

creating
change:
youth
style!

**A Youth Action Strategy Exploration Report
for the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation**

Denise Andrea Campbell
For the McConnell Foundation
2002

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- Denise Andrea Campbell

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Youth respondents specified how they wish to be identified.

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getting started

Rationale for strategy exploration:

Over the past decade, the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation has funded a variety of youth initiatives, investing a considerable amount of time and resources in young people. The Foundation has both responded to individual organizations and clusters of organizations, and has initiated its own pro-active programs in arts and environment education and student engagement. This long standing support for youth as part of the Foundation's work is rooted in the personal interest, experience and commitment to young people of McConnell staff and leadership, and in a general recognition that youth are important to the implementation of the Foundation's vision and mission.

In this funding history, the Foundation has demonstrated a relative tolerance for risk, but has also faced challenges that have led to this effort to explore a more coherent and effective way to support youth and youth initiatives. What is the current thinking and models in the philanthropic community about the role of foundations in supporting youth? What do young people themselves believe are the necessary areas of investment and development? Is there a

niche that the McConnell Foundation can occupy in this current climate? What should the philosophical underpinnings and strategy be if such a niche is found? Given its history, vision and culture as a private family foundation, what is the appropriate balance between what is needed in youth work and the Foundation's strategic direction as a funder?

Creating Change – Youth Style is the result of asking these questions, scanning among existing trends, initiatives, and the Foundation's own granting history to recommend a course of action for the Foundation in the current and emerging youth landscape.

"I think there needs to be some real valuing of the work that youth are doing. I'm tired of the whole 'youth for tomorrow' stuff, and the very big emphasis on 'volunteering' which basically translates into free labour by youth who have the time because they can spare/make the hours (no people at home to take care of, don't need a job, are talented multi-taskers, etc.). So, make it worth our time for one thing. That is, provide opportunities for youth involvement that are relevant. Make the hours and location convenient. Make the tasks interesting and manageable, and have them be learning opportunities. And then when we do good work, acknowledge it, reward it, etc. Have some volunteer appreciation. Have opportunities for more experienced youth to mentor less experienced youth."

- zohra moosa, former Coordinator, Youth Action Network

"I hope that is what our organization is sort of known for – helping a multitude of systems and initiatives look at youth engagement. It is certainly important to answer the WHY in each one of those areas (ie. community development, economic sufficiency, etc.). There are lots of articles and reports and a lot of thorough information about why it is important and the impact that it has. One of the things that I have been finding to be really compelling to adults is that it's not just about what is good for young people. It's great that they are having all these really good benefits from being involved in the programs. But it is really good for the community and for adults who have power. If you just want to go down the social science route and look at what we've done in the last 30 or 40 years, even internationally, some of the most successful initiatives have had youth-adult partnerships. Some of the most dismal initiatives have had no youth involvement and have had very little impact on the young people they were trying to target. For every dollar you spend, you get three dollars worth of benefit because you are involving and engaging young people, but the community is benefiting and the adults are benefiting so you get a lot of return on your investment that way. Unfortunately, the vast majority of foundations are still thinking about funding youth services rather than the youth connections to community development, economic interdependence and so on.."

- Maureen Sedonaen, Youth Leadership Institute

why youth?

words of wisdom:

"I love working with youth – the infectious sense of possibility, brazen courage and irreverence, clarity of thought and conviction. Enabling young people to recognize their own power to make social change has a lasting impact on their lives, (on me, because they brighten my life) and society at large."

- Victoria Shen

"Youth development is but one stage in the continuum of individual human development. It is important to understand youth development in the broader context of what is known about human, social, community, institutional and economic development. Why? Because young people's development both hinges on and culminates in their integration into the economy and community and their representation in civil society. Equally important, the characteristics of development are generic – they hold true whether you are talking about neighborhoods or economies or children."

- Forum for Youth Investment

Youth are affected by a whole array of social, economic, and environmental issues today. Yet, there are structural barriers impeding their ability to become full solutionmakers.

The million dollar question in the world of philanthropy – why youth? Why focus on young people for a targeted funding strategy over other constituencies?

Youth are cross-cutting.

The focus on young people as a social constituency is an opportunity for a foundation to be cross-cutting and potentially have broad scale impact in terms of (1). working on different interests and issues (i.e. from environmentalism to community development, etc.); (2). working with diverse communities (i.e. women, people of colour, low-income communities, etc.); and (3). accessing and working in and with mainstream and marginalized communities.

Youth are agents of change

With the McConnell Foundation's interest in helping people adapt to change, there needs to be a pragmatic recognition that young people are key players in this pursuit. As J.W. McConnell Family Foundation President, Tim Brodhead, stated, "it is intrinsically easier for those who are not so invested in the status quo to see problems and resources differently." Young people are naturally less constrained by the limits of tradition and convention. Some call it idealism, others call it energy... But the reality is that young people contribute to communities, systems and problems around them with different eyes – a

words of wisdom:

"Can we get research that demonstrates that engagement is not a do-good thing but engagement of young people also benefits those systems – that you have a better running organization, you have a better running society, you have a better running programs if you have young people engaged? It's about that the reciprocity of the relationship, rather than you do this so that young people experience benefits. Rather, you do this because young people experience benefits but the other 50 per cent of it is that the system is better and healthier."

- Stoney McCart, Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

certain level of clarity of values, possibility, and innovation – with an ability to be less compromised and to 'say it like it is'.

"Youth development is about the whole of our development. It is about the development of multi-dimensional thinking that takes into account a full understanding of the realities and cultures of the world we live in, it is about decreasing our unnecessary alienation from each other – created through social history we only just barely understand. Most of all, this issue is about developing the power and influence of the sector and the sustainability of our work."

- Nonprofit Quarterly,
Winter 2001: 3

Youth personally benefit.

According to the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, whatever the terminology – youth participation, youth engagement, youth activism, or youth development – when young people are supported in getting involved in solution-making and action, the results have proven to be positive in terms of young people's resiliency, their career path, civic engagement as adults, their leadership development, and so on. They become active, involved citizens who have the confidence and experience to contribute in countless arenas in countless ways.

youth development

In the United States in particular, the language of **youth development** has taken root to describe the process in which all young people can fulfill their needs, develop their skills and seek opportunities in becoming adults. It is a developmental process which speaks to all areas of their lives: personal/emotional, social/cultural, moral/spiritual, vocational, cognitive and civic. According to the Forum for Youth Investment, "like the early childhood years, middle childhood, adolescence and young adulthood (which we refer to collectively as the youth years) are critical times for the development of a range of attitudes, values, skills and relationships. They are also the years in which these attitudes, skills and relationships are tested, strengthened and put to use in settings independent of the family."

The core of youth development is to facilitate the positive growth and development of young people into happy, healthy and productive citizens, workers, community members, and parents by having safe spaces to engage; positive relationships with adults and peers; meaningful opportunities to engage and contribute; opportunities to go beyond themselves in their contributions and sense of belonging; and to be challenged and to learn.

For over a decade, the American-based Search Institute has been popularizing these notions in the form of their

'developmental assets' framework – the 40 positive (internal and external) experiences and qualities that individuals, systems and communities have to contribute to the lives of children and youth.

Youth development is also asset-based in John McKnight's notion of shifting from a focus on people's needs, problems and deficiencies, to build instead on their assets, strengths and capacities. As such, youth are citizens, not clients. These elements of youth development make it an ideal and robust philosophical underpinning for progressive programs, strategies, attitudes and environments.

core elements:

From a psychosocial perspective, development in adolescence and young adulthood requires that young people grapple with three key challenges:

- learning their own power to contribute
- learning who they are and where they belong
- learning to develop relationships and community

Youth development speaks both to the challenges young people experience and the expectations generated during these processes, and to the people, organizations, systems and environments around them providing opportunities, resources, challenges, attitudes and personal investment to successfully transition into healthy, productive adults.

words of wisdom:

"Once we were looking at the question of individual and community change, we found that the field that anchored the work for us really was the youth development field which talks a great deal about the supports and opportunities and capacities that young people needed to grow up healthy and sound. What we found is that we are carving a little bit of a niche by ourselves by seeing social activism, community organizing, civic engagement, seeing that as a youth development strategy. That the opportunity to participate in making a better community with others through collective direct action, in fact, answers some of the youth development needs

that teenagers and young adults have. Through the help of some consultants and writers and thinkers in the youth development and youth organizing area, we developed a point of view that when young people effectively come together to take direction action to improve their universes, that they in fact develop better as people themselves. So that youth development and community change outcomes are two rails that the same train rides on."

- Robert Sherman, Surdna Foundation

key findings

Earlier this year in an interview with Charity Village, McConnell Foundation President, Tim Brodhead said, "We have a certain amount of experience, but by its very nature there is no point at which you can say, 'we've got that down pat'." It's this desire to keep looking for better, innovative ways to do philanthropic work that encouraged the McConnell Foundation to engage in a process of learning from others – the innovative and the effective – in order to explore a new strategic direction for youth funding.

An internet-based exploration was the first step. In this process, over 80 foundations and youth organizations based in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom were explored. With the help of members of the McConnell team, 15 were chosen for approximately one hour interviews about their own strategies. The interview pool includes foundations, several organizations and one network from all three countries. They include private, community-based and publicly funded institutions. Some operate locally, some nationally, and a few, internationally. The majority focus on several issues and programs while a few are singularly focused on youth, with one foundation currently in a transition process from multiple programs to youth-only. In all cases, leaders were interviewed.

Near the end of the foundation interview process, attention turned to young people themselves. A very diverse group of 'amazingly wonderful, brilliant, passionate and experienced funky young social visionaries' participated in an internet-based interview. These young people have had experience with the McConnell Foundation or were known to the author. They are some of Canada's leading achievers, activists and leaders, ranging in age from 15 to 29. They've started organizations, managed projects, lead and joined movements, or have been the doers behind the scenes, be it locally in Toronto, Ontario or on Alberta's Blood Reserve, provincially, nationally or in some cases, internationally. Labour, globalization, science education, community involvement, anti-racism, anti-violence, feminism... whatever the issue, this pool of young people have been there, and tried to create change in it.

The following sections – **from youth** and **from foundations** – summarize their experiences, visions and recommendations.

Passion, wisdom, experience and brazenly honesty..

These qualities lie at the core of the responses provided by the young people as they talked about what it takes from themselves, their peers and adults around them to enable youth action and to rev up social change. Behind their age definitions of 'youth' comes an understanding of the power differential between youth and adults that creates inequities and often marginalizes young people. They demystify the notion of 'adult allies' and explain why many adult-led or youth-serving organizations don't work for most young people. They hold out hope for multigenerational work as they see their work as youth intimately tied to their roles as community members, citizens, and people in the world. Community change is what they seek. And if you are a decision-maker – a funder, especially – and truly interested in what they need, they are reflective and directive about that also.

The majority of the foundations, while they perhaps may not describe their processes as such, are pursuing strategies and approaches that are the beginnings of a paradigm shift in the role of funders and in philanthropy. At the heart of many of their institutional visions, lies a deep interest in social change, and in their strategies, an increasing recognition of the complexity, longevity, and multi-faceted nature of achieving true social change, whether at the micro or macro levels. This increasing understanding is propelling leading institutions to grapple with the difficult questions of program or project investment versus capacity-building, reflection and leadership development; of investment size, scope and length; of youth involvement in their own processes as well as in the organizations they fund; of collaboration and field-building; of measuring success in this context; of transforming their institutional cultures into learning cultures; and of deliberately mainstreaming their commitment to youth or trusting a more organic process. So many issues and challenges, and yet, lots of ideas, passion, and commitment to do things better.

commonly funded youth programs:

As told on the websites of about 80 foundations, foundations in Canada, the US and the UK are primarily supporting youth through: Youth in Philanthropy, Youth Development (which describes a variety of asset-based youth support), Civic Engagement and Governance, Capacity-building, Academic Achievement, Youth Achievement (Awards and Recognition), Youth Engagement, and Youth Leadership. Youth Entrepreneurship appears a little less frequently in foundation strategies.

from youth

young people's realities:

In the chronological order of creating this report, young people were interviewed after the adult foundation and organization leaders. Yet, their voices should necessarily come first, since it is their experiences and perceptions that ultimately should be at the centre of devising effective youth development initiatives.

Unlike the adults interviewed for this report, youth leaders, achievers and activists were not asked to detail their innovations but to reflect on their experiences of trying to contribute to the world around them – in whatever form – and from there, speak both to their needs and what they believe must be changed in adult behaviour as organizational leaders and funders to better enable youth efforts.

The difficulty is that often when youth speak about their realities, their analysis is heard as only negative – even when youth express some of the same concerns as other adults, as is the case in this report (see **from foundations**). The challenge is to truly hear what young people are saying and from there, to begin true dialogue about possibilities and change. The adult leaders featured in the next section have recognized the importance of this and have engaged in such learning to create the innovations in their domains. For most young people, however, adult leaders like these have yet to become so commonplace as to greatly affect their realities at this time.

common themes/perceptions:

- Adults in general and adult-led youth-serving organizations get preferential access to funding and legitimacy
- Youth-to-youth work is effective
- Youth work linked to social change, the role of youth as citizens and their personal experiences and passion
- The importance (but rarity) of effective youth-adult relationships and adult allies
- Capacity-building, and leadership development funding are critical.

labels and definitions:

The first question asked of the youth leaders, activists and achievers interviewed was how they define youth in age-related terms. While a few of the young adults pushed the age limit up to 29 and 30 ("funny how this age bracket creeps higher as I get older," quips Michelle, a Toronto activist), the vast majority of respondents offered the age definition of 14 to 24, with a few starting as early as ages 12 and 13.

The question about categorizing themselves as either a youth achiever, a youth activist, a youth leader, combinations of these or another possibility revealed the multiple roles many young people are seeing and claiming for themselves in the work they do – creating the path, inspiring along the way, and critiquing the journey. Increasingly, all are deemed critical.

zohra moosa, former Coordinator for Youth Action Network, explains the qualities she associates with these labels, having chosen all of them to apply to herself:

Leader: able to provide a positive example of the way something could be done (a particular project, a skill, whatever); is an inspiration to others sometimes too, or at least motivates others to get going.

Achiever: a little bit of an ambitious element to this; a need to get many/multiple projects under your belt; high energy, a lot going on, many projects on the burner, balls up in the air, but a deliverer.

Activist: questions, critiques, challenges, interested in change, interested in changing yourself as well as the world.

Several youth were reluctant to categorize themselves at all. For most of these resisters, the sticking point was claiming the label 'youth'. Older or more experienced youth like Darshani or zohra felt that they are transitioning out the category so the label no longer fits.

"Youth: I don't really identify with being a youth, either as an advocate for youth (anymore), or as someone who needs to be advocated on behalf of. I

guess I feel a bit older than a 'youth.' I don't want to take up a space when I feel like I have a lot of privilege that allows me to create my own space in adult spaces. Does that make sense? For example, although people still see me as a youth when I'm talking, I'm articulate and I have the vocabulary and force of voice to be able to speak louder. I also am familiar with bureaucracies and with paper pushing, so I can navigate systems and organizations. I know where to go to have my voice heard (doesn't mean they'll listen, in that way I'm still a youth, among other things). I dunno. It's just not something I associate with myself and I won't be under it (age 24) in a few months anyway."

For others like Amy Higgins of the NB 4-H Club and Dan Breault of The Students Commission, the resistance is completely about refusing to be labeled. "Don't put me in a box," responded Dan. "I am all, and yet none of these. Label: something that society deems that everyone seems to 'fit' in. I do not have a label. Sorry."

Understanding that labels are constantly imposed on youth in society, often by those with more power – teachers, parents, the media, police, decision-makers, adults in general – and in most cases, to young people's detriment, explains the frankness of Dan Breault's response and those like his. Language has power and finding the right balance between creating room for self-identification, and making distinctions in order to more effectively reach a particular population is not an easy task. Yet, erring of the side of self-definition is usually the better option.

passion, citizenship & change:

The philosophy of youth engagement that many youth practice is intimately linked to community change, citizenship and notions of responsibility, self-realization, fairness and justice. Put simply, youth know, either through their own lived experience, or through what they observe, that the world is not fair and safe for everyone and they have a role to play in making things better.

Dan Breault connects the dots from his own personal trauma to his commitment and effectiveness in working with youth in vulnerable circumstances: "I got a bad deal as a kid. I was robbed of a childhood due to three major factors: child abuse, becoming a child prodigy, and a drug

addiction. I have dedicated the next few years of my life to working with youth in care, youth with addictions and at-risk youth. I found out that with my philosophy of been-there-done-that, I am effective in affecting change in young people's lives for the better. When I was young, nobody went to bat for me, and now I am a pinch hitter."

Nrinder Nindy Kaur Nann, the National Youth Representative for the Canadian Labour Congress, adds that her "passion is fueled by witnessing people fundamentally change and challenge and unlearn in their lives. When I am asked to witness and participate in the process of that change. When people live, breathe, walk and love with their passions, politics and a true sense of solidarity everyday. When I see people support each other and choose to be a part of another's struggle and support them in changing whatever shitty situation they are facing. When I see my peer activists do all that in a healthy way that doesn't damage their bodies, spirit and minds. When I am taken care of and care for others who are making change in their personal lives and in the lives of others."

"I consider meaningful youth engagement to be working on initiatives that actually affect you as a young person. Youth engagement by my definition means putting your experience and skills to work on things that have some bearing on your

words of wisdom

- An effective youth leader would... take steps to begin a change of thinking in all of society.
 - An effective society would... embrace youth and realize that we can help far more than harm."
- Amy Higgins, NB 4-H Clubs

personal everyday life," Kehinde Bah, the Toronto Youth Cabinet Chairperson admits, reflecting on his life and the lives of his peers in inner city Toronto. "I don't believe in youth engagement when the issue that young people are engaged in only affects them from an emotional level. I've had to work with many young people that understand some issues from what they see on TV or overheard at school. For example, the commitment to the 'cause' can't possibly be real if you're working on an issue like 'saving the homeless' if there aren't any people that are homeless (or have been homeless) working with you. A major part of youth culture today (at least urban youth culture) is about 'keeping it real' and that means staying true to what you know, not what you've learned."

Like many other young people who experience racism, poverty, sexism and other oppressions, Arlene acts from her own sense of power to better her community. "I am still a youth, I am Aboriginal, I live in a small community

learning for foundations: how to better access youth

"No. I wasn't aware that foundation funding was available. Some outreach and advertising would be good," said one young respondent..

While the situation may not be this grave among more experienced youth leaders, the reality is that many teenage youth are unaware of foundation funding and if they are, they believe that funds are not available for young people. Outreach and advertising is definitely a must if the aim of any philanthropic body is to connect to as many communities as possible so that need and diverse stakeholders have a chance to apply to funding programs.

njeri-damali (campbell) suggests that following outreach and communication methods to increase the awareness and accessibility of foundations to youth,

- * easy to fill in, stream-lined funding applications

- * staff who will walk-through the process with applicants if needed
- * flexibility in reporting guidelines (i.e. accept videos, zines, works of art as 'professional' and 'suitable' applications and reports)
- * meet with applicants and add oral components to the application process
- * include glossaries in applications packages
- * give tips, and have a transparent, participatory process
- * develop relationships with applicants, those who are denied can try again -- support that
- * funders can outreach their funds and speak to youth; encouraging them to seek funding
- * have application workshops where young people can learn how to write effective proposals

and I work with other communities to help incorporate and engage youth. I chose this because it is my future and my right as an individual in society to improve the quality of life for everyone and if this is shown to other young people then by the nature of God we can improve most anything! I have chosen this career to better my life, better the lives of less fortunate, help improve the quality of life for young people and to be a voice that can be trusted and depended on."

If active citizenship is truly about understanding and enacting one's rights and responsibilities to contribute to the development of society, to work collectively to address issues of common concern, and to offer a new vision of the world, then there is no shortage of young people who are in fact more aware and active as citizens than many of their adult counterparts. This is not a feature of just the 'stars' among young people. As a young feminist remarked recently in the NAC Young Womyn online Network, "I tell young women that if they have ever complained about anything, they are political."

Nor is it confined to those who see themselves as 'activists'. Young people who become social entrepreneurs, using business interests, for example, to apply new approaches to existing issues, or those who prefer to learn the game and add youth voices to more conservative spaces, or even those like Shannon in BC whose contribution is about turning her love for science into a high school science journal, written by and for her peers – the philosophy remains the same. It's about a belief that they can and should make a difference for themselves and those around them.

Yet, being young in an adult-centred

words of wisdom:

"But as I age and watch my peer group age with me (I am in my late twenties), I recognize how social, economic and political barriers prevent us from finding the security and stability that I associate with 'adulthood.'

- Victoria Shen

world creates barriers that makes the development and the exercise of young people's active citizenship challenging and sometimes, near impossible for most average youth.

youth-led vs. youth-serving:

Young people overwhelming perceive and have experienced the 'David and Goliath' battle, as the Executive Director of the Youth Leadership Institute calls it, between youth-led and adult-led-for-youth initiatives in terms of legitimacy, access to funds and effectiveness with youth. This perception they share with adult foundation and organization leaders also interviewed. In terms of which side typically gets the goods – these youth and adults agree that the scales are tipped in the favour of adult-led-for-youth (or youth-serving) initiatives and organizations. Youth-serving are taken more seriously and trusted more by their peers who are in decision-making capacities that can affect the lives of young people.

Youth-led is often a harder sell to the adult world when it comes to critical things like decision-making, community change initiatives and access to funding and support.

"Access to funds? Do I really need to comment on this... If I went in looking for funding as a young women etc. and an older person with more experience went in not even in the same field but with more initials after their name I wouldn't be looked at!" explains Arlene of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, LB, revealing a strong perception of inequality that many young people have. There is no denying that in many spaces and places, age and credentials are equated with responsibility, experience, and knowledge, and therefore, more worthy of investment, regardless of how shallow these assumptions may be at times.

For Dan Breault, it is not just about perception – it's reality. "Of course [there's differential access]. Doing work for Health Canada for the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, we are required to put on a conference.

This conference is for policymakers, researchers, etc. We got a 'bump' of funds for this conference. People are interested. However, for our annual conference for youth (the one where we actually conduct a major part of our research) we found only ONE partner to help us fund this – the Manitoba Department of Education and Training. The message is quite clear: there is money for adults to learn about youth, but none for youth to tell adults what they are going through."

There are funders out there who are quite willing and interested in supporting young people and their initiatives, like those interviewed for this report. However, the force of young people's negative experiences with the majority of traditional funders – the clear preference for adults "because the funders believe that they are more responsible," as Myron John of the Blood Reserve puts it – and the perception that this creates among youth that all funders will treat them unfairly, means that even those few progressive funders have much to do to alter the mistrust youth have developed.

Several youth note that even when

words of wisdom:

"Young people are accessing less than 1% of funds from foundations. So, adults at foundations are giving more than 99% of their resources to adult-led youth-serving organizations.... Increasingly common is a lot more competition from adult for youth resources."

- Matt Rosen,
Youth Leadership Institute

attitudinal barriers towards youth don't exist with funders, the structural ones kick in, such as the Revenue Canada-imposed barrier of having to be a registered charity to access foundation funds. Not only does a lot of action, ideas and change happen in a deeply local or unstructured way, but not every effort to improve a social, environmental or economic problem, aspires to be a full-fledge national organization which will exist for 50 years. Consequently,

youth are frustrated by adult visions and agendas about how things should be rather than being innovative around structural barriers and daring to see alternative possibilities for success and impact.

Youth are frustrated in the

youth-friendly foundations:

In Canada, there are examples of youth-friendly foundations that are dealing with the issues of structural barriers. For example:

- Alberta's Wild Rose Foundation allows student councils, teen centres, and other youth groups to use school and municipal charity numbers to access funding.
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation's Get Up, Stand Up Program ran for three years allowing youth groups to be sponsored by incorporated organizations in order to access funding. They also had young people making the funding decisions for their peers.
- Increasingly, foundations are using intermediaries and other partnerships to enable youth to access funds.

competition for resources with adults, also because of a difference youth detect in authenticity. Not all adult-led-youth initiatives are interested in youth for the 'right' reasons. Because it's the trend, because that is where the money is, because under the guise of volunteerism youth labour comes free... and a host of other 'disingenuous' reasons were cited as to why some adults start organizations and projects for youth and why they don't work.

"I won't even front!" states Kehinde Bah. "Adults, if you think you've got the best initiative that's going to become the new 'flavour of the month' among funders, at least run it by the youth that you're serving first. I always hear of ideas from adults that are going to revolutionize the youth sector, but if youth don't like it anymore 6 months into the project, wouldn't it have been better to have their input from the beginning?"

His message – involve those most

affected in the design and delivery of solutions to change their condition – is one that is taking root at a programmatic as well as rhetorical level in the funding world.

For the youth interviewed, experience and observation tells them that many people are in 'youth work' because of the optics without really understanding or wanting to do the work to make the experience genuine. It's about exploitation and the inability to recognize that the exchange needs to be reciprocal, which means that young people aren't the only ones who need development and training.

Emmy Patin, though a staunch believer in multigenerational partnerships, can't deny these conclusions. "My experience is that adult-for-youth-led initiatives can be and often are soaked in moralizing attitudes, like anti-pregnancy campaigns, or drug-free or anti-sex initiatives, which don't really address the roots of the issues, like sexism, homophobia, racism, classism, etc. Grown-ups, unfortunately, hold the purse strings and when they feel threatened they will usually resort to hierarchical decision-making patterns, with themselves at the pinnacle. I think that organizing with 'adults' is not impossible. Like I said, I am committed to inheritance. But young people should be organized *with*, not for."

The general preferential treatment that adults and adult-led-for-youth organizations enjoy in terms of legitimacy and access, and the patronizing, moralizing and exploitation that many youth experience in these organizations and projects are made more acute for youth because they reflect the power differential between youth and adults in society in general. Youth have less power in society and are often unheard, told what to do, and left out of decisions and solutions that have impact on their lives. They are seen as problems or blank slates, or 'in-training' by the very people with the power and resources to act on these perceptions. So when youth enter the adult-dominated funding world, it is hard to trust that they will be respected and treated fairly

when engagement works:

For everything that goes wrong in youth programming, there are others that are positive, effective, and that just plain "hits the rights spot." All of the youth interviewed had these moments. Here is just a sample:

- "My experience with my local Boys and Girls Club. Because I went from a troublesome youth with a lot of anger, distrust, to a more focused, positive thinking and motivated youth. My experience there has made me what and who I am. It is their philosophy and the staff that I have been exposed to that made it positive. They cared and they worked with me even though at the time I was a troublesome kid. I got recruited into their leadership group and since then never looked back. Trust is the # 1 reason it was positive. They trusted me and I trusted them. They got me to volunteer and work on some projects. Attaining my goals then and seeing firsthand how community works and how to organize events and coming through with the expectations boosted my confidence by a lot. It gave me something to be proud of and I was thanked and recognized for my commitment." - Hassan
- "My work with Canada25. It has been positive because it has been driven entirely by young people, and we have been able to work with senior leaders of all sectors to make things happen. It hasn't been a token "youth engagement" activity. The people I've worked with are some of the most inspiring I've ever met." - Alison Loat
- "The Governor General Youth Forum. It really helped to have all of those other youth who are trying to do similar things and hear problems and success stories. I met SO many people who are outstanding in what they do, and made me strive for more." - Alison Corbett

because that has not generally been their experience in the rest of the world. It is hard to trust working under adults in youth-serving organizations because their experiences have told them that many adults don't understand the meaning of shared power – that it is both a matter of will and of skill.

There are many adults who understand that, and moments when all the elements come together to create truly positive experiences that youth and adults benefit from. For many young people, however, such moments often happen in youth-led spaces.

“The youth-helping-youth approach has proven to be the most effective method to me,” admits Dan Breault. “When working with ‘at risk’ youth, I have seen social workers, counsellors, youth workers, educated people, teachers and parents all try different methods that they have read about or been taught and fail consistently where I have been successful. I attribute my success to the fact that I am still young, and have a wide variety of life experiences that I can pass down. Youth seem to want to get involved in the projects that I invite them to because they see that I was once like them, and am still like them, but yet I am succeeding in my life and they would like to as well.”

Most respondents share this opinion – that youth-led are more effective with other youth because they can relate, they are more genuine, the power issues aren't so evident, among other reasons.

The danger here, of course, is to become too dogmatic or purist about these two sides and to fail to balance reality with perception. For example, one respondent put The Students Commission in the privileged adult-led-for-youth category along with the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs and so on and commented on their “swift turnaround time and organizational savviness that comes from name recognition and contacts.” Several other youth staff and non-staff respondents with some connection, even brief, to this organization, not only classified it as youth-led, but they also used it to

chronicle the same kinds of frustrations and disadvantages as other youth-led organizations.

Patin's experience with another organization commonly accepted as a ‘youth-led’ speaks not only to the complexity of the labels ‘youth-led’ and ‘youth-serving’, but that they are not pure in terms of marginalization or access to power.

“I think I like to work with ‘youth’ because typically they tend to be more loosely organized, without so much professionalism. I am not someone who favours politicking and professionalism. Which is why I am so disturbed by organizations like “youth x's” and the like... but then this only proves my point about different youth having different needs, and also different amounts of access to power. I mean, here I was at the “youth x's” AGM, and this dope, who is the president? or coordinator? was going on about how when it comes to youth organizing, money is not the issue... ‘we happened to know Shelia Copps’ daughter, and managed to get a huge grant from the government... so money's not the issue, enthusiasm's the issue,’ so everybody get up on your chair and cheered!!! I mean, what the hell are you talking about? Not all of us know Shelia Copps’ daughter, and excuse me, but money is indeed the issue, along with power (usually the same thing). So, I don't identify with all youth and youth organizing.”

Differences in power, resources and access are not just limited to the youth-adult duality, but also between young people, and their organizations themselves. Alison Loat, for example, feels that young people need skills that will “help them play the game while staying true to what they are trying to achieve” while Michelle thinks youth need to learn “anti-oppression implementation and communication.”

These differences must be noted and understood, and then from a funder perspective, accessed according to who and with what kind of approach gets access among youth initiatives, and where the gaps are and the difficult

question – why? From there, decisions about where to focus energy and resources can be made.

multigenerational work:

Despite the numerous challenges and frustrations youth experience with adults in doing social change work, there is overwhelming agreement that adult-youth partnerships and multigenerational work are significant to achieving many of the things young people care about – self-empowerment, skill development, sustainability, and true social change. Believing in the potential or even the rightness of this work is one thing.

Patin, a Northern Ontario youth activist, sees “multigenerational work as the only work that makes sense. Not that young people should not have their own organizations, but there should be a sense that this work is not forever, that there should be a turnover rate, and that inheritance is the ultimate goal, not entrenchment.”

However, being a part of relatively successful versions of multigenerational work is fairly rare because of the great distrust between youth and adults, and many young people's experiences of being demonized, tokenized, marginalized and minimized by many adults when they do dare to partner.

njeri-damali (campbell) describes it as the “malfunction of imbalanced power relations between adults and youth that damage the possibilities. When self-actualizing adults who understand how they benefit from ageism work with self-actualizing youth who know that they are experts in their own right, all individuals involved benefit.”

Youth commend efforts to help adults who have genuine interest in youth development to learn how to become better allies and to transform their organizations, classrooms, boardrooms and other spaces to reflect ally attitude and action. Their only caution is that such efforts should not be made at the

expense of youth funding, but rather as a parallel strategy.

Now that young people have defined

effective adult allies:

The Centre of Excellence is interested in whether there exists a magic recipe for those people who are effective engagers of youth. The youth leaders, activists and achievers who lent their voices to this report have experienced these ingredients in the few effective adult allies they know:

- likes and respects young people
- open-minded
- generous
- compassionate
- willing to take risks
- willing to learn
- self-reflective
- doesn't micro-manage
- opens doors
- fun
- good listener
- shares power and resources
- gives praise and constructive criticism
- doesn't compare and prioritize whose experience is more valid
- thinks critically
- recognizes that oppression exists
- willing to put job on the line in defense of a cause
- builds capacity

With resounding clarity, young people feel that interest in youth alone does not make an adult an effective engager or ally. Some of these characteristics undoubtedly can be learned, and perhaps others are innate. However, not every program established to mentor young people include effective adult allies - especially if these mentorship approaches are based on one-sided transfers of skills, knowledge, opportunities and/or respect, and if they ignore the **critical ingredient of reciprocity**.

what to fund and support:

themselves, their approach to engagement and their experiences with adults in work and funding, their enthusiasm turns to the question of what to fund and support. It appears that most young people, even those well experienced and connected to youth communities, organizations and issues, were just so far disconnected from sources of funding that simply being able to access resources was the crucial need. "Tonnes of money, tonnes of training" is the commonality these in their response.

Initiative-style funding is still welcomed by youth as some said that funding for youth action conferences, place-based projects like those in inner cities or rural communities, and issue and identity-oriented projects like those on and for racialized communities, Aboriginal issues and young women rank highly among youth as pressing need areas. Achieving social, environmental and economic change cannot come about without recognizing the differential impact on different communities.

However, there is also passionate and experienced-based expression to go beyond project funding to multi-year, core funding and other types of supports that do not necessarily box youth organizations into the priorities and pet projects of funders, but instead, enable organizations to do their core activity and to develop it better over time.

Vanessa Reid, Executive Director of Santropaul Roulant, for example, rightly points out that "government funds to voluntary sector organizations directly impact those organizations' mission, direction and internal cohesion. Since

words of wisdom:

"I think that a lot of change tends to happen in a deeply local way first and that is where people cut their teeth is in local institutions with local problems."

- Robert Sherman, Surdna Foundation

organizations need the money and resources, they will often create a program or project in order to get the funds (and possibly to try something new), but those sources are short-term and not renewable, and I would argue, they often side-track the organization from their original mission or vision."

She, like others, point to a need to "balance between funding for new and innovative projects, capacity building of voluntary organizations and their core activities and, equally important, inspiring volunteerism and citizen engagement."

Another category of resource support popularly expressed by youth leaders is the need for training, leadership development, and sharing. Yes, this partly speaks to dollars, but it also speaks to the creation of opportunities to learn, network, disseminate, and to collectively influence change.

As a relatively young adult who recently graduated from the McGill-McConnell Program for National Voluntary Sector Leaders, Lynda Manser voiced a leadership development and capacity opportunity that several of the young adult leaders in the program (there were only a few) have also seen a need for.

"In addition to core funding, it would be really neat to see a mini McGill-McConnell Program for youth leaders. The opportunity to share and learn is so rare for them. The McGill-McConnell [Program] is a really good way of bringing people together who have similar experiences, and who are interested in improving their skills in the

"We put a very abled person (Ravi Gurumurthy) in charge because we wanted youth leadership to be credible from the start because we knew age will be a block. I remember one medical person saying 'you have someone in charge who's not old enough to be a houseman' and turning up his nose at that. So you get that full range of attitude from the community."

- John Naylor, Carnegie Trust

context of work. It would be good to see this directed to the youth population of organization leaders and movement activists."

Internet exploration of other youth leadership development opportunities out there for youth, such as Leadership Today, the innovation of Marc and Craig Keilburger, while seeming very effective in some areas for certain kinds of young people, tend to seek out individual youth in order to cultivate individual-style leadership. Most critically, they seem to lack the connection to an organizational base, and the cultivation of leadership and management skills, and thinking related to being responsible for others and enabling collective change.

Given that so many young people are seeing their desire to engage as part of their role as citizens, they speak of leadership development that has both pragmatic elements (technical, organizational and management skills) and strong movement-building components as well. They also see it not to be just for elites and achievers, that all young people have a role to play and that there are structural forces that create more barriers for some youth than others. This is also quite a departure for many popular leadership development programs for youth.

Young leaders like Candis Steenbergen link today's complex societal issues to a changing need in leadership and organizational development. They "force activism and movement building different[ly] from the get-go. Strategizing becomes a totally different thing altogether – in order to make an impact, it has to be unlike what is up for sale in shop windows. What strikes me as most significant has been the desire to understand and work through and talk through differences - in ideology, in life-chances and choices, in experience, in virtually every area of life. A desire to learn about others and engage in conversation about particular aspects of individual people without assumptions – or to work through presumptions or to shatter them altogether – and to put that learning into

practice via activism. It doesn't always translate into immediate action - but it certainly bonds seemingly opposite people in ways that I haven't seen elsewhere, and creates a more solid and grounded foundation through which amazingly effective movements can progress and make social change happen."

Michelle, a young feminist adds that "an effective youth leader would have stepped out of the role as leader and be an advocate and supporter especially financially, provides a network of funders. An effective youth organization would have solid core funding, excel at outreach and offer training to new recruits, operate on radical models that promote equity (consensus decision making) and MOST IMPORTANTLY, operate from an anti-oppression framework."

These social developments and new visions of community organizing requires the cultivation of key activism skills, as well as achievement and leadership skills that young people can develop further if opportunities were created to learn them in reflection as well as on-the-fly by doing.

Lynda Manser also notes the need for a youth-version of multisector partnerships with government and the voluntary sector similar to what the McConnell Foundation was able to help achieve for adults within the sector. The point being that such resourcing of networking, dissemination and collaborations will help create some of the cultural shifts in the broader society that will aid youth action.

how to fund:

An important last issue is linked to what to fund and that is how to fund. Young people like Lanny Jimenez of the Vancouver arm of The Students Commission and Alison Loat, a Toronto youth leader working on policymaking, feel that foundations are inaccessible because they are unapproachable to youth. "I think the word 'Foundation' scares me, maybe because I don't know

them too well," admits Jimenez.

"My number one concern with most funders is that they shape how you do your events and can enforce something on the group if they want to as their funding is needed to do anything. They call the shots and you must conform to their rules/guidelines in order to attain the funding... Their lack of flexibility will have to be accepted and a failed event may occur and there may never be funding for your group ever again," says Hassan a Toronto youth activist, expressing other dynamics about how funding occurs that needs to be changed.

If youth see funders as inaccessible, as calling the shots, as funding only hierarchies and structures, as ignoring the grassroots, as not taking the time to think through obstacles and to be become known to youth and as unwilling to support them through the application process and even through declinations and referrals, then funding to youth will continue to be out of reach.

Developing real and flexible relationships with young people and their organizations and movements, hiring a young person to do this work, and using youth-friendly ways of advertising funding opportunities to youth are all named as key approaches of how to fund effectively to young people and to make foundations more youth-friendly.

...such changes are happening:

The Laidlaw Foundation, based in Toronto, funding provincially, spent almost a year and a half working with their youth granting committees, talking to young people and their organizations in the province, and using trial and error to create the Youth Engagement Programme, a strategy that many young feel is working. They provide funding training and support. Youth make grant decisions for their peers. Informal youth groups, established youth-led and youth-serving organizations access funds. They are learning about how to better fund capacity development through a flexible long-term relationship with the Ontario Young People's Alliance.

from foundations

foundation profile:

name	youth initiative	scope	granting budget YB: youth budget TB: total budget	focus
Carnegie Trust	Carnegie Young People's Initiative	International	YB: £200 000 to £250 000 a year, (excl. youth grants), 3-5 staff	Multiple programs
Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement		National	TB: \$800,000 a year, 17 staff	Sole focus on youth
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation	Program for Youth Development	Regional	TB: \$25-30 million a year, 27 staff	Transitioning into sole focus on youth
Do Something		National	YB: \$1,500,000 for 200 schools 14 full-time staff	Sole focus on youth
Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund	Youth Development	Local	YB: \$3.5 million TB: \$21-22 million a year, 22 staff	Multiple programs
W. K. Kellogg Foundation	Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships	International	YB: \$100 million in 3 sites over 12 years	Multiple programs
Laidlaw Foundation	Youth Engagement Programme	Provincial	YB: \$500,000 annually, 1 part-time staff	Multiple programs
Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation		Local	\$800,000 annually, 5 staff, 2-3 part-time consultants	Sole focus on youth
Ontario Trillium Foundation	Get Up Stand Up	Provincial	(then) TB: \$10 million YB: \$500,000 1.5 staff; (now) TB: \$100 million	Multiple programs
Search Institute		National		Sole focus on youth
Surdna Foundation	Effective Citizenry	National	YB: \$5-6 million annually, 3 staff	Multiple programs
Wild Rose Foundation	Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program	Provincial	YB: \$50,000	Multiple programs
Youth Leadership Institute		State and National	TB: 26 staff (16 full-time), 6 student interns	Sole focus on youth

common themes/perceptions:

- Youth development as the philosophical underpinning
- Youth work in the context of social

change

- A need to balance project support for youth and youth organizations with capacity-building support at the

organizational level and support to build the youth development field

- The importance of youth-adult relationships and adult allies, while supporting youth-led actions

note of interest: grades vs. engagement

From a review of some 80 foundation websites on the internet, it appears that Academic Achievement, as opposed to Student Engagement, is a large focus for philanthropic support. Improving student participation and engagement in schools as the McConnell Foundation is currently pursuing in the Student Engagement program, is not widely pursued. The emphasis is not on improving student voice, choice, and action in schools nor creating more equitable relationships with adults and creating youth-respecting environments in schools. The focus is on academic performance with some emphasis on broader student involvement in activities.

what they do:

name	perspective
Carnegie Trust	The Carnegie Young People Initiative (CYPI) is a 10 year research project in the UK and Ireland investigating what it's like to be young today. CYPI aims to improve young people's involvement in local and national projects that are about young people's rights to participate as citizens. It is a major initiative of the Carnegie Trust, Andrew Carnegie's legacy foundation.
Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement	The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement is focusing on finding, describing and building models of effective strategies for engaging youth in meaningful participation and making healthy decisions for healthy living. It is working to be a catalyst – setting a standard for meaningful youth engagement in organizations, schools, governments and communities. In this process, the Centre is committed to "walking the talk" with youth, supported by professional adults, leading the research, the model-building, the public discussion and dissemination of the Centre's findings and the implementation of effective strategies in other organizations and institutions.
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation	For the past two years, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation has been working to shift the bulk of their resources and energies toward strengthening the field of youth development and assisting key organizations with their new Institution and Field Building approach (IFB) to grantmaking. By 2004, the Program for Youth Development will become the sole focus of the Foundation.
Do Something	As part of Do Something, young people are asked what they want to do to make things better and then given the resources and support to bring their unique visions to life. Through the Do Something Network in America's schools, young people are inspired to look beyond themselves and take action to improve the world around them through Do Something's curriculum and with the support of caring educators trained to become Community Coaches.
Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund	Focusing its support in San Francisco and Alameda County, the Haas, Jr. Fund is dedicated to celebrating and building community. Under the Youth Development funding program of the Fund, Haas Jr. prioritizes Neighborhood Hubs for youth in underserved areas; high-quality Programs in organizational capacity-building; community-based Youth Sports programs; and two new Learning and Development Areas: youth leaders and young people in crisis.
W. K. Kellogg Foundation	The Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships (KYIP) started in 1987 as commitment to work in three different communities – a neighbourhood in Detroit, Calhoun Community (includes Battle Creek where Kellogg is headquartered), and Marquette and Alger Counties – in partnership to try to make them the best possible communities for children.
Laidlaw Foundation	The Youth Engagement Programme employs youth in philanthropy to implement the following three granting strategies: (1). building youth's capacity for engagement; (2). building organization's capacity to engage youth; and (3). knowledge-sharing and collaboration.
Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation	MAYF assumes ownership of the Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships (KYIP) and builds upon the successful program, which for the past 12 years was operated by the Kellogg Foundation and has now been transitioned into the community. Through strategies of positive youth development and asset building, MAYF works to advocate, mobilize, catalyze, and convene to lead the community in planning, implementing, and investing in youth and their future.

what they do:

name	perspective
Search Institute	Search Institute is a research-based social change organization devoted to bettering the lives of kids. The Institute generates, synthesizes, and communicates new knowledge, convenes organizational and community leaders, and works with state and national organizations in the areas of research, communication, networking, community supports and training.
Surdna Foundation	The Surdna Foundation's Effective Citizenry Program is focused on young people taking direct action to solve serious problems in their schools, neighbours and larger society and building the infrastructure to support youth action. They are particularly interested in programs which (1). recognize and work toward multiple levels of change: from developing the skills of individuals and groups, to opening up institutional culture to allow meaningful and effective youth involvement, to improving the community, to reforming policy; (2). that bring young people and adults together in effective cross-generational partnerships; and (3). that actively address and promote core values that are important to our democracy: equity, justice, fairness and inclusion in decision-making.
Wild Rose Foundation	Winston McConnell describes the 4-year Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program as "trying to get the civic pride back into the youth in Alberta. There are many youth organizations/groups like student councils, municipal councils and youth committees from organizations that are doing innovative projects around youth leadership development, youth community participation and youth volunteerism in their communities. They cannot apply through the regular Quarterly Grants Program because they are not registered as a society under the Society Act of Alberta. So, the Foundation Board set up the Initiatives Limited Grant Program to support these youth groups that support youth leadership development, youth community participation and youth volunteerism in Alberta."
Youth Leadership Institute	As a community-based institute, the Youth Leadership Institute has two sides. On their community side, YLI runs programs in three counties in the Bay Area in California. Specifically, YLI works in three program areas which form their "learning laboratory": (1). Youth in Philanthropy; (2). They link preventive youth development strategies; (3). Youth Governance and Policy. On the institute side, YLI serves as an intermediary to provide training, technical assistance, capacity-building and funding for projects.

what to fund:

What to fund is an important question for foundations, and yet, it seems that these leading institutions are clear in their agreement about the limitations of project-funding to achieve social change, the need to fund reflection, core competency development and capacity-building and learning-by-doing. They seem to be taking the 'bold' step to apply in their funding to organizations some of their own strategies that make them more effective and in the process, urging other funders to shift themselves a little to develop a level of comfort with a certain amount of startup, repetition, risk-taking and development..

Surdna Foundation	"By making a couple of grants and with some good attention focused on the organizational side, then as more and more young people have come through, they came into a better organization with a plan that they stepped into. This did not determine what they were going to work on, what specific things they were going to do. But the infrastructure of the group was more solid. Paying attention to the organizational needs helps the program and really mitigate against that organizational push that young people create when they grow up," explains Robert Sherman of their capacity-building funding .
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note of interest: ineffective websites

Surprisingly, many foundations, even those that belong to the various grantmaker affinity groups for youth and children, do not do an overly "effective" job of communicating their children and youth priority or the substance and excitement of their youth programming on their web sites. Consequently, some possibly innovative and effective youth strategies underway in other foundations than those chosen to be interviewed in this research were overlooked. Remove the names from most foundation websites, and many look the same, speak in the same voice, and say very similar things. Not much appears, among the vast majority of foundation websites, to speak of their uniqueness, or to tell the stories of the real change they are able to achieve. His finding speaks to the importance of using foundation websites as an effective communicator of who foundations are, and the life-giving forces behind the work they are doing.

what to fund:

name	perspective
Search Institute	<p>Search Institute's history and approach recognizes the limitations of program-focused efforts for youth-centred social change. According to Laura Lee Geraghty, Search's new Director of Strategic Initiatives, "Most organizations are dealing with programs, whether it is an agency that is delivering services in the community or working with youth in the community, or foundations. Most often, the focus is on programs. With Search Institute, programs are certainly important to us and what we do but they are really only a portion. What has happened in the last decade or more is that we have focused in on the 40 developmental assets, recognizing that, to a large extent, the level of frustration over the propagation of programs to deal with youth problems has not really changed anything in the long-term happening with youth... and has not really changed society as a whole."</p>
Clark Foundation	<p>In the challenge of what to fund, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation is an interesting case not only because of the significance of its journey from a multiple-program foundation to shifting all its resources into a sole youth focus, but also because the strategy underpinning their new focus calls them to support and build organizations in the core of what they do, rather than in foundation-identified issue areas and pet projects.</p> <p>Explained Nancy Roob, "Part of why we moved in the direction we have, again on the methodology side in terms of our institution building approach is because of the ways in which we have seen the limits of our effectiveness as a funder, meaning you can pump a lot of project-based money into organizations but if they don't have a lot of infrastructure to actually sustain those projects in the long-run, and if those projects were never central to their missions to begin with, you just have a recipe for non-effectiveness. You just don't end up with any results. That is the story basically of most funding, at least in our country. It's every foundation doing its own initiatives and driving its particular agenda with nonprofit organizations. The nonprofit organizations that want to stay focused on their missions and want to deliver their products, end up getting twisted in all sorts of directions to meet the expectations of other foundations, basically."</p>
Kellogg Foundation	<p>A major challenge for the Kellogg Foundation is getting the funders in the communities to not require the organizations they are working with to keep focusing on the deficit model of youth (i.e. youth are problems to be fixed). They have agencies that are working from a positive youth development perspective, but funders who are still expecting and requiring organizations to work in the negative, deficit mode.</p>
Do Something	<p>Broadening the mindsets of funders is identified as an area in need of more attention says, Lara Galinsky, Program Director. Youth programs need support that is versatile and comprehensive, rather than focused on crisis intervention. "Funders need to have a unique and innovation approach to youth leadership and engagement."</p>
Laidlaw Foundation	<p>The Youth Engagement Program (YEP) is asking for people to think and apply in a different way. The questions are all very similar but the Programme is being quite genuine in their request for honesty in the reporting as well as applying. The Programme Coordinator desires to share their learnings with other funders because there are pockets of funding all over that can be accessed for youth initiatives but there are some traditional views about young people that get translated into what gets funding and how youth programs get funding. "That's a challenge for us. YEP is up against that. We are an idealistic program that is not just funding youth stuff but funding it in a particular way," admits Ilkiw. "It's almost saying that we don't believe those traditional ways work."</p>

learning for the McConnell Foundation: youth and sports

Learning more about one of the 'signature projects' of the Haas Jr. Fund may also be helpful to the McConnell Foundation's efforts to play an important role in the area of youth and sports. In Partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Haas Jr. Fund created the Youth Sports Connection now known as Team Up For Youth which looks at how sports play a critical role in youth development. Under this initiative, they are looking at youth sports as a vehicle to community building and youth development. Again, understanding youth development to be "an asset-based approach to developing healthy, happy youth and young adults," and viewing community development to also be about creating social, economic and environmental health and well-being within a community, the approach of this signature project, may very well add a new dimension to the McConnell Foundation's current thinking about youth, their physical health and well-being, and their leadership and engagement.

note of interest:

The Laidlaw Foundation's work on neurological development and recreation provides a scientific rationale for why a focus on youth is important. From a developmental pathway view, positive activities that capture the 'passions' (intense motivation) characteristic of the adolescent brain, are critical at this age. Engagement in things like sports, social issues, and organizational and community change are necessary to satisfy the natural sensation-seeking and need for 'big jolt' reward of the neurobiological system, thus spurring learning. The complex social interaction that youth development programs offer, especially with high exploration-learning elements and opportunities for youth to create their own new/novel sensations and have ownership to create the 'big jolt' is highly implicated in this theory as a strong positive for young people.

what to fund:

name	perspective
Clark Foundation	<p>"We also started to question these very limited resources. Does it make sense to have our dollar spread across all these different areas of interest or should we think about how we can get behind one outcome area?" explained Nancy Roob.</p> <p>The sector is in a very transitional place right now around a lot of the issues and values and principles that underscore some of the decision-making that the Foundation went through. So, "there are a lot of folks that see it very threatening to see a foundation move in this direction because if we are in fact, really effective, it puts into question lot of the ways other foundations go about doing their business."</p>

how to invest:

Closely connected to the substantive question of funding, is the question of the nature of the investment in terms of the amount and length of time. Again, there is a general consensus both from the funders and the few organizations included that receive funding, that the investment needs to be over time and be about relationship building. The size and scope of the investments vary. Some foundations realized the critical importance of investing staff time and resources into bigger picture thinking, knowledge-building and strategizing in order to advance their goals and to do so in more effective, innovative and strategic ways.

Laidlaw Foundation	<p>"If we want to achieve a societal shift, we need partnership. But youth don't have access to funding and foundations. This program is a first step to getting funding experience. It enables young people to take a risk and learn to access the funding world. The challenge is how to make sure funding is accessible to young people without the process being too easy. You want a process that falls in line with demands from other funding agencies. Otherwise, youth would be set up for future failure. We wanted to ensure youth gained confidence, knowledge and skills to access other funders, and to initiate their own projects." explains the Programme Coordinator for Youth Engagement.</p> <p>Violetta Ilkiw also spends a lot of her time, conducting proposal-writing workshops and other outreach and training, facilitating the sophistication of the youth philanthropists of the Programme Committee, and helping potential grantees and those who are declined, understand the nature of a good application and project. Such funding education is part of the investment Laidlaw makes to help meet the goals of their Youth Engagement Programme.</p>
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how to invest:

name	perspective
Clark Foundation	The current level of investment per organization in the Institution and Field Building initiative is \$2-3 million over 5 years. However, there will be more variations in investment as they move forward, more reflection on their strategy as other organizations join the fund, since not all will be able to absorb this kind of investment while larger organizations may be able to handle more. There is certainty at this stage that five years is just not long enough so a longer timeframe must be factored into the strategy formulation.
Youth Leadership Institute	"We created people who are responsible for this at a content level who are not necessarily in charge of running programs, but who are in charge of thinking, and acting upon and building the areas of Philanthropy, like myself or in Governance and Policy. We have a staff person responsible for big picture Training. We have a staff person really thinking about the intersection between youth development and Prevention. People aren't tied up running on-the-ground programs but are really focusing on not only what goes on in the program, but also what is happening nationally and making sure that research and the practical things people are doing gets married with innovative stuff that we are doing at the grassroots level in our programs," explains the Associate Director of Philanthropy, Matt Rosen.

building the sector:

Recognizing that their work does not happen in a vacuum, and at the end of the day, that they are interested in "creating changes in society" and "causing cultural shifts," has great implications for the type of strategies that foundations and organizations employ – be they about network-building and collaborations, research and academic scholarship, organizational capacity-building, training and public awareness, or other not-as-yet thought of methods.

Surdna Foundation	Surdna Foundation's Robert Sherman is very clear that their interest in supporting youth in taking productive action today as part of their youth development work would not be truly effective unless they were pursuing a parallel strategy of "building the infrastructure to make the work good happen. Strengthening the groundwork for meaningful youth involvement" as they term it, requires that Surdna invests time, energy and resources into documentation and evaluation of effective practice which leads to stronger understanding of the productive roles young people can play as citizens; intermediary organizations and networks which provide training, evaluation, organizational development and generally help build the field; and active linkages between youth development and community change/policy change efforts.
Clark Foundation	<p>Part of the Foundation's attraction to the youth development field was the opportunity to develop the field in one of its basic need areas, contributing the Foundation's new institution investment approach to grantmaking, admits Nancy Roob. "But in order to move the various forces in the field, public funding, whatever else it takes to get those kinds of practices to scale, one had to start at this basic level of building some institutional capacity behind organizations who really do have promising products, of which, there are very, very few."</p> <p>The Foundation desires to do more than help strengthen individual youth-serving organizations. It also seeks to bolster the larger field of youth development. For example, its efforts to strengthen already promising youth-serving organizations will result in new knowledge about effective youth development practices and standards of success. Similarly, by making investments in organizations that work across the field of youth development, the Foundation can share findings or lessons emerging from work it is supporting, which ultimately might lead to significantly improved services for young people throughout the nation.</p>
Search Institute	As a research-based social change organization devoted to bettering the lives of kids, Search is clear that their role is to help develop the asset-based youth development field through research, communication, training and convening . Laura Lee Geraghty, the Director of Strategic Initiatives, notes, "We are not out doing this. Everyone else takes our framework and infuses it in what they are doing and we have empowered them with resources and information to make the change. We are reflecting and convening. We bring them together so they can learn from each other and we listen in and build better resources and get back to them with better ways of doing."

building the sector:

name	perspective
Kellogg Foundation	The large part of the work of the Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships over 12 years was building the youth development field in the three communities. When transition from the Foundation back to the communities had finally occurred in all three sites, the Foundation had created a cadre of adult leaders that understand positive youth development and are advocates for it, and a lot of people who share a common leadership experience and can talk and work together.
Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation	According to the Foundation's President and Director, Judy Watson Olson, "We have determined that because information can leverage change, and the asset model and the focus on understanding young people is so powerful in our community, we have made the transition from a grantmaking organization to a learning organization that disseminates information. We have a new mission statement which is to be the catalyst of the development of healthy youth through research and dissemination of best practice. So we have moved away from being a source of money to the community to being a very strategic, focused source of youth development information in the community."
Surdna Foundation	"I don't know how I would actually be able to do my job if I did not have free reign to be in major relationships with like-minded colleagues . It is impossible to do this work alone and it is not well-done alone," acknowledges the Program Officer for Effective Citizenry about the role of collaboration in strengthening the youth development sector. They have been able to bring other money behind theirs in such strategies and to get other funders like the Carnegie Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust to move in a similar direction in benefit of young people.

how to measure:

Since many of the foundations and organizations understand that the success of their youth development work is intimately linked with the notion of community change, the ever-present challenge of measurement and evaluation takes on new meaning. There is an understanding that social change is a long and complex process and there are few tools to measure social change beyond qualitative methods. Some foundations also feel that many funders have ambitious expectations about impact given the size, scope and length of their investments.

Search Institute	A constant and critical challenge for the Search Institute is not having measurements of success. This is a challenge for Search at the institute level, for communities, for organizations and sometimes for the individuals who are trying to do this work "because, whether or not we should be measuring that, that is the way we have been taught to think about almost everything, and certainly that's how the funding goes whether for foundations, governments, corporate America or elsewhere. But what we are talking about here is social change that is going to happen over decades. We are talking about changing the culture of society so the easy fixes aren't going to happen and the easy measurements aren't going to be there either."
	Search is in the beginning stages of looking in other areas: What changes are occurring particularly in school climate? What difference does it make when an after-school program is infused with assets? These areas may help bring them closer to having a tool that can assess community change.
Kellogg Foundation	Dr. Baines, Kellogg Program Director, notes that another major challenge is the expectations of funders that encourage organizations to over promise on their outcomes. "I am very happy about the lessons we have learned and the project did what I hoped that it would do. We could have done better at managing everybody's expectations about what the outcomes can be. Funders think that the amount of resources they have can have greater impact on the problem than is realistic."

how to measure:

name	perspective
Marquette-Alger Foundation	<p>As a former staff member of the Kellogg Foundation, Judy Watson Olson knows they have invested intensively in evaluation of the KYIP sites, but it is extremely difficult to get 'cause and effect'. However, "the best you can do is to say, here is what is. We are trying to be comfortable with some kind of evaluation plan and recognize there will always be people who will take some shot at it."</p> <p>The reality is that the diversity and complexity of communities mean that it is hard to ascertain cause and effect so this gives rise to a critical question for philanthropists: how important is taking credit?</p> <p>The Foundation depends on a lot of qualitative data (i.e. case studies, policy change, and attitudes) to demonstrate that community change is happening. They use community focus groups as qualitative discussions about community changes and have developed their own change indicators. During discussions, they now listen to community stories and their reflections and begin to measure according to their indicators.</p>

strategic innovations:

Many of the goals and visions being pursued by this group of philanthropic and organization leaders speak to transformative possibility. In some cases, the potential and the philosophy of the work combine to challenge who the institutions are and how much internal transformation they are willing to take on, especially around the issue of youth involvement in their own structure. For the most part, these foundations and organizations are fairly honest in their self-critiques, understand their limitations, and are creating innovative structures and strategies to do the work.

Do Something While Do Something is a youth organization, a very large part of the organization's strategic components to accomplish their mission is a focus on **training and supporting adults** in schools to become Community Coaches, creating a new position in society and a new position in schools. They also created specific curriculum that taps into the structural practice in schools, like doing food drives around thanksgiving, to push students to the next level in order to help them create projects around root causes (of hunger, for example), and to move them away from a charity mindset to civic engagement action and understanding. The Path to Change curriculum helps addresses questions of root causes.

Carnegie Trust The Carnegie Trust stands out for its innovation in devising a strategy that not only interplays between the Trust's grantmaking, thinking, and major initiatives but also accepts and challenges its own structure as a foundation. Yet, an important part of the Carnegie Trust's strategy is to make a distinction between grantgiving and strategic initiatives by creating both a link to the Trust and the outside world. When doing strategic initiatives, the Trust has a practice of always having a Steering Group which includes Trustees, as well as others, so that the strategic initiatives are never wholly inside the Trust. They become semi-independent bodies. Structurally, the chairman of the Trust, John Naylor as Chief Executive, and usually the chairman of the relevant grantgiving subcommittee, will sit on the management committee of the initiative with outside members. This fairly rare practice of creating **arms-length bodies to house major initiatives** is about a commitment to collaboration, to sustainability and overall effectiveness (i.e. the Director of the initiative can be solely focused on this work, rather than multiple priorities), and the freedom to infuse young people into the initiative which could not happen given the structure and culture of the Trust itself, "we can't do that if we are running the whole thing from the Trust." Trustees are not under the age of 25. This model has spun off several independent NGOs that are now sustainable.

strategic innovations:

name	perspective
Centre of Excellence	<p>The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement is now marrying their strategic focus on adult engagement in research with their strategic focus on processes to affect change, especially on government leaders. "There is an experiential component to this because 'engagement is about the relationship between people, ideas and activities.' That's the phrase I like from that OREP study* on student engagement. Policymakers can't get it or write policy correctly without first experiencing it.. For our national conference, we're trying to find highly experiential, creative ways to help adult decision-makers get out of their heads and into their bodies so they can experience and understand what that OREP quote means. This is not a cognitive thing, which is what many people believe so that's why they want a recipe. T.S. Elliot calls it the 'objective correlative' – we have to link these very abstract concepts to the here and now and in a highly experiential, creative way. The tricky part is figuring out how to engage adults in the experience without scaring them away," explains Centre Director, Stoney McCart.</p>
Surdna Foundation	<p>As a private family Foundation, Surdna illustrates the importance of knowing themselves, their leadership, and the role they can and should play in a given process of social change. Robert Sherman describes this self-knowledge as understanding the 'informal screens' at work in the Foundation's culture. This is illustrated in two ways. (1). The placement of youth in the Foundation's operations: While the Foundation respects young people maximally and continues to invests in their current capacity to be involved in their communities, the Foundation culture does not allow for direct youth involvement at the Board level or in the Foundation's operations. "I don't want to over glorify that [youth] have to be in the lead of absolutely everything. I believe there are places for organizations like Surdna as they are currently configured to also play a meaningful role in this work. Just because it is about youth governance, doesn't mean that we have to have youth governance. Maybe it would improve things, maybe not. I think there are a lot of different varieties in the world." The young people that Surdna interacts with and supports seem to share this philosophy as there appears to be no challenge to the adult-only nature of the Foundation. Youth do have influence through the Director's constant meetings in the community and with them as grantees.</p> <p>(2). The areas and issues that Effective Citizenry focuses on: "In this Foundation, we are not likely to be funding anti-globalization youth activism. It's not the kind of community-based problem-solving that we are looking at here. It would also probably create conflicts on our board between people who have different and opposing politics around that. So we work on a range of issues that our directors are comfortable with and I think they are the right ones. There is a lot of work to do with education reform, justice reform and youth media. There is more than we can possibly fund with our limited resources."</p>

youth involvement:

Youth involvement in the actual decision-making and implementation of these institutions generally fall into three categories: (1). those like the Carnegie Trust who are doing it as a matter of principle, authenticity and role modeling and must formulate innovations to grapple with the Trust's structural limitations; (2). those like Edna McConnell Clark who feel similarly and do it to some extent, but know they are still adult-driven and so are thinking of new ways to involve youth; (3). and finally, those like the Surdna Foundation who know it is not part of their organizational culture and do not feel youth must be at every table, just the tables that count.

Centre of Excellence	<p>As a Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement committed to walking its talk and itself becoming a model of engagement, the Centre is certainly committed to youth involvement. In practice, young people are critical players at the table every step of the way – from making the strategic decisions via the internet for national collaboration to the creation of a parallel Youth Ethics Committee to balance out some of the power of the university ethics committees, to actually being on the ground and doing the work.</p>
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*A 1995 McConnell Foundation sponsored three-year study conducted by the Office of Research on Educational Policy (OREP) at McGill University on strategies which increase student engagement in learning and school life. For report, see: http://ed-lex.law.mcgill.ca/SE_e.htm

youth involvement:

name	perspective
Clark Foundation	<p>"Basically, [our due diligence team] is the way we go about making the decision about whether or not to invest . We have had some preliminary meetings about a next step for us – to engage young people on the due diligence team so that they're apart of helping us make the assessment of whether or not the organizations we are considering for investment are in fact working effectively with the young people that they are serving," says Vice President, Nancy Roob.</p> <p>In the meantime, to be able to "see when it is smoke and mirrors and when it is real," the due diligence team does extensive interviews with all the young people that are named by the organizations in decision-making capacities, such as youth who are claimed to be on the boards or program design committees. This process to date has lead to the rejection of organizations that make claims of engaging youth in ways that they really do not.</p>
Laidlaw Foundation	<p>According to Violetta Ilkiw, "Having the kind of committee that exists right now in the Foundation is perhaps breaking down my own assumptions about how foundations work. But having that committee grounded and respected in the Foundation has been a huge achievement. This has been a process of change and changing perceptions and understandings of what young people might do with \$500,000. It's a case where you've got a slate of young people where other members may be asking, 'who are these young people?' The fact that the committee is not treated as a group of philanthropists in training' – is wonderful and the Foundation should be commended for that."</p>
Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation	<p>The MAYF will take the asset survey results back to the youth directly for the first time this year, and engage them in dialogue about results. In the past, youth have come to community meetings to discuss results but the results were never brought to them directly as the key constituency. This development seems critical especially when survey results indicate that only 17 % of youth respondents feel that they are valued by the community despite the work done to date at the community level. Talking to young people themselves about the results will not only be about demonstrating their value, but also creating value in for those young people.</p>

learning for the McConnell Foundation: student engagement

The School Reform Philanthropy Project takes what the Youth Leadership Institute knows about school reform and young people's involvement in an advocacy issue, partners it with their philanthropy strategy and provide training and support for young people to do youth-led projects that YLI has funded around school reform. Given its potential and the excitement around it, YLI hopes to grow the project so that they can start to do some comparative analysis of different types of projects and different types of impact they have had either on the governance structure at a particular school or school district, but also the young people's engagement in their school or in their school community both before and after the project.

While there may be great and subtle difference between YLI's project and the McConnell Foundation's Student Engagement program, as both embark on evaluation components to learn from these new initiatives, there may be opportunities to learn from each other and enhance their respective programs. Reminders gleaned from Do Something, the New York-based youth organization also interviewed as part of this strategy exploration, have already added to the clarification process underway in the Student Engagement pilot in terms of the emphasis on adult allies and culture change in the Foundation's thinking and the program application and resource bank. Perhaps as the McConnell Student Engagement Program grows in sophistication given findings from the pilot stage, learning from Do Something's training and support of educators to become Community Coaches may prove to be of great value.

words of wisdom

"Grants are not as necessary for financial reasons, we found. The expenses are not huge. They can be easily fundraised. But the other critical reason for the small grants [to schools in the program] is that they're huge for buy-in. They're huge for energy-building. They're huge for celebration purposes."

- Lara Galinsky, Do Something

youth-adult partnerships:

Most of the foundation and organization leaders interviewed are of two minds about youth-adult partnerships. First, they generally acknowledge that in the battle for support, legitimacy, opportunity to make mistakes and still be around, and to participate fully and wholly in community change, youth-led initiatives are at a disadvantage in comparison to youth-serving (adult-led-for-youth) initiatives. However, because these leaders believe that youth development is part of a larger process of social change, multigenerational work and the critical roles that adult allies can play if and when they are found must be supported.

name	perspective
Youth leadership Institute	<p>For Sedonaen, the youth-led versus youth-serving dilemma describes "a David and Goliath reality happening for us. I mean so many more resources goes into youth-serving and youth service and so few resources goes into actually developing the leadership skills of communities to develop the capacities of young people. In my estimation, it's sort of an unfair argument to say that something (youth-led initiatives) have failed when it has never been brought to full scale."</p>
Centre of Excellence	<p>Articulating the Centre's growing frustration with the 'youth' emphasis in its name, Stoney McCart, Centre Director, explains part of the core philosophy of their work as a Centre. "When you say a Centre for Youth Engagement you label it and every body thinks the focus should be on youth but as a Centre for Engagement, what we are really looking at is engagement processes and outcomes for individuals and systems, and we are confirming that "adult" engagement in youth engagement is one of the most critical pieces. Also, the engagement process is not going to be substantially different from community to community. As soon as we stick these little adjectives like youth in front of things, we start to qualify and then people start to exclude and think that the work is all about fixing young people. That means you can't get the whole cultural shift of the whole community because you do need to shift the community."</p> <p>Alongside such a structural victory, are more informal and perhaps more profound developments in the researchers own recognition of what it means to truly engage young people in research and to begin work towards their goal of changing how research is done so that it is more accessible and relevant to youth. The shift has been significant too, as youth and program staff adopt research tools, in their work and language, and see the role of partnerships with academic work.</p> <p>Holding the shifts daily sometimes is a challenge. Explains McCart, "As we prepare to administer the survey again, the researchers are busy trying to shorten it. But for efficiency, which is normal behaviour, they are back to doing it by themselves without consultation, especially with youth. Inadvertently and unintentionally, as they "edited", they removed every piece that was put in by youth in the first process. They had forgotten totally the lessons, but were quick to respond when it was pointed out to them. The learning has not stuck yet.."</p>
Laildaw Foundation	<p>According to Laildaw's Ilkiw, "The ideal is to have young people and adults working together. That is why we felt the second stream, to build organizational capacity for youth engagement was so important. The change has to happen with adults. We have found that often, a successful initiative does require some support and feedback behind the scenes of an adult or older youth. We try to provide some of this support (from staff or committee members) when it is lacking. It is vital for youth to be able to take risks and learn from these risks and challenges. We want youth to build confidence, not feel ineffective or demolished. The kind of support the Foundation has provided in these cases hasn't happened in any structured way. We just see the opportunity and provide it. Yes, we are funding things we want driven by young people but it is okay if it in not youth-for-youth. Actually, we encourage youth groups to work with others in the community to solve an issue or a problem. What is paramount, is that key decisions are made by young people. We want them to have creative and budgetary control."</p>
Search Institute	<p>"One of our answers if this debate [youth-serving v. youth-led] came to us is that it would have to happen everywhere – that there is no one way to change society. The more paths we can get this into, the greater the opportunity for real change to occur," remarks Mary Ackerman. "If it only happens with youth-led organizations, it will take at least a generation before we see any long-term impact, and it won't totally change everything. What we need to think about, is how mayors think differently, how do public policy leaders, how does the director of a health organization think of youth differently?"</p>

youth-adult partnerships:

name	perspective
Do Something	Do Something's philosophy is that if young people are to make change, they must lead their initiatives. If they do not own them, the initiatives will die or fail. So in working with educators as Community Coaches, the program supports them unlearning their 'in front of classroom control' and learning to move to the side, letting young people take the initiative and letting them fail [and experience success]. Their role as Community Coaches is to guide youth along the way.
Kellogg Foundation	During the Kellogg Youth Development Seminars (2-year adult-youth training programs in KYIP), Dr. Tyrone Baines realized another reason for multigenerational partnerships that had a transformative impact on cynical adults . "In a place like Detroit where you have all these years of neglect, a lot of people were dealing with this entitlement piece – 'I have to get my share of what is owed to me, what is out there to get.' With the help of the extensive work of KYIP, the focus shifted from me getting my share to focusing on the real issue which is youth. It was not articulated but it was an issue. I saw some of that changing. That shift happens because you stay long enough. You have to stay long enough so that trust is built and that sense entitlement is over so the focus can begin to be on something else."
Centre of Excellence	"If you believe in change and feel that the world needs to be changed, what are the assets that youth bring to the table that are missing?" asks Stoney McCart. "Some of those answers lie in things like values and idealism but I am so tired of hearing adults twist these in patronizing ways about youth contributing energy and idealism that results in undermining these qualities. They are real and important. You can't have change without an idealistic vision and values about what is right and wrong. As adults age, you lose that idealistic clarity and yet, it is very important to have in a healthy society. Investment at every stage in human development is critical in order to have a healthy society. As a society, we have not paid enough attention to the things that have been eroded in the past 50 years, like public values, public spaces and public participation."
Wild Rose Foundation	The Foundation does recognize that structural barriers exist to make accessing funding difficult for non-incorporated youth groups and organizations (which are youth -led) than those that are more established (often youth-serving). It is this understanding that makes the Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program the Wild Rose Foundation's strategic move to tap into the places and spaces where youth are organizing to participate and volunteer. "This is mainly geared towards the groups that are not recognized by foundations and other funders. Unless they have a middle organization involved that have a charitable number, they do not have access to much funding support," Winston McConnell, Program Coordinator, acknowledges. Eligible initiatives "must be implemented, organized and delivered by the youth."

"My fundamental belief that the role of foundations is not as the primary agent of change, but as a catalyst toward change by contributing the resources, tools and knowledge to help individuals and groups to create positive social change."

- Violetta Ilkiw, Laidlaw Foundation

words of wisdom:

"The fourth area of our work is creating a child-centred touchstone for the community. We have been mapping the youth development community using an ecological framework for looking at community. Using an ecological approach, we are developing a community map with the child in the center surrounded by the systems that can influence a child's life. For instance, youth experience the most immediate and early influences from the microsystem, which includes the family, the school, peers, and religious institutions. The next ring out from the center includes agencies and organizations that provide services to children and families such as the health department and youth programs. We are building the map with actual identified local players so that this map can be used to better understand the interactions between systems and the impacts on young people and their lives. We are taking it out in the community to test it and build upon it so that it will help us learn and better connect to support the healthy development of young people."

- Judy Watson Olson, Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation

infusing youth:

If these foundations and organizations are indeed making the connection between youth development and social change – that they are “two rails that the same train rides on” as Robert Sherman puts it – then questions are raised about how infused the youth priority becomes not only in the structures of the institution, but also, in all its programming. Only a few of the multiple program foundations seemed to be grappling with the question of mainstreaming a youth lens/youth screen in all their philanthropic work.

name	perspective
Laidlaw Foundation	The Laidlaw Foundation is making an attempt to infuse youth engagement in all their programmes and throughout the Foundation. This is seen as an ongoing process, with constant renewal and recommitment required at all decision-making levels of the Foundation. Young people on the Foundation Board was a good start. There are also youth on the various programme committees . For example, the Environment Programme and even Investment Committee each include two young adults under the age of 27. Not all youth engagement initiatives go to the Youth Engagement Programme though when youth-related applications go to other programs, the Youth Engagement Programme sometimes provide assessment advice about how to strengthen the youth components. The YEP Coordinator believes there is much potential.
Surdna Foundation	The Surdna Foundation on, the other hand, rejects the notion of deliberate mainstreaming of a youth lens or screen to their work. "The programs naturally weave together but we don't have a deliberate intention that they must or should. They all have their own integrity and their own guidelines. The fact that we do cross over is a sign that the work has some sync to it but that is not by design. I think we would feel here that [infusion] would be too much of a stretch... and to stretch for it, might create some very artificial grantmaking."
Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation	The Foundation also tries to model for the community, having youth in important roles and having a voice. For example, when the results of the Youth Asset Survey are presented in the community, youth make the presentation. Also, the Foundation has been fortunate to have youth interns working in the program for the last several years. "We are trying to be a good corporate members in the community in terms of taking leadership about involving youth and making them true community partners," explains Judy Watson Olson.

words of wisdom:

"The mobilizing comes when adults see their reality and ask how will community change to provide the assets that young people need? It is the very first step for many communities in changing because they see that they can do a little bit, and congregations can do a little bit, and maybe the mayor's office can do a little, and maybe the extension service can do a little bit and maybe the YMCA can do a little bit. It is a very strong call to action for broad sector involvement. What we really put forth in the asset language is that when you go out there to mobilize sectors, you need the youth voice at the table. They will tell you what is missing, what they have, and maybe how to get it. It is not just community change, but bringing young people into the conversation for the change."

- Laura Lee Geraghty, Search Institute

"You need to do it [learn-by-doing] in order to really cement the learning. No amount of instruction or information dumping prior to or during the event sometimes creates the learning for people. Often, even to our frustration, they need to do it to learn it. We can play and I am not going to get in the way of us trying another learning tool to see if we can't better prepare, but there is some part of our process that we have learned after all these years that says it's all about process and everyone needs to learn it their way in their right time at the right moment.."

- Stoney McCart, Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

key challenges:

The road going for these leading foundations and organizations is certainly not always smooth – there are challenges to contend with, such as managing interests in partnerships, finding the right language and depth to create change, going through transitions, innovating and taking on too much, and then ensuring tracking and evaluation of youth projects happen. But is it worth the effort? Definitely, says these innovators.

name	perspective
Carnegie Trust	With a 10-year, 5-country mandate to increase young people's roles and value in public decision making, Trust notes the complexity and variety of people and groups involved , and finding a way to bring these various differences into a more collaborative formation, as one of the biggest challenges they face with the Carnegie Young People's Initiatives.
Centre of Excellence	Language is also part of the struggle for the Centre. Just like Stoney McCart's suggestion that maybe the word, research, has to change in order to help the Centre fulfill its goal of having youth use and own research, she also feels maybe they are not asking the right questions. " Perhaps, we do not know what the right questions are yet in order to be engaging or interesting and engaging. You can walk up to a young person and say 'how does it feel to be engaged and they will look at you blankly. Now some of us know how to do it right, but we've almost been sucked in and seconded by the 'we're now a research centre', we're doing research and we're going to look at this concept called engagement' and we almost forget what we already know from programming with youth is the best way of doing things because we are now doing things that are more esoteric. I laughed recently at a Core Meeting, when the academics were all using plain language and the jargon was coming from youth who have been on the team for awhile"
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation	The greatest challenge by far in the Clark Foundation's transitioning process from multiple programs to focusing solely on youth development is "the transformation of basically taking a very well-established foundation and essentially creating a startup business . That is it." On a smaller scale, they have difficulty finding enough promising organizations to invest in.
Laidlaw Foundation	For Violetta Ilkiw a major challenge for the YEP is the way many youth-serving organizations think and their willingness to prove their commitment to youth in structural ways. "Organizations that work with youth need to put their money where their mouth is which means having a line item which speaks to youth in their operational budgets. This may apply to training; youth programme development, working with youth volunteers, etc. It is thinking through a strategy and saying because youth are so important to us, we need to think about how we treat them throughout the organization and I don't see a lot of organizations doing that. It's a challenge that we have put out there but it is also a challenge we are struggling with in the Programme as well."
Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation	Judy Watson Olson speaks of two main challenges. The first is "about sustainability – our infrastructure in philanthropy is very shallow and times are tough for nonprofits. To design supportable and sustainable organizations is a very important challenge for the community. We have important work to do to consolidate and streamline the organizations in the community. [Second,] we need to make systemic change and go deep enough to enable societal change. For example, we can do all the application of youth development in the community we want, but if we don't have more parents playing significant roles in their children's lives, we probably won't get anywhere. Without going deep, any of our applications will come and go."
Youth Leadership Institute	The two main challenges for YLI centre around the innovative nature and breadth of the work they do. Their ideas are fairly innovative and progressive, so their partnerships with other foundations and organizations are often challenging because they are ahead and getting others there is not an easy process. Furthermore, such progressive complexity is a lot for an organization to take on. They struggle in balancing doing authentic work, innovating, training and disseminating.

what is well-funded?

While the following areas all have places in the effective implementation of youth development practice, they are already have heavy investments, and the limitations of how they are currently practiced in some instances, means that the McConnell Foundation should not pursue these areas as is, but instead incorporate critical elements that push their potential into a broader Youth Action Strategy. (see **strategy recommendation**)

words of wisdom:

"We are not just a grantmaking organization.

We don't just do grantmaking. We do a lot of convening, we do a lot of training, we do a lot of networking because we see youth philanthropy as sort of a vehicle for community change and community-youth building."

- Maureen Sedonaen, Youth Leadership Institute

"It's not just the savvy activist youth who are out there, who may be better connected, know the language to use and feel more comfortable contacting funders.... The programme is revealing the continuum of possibilities of youth engagement.

One of the discussions we had recently was about having spent so much time to a place of agreement over the programme strategies, that there is a risk and fear of becoming too dogmatic – holding too high an expectation from applicants.

We are setting the bar to aim toward our vision, of what we would like to see. But we need to recognize when groups are struggling to get there and we need to fund them in the process of getting there."

- Violetta Ilkiw, Laidlaw Foundation

youth in philanthropy:

Youth in Philanthropy is definitely a heavily populated area in terms of philanthropic involvement with youth. In Canada, for example, it is a large movement among community foundations. An extensive study conducted by the Youth Leadership Institute on behalf of the James Irvine Foundation speaks to many limitations of the existing Youth in Philanthropy models, including the often tokenistic nature of the budgets and the sole focus on youth achievers as grantmakers. Youth in Philanthropy is also often approached as an end in and of itself. Slowly, other foundations like the Laidlaw Foundation, are pushing the boundaries of Youth in Philanthropy as effective methodology in a more comprehensive youth strategy.

youth in policy:

According to a recent literature review by the Laidlaw Foundation, in Canada, there appears to be a growing interest in the role of youth in public policy-making as suggested by the emergence of youth councils, advisory committees, youth advocacy groups, and the participation of youth on governing bodies such as school boards. Government departments have taken hold of this trend, increasing opportunities for youth voice in policy formulation via such models as advisory committees and the Centres of Excellence. Like the youth in philanthropy emphasis, there are many possibilities in this area, but also much work that needs to be done to make them true engagement processes.

youth leadership:

Many funding initiatives, school and organizational-based youth programs are about youth leadership development. Yet, while the concept of leadership development should be ever-present in youth programming, and some are indeed effective, many youth leadership programs are flawed in two ways.

First, they cultivate a 'leader-as-hero' syndrome where the focus is individualistic and achievement-oriented which privileges youth who are already excelling in the system and neglects those who aren't, the many ways in which leadership can be cultivated and demonstrated, and the collective skills and attitudes necessary to address many of today's complex issues. Second, while well intentioned, most youth leadership programs are preparing youth with skills to use in the future, while neglecting current opportunities for youth to learn-by-doing today. Youth are tired of the 'youth-are-the-future' approaches taken by adults in the course of pursuing youth development, and prefer to see youth leadership as a by-product of opportunities to contribute today.

youth-serving organizations:

Youth-serving organizations have ready access to resources, legitimacy, and capacity-building. Yet, youth are rarely in any decision-making role so a sole focus on youth-serving organizations for youth development may miss critical and effective youth innovation and action.

Positively, some large national youth-serving organizations are more systematically looking at fundamentally changing themselves for the benefit of effective youth engagement. The McConnell Foundation has recently approved a grant to support such efforts.

where are the gaps?

Foundation, organization and youth leaders have identified the following gap areas in youth funding and support strategies:

- There is a gap on the teenage side in terms of **youth action** today rather than skill development for the future.
- Funding support for capacity-building, core activity support and betterment, reflection and learning-by-doing, collective leadership development, especially for **youth organizations** where young people solely or are in the majority in terms of governance, decision-making and program delivery is needed.
- Informing and building the **youth development sector** in terms of resources, training, networks and so on is a need area.
- The whole arena of impact and **measuring the change** that youth development efforts are making at a community and societal level is in need of more investment.
- Broadening the **mindsets of funders** is seen as a need area.
- While **youth-serving organizations** are well-funded in comparison to their youth-led counterparts, there is a gap in funding which encourages culture transformation in these organizations to grapple with the changing need among young people to have voice, choice and meaningful action within these organizations. [note: The McConnell Foundation recently approved a grant to assist such a transformation process for national youth-serving agencies.]
- There are gaps in terms of **sub-groups of young people**: socially marginalized young people; 18-24 year olds in terms of funding and services on the preventative side; Black youth; young women; youth with disabilities; youth in and from care who don't necessarily want to self-identify as a group; opportunities for civic involvement for young adults in their mid-twenties; race, class and economic disparity in terms of who gets services and support in a community.
- Funding of the **arts and culture programs and sports programs** for older youth is needed, especially as they get cut from education and become user-fee driven in the community. Youth not only have nothing to do, but are cynical as well. They feel there is 'nothing for them.' It happens in the downtown core, and increasingly more in suburbs that have had more resources and also in rural areas where youth can just drop off the agenda in terms of resources though their needs don't disappear.
- More attention is also needed in **the values area** – the return of the caring community, building supports across families and neighbourhoods, however diversely defined. There needs to be strengthening of the net of caring adults in young people's lives.

words of wisdom:

In terms of Britain, the gap Carnegie Young People's Initiative (CYPI) is concerned with is practical application. "We feel that a great deal has been achieved in the past couple years at the policy level, but when it comes to work on the ground, there is vast differences so that is a big gap. It is the one we are trying to look at over the next three years."
- John Naylor, Carnegie Trust

"I look at the impact we could make with the Centre carrying on beyond our Health Canada mandate and the day I just spent haggling with other project funding proposals for a relatively small amount of dollars and then the impact we have had in the ten years of The Students Commission (the Centre's administrative lead organization which Stoney McCart also heads) and think that someone should fund us to keep doing the core of our work, enabling us to become even more effective and innovative, without being sidetracked by constant project funding."

- Stoney McCart, Centre of Excellence

where are the opportunities?

While the gaps identified suggest a world of possibilities for investment and support, the gaps that most lend themselves to becoming opportunities for a potential youth strategy for the McConnell Foundation are those that are consistent with the Foundation's vision, mission, goals and priorities.

vision:

The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation's vision is a society in which all Canadians have the opportunity to develop their potential and to engage fully as citizens in the exercise of their rights and responsibilities.

mission:

To support projects and programs that enhance the ability of Canadians to understand, adapt and respond creatively to the underlying forces which are transforming Canadian society and the world.

goals:

- to support the development of healthy communities that are environmentally and economically sustainable;
- to enable individuals, families, organizations and communities to adapt to new roles and challenges;
- to assist important social and cultural institutions in health, education and the arts, to reposition themselves to face new needs and challenges;
- to provide young people with opportunities to engage and to develop their leadership potential; and
- to encourage and promote generosity and voluntary action.

As a relatively large funder, the Foundation adopted a national mandate which leads it to seek opportunities to achieve country-wide rather than more localized results (this may include the dissemination of promising or innovative local initiatives).

guiding questions:

- Does the proposed activity develop under-utilized resource? Is it catalytic, that is, will it release latent capacities and energies or disseminate promising initiatives?
- Is the proposed activity transformative – does it re-state an issue or re-position an institution so as to offer possibilities and opportunities?
- Is the proposed activity inclusive, empowering those who are involved as citizens and actors?
- Is the proposed activity engaging, emphasizing people's right and responsibility as citizens?
- Does the proposed activity encourage collaboration?

A youth strategy that :

- develops young people's capacities for civic engagement as active citizens through opportunities for meaningful youth action today.

- encourages growth, development and entrepreneurship in young people's approaches to youth-centred social change.

- builds opportunities for youth to understand and engage in innovative solution formation and building at the community and societal levels.
- builds organizational understanding and capacity to effectively engage young people as active citizens and leaders in social change.
- builds the youth development sector's awareness about the importance of engaging young people and their ability to engage youth in new roles in their organizations, institutions and initiatives.

- supports national youth actions and organizations.
- encourages the documentation and dissemination of good practice and knowledge nationally.
- repositions current models of arts, culture and sports programs, and infuses them in the lives of young people [note: McConnell Foundation is already pursuing opportunities in the arts and sports area].
- supports youth-serving agencies and institutions transforming themselves to meet the engagement needs of youth [note: McConnell Foundation has recently decided to pursue this opportunity].
- is itself catalytic, innovative, inclusive of youth and collaborative in approach.

strategy recommendation

vision:

A society in which all Canadians have the opportunity to develop their potential and to engage fully as citizens in the exercise of their rights and responsibilities.

The Foundation seeks to fulfill this vision by recognizing and fueling the passions and efforts of young people to identify and address the serious social, economic and environmental issues present in their communities.

words of wisdom:

"It's appalling. Young people feel that they are not valued in the community even though there are constantly increasing numbers of young people involved in community service, service learning and other arenas like that. They still feel as though they are not valued and you can see that in a million ways. This does have a lot to do with youth engagement, youth empowerment and youth leadership development."

- Laura Lee Geraghty, Search Institute

"Everyone has a voice,
and your opinion matters
no matter what your age.

Everyone can contribute something to a group,
and people are usually willing to participate
in something which they don't feel intimidated by.
This is an important factor."

- Alison Corbett

"I've a tripartite philosophy for myself
as a young person:

- (a) young people are experts in our experiences
 - (b) young people both learn and teach
 - (c) young people are interested in practical change."
- njeri-damali (campbell)

Based on learnings from the interviews, the recommendation is for the McConnell Foundation to pursue a Youth Action Strategy which includes the following three components:

- (1). Support youth in taking action
- (2). Capacity-building support for youth-led and youth-infused organizations
- (3). Strengthen the youth development sector

The Youth Action Strategy will provide young Canadians, ages 14 to 24, with opportunities to contribute to the development of their society, to work together to address issues of common concern, and to offer their own vision of the world they want. The Strategy will contribute towards the healthy development of young people through their own civic engagement action. It will support multiple levels of change – from individual skill-building to organizational development to community building to influencing policy outcomes.

Special emphasis will be given to youth action projects and organizations which are national in scope, or if local, have potential for spread. A supported process of reflection, documentation, and evaluation will ensure that information, approaches and models are disseminated more widely.

(1). youth action grants:

Project funding for youth (primarily 14 to 24) to take direct action to solve serious problems in their communities and the larger society in innovative ways.

assumptions:

- Young people are innovative, problem-solvers who are affected by socio-community issues, are interested in addressing them and need support to engage in, understand, and try solutions.
- Social change processes help young people realize their own power to contribute and begin cultivating a sense of citizen responsibility and efficacy. As such, they contribute to youth development.
- Peer-to-peer initiatives are generally effective and positive for the youth involved.
- Good ideas, approaches and innovations are often developed locally without the means to build them or disseminate them at a larger level.

- Foundation partnerships and collaborations are effective in creating flexibility for more grassroots youth projects to access support.

guiding principles:

- **Youth-led:** While youth-adult partnerships are encouraged, youth must be in the decision-making and leadership capacities of these initiatives.
- **Project Funding:** These grants are smaller than the capacity-building and youth development sector supports. They maybe single disbursements with a sustainability component (if applicable) being to connect them with a more established youth-led or youth-serving organization.
- **Adult Allies:** With effective adult allies, youth-adult partnerships have been deemed beneficial. Where possible, adult allies will be encouraged to support youth initiatives.
- **Flexibility:** Wherever possible, through partnerships, informal 'youth groups and networks' who can prove to have a constituency and pass due diligence will access this fund, as well as incorporated youth-led organizations. Being more flexible enables the Foundation to be more responsive to how many youth are organizing at the community level and can provide the catalytic support to becoming more 'structured' if that is the goal or to disseminate innovation.

complimentary McConnell initiatives:

This component of the Youth Action Strategy is consistent with the existing Foundation initiative in Student Engagement in assisting young people to have meaningful voice and action in a process of change. The Youth Action Grants build on and compliments Student Engagement by taking this beyond the school environment to focus on the community/society level.

(2). capacity-building support grants:

Multi-year capacity-building grants to (1). youth-led organizations and (2). youth-infused organizations who are proving to be promising in their respective spheres. These grants are to improve the practice and performance in the core activity of these organizations.

assumptions:

- Youth-led and youth-infused organizations are often effective and innovative but can be sidetracked from bettering their core competencies due to the endless search for project funding. Capacity-building support helps change this dynamic.

words of wisdom:

Every generation of young people needs to be part of movements.

"It's where we learned that we could make a difference.

It's where we learned our own empowerment and that it is okay to take risks, that it is okay to fight the system, and that it is okay to not be liked by large numbers of people if in fact you were working for a just cause... and you had a cadre of people around you that supported you in that."

- Mary Ackerman, Search Institute

"By helping a select number of youth development organizations enhance their overall operations, improve the quality of their programs and do a better job of serving more young people in need, we believe that, as a result of their accomplishments, these organizations will become sustainable and serve as models for the field."

- Nancy Roob, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

definitions:

Youth-led Organizations are those where young people, primarily under age 24 (but sometimes extends to age 29) are the participants, decision-makers, and initiators. [Motto: "By-youth-for-youth." i.e. Ontario Young People's Alliance]

Youth-infused Organizations describes hybrids of youth-adult partnerships where some adults may be participants, staff and decision-makers, but youth lead in terms of participation, program delivery and decisions, strategy formulation and governance.

[Motto: "Youth-led, adult-supported." i.e. The Students Commission]

Youth-serving Organizations are those where adults are the leaders and initiators in terms of program decisions and delivery, strategy formulation and governance. Youth are generally participants and volunteers rather than staff and decision-makers.

[Motto: "Adult-led, youth participate." i.e. Boys and Girls Clubs]

- Time spent supporting youth action organizations in reflection, planning and training will strengthen them so they can withstand the pressure of transition and turn-over.
- Capacity-building at the organizational level is about building the necessary infrastructure to support more young people in becoming engaged and taking action.

guiding principles:

- **Youth development in asset-context:** Youth-led and youth-infused organizations should generally take an asset-approach to young people, see them as agents of change, and provide meaningful opportunities for contribution, growth and development which leverage the assets of youth.
- **Long-haul:** The Foundation's commitment should be multi-year.
- **Due Diligence & Development:** Due diligence to select organizations that are promising in their respective areas (i.e. great demand from and success with youth, effective innovator, demonstrated results, etc.) . Growth planning is part of process with selected organizations to create development plans, as well as building effective relationships between the Foundation and grantees for optimal learning and development.
- **Youth-led:** While youth-adult partnerships are encouraged, youth must be in the decision-making and leadership capacities of these initiatives.
- **Adult Allies:** Youth-adult partnerships and other learning exchanges will be encouraged to facilitate development.

complimentary McConnell initiatives:

The Foundation 's recent grant approval for support to the National Youth Serving Agencies complements this component of the Youth Action Strategy in providing capacity-building support at the organizational level, but creates room to focus on infrastructure support for youth-led and youth-infused organizations.

(3). youth development field support:

Funding and resource support to help build the youth development field in Canada – from training, knowledge-building and dissemination to convening multisector partnerships, building networks and creating funding alliances.

assumptions:

- Young people, their projects, and organizations need support in accessing the funding community. The funding community needs to start seeing the value of this kind of comprehensive funding strategy for youth.
- There are many good ideas, resources, models, learnings that get developed but remain local or isolated.

a word about labels:

While this strategy may develop a new name, Youth Action Strategy is preferable over Youth Development Strategy from the end-user point of view. Development, given the context that young people live in and how they perceive funders, seems paternalistic, whereas Action speaks to their desire to get out there and make a contribution. Language matters.

...on infrastructure support:

"Your [McConnell's] change agenda is what we are working with. The change is for young people but it is not the young people that are going to have to change, it's the rest of us. What is very clear and exciting is that youth are part of making that change happen."

- Mary Ackerman, Search Institute

"There is need for a youth version of both the McGill-McConnell Program for National Voluntary Sector Leaders (about effective leadership and organizational development) and the Voluntary Sector Roundtable process with government (about sector building and policy change). Both are areas where the McConnell Foundation stands alone with a proven track record of support and innovation in Canada."

- Lynda Manser, National Youth in Care Network

- Those involved in the youth development sector – young people, organizations, funders, policy makers – will benefit from opportunities to dialogue, build relationships and learn from each other.
- A social change approach to youth development necessitates engaging as broad a spectrum of players as possible to create mutual understanding and a culture shift.

guiding principles:

- **Learning Relationships:** Networks, learning laboratories and other training and sharing opportunities create peer-to-peer learning and cross-generational partnerships.
- **Multiple levels of change:** Sector building activities should lead to multiple levels of change – from individual skill-building to organizational development to community building to influencing policy outcomes.
- **Evaluation and Dissemination:** An emphasis needs to be placed on knowledge-building, training and awareness based on the reflection, evaluation and dissemination of good practice and solid thinking.
- **Collaborations:** As resources and focus is limited, deep and informal collaborations with existing networks and initiatives will be encouraged to maximize sector building.

complimentary McConnell initiatives:

This component of the Youth Action Strategy is consistent with past and present practice in the Foundation to help strengthen the voluntary sector in Canada as a whole through supports to the Voluntary Sector Roundtable, for example, and innovations like the McGill-McConnell Program for National Voluntary Sector Leaders.

collaboration:

As the Youth Action Strategy recommendation draws from the experiences and expertise of a variety of foundation strategies and individual recommendations, there are any number of people the McConnell Foundation can turn to for assistance, further detail, and collaboration to bring a youth strategy to life.

In particular, this strategy has the most synergy in its overall coherence and components, with the strategies of the Effective Citizenry Program of Surdna Foundation [New York, US] and the Youth Engagement Programme of the Laidlaw Foundation [Toronto, CD]. Both Robert Sherman and Violetta Ilkiw have offered to meet with the Foundation to talk further about any or all aspects of their work, learnings and possibilities for the McConnell Youth Action Strategy. They view such collaboration as part of their strategies and efforts to achieve big picture success.

Operational Options:

Effectively generating a youth strategy in the Foundation requires not only knowledge of what is being done out there and not done, as good philanthropic strategy, but also understanding what makes a good youth program, then designing a strategy with programming elements in order to respond to young people's needs. A range of options are possible for how the strategic components can be carried out..

- infusing a youth lens in the Foundation

OPTION 1: The Youth Action Strategy is a discreet and independent strategy.

OPTION 2: Informal discussions and crossovers between Foundation staff on the Youth Action Strategy and other Foundation initiatives take place where and when opportunities arise.

OPTION 3: Complete infusion within the Foundation of a youth screen on most to all grants for possible youth development components.

- youth in philanthropy in the Foundation

OPTION 1: Foundation staff make funding decisions with Trustee approval.

OPTION 2: An in-house youth in philanthropy committee for the Strategy makes funding recommendations, works with grantees and does some training and communication about the Strategy.

OPTION 3: Option 2 but using an intermediary to manage and facilitate the process. Grant recommendations come back into Foundation and to Trustees.

appendix: interviews

Carnegie Trust

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

Andrew Carnegie gave £2 million to create the Carnegie UK Trust, "to improve the well-being of the masses." Through wise investments, grants of more than £24 million have been made over the last 87 years for, among other things, opening public libraries, providing church organs, developing village halls and supporting community needs in the arts, heritage and social welfare. The Trust's current priorities are to support village and rural community development; to encourage new trends in creativity and imagination across a broad spectrum of national life; to help to improve the prospects of young people and support their active participation in society; and to widen the use of village halls as centres of service for the community.

Strategic Initiative Name: Carnegie Young People's Initiative

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Carnegie Young People Initiative (CYPI) is a 10 year research project in the UK and Ireland investigating what it's like to be young today. CYPI aims to improve young people's involvement in local and national projects that are about young people's rights to participate as citizens.

INITIATION:

Carnegie Young People's Initiative rose out of the Carnegie Trust's systematic process of 5-year review where half way through the 5 years, they conduct a

review of the Trust's present policies and what their future policies might be and at the 5-year mark, they make changes. This regular framework of review and assessment leading to CYPI happened in 3 ways:

(1). The trustees own' interests in part creates catalysts. Then these interests are backed by research and exploratory papers, with relevant speakers on the papers, providing the necessary knowledge for trustees to make informed decisions.

(2). Trustees were involved for 10 years in the Third Age, those that are over 50 who have finished normal career life but are fit and well. While this group raised interesting area in terms of present institutions and how they can adapt to the future, and the Trust could have pursued areas like dying, the Trustees did not want to be identified with older people . They had a strong feeling that the Trust should do something with young people. John Naylor, the Trust's Chief Executive, was previously National Director of the YMCA so he had professional experience to contribute to this direction.

(3). The Trust moved from this principle of youth to a process to a focus. Finally, they convened a conference of 50 participants, bringing together a whole range of people – youth, civil servants, media, academics, business leaders, and so on, to look at the territory and what the Trust should do. The First Phase of this direction was to look at transitions youth people go through and from this, the focus on participation came.

Philosophy **Category:** Civic Engagement

PHILOSOPHY:

"Certainly, there is the whole recognition that youth don't get a good deal, and that young people ought to get a good deal in terms of their own recognition, their own development, and in terms of the services, and in terms of the influences they have on policy and also in terms of their engagement with the political process," explained Naylor.

"That was where we have come to. Our approach is participation in public decision-making. There are development areas – there is certainly engagement which is at the heart of it and to do that, there is needs to be capacity-building as well and encouragement of leadership."

GOAL:

"The goal is probably culture change so there is a recognition of the need to involve young people in all things that affect them, whether it's policy or practice, or services. For that cultural change to actually happen, that's huge and we can only get a little way along that road,," admits Naylor.

MULTIPLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

Carnegie Trust's broader strategy can be best described as a strategic interplay between the Trust's grantmaking, thinking, and major initiatives. This interplay combines their strategic initiative with

grantmaking of on-the ground organizations working in the field of the initiative because sometimes the grassroots initiatives can illustrate strategy and vice versa.

The Trust also usually has three strands strategically in any quinquennium. Currently (2001-2006), they are:

(1). Young people;

(2). Rural community development – focus on local initiators and encouraging those. “If they are young, all the better,” says John Naylor.;

(3). Creativity – focus on young creative organizations and ones that cross boundaries.

But there is no main theme really running through all three strands.

Yet, an important part of the Carnegie Trust's strategy is to make a distinction between grantgiving and strategic initiatives by creating both a link to the Trust and the outside world. When doing strategic initiatives, the Trust has a practice of always having a Steering Group which includes Trustees, as well as others, so that the strategic initiatives are never wholly inside the Trust. Structurally, the chairman of the Trust, John Naylor as Chief Executive, and usually the chairman of the relevant grantgiving subcommittee, will sit on the management committee of the initiative with outside members.

This fairly rare practice is about a commitment to collaboration, to sustainability and overall effectiveness, and in the case of CYPI, the embodiment of the youth involvement philosophy. “If we had it just done it within the Trust, again you are not working in partnership, you are controlling it all, and you are not working with the outside world. And so working with young people, our Trustees are not all under 25. If you are going to have something with young people and you're talking about youth involvement, our feeling was that you need to model that and we can't do that if we are running the whole thing from the Trust.”

Not only does this arms-length approach allow for a wide range of other players to be involved, but it means that the Director of the initiative can be solely focused on this work, rather than multiple priorities.

While not an aim of the Trust, many of its strategic initiatives have nonetheless spun-off into separate organizations or networks. For example, one strategic activity organized in this manner, on voluntary arts, started out as research looking at government structure and funding. Now it has become the Voluntary Arts Network, a separate charitable organization that the Trust does give some funds to, but since there were multiple funders involved in this initiative right from the start, the Carnegie Trust has never had to bare the sole financial responsibility for this new independence.

And what of accountability in this model? According to Naylor, “We keep enough control so money and ideas are accountable.”

The initiative reports to the three main Trustee meetings a year to allow for the Trust to participate in any major strategic issues that affect the Trust and should be addressed. For the Carnegie Trust, this process is crucial since keeping their initiatives at arms length, allows for appropriate expertise and partnership, but they also ensure enough of a link to the Trust so that it can have sufficient influence when need be.

INVESTMENT:

- Direct investment in CYPI is £200 000 to quarter of million pounds a year, not including grants to youth.
- Length of commitment is up to ten years.

This is the Trust's baseline but they also attract other resources, like the lottery, other foundations, and actively seeks collaborations to “make the resources go further.”

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

“There is no reason why young people have to be tokens. There are young people who can do great things and have done great things,” states Naylor.

With the arms-length relationship to the Trust, CYPI is free to have youth permeate through its structure. From the chairing of the entire initiative to its management and conference participation, CYPI involves youth centrally in the execution of the initiative. The chairman of the CYPI, Ravi

Gurumurphy, was appointed at the age of 22. John Naylor clarified that this was not a tokenist appointment. Rather, the chairman is a bright capable man who helped produce a report that influenced the career service. In fact, he is the highest ranked civil servant for his age ever in the history of the UK civil service, as a senior person in the Social Exclusion Unit of the English Government.

The deputy chairman is Lord Laming, experienced in chairing the most important Government inquiries. CYPI's management committee is 50/50 youth and older people. The advisory committee has far more younger people participating. Each year, the major conference related to youth in the project is comprised of 50% young out of its 200 participants. Youth have the leadership of this process and Ravi Gurumurphy has chaired the conference. Most workshops at the conference is chaired by young people.

COLLABORATION:

John Naylor describes the Trust as having a “very collaborative view of the world” for three primary reasons:

(1). It make the resources go farther.

(2). It engages others very early in the process so they have ownership early on. There is no problem with dissemination, for example, because “we are already disseminated by the nature of the people involved.”

(3). It takes advantage of the Trust's independence: “We have no axes to grind, we are not politically biased or financially dependent, so we can be independent” in these collaborations.

(4). It allows the Trust to not be in an area long-term and consequently, enables greater trust building among other organizations because “we are not going to be reading on other people's toes long term. We will disappear. It gives us a clearer role.”

The only minor problem with such a collaborative spirit is that the Trust may not always get the credit/recognition they deserve.

SUCCESS:

For John Naylor, the two prominent indicators of success are related to the

policy arena. First, the fact that the government minister responsible for youth launched publicly the publication of the principles that government and government departments should use to involve young people in all government consultations and generation of government services at a Carnegie main conference. "So the fact that he choose us suggests that we have a significant influence in shaping government policy and the government is thinking of involving young people. That was symptomatic of the fact that there was beginning to be a sea change in attitude."

Second, as soon as CYPI published their UK mapping report that revealed the disparities between different parts of the UK and their recommendation that consistency should be created to generate a large step forward, within less than 2 weeks, the issue was debated in the House of Lords, initiated not by the Trust, but a Labour peer who had received the report.

CHALLENGES:

(1). The complexity and variety of people involved, the interest groups and finding a way to bring these various differences into a more collaborative formation.

(2). Getting people to recognize the participation issues of young people was a major challenge. Now that this is achieved, the challenge is to get some real action on the ground. The next three years of the initiative is focused on implementation.

RESPONSE:

"Youth are satisfied up to a point but they always want to be more. That is to be expected. There will always be questions and challenges," explained Naylor.

In CYPI, they try to be aware of the need to sometimes challenge young people's own prejudices about youth competency and to avoid setting a young person up by interrupting participation to always mean putting a young person in a position even if he or she is not ready.

"We put a very abled person (Ravi Gurumurthy) in charge because we wanted youth leadership to be credible from the start because we knew age will be a block. I remember one medical person saying 'you have someone in charge who's not old

enough to be a houseman' and turning up his nose at that. You are going to have a range of attitudes from that kind of prejudicial attitudes to someone like Lord Laming who said, 'if you are going to have a young person as chair, I will be vice-chair because I don't want to be chairman of young person's thing; a young person ought to do it.' So you get that full range of attitude from the community," says Naylor of the broader reaction.

The Trust staff at one level don't have a huge amount to do with CYPI because it is a separate project. When the Trust receives grant applications related to youth, they consult the CYPI staff because they are experts in this area. The staff who are working on the project directly are very positive. However, the overriding concern is that the field is huge and the Director of CYPI balances the need to narrow so they are effective but with staff's desire is to do more and have more resources to enable that.

GAPS:

Focusing their initiative has been a challenge for the Trust given other need areas but CYPI has discovered that young people's participation is so bad, that the area is to expansive. Yet, they have had to limit themselves to education, looking at schools, and health, looking at local government and the impact on national government.

"But there is so much more. We felt we needed to have different arenas that were illustrative of the principles and the culture youth are faced with. We could spend a major initiative on socially excluded young people or one group of socially excluded young people. We have taken the view of getting illustrative samples, structures, areas and people to generate impetus in the whole field. Inevitably you could do ten times more if you have ten times the money."

Carnegie Young People's Initiative

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

The Carnegie Young People Initiative (CYPI) is a 10 year research project in the UK and Ireland investigating what it's like

to be young today.

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

CYPI has a 3-year program to promote young people's participation in public decision-making in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. CYPI does this work with a small team based in London and a workplace with four key areas of activity:

(1). Mapping existing institutions that are already engaging youth and drawing policy conclusions from there. The result of the mapping work is the Taking The Initiative Report

(2). Looking at whether there are common standards for participation. "It's an enormously patchy picture of organizations... everything is extremely ad hoc. So one way of improving that is to create some sense of standards across organizations," explained David Cutler, CYPI's Director.

A final report will be released at the end of the year but there are already big developments in line with this recommendations. For example, the local government have a standard for young people's participation called "Here By Right" which CYPI helped develop. The Government in England created a policy, "Learning to Listen", as the standard for all government departments including action plans and goals to involve young people in their decision-making.

(3). Looking at evaluation – what evaluations exist, whether engagement could be evaluated, and promoting evaluation.

(4). Capacity-building is the most general piece of the approach. It includes the grant stream by the Trust, promoting initiatives usually by small organizations, many seminars, policy forums, and national conferences. There is also a growing band of specialists workers and participation workers. So in Scotland, they funded a support network for them and now trying to grow that support in England and the other countries.

Philosophy Category: Civic Engagement

PHILOSOPHY:

For David Cutler, it is important that the initiative starts and stops at public decision-making. "I think we think it is the most important issue. Before 2000, there was a program looking at transitions. I felt it was a little too vague. Carnegie is pretty small so it was important to focus. Looking back on the work, [public decision-making] had been a minor theme in the first phase on transition and I felt it was the most important thing to continue. We did a scan not unlike what you are doing now, and at the end of 1999, among all sorts of different groups including young people themselves felt that was the most important issue to focus on."

GOAL:

CYPI goal is the promotion of public decision making by young people aged 10-25.

SINGLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

From Cutler's perspective as Director of the initiative, the relationship has been enormously positive with the Trust given the arms-length strategy. "The ordinary practical challenges have been lessened by having a relatively secure funding stream, even if it is small and core funding. By the standards of the voluntary sector in this country, that is pretty secure funding. We have to justify it and be highly accountable but it is a single source of funding and that has made things much easier. Carnegie overall has a good reputation in this country, it has a much bigger name than a single project would have on its own. It is good thing that it is based in Scotland because it forced our multi-country perspective. I think it has made us less London-oriented. A lot of the progressive work had been happening in Scotland anyway."

The benefits are mutual, explains Cutler. "There is definitely an increasing synergy between their grant stream and the research policy development that we do so we are in a better position to advise on grant applications because we spend so much time talking to people about the issues. It makes us less generalist. I think that is a mutual benefit that gives them greater expertise than they would normally

have as a general grantmaking charity, and it gives up a lot of extra scope in terms of encouraging worthwhile development on the ground. It means we have the advice of experienced Trustees. They have a fresh group of young people associated with the Trust who are younger than the Trustees. With the chair being 22, it has added another generational perspective. It has been useful for them to have us in London, the place of central government decisions, we are more recognizable to central government in London."

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

"The point of the initiative is about young people's involvement in public decision-making, so it would be pretty hypocritical if we did not involved them in our own decision-making," Cutler states.

Young people are involved in 3 main ways:

(1). The Young People's Involvement Coordinator is a young adult who contacts young people already involved in public decision-making and get young people to join CYPI as a kind of second tier that are then consulted as an advisory to the initiative.

(2). Youth also make up half the management group that governs the initiative.

(3). The initiative is chaired by a young person, Ravi Gurumurthy, who became known to CYPI through writing a report for Carnegie Trust on disengaged youth and he is very accomplished.

Cutler describes their attempts at youth involvement in the initiative as creating a "relatively even basis between older people and younger people under the age of 25."

SUCCESS:

Since creating a cultural shift is an important end goal of the initiative, both government policy and organizational action are important outcomes. The success of the initiative to date, is spoken of in terms of both these areas. "I am not sure I see the House of Lords debate as an outcome. I do think the 'Learning to Listen' is a major shift in policy because they did not involve young people in policy discussions before. The other issue is a more general acceptance across the 5

countries about the importance of the subject and trying to focus more government and local resources. It has been trying to make it more mainstream. By the end of 2002, all the major organizations at a national level and many local ones will have a commitment to young people's participation where at the beginning, very few did. This is a more general shift in policy acceptance across the board, though of course in reality, that varies a great deal in practice between the organizations."

CHALLENGES:

"We are very small – normally between 3 to 5 of us. Coverage of the issue is pretty difficult. That's really been the most important issue. We have really been doing it on a shoe string. We are trying to look at the 5 countries in a comparative way," explains Cutler of their major challenge.

GAPS:

• In terms of Britain, the gap CYPI is concerned with is practical application. "We feel that a great deal has been achieved in the past couple years at the policy level, but when it comes to work on the ground, there is vast differences so that is a big gap. It is the one we are trying to look at over the next three years."

• The second gap is the awareness from young people of their rights. They do have a right to participate even though the opportunities are varied at the moment, but there is an enormous amount of work to be done in raising awareness about those rights.

• Socially marginalized young people is another area requiring attention. There are opportunities for young people to be involved in public decision-making now, except for those in care, those with learning and physical disabilities, younger age groups, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) young people.

Centre of Excellence

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

The Centre Of Excellence For Youth Engagement was created to develop with

youth effective strategies for engaging youth in meaningful participation in making decisions for healthy living.

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement is focusing on finding, describing and building models of effective strategies for engaging youth in meaningful participation and making healthy decisions for healthy living. It is working to be a catalyst – setting a standard for meaningful youth engagement in organizations, schools, governments and communities. In this process, the Centre is committed to "walking the talk" which means youth, supported by professional adults, leading the research, the model-building, the public discussion and dissemination of the Centre's findings and the implementation of effective strategies in other organizations and institutions.

INITIATION:

In the 1997 Speech from the Throne, the federal government committed to the development of Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being as part of the federal government's contribution to the National Children's Agenda. The vision of the Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being initiative is to enhance "our understanding of, and responsiveness to, the physical and mental health needs of children and the critical factors for healthy child development."

In the year 2000, Health Canada created a competition to establish five Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-being, each with a specific focus. The Students Commission, a national youth organization doing youth engagement for a decade, pulled together a consortium of partners and pitched a vision and strategy that won them the lead of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement.

Philosophy **Category:** Youth Engagement

PHILOSOPHY:

"We have come to understand that perhaps the word "youth" should be deleted and we should call ourselves, The

Centre of Excellence for Engagement," says Stoney McCart, Centre Director. "When you say a Centre for Youth Engagement you label it and every body thinks the focus should be on youth but as a Centre for Engagement, what we are really looking at is engagement processes and outcomes for individuals and systems, and we are confirming that "adult" engagement in youth engagement is one of the most critical pieces. Also, the engagement process is not going to be substantially different from community to community. If you are engaged, and if you have the capacity to engage different communities, youth are just one of those communities you can engage. The focus needs to be on relationships, processes and systems. We've got to get adults who are keen and interested in being engaged with youth and we need to support youth who we are trying to engage in various parts of their society. As soon as we stick these little adjectives like youth in front of things, we start to qualify and then people start to exclude and think that the work is all about fixing young people. That means you can't get the whole cultural shift of the whole community because you do need to shift the community. That's what Mark [Pancer, Centre researcher] has been saying in his research but people knee-jerk back into the other stuff, and that what is what Del [Williams, a Centre core partner] has been saying in Saskatchewan advocating for youth/adult partnerships in improving Saskatchewan schools. The biggest barriers to youth engagement exist outside young people. Those barriers exist in attitudes and perceived attitudes — whether these perceptions are true or not, young people think that adults, the media, and even their peers think they are not capable."

GOAL:

Five years from now, the Centre hopes to have:

- (1). changed the way research is done.
- (2). involved sufficient numbers of youth and youth organizations so that research is made comfortable to them and becomes a regular part of youth organizational activity.
- (3). made an impact on adults in

significant numbers so they understand the phrase "adult engagement", understand its link to "youth engagement" and understand that youth engagement is essentially talking about relationships between youth and adults. Part of the attainment of this goal involves increasing the amount of research being done about the adult piece.

Stoney McCart elaborates on the second goal: "One of the things is to embed the concept and ideas related to doing research and doing evaluation and make them as common and known in youth organizations as say – here is your facilitator manual, everybody sit in the circle, active listening – all of those of things that any good youth organization or youth-serving organization should have and, I expect at this stage, at least has a manual or a crib sheet around these things and commonly tries to practice them. We have focus groups, we do this, we do that. They become commonplace. The cultural shift for youth organizations is that research isn't just out there. That research doesn't just belong in the ivory tower but that it is part of the whole user-participation process. But I think some of that cultural shift must come from inside the organizations and that develops from the comfort level of using the tools. Again, the flexibility to use them imperfectly, the whole trial and error process, and the need not to be as structured as it has to be for academic peer review — all of these things are part of the change that needs to happen on the research side. But having organizations feel comfortable and capable of doing research and using research and taking ownership, particularly youth organizations, meaning young people is a critical goal. Maybe that means renaming that word."

SINGLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

The Centre's strategy is defined by two overriding things: the five functions given to all Centres of Excellence by the funder/initiator, Health Canada, and more organically, from its own research findings and other learnings as they develop. In the first instance, the Centre strategy includes conducting research, providing policy advice, communicating and training, and

building networks.

On the research side, the first learnings coming out of the literature review and so on indicate that the biggest gap in research is on the adult side of engagement. The benefits of engagement for youth are well and clearly documented across a whole range of sectors whether in terms of recreation, health, careers, civic engagement; in whatever areas, there are clearly proven benefits for individuals who are engaged. They have fewer risk behaviours; they have higher academic results and do better in schools, and do better in careers. They are obviously performing. All of this is well documented on the individual side.

The Centre now wants to turn its attention to two pieces that are missing. According to Stoney McCart, "One is very hard to grasp. Can we get research that demonstrates that engagement is not a do-good thing but engagement of young people also benefits those systems – that you have a better running organization, you have a better running society, you have a better running programs if you have young people engaged? It's about that the reciprocity of the relationship, rather than you do this so that young people experience benefits. Rather, you do this because young people experience benefits but the other 50 per cent of it is that the system is better and healthier. There is not much on systemic side."

The other big piece is – is there a magic recipe for engagement? Is there a magic recipe for those people who are effective engagers whether they are adult allies for youth or something else? What are the qualities of those people who are really good? What are the qualities of those systems? What are the qualities of organizations that effectively engage? "In our case, we are supposed to be looking at young people but I suspect these are the qualities that effectively engage user groups of any kind," McCart notes.

It can be as simple as looking at those teachers whose kids are engaged in their learning. I suspect that you find the same qualities in those teachers, as you find in those coaches that turn kids out, or the political organizations that have young people involved. I suspect that a lot of those

things are the same. Then comes the next big question. Can those things be taught or are they innate? Do we need to then develop a system of recognition and rewarding and encouraging of that kind of engagement? We talk about leadership but maybe there needs to be some kind of recognition of that capacity, which is not necessarily leadership, that ability that maybe the fundamental missing piece in terms of what we are doing in education, learning and other youth programming."

There has been that expression around for a long time in terms of helping teachers become a "guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage." Perhaps there is a characteristic behaviour that makes a good engager. Are there ways of helping people learn how to do that, set up curriculum that is designed to do that? Yet, in the process, how do you get around the kind of information dump that many people resist in the efforts to learn by doing. "You need to do it in order to really cement the learning. No amount of instruction or information dumping prior to or during the event sometimes creates the learning for people. Often, even to our frustration, they need to do it to learn it," explains Stoney McCart based on years of experience with youth and organizational leaders. "We can play and I am not going to get in the way of us trying another learning tool to see if we can't better prepare, but there is some part of our process that we have learned after all these years that says it's all about process and everyone needs to learn it their way in their right time at the right moment. I'll show you the narrative training manual for the Centre. No amount of getting that amount of material and putting it in front of someone is going to them internalize it."

At the heart of the Centre's strategy is a deep commitment to achieving change through process-oriented work. For example, the Centre has necessarily focused a great deal of time and energy on building the capacity of the core partners because in doing so, the Centre is modeling the processes and lessons learned in striving to improve and implement true engagement practice. Becoming their own laboratories helps the Centre leaders create solutions that enlarge

and deepen the impact. From this, they are sharing the most profound and simple lessons and best practices, because they have grappled with how to sustain them and be there in an ongoing way. They have learned that spending time on relationships is critical because it is these relationships that form bridges, creating cultural shift.

Yet, while they recognize that their results are their process, others don't, particularly many adult decision-makers "They say 'those guys are really good on process but where is the substance?' They don't see experience as academic," laments Stoney McCart.

It comes an important development in the Centre – to marry their strategic focus on adult engagement in research with their strategic focus on processes to affect change, especially on government leaders. "There is an experiential component to this because 'engagement is about the relationship between people, ideas and activities.' That's the phrase I like from that OREP study* on student engagement. Policymakers can't get it or write policy correctly without first experiencing it. We are creating those experiences, particularly in terms of youth-adult partnerships," explains McCart.

So for the national conference being hosted by the Centre, they are working to find creative ways for adults, particularly adult decision-makers, "to get out of their heads and into their bodies so they can experience and understand what that OREP quote means. This is not a cognitive thing, which is what many people believe so that's why they want a recipe. T.S. Elliot calls it the 'objective correlative' – we have to link these very abstract concepts to the here and now and in a highly experiential, creative way. The tricky part is figuring out how to engage adults in the experience without scaring them away."

*A 1995 McConnell Foundation sponsored three-year study conducted by the Office of Research on Educational Policy (OREP) at McGill University on strategies which increase student engagement in learning and school life. For report: http://ed-lex.law.mcgill.ca/SE_e.htm

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

As a Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement committed to walking its talk and itself becoming a model of engagement, the Centre is certainly committed to youth involvement. In practice, young people are critical players at the table every step of the way – from making the strategic decisions to the creation of a parallel Youth Ethics Committee to balance out some of the power of the university ethics committees, to actually being on the ground and doing the work.

While the Centre is really just beginning to explore in their research how youth engagement benefits systems, Centre Director, Stoney McCart's take on youth contribution to change processes is as follows: "If you believe in change and feel that the world needs to be changed, what are the assets that youth bring to the table that are missing? Some of those answers lie in things like values and idealism but I am so tired of hearing adults twist these in patronizing ways about youth contributