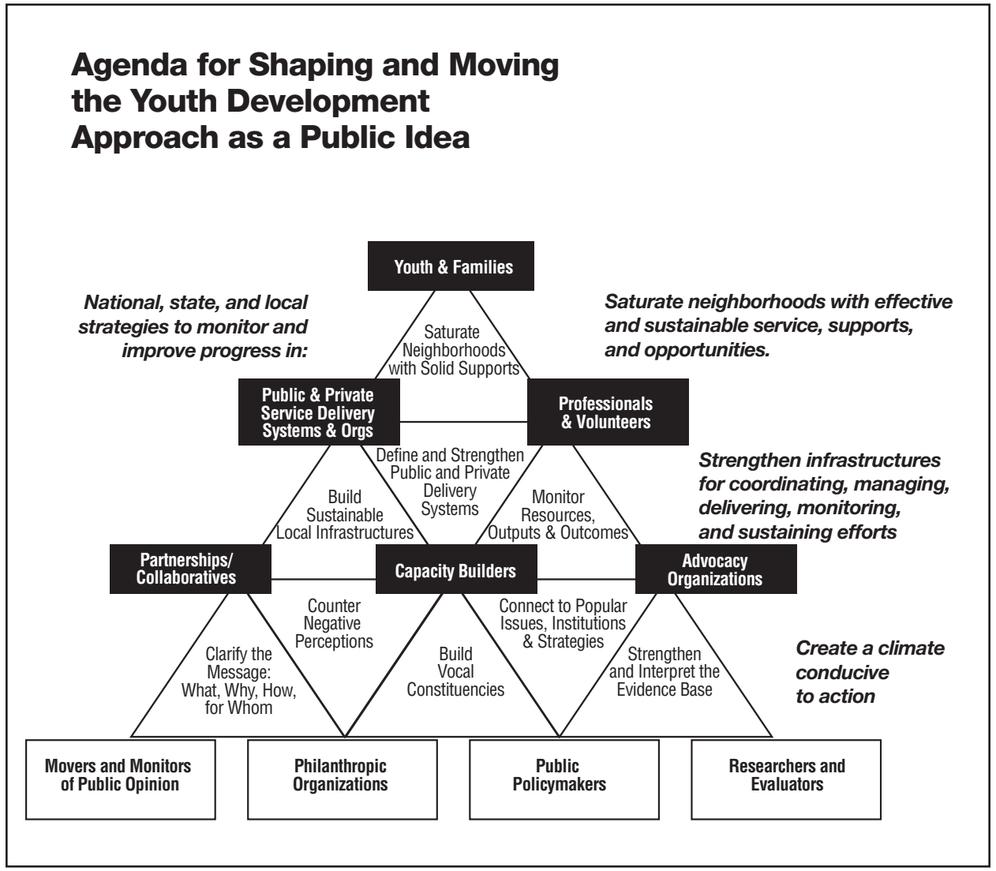


FIGURE 5

struggle to advance a coherent picture of positive youth development in the midst of fragmented policy, resources, and opportunities. One concept that might help parents, communities, and the full range of actors discussed, is a focus on *pathways* rather than programs. We turn now to these points.

Learning from the Practicality of Parents

"Youth development is what you'd do for your own kid on a good day. We don't need a fancy definition to know what to do." This statement, made by Hugh Price, president and CEO of the National Urban League, sums up what we all intuitively know. Parents never provide all the services, supports and opportunities that youth need. On a good day, however, they do monitor the full range of developmental domains (See Figure 1) and—intentionally and strategically—attempt to connect their children to the things they need.

A good portion of what we know about early childhood care and development was in fact learned by observing parents—good parents and troubled parents. The centrality and intuition of parents in the early development of their children is not debatable. But how often are the parents of adolescents consulted or observed? There is relatively little appreciation of the wisdom and centrality of parents,

even though year after year polls show that a majority of young people either talk or want to talk with their parents as key advisers and look to their parents as role models. While true that early childhood is developmentally the time for bonding, and adolescence is (in some ways) the time for separation, we should not let the superficial differences in parent-child relationships (early adoration vs. adolescent antagonism) lead us to the conclusion that the parents of adolescents and young adults are clueless. We could learn much from observing and reflecting on the parents' balancing act—the ways in which parents attempt to monitor the development of their children and the environments in which they spend time, and the ways parents make intentional and strategic choices with limited resources.

Raising fully prepared youth is not as simple as A + B = C, but it is not rocket science either. As far as one in 20 parents might be able to label the steps they take, and perhaps only two in 1,000 would label them the same way. But it is quite likely that parents would quickly develop a common list if interviewed. There are six steps most parents or guardians take to support their children and, in fact, that most young people take to protect, prepare and promote themselves:

- *Reality check*. Where are they developmentally—cognitively, emotionally, socially physically, spiritually?
- *Goals check*. Where are they aiming? What knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors do parents and children want to achieve? Avoid?
- *Progress check*. Where are they now? What progress has been made? Are the goals still realistic targets?
- *Inputs check*. Are they getting what they need? Is the fuel supply adequate? Is the fuel mix correct?
- *Settings check*. What are the possible sources of needed fuels? Are they adequate? Marginal? Dangerous?
- *Overall community check*. Is the overall settings mix right? Is it easy to piece together a steady diet of needed inputs, or is it necessary to bypass or compensate for major settings (like schools, neighborhood blocks) that are not functioning well?

These six "checks" that parents do are not interchangeable; they are interlinked. While policymakers and programmers may arbitrarily select among them, parents view them together more organically in an ongoing assessment of their child's needs. But even when parents have a strong sense of what is needed, they often cannot find (or afford) the supports they seek. Community supports must be developed to help parents help their kids. This is an area in which youth development advocates have misjudged public opinion. As Gary Walker discusses in his chapter and as Public Agenda research confirms,[22] there is a strong, long-standing belief in this country that youth development starts with families, not programs or initiatives. The public consistently pulls back when programs seem to be less interested in helping families help their children than in helping young people help themselves (especially, but not exclusively, around issues of reproductive health).[23]

Parents and young people intuitively use an algebra for youth development—one that we have yet to translate into powerful, policy-adaptable equations. If young people are to get the services, opportunities and supports they need, policy planners, organizers and researchers will have to find ways to assess the fuel mix as it is supplied by the full range of sources in a community (families, schools, community-based organizations, peer groups, faith organizations, gangs, etc.). Parents do this every day. Poor fuel mixes are one of the primary reasons parents move when they can afford to.

Why push for formulas? Because youth development requires multiple inputs from multiple sources over a sustained period of time. Formulas are the way to show concrete relationships among multiple variables. Lists (of desired outcomes, essential inputs, etc.) inform, but they do not instruct. More important, lists give funders, practitioners and

policymakers a false sense that they can choose to support their favorite outputs, inputs or settings at whatever levels they feel comfortable.

The first lesson learned by youth development advocates was that it is unproductive to insist that everything be done simultaneously. The more recent lesson is that it is equally unproductive to insinuate that anything can be done in any order or at any level of scale and consistency. There is a logic to the list of "beyonds" (see Figure 2). And there is an internal logic to how the outcomes, inputs and settings fit together. We may never get to formulas (and probably should only try in rhetorical ways), but we should be able to craft rough lenses that help communities assess their strengths and weaknesses (or force them to confront them), and push them to prioritize responsibly.

Prioritizing Community Agendas For and With Youth

One thing we know is that today, it is harder than ever to be a parent. Families need an engaged community—one that embraces a vision of youth development, taking into account the full range of relevant issues and actors. Looking back, it is regrettable that we failed to offer sufficient guidance to communities, program planners and policymakers who agreed with the vision but wanted assistance in prioritizing the work. Unfortunately, once we realized that everything could not be done at once, we allowed the task lists to be presented as options. Our failure to develop a clear framework for strategic planning of action allowed these lists to be used as the basis for selections that reflected personal preferences or opportunistic use of available funding rather than strategic analysis.

On the surface, the questions "What do youth need?" and "What should communities do?" seem much more difficult to answer when the goal is overall preparation and full participation than when the goal is, say, prevention of violence or substance abuse. This is, in large part, because when the charge is specific (for example, substance-abuse prevention), the solution is expected to be specific (a targeted, time-limited substance-abuse prevention program). The program may (and should) contain elements that address basic needs, but it is the program as a whole, not the elements, that are sold as a package. The opposite needs to be true. Just like parents, planners need to read the ingredients, not just the product name. To use a nutrition analogy, for many prevention programs the marketing was equivalent to that of a healthy snack. Planners were not encouraged to read the ingredients list on the packaging, much less to compare labels and think about total calories or daily requirements. Our approach was often analogous to searching for the perfect "snack" to solve a weight problem instead of focusing on developing an overall diet and exercise plan.

If adhered to, the simple statement made by the Lilly Endowment offers an alternative prescription for action. It suggests the importance of intentional monitoring of all the crucial areas in which development occurs, and the intentional and strategic selection of areas to invest key resources.

Monitoring: Outcomes, Inputs, Settings and Systems, and Resources. Funders have driven the outcome-accountability message home to direct-service providers. But the results have often been counterproductive, especially when investments in monitoring above the individual program level have been limited or nonexistent. Young people do not grow up in programs; they grow up in families, neighborhoods and communities that are served or disserved by systems and sectors. The real question is not what a program is providing for youth, but what a neighborhood, community, system or sector (public education, public health, nonprofit community) is providing for youth and their families.

Intentionality and Strategic Selection and Action: Planning, Prioritizing and Adjusting. Youth development advocates upped the ante and exponentially increased the options for action by

offering a new calculus for youth investment and involvement that broadened the goals; broadened the strategies; and increased the lists of actors, hours and settings deemed relevant for involvement, if not accountability. Many individuals and organizations took this call to action to heart and brought new levels of intentionality to their youth-focused activities. But, as with monitoring, the challenge is to push the intentionality up several levels. The new mantra: monitoring for action.

Infrastructure: Funding, Coordinating, and Infusing Knowledge and Purpose. To effectively and consistently undertake the tasks above, we must strengthen the infrastructure. The infrastructure for generating and coordinating nonacademic and nonschool supports for youth is perhaps as fragile and Byzantine as the array of direct service providers themselves. Much of the coordinating and grant making is done via committees that represent functionally overlapping initiatives. Progress will not be made until there are permanent institutions in place that have been given the budget and authority to act on behalf of young people and families, not initiatives or systems. These are needed at every level, local to national. The frustration is building fastest at the local levels, however, suggesting this as the place for concentrated experimentation.

Just as we need an infrastructure to monitor and make strategic decisions to promote the youth development movement as a whole, we need community infrastructures to monitor and make strategic selections for and with local youth. So what is needed? Here are specific recommendations for action:

- *Baseline and annual data that track at the individual level* and allow us to develop a picture of what young people need, what they get, how they are doing and what they are providing to family and community;
- *Baseline and annual data at aggregate levels* that tell us what families, neighborhoods and systems need, what they get, how they are doing and what they are providing to young people, families and communities;
- *Baseline and annual data that estimate,* if not monitor, dollars spent as well as activities delivered by the full array of systems and actors that have youth services as a mandate or interest;
- *Mechanisms for collecting, disseminating and discussing the data* at the neighborhood and system levels and for involving young people, families, residents, and frontline workers in the processes;
- *Intermediaries* charged with training, technical assistance, network development and issue advocacy to use data in ways that strengthen formal and informal support systems;
- *Infrastructure* at the neighborhood and municipal levels to use the data to inform planning prioritizing and reallocation and realignment of resources, accountability, and attention across neighborhoods, organizations and systems; and
- *Strong and varied local leadership* to keep public and private attention focused on youth, youth outcomes and community accountability.

The Bottom Line—Pathways to Full Participation

In the previous section we discussed the challenge brought about when the vision is presented to communities in the form of lists. Recognizing the complex challenges that communities face as well as the rich array of resources they bring, one way to provide the focus necessary to monitor and make selections intentionally and strategically is to advance the vision of pathways as our ultimate bottom line (See Figure 6).

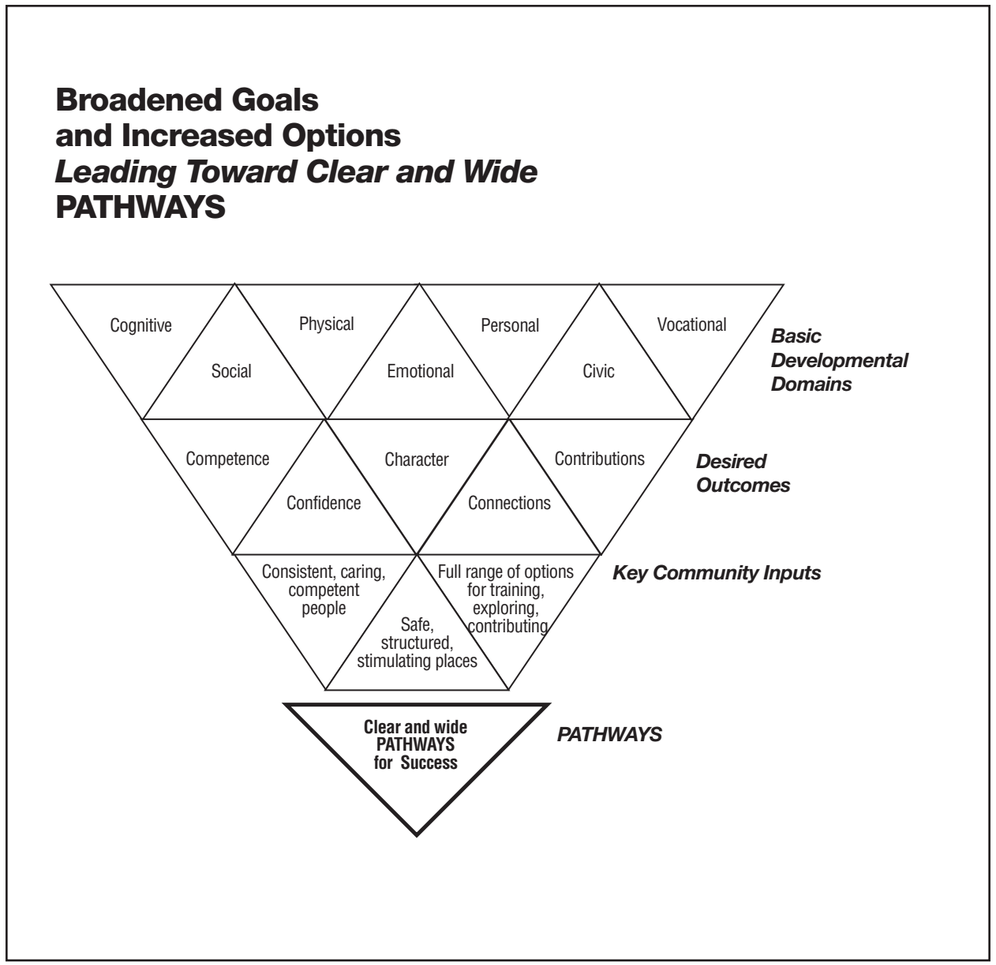
To be effective, strategies to engage youth should not be "hit or miss" or isolated opportunities offered in a vacuum. There is a big difference, for example, between an isolated community service opportunity and one that attempts to draw youth into related studies and careers. Consider how the "stepping stones" toward increasing skills and responsibilities are clearly and intentionally laid out in Boy and Girl Scout programs and in some

faith-based institutions, or how parents attempt to connect their children to the full range of services, opportunities, and supports that they need.

In the end, if created intentionally and strategically, more supports for more youth in more neighborhoods constitute more pathways to success—pathways diverse, wide and accessible enough for all youth to see, try and ultimately select from. These pathways offer the basic things young people need: opportunities to learn, work, and contribute in ways that are relevant to them and to others. Pathways should engage young people in roles as full participants in the work place, the community, and society at large.

The challenge, as we approach the next decade and the next millennium, is to create a robust public idea that inspires sustained public, private and policy action that focuses on creating more pathways rather than just more programs:[24] Pathways that guide youth beyond preparation to full participation and action in their communities.

FIGURE 6



The Agenda in Action: the Beacons Case Study

Taken together, the recommendations in this paper appear to present a daunting challenge. First we say that the full list of "beyonds" must be addressed intentionally and monitored. Next we present a list of recurring issues that must be addressed—from building a solid base of sound programming in neighborhoods to building a vocal constituency of youth and adults. Then we say that a broad range of actors, from the general public to organizations, to policy makers, must be attended to with the same degree of intentionality and monitoring that we advocate for youth. Finally, we say that all this action must be focused on, and result in, more and better pathways to full participation.

Should this picture of what youth need, the range of tasks that need to be tackled, and the range of actors that need to be involved be cause for disillusionment? Is it simply more than we are able to accomplish?

We readily acknowledge the challenges before us. But we also reflect upon the challenges we have already overcome and the successes we have achieved, and conclude that the vision we have laid out is achievable. Further, our hope, and indeed a good measure of our optimism, comes from looking upon one of the successes that emerged in the past decade of promoting youth development: the New York City Beacons.

Initiated in 1991, the Beacons created a web of school-community-family partnerships, coordinated through community centers located in public school buildings. Funded by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the Beacons offer a range of activities and services to participants of all ages before and after school, in the evenings and on weekends. With a current funding level of $36 million, the Beacons make up the largest municipally funded youth initiative in the United States (Warren, Brown and Freudenberg, 1999).

The Beacons, as much as any effort, have embodied and implemented the full range of recommendations presented in this paper. As such, they give us cause to believe that what we have called for is an achievable reality.

Beacons and the "Beyonds"

The Beacons were premised upon a sound understanding of the youth development approach, as articulated by the "beyonds."

- *Beyond prevention—problem reduction and full preparation for adult roles and responsibilities.* The focus was on positives—people, places, possibilities—but with crime prevention as the hook. Funding was secured as part of a comprehensive antidrug and crime strategy for New York City. Nine centers were proposed instead of an additional prison barge. Notably, a substance-abuse prevention curriculum was not proposed, and funding did not hinge on promised reductions in youth crime and drug use. The publicly stated focus was instead on improving community inputs—increasing the number of safe and stimulating places for young people to go, things to do, and people to talk to in neighborhoods where the streets were the only after-school alternatives. Achieving a full range of positive youth and community outcomes, while not touted for accountability purposes, remains the underlying and ultimate goal.

- *Beyond quick fixes—deficit remediation, crisis response, problem prevention and long-term attention to development*. Within the Beacons you may find any number of short-term, targeted activities—summer service programs and six-week prevention courses, for example—but programming for specific issues and age groups is embedded within an ongoing institution committed to building relationships and engaging young people with ample opportunities to contribute and benefit.

- *Beyond basic services—human, health, housing and economic services and a full range of supports and opportunities.* Beacons were designed to provide a full array of services, supports and opportunities, not just for young people but for the full age range. Institutions committed to broad-based development—families, schools and community-based organizations—were made the key players. Social services, child welfare, law enforcement and health were brought in later, once the tone had been set. While activities are most often what bring people through the doors, Beacons staff are prepared to do assessments of the full range of needs and to coordinate services. Over time, as Beacons have been able to demonstrate that they can attract large numbers of youth and families that need critical services, they have been able to bring services or the service dollars on-site.

- *Beyond schools—24 hours a day, seven days a week: during the school day and before and after school including nights, weekends and summers.* The driving idea behind the Beacons was to expand the hours, activities and actors involved in young people's lives beyond what they find in school, and to do this in permanent, accessible places. School buildings were quickly identified as universal, yet underutilized, settings. While community-based organizations are critical for ensuring community ownership and flexible operation, the partnership with schools and government is essential for securing and sustaining resources.

- *Beyond professionals and beyond recipients—teachers and youth workers and families, community members, volunteers, young people, and non-youth focused professionals; young people as recipients and as active agents in their own development and that of their communities and society.* Community engagement and ownership have been instrumental from the beginning. The broad blueprints were filled in by the community as young people, parents, residents and community associations and councils were engaged in planning their Beacon. Young people and their families were brought in at the beginning to shape the programming and were critical to ensuring a mix of engaging activities and opportunities for participation and leadership both within the Beacon and throughout the community. Parents and young people both teach and take classes (in everything from aerobics to English as a second language) and are key planners of and actors in community initiatives. Young people are engaged as significant, if not primary, change agents in their communities, doing everything from physical revitalization of housing and parks to voter registration and political advocacy.

- *Beyond labeling—nonstigmatizing efforts for all youth, including those living in high-risk areas, and those with specific challenges and problems (e.g., dropouts, young parents, court-involved youth).* Initially targeting neighborhoods most in need, the Beacons opened the doors to all members of the community. The neighborhood—not the school—was the focal point. Centers serve, support and challenge the children, youth and families of the neighborhood, not the just the student body.

- *Beyond pilots—pilot programs and an array of steady services, supports and opportunities that are affordable, accessible and attractive enough that at least 80 percent of youth aged 10 to 22 are connected to something for at least 80 percent of their second decade of life.* Beginning with $5 million in municipal "Safe Streets, Safe Cities" funding that helped 10 community-based organizations create community centers inside schools, the initiative continues to stand out in terms of its sustainability and scale. By 1998, the initiative had expanded to 40 Beacons; in 1999 there were 80 Beacons operating—each with a base grant of $450,000 (Warren, Brown and Freudenberg, 1999).

By implementing of these "beyonds," Beacons laid the groundwork for an effective youth development approach. But they did not stop there. What makes the Beacons story especially noteworthy is their simultaneous achievements in terms of sustainability and scale. The Beacons are one of our best examples of beginning with a clear blueprint based on the youth development framework—the full set of "beyonds"—and then strategically selecting elements to highlight, not only to ensure effectiveness but also to ensure scale and sustainability. By the end of 1999, 80 Beacons were in operation. The number alone is impressive—suggesting a level of scale in publicly funded youth programs rarely reached in American cities. But the story is not in the number; it is in the strategy that led to it, a strategy that at every turn opted to promote the goals and principles of youth development while intentionally working to ensure the quality, reach and longevity of the effort. By using the lenses of effectiveness, scale and sustainability, we are able to see how they homed in on a highly visible, politically savvy strategy for achieving scale and sustainability while keeping the overall approach of youth development intact.

Any attempt to expand the reach of the youth development philosophy and approach must be balanced with attention to the quality of the efforts and strategic decision-making to sustain them over time. Effectiveness, scale and sustainability—a troika of goals called for by the International Youth Foundation and others—are useful lenses when making strategic decisions about the youth development framework. All of the pieces of the framework are integrally related and important.

This troika was achieved by the combined efforts of the range of actors we discussed as critical to shaping and moving the youth development approach as a public idea. Collectively, they addressed many of the "nagging" issues we presented earlier.

Beacons and the Agenda for Shaping and Moving the Youth Development Approach as a Public Idea

From the beginning, the Beacons effort focused on far more than a single delivery system. Joint accountability was essential – we underline the number and range of players below to underscore this point. As discussed above, *youth and families, professionals and volunteers,* and *public and private delivery systems* all worked together to build a solid base of sound programming in *neighborhoods. Schools,* along with established *community-based organizations* and the *Department of Youth Services (DYS),* were key members of an unusually well-balanced partnership. No single partner wielded excessive power. *Schools* (selected on the basis of location, not interest) provided space. *Community-based organizations* (competitively selected based on capacity and established *neighborhood* ties) provided the staffing and basic programming. *DYS* provided management and funding.

The *Youth Development Institute at the Fund for the City of New York*—a then-young intermediary organization—acted as the convener of *collaboratives* (e.g., monthly meetings of the *Beacons directors*), *capacity builders* (e.g., technical assistance and professional development activities for *Beacons directors and staff,* linking to such resources as funding and staff training opportunities, and convening *Networks for Youth Development*—a peer network of *youth organizations* promoting youth development as a field of practice and mastery and committed to accountability and authentic assessment), and as an *advocacy organization* (advocating that public agencies foster collaborative relationships with the Beacons) (Warren, Brown and Freudenberg, 1999). As such, they assisted actors in the *public and private delivery systems* to develop sustainable infrastructures, strengthen delivery systems, and monitor resources, outputs and outcomes.

Philanthropic organizations were engaged strategically, with *foundations* coming in as quiet partners supporting training, technical assistance, and evaluation. *Researchers and evaluators* assisted in building an *evidence base* (an evaluation is being conducted by the *Academy for Educational Development,* the *Chapin Hall Center for Children* and the *Hunter College Center for AIDS, Drugs and Community Health*) (Warren, Brown and Freudenberg, 1999).

Public opinion and *public policymakers* were attended to equally and strategically. Beginning with the hot topics of drug and crime prevention, politics were never ignored. Positioning and additional *public systems* funding and integration were always goals. The strategies were not all successful, but the diligence never let up—in *city hall*, in the *school buildings,* in the *communities*. *Parents*, the *public* and the *press* (movers of public opinion) were key stakeholders, creating a *vocal constituency* that kept the political pressure on. A clear message was articulated, with a simple name (Beacons), simple goal (people, places, possibilities) and simple plan (one per district), which allowed the *media* to monitor resources and outputs, *parents* to label what they knew they wanted for their children and themselves, and vocal public constituencies to rally when the going got hard. Had *DYS* simply given 40 contracts for substance and delinquency prevention to 40 separate community-based organizations with different names, the expansion and even the existence of Beacons schools would be in question. The *vocal constituencies* in the *public* and the *press* saved the Beacons from the chopping block after the change in administration.

Selecting *schools* as the actual settings for this work did more than open up unused facilities in the before- and after-school hours. From the outset, it laid the foundation for a savvy scale and sustainability strategy. Starting with 10 Beacons in 1991, organizers realized that going to scale meant starting big enough to capture attention across *school districts.* The initial placement of these 10 Beacons was also strategic. Putting the Beacons in the worst neighborhoods allowed the political process to work for expansion. *Parents* in less distressed neighborhoods clamored for their own Beacons. The publicly stated goal of at least one in every school district was quickly met—there were 40 Beacons by 1996, doubling again by the end of the decade.

Effectiveness, scale and sustainability—Beacons schools rate high on all three. On effectiveness, they have not only done a good job of adopting the youth development philosophy; they have done a good job of training to it and evaluating against it as well. But they might not have achieved the Triple Crown had they taken the traditional route—prove effectiveness, slowly increase scale, then (and only then) begin to plan for long-term sustainability. Beacons' master crafters took the best of what is known, pitched it straight, did not overpromise on outcomes, and planned for rapid but sustainable growth from the beginning, building on what already existed. This is the lesson. There is no doubt that the quality of Beacons varies from center to center. But the number of Beacons schools would not have reached 80 if these centers had been established, funded, and evaluated one at a time. We did not build a public school system or a public health system or a public corrections system that way. And we certainly will not link these systems with the existing community-based infrastructure (for youth and community development) that way.

In an increasingly complex society—one where families are becoming more fragmented, working hours of working parents are on the upswing, gun and drug availability is rampant—affluent as well as distressed families are less able to coordinate, much less personally deliver, the supports that they used to provide. Success stories like the Beacons suggest that there are ways to build on and link to services and professionals that exist in neighborhoods while actively engaging parents and young people in securing the supports and opportunities they need. Growing individually and in number, each Beacon school is a dynamic part of the community, responsive to young people, families and service providers. Much more effective than opening up dozens of cookie-cutter service centers that all provide the same menu of

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supports, the network of community-based Beacon sites was primed to promote the full youth development framework and engage the full range of actors—families, school and human service officials, community members, teachers, service providers, law enforcement officers and, most important, young people themselves—in shaping the life and direction of the community. And so, as a result of careful, intentional monitoring and strategic action, the youth development approach flourished in systems and settings beyond its usual purview. This kind of innovative transplanting of the youth development approach will have to be done if we are to see changes at the scale and level needed to change the landscape for young people, especially older adolescents and young adults who are not in college environments.

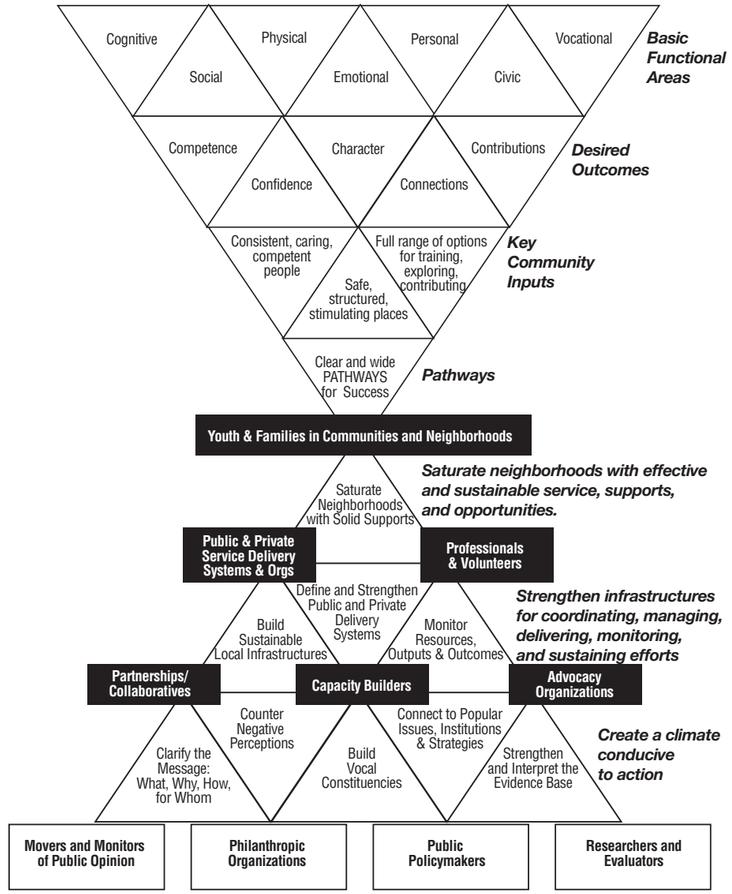
Conclusion—An Agenda for the Next Decade(s)

In the end, reflecting on the success of the Beacons, we see clearly the value of using a sound youth development framework to broaden the goals and increase the options (the list of beyonds), engaging the full range of actors necessary to build and sustain a public idea, and addressing critical issues.

This analysis comes full circle to embody all of the key points presented in this paper and, when properly aligned, presents a cohesive picture of an agenda for the next decade(s) (see Figure 7). The top triangle from Figure 6 depicts the youth development idea in terms of broadening the goals and increasing the options. The bottom triangle from Figure 5 depicts what is needed for a public idea to take hold and have impact. They come together at a critical fulcrum: youth and families in communities and neighborhoods saturated with effective and sustainable services, supports and opportunities that form clear and wide pathways for preparation and participation. This is the ultimate vision we must pursue. But while we increasingly refine the vision, we must never lose sight of the critical infrastructures required. Pathways are the focal point for a full range of necessary community inputs and a means to a full range of desired outcomes for youth, connected to basic functional areas. All of these areas, outcomes and inputs must be addressed with intentional monitoring and strategic action. Then and only then will they come together logically to form clear, coherent, attractive and wide pathways.

Further, if we are to successfully instill the concept of pathways as a powerful public idea, we must not lose sight of the full range of relevant actors. Public ideas do not become powerful through one sector, actor or institution. The full power of a public idea is realized only when it takes hold in a number of places, influencing public policy, organizational missions and private action. Neighborhoods will only become saturated with effective and sustainable pathways when there are strong infrastructures for coordinating, managing, delivering, monitoring and sustaining efforts, and when there is a climate conducive to action. To ensure that this happens, we must once again stress the importance of intentional monitoring and strategic action—this time referring to the range of actors necessary to shape and sustain a public idea. Then and only then can we hope to achieve effective and sustainable pathways, clear and wide enough for all of our children to traverse.

An Agenda for the Next Decade(s)



Broadening the Goals: Outcomes that go "Above and Beyond" problem prevention and academic competence to embody full preparation for adulthood.

Increasing the Options: Moving "Above and Beyond" by attending to the full range of approaches, actors, settings, and ti°mes that affect development.

Shaping and Moving Community Agendas For and With Youth: Intentional monitoring and strategic action focused on creating, sustaining, diversifying and multiplying pathways to preparation and participation.

Shaping and Moving the Youth Development Approach as a Public Idea: Intentional monitoring and strategic action of, and by, all key actors. Together these actors must address the "emerging and reoccurring issues" inside the triangles.

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Endnotes

[1] This paper builds directly on the paper "Reflections on a Decade of Promoting Youth Development" commissioned by the American Youth Policy Forum for its edited volume *The Forgotten Half Revisited*. Our further reflections were prompted by two subsequent events: reading and discussion of *The Power of Public Ideas,* edited by Robert Reich (1988), and discussions with key leaders of the emerging and persistent issues that stand as barriers to investment in the adequate preparation of all young people.

[2] Each of the themes obviously needs to be specified within its context, whether in countries around the world or in counties in the United States. But our work suggests that each of these themes has sufficient currency to spark discussion.

[3] Competency areas included are originality (creative competency), understanding (personal competency), thinking (cognitive competency), civic competency, our bodies (physical health competency), mental health competency, employability competency, and social competency.

[4] See Pittman and Irby (1996); Zeldin (1995); Zeldin, Kimball and Price (1995); Zeldin and Price (1995).

[5] Areas considered include organizational structure that is supportive of youth development; environment factors to which special attention has been focused; a holistic approach to young people; opportunities for contribution; caring and trusting relationships; high expectations; engaging activities; and factors that promote continuity for youth in the program. ("Create safe environment" is one of the subheadings under "environmental factors to which special attention has been focused.")

[6] Delbert Elliott (1998), probably one of the best-known and most prolific researchers on youth violence, offers a list of what works and what does not work to prevent or reduce youth violence. The parallels to the youth development arguments on both sides are striking. What works, for example, are individual competency building, multifaceted family-strengthening efforts, and changes in school norms and climate. What does not work includes boot camps and free-standing prevention curricula.

[7] In Adolescents at Risk, Joy Dryfoos (1990) reports that, beyond the problem-specific information offered, most effective prevention programs focus on the development of social skills, problem-solving skills and communication skills; engagement or re-engagement of youth through participation, leadership and the building of membership within the group; the establishment of new norms and expectations for behavior sanctioned by the group; and the development of different and deeper relationships with adults (different structures for interaction were established and adults were trained to work differently with youth).

[8] Public/Private Ventures selected a different but overlapping list of concrete deliverables to spark community-level capacity building in its Community Change for Youth Development (CCYD) demonstration project. Many initiatives successfully convey the importance of the individual interventions selected (e.g., reducing gun violence, ensuring reading skills). But America's Promise and CCYD are two examples of initiatives that have successfully conveyed the importance and feasibility of providing the interventions as a package. Both convey the idea of thresholds and cumulative impact. The assumption: young people who get these five things are significantly better off than those who only get two or three.

[9] Term coined by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

[10] By their own admission, both America's Promise and CCYD have fared less well in reaching all youth than they have in addressing the package of needs. CCYD selected specific high-need neighborhoods, targeting 12- to 20-year-olds within them. Their sites have had much more success attracting the younger youth into programming than the older ones, primarily because they run into the tough issue that older youth want and need jobs. The question: How much to push communities to find strategies for engaging older youth, or, short of this, how much to communicate the implications of failing to adequately address the needs of this population? America's Promise has an even broader mandate to reach disadvantaged youth from birth on. The organization is pushing hard to get communities to accept all five resources, not to pick and choose. But it is vague to silent on the five age groups (0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 if communities track young people out of high school into careers and college). And it has not explicitly articulated goals for working with marginalized or disconnected youth—those out of school, out of work, involved with the courts or just uninvolved.

[11] Compelling data have recently been released in an edited volume, *America's Disconnected Youth: Toward a Preventive Strategy* (Besharov, D. (ed.), Washington, D.C.: CWLA Press). These data strongly suggest that most young people are at least marginally connected to school and the labor force, or both, until the age of 16 or 17, but that disconnection after 17 quickly becomes more common—jumping from 4 to 8 percent among whites, 5 to 13 percent among blacks, and 9 to 15 percent among Hispanics. By age 19, almost 17 percent of both males and females have been disconnected for at least one 26-week period. Disconnection appears to be relatively benign in small quantities, but toxic in multiple doses. Youth disconnected during three or more of the transitional young adult years experienced significant hardship: at ages 25 to 28, their median family income was only about $18,000 for men and $15,000 for women; about 44 percent of the long-term disconnected men and 56 percent of the women were in poverty; 34 percent of the women received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and 48 percent received food stamps; and men were six times more likely to have spent time in jail or a youth correctional facility.

[12] Notable local examples include Philadelphia's Urban Retrievers, a four-pronged leadership training program created by and for youth; Coleman Advocates for Youth's Youth Making a Change (San Francisco); and LISTEN, Inc. (Washington, D.C.).

[13] The Safe and Sound Community Promises campaign asks adults to promise to bring positive energy to the lives of children and youth in their neighborhood; learn something about the needs of children and the resources available to them; and make their voice heard on public issues that affect the well-being of children and youth. Youth are asked to promise to respect others' differences; establish integrity through discipline, honesty, responsibility and morality; be prepared to learn at all times; and maintain a positive attitude, self-confidence and enthusiasm.

[14] Five years ago, the National Network for Youth coined the term "community youth development" to reflect a challenge to its members—calling for them to go beyond their commitments to high-quality programs and services, to make commitments to link themselves and the young people they serve more firmly into the communities in which they live. The Network's formal language reflects a growing recognition that young people, especially adolescents and young adults, cannot and will not grow up in programs (unless forced). Community supports are critical to their development, as is community involvement.

[15] Steven Shinke and colleague's (1992) evaluation of Boys & Girls Clubs programming in housing projects led to a major BGCA expansion, fueled in part by a significant HUD investment. Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America has been able to parlay the Public/Private Ventures evaluation of its mentoring programs into a major organizational expansion that has had spillover effects for mentoring in general (Tierney and Grossman, 1995). The Teen Outreach Program, subject of an ongoing control-group evaluation spearheaded by Philliber and Associates, did not attract government funding, but it did keep the school-based pregnancy- and dropout-prevention program from dying and allowed it to go slowly to scale (Joseph et al., 1997).

[16] The federal government recently released the second annual indicators report on children and youth, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being.* While there are dozens of factbooks and compendiums of national and state data, this report is the product of an interagency working group that came together to select official indicators for the country. Marketed correctly, the release of these numbers could carry at least a fraction of the weight that the current release of leading economic indicators does. Youth development advocates may write off the exercise because it does not capture enough positives. But it has other equally important weaknesses that limit its utility as a powerful tool for social marketers. First, many indicators beg for comparisons—at the country or the county level. International comparisons lit a fire under Americans in the 1980s when the international teenage pregnancy and childbearing data were reported by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, and they continue to generate sparks in education (e.g., the TIMMS study). Second, most of the categories (e.g., education, health, family security) beg for a consistent mix of indicators. The current mix of resource indicators, status and behavior indicators is not even across the categories.

[17] Many communities have supplemented the Kids Count data with local survey data. The Search Institute's Healthy Community Initiative has provided over 400 communities with local data on the self-reported assets, behaviors and needs of their middle and high school students. The Center for Youth Development has convened representatives from over 20 different youth-mapping projects and has helped eight communities implement their YouthMapping process; further, The Center is encouraging the use of a common set of indicators in its mobilization cities. And an ever-growing number of communities, often with the backing of local foundations, are investing in customized surveys to map youth needs and community resources neighborhood by neighborhood. Increasingly, these need and asset assessments are linked to real change initiatives. For example, extensive, issue-specific surveys of youth, parents and service providers in Detroit (sports and recreation) and Philadelphia (after-school opportunities) fed directly into large planning and service improvement efforts.

[18] Obviously, families are the "steadiest" of the steady hand actors. It is critical that efforts reinforce the centrality of families as the key actors in young people's lives. Families must provide critical supports and opportunities to their children, and they must play a critical brokering function, monitoring their children and their communities and acting as a conduit for connecting youth to critical services, opportunities and supports.

[19] For example, the members of the National Youth Employment Coalition have completely embraced youth development, making adherence to sound youth development principles one of three areas in which programs self-assess. (The other two are organizational effectiveness and youth employment and training practices.) Prevention curricula coordinators in state and local public school systems used the paradigm shift to argue for consolidation of the separate prevention curricula and better integration with the core academic curricula. And Communities That Care (CTC), a community risk-focused prevention training system developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano of the University of Washington, has received major funding and promotion from the Justice Department.

[20] In New York City, the Youth Development Institute at the Fund for the City of New York has emerged as an exemplar of a local intermediary. Similarly, the Indiana Youth Institute, Chicago Youth Agency Partnership, Hampton Coalition for Youth, YouthNet of Greater Kansas City, Community Networks for Youth Development (San Francisco) and the Urban Strategies Council (Oakland, California) have all played key roles in helping develop effective, sustainable and large-scale local efforts for and with youth.

[21] As the Community Networks for Youth Development writes: "TA intermediaries provide the valued services of (1) helping agencies to self-assess their needs, and (2) identifying and obtaining resources to meet those needs, which includes doing the legwork to find resources and sorting through the vast array of what is available to surface useful items and people. Youth workers and program managers want these things to be done but rarely have the time themselves" (Needle, 1994, p.3).

[22] A key finding of the report is that "Americans believe that parents are fundamentally responsible for the disappointing state of today's youth" (Farkas, et al., 1997, p.13).

[23] Youth development advocates are understandably biased toward encouraging young people as independent actors and, more important, protecting young people from hazardous or punitive home situations. These elements should not be lost, but rather should be balanced with a recognition of the wisdom of parents and the central role they play in the lives of young people. As with early childhood, a major support for parents could be the teaching of good parenting skills for adolescents based upon lessons learned from parents and backed up by research and practice in youth development.

[24] For a more in-depth discussion of pathways, please see "Youth as Effective Citizens on Developing and Deploying Young Leaders" (forthcoming), IYF-US, International Youth Foundation.

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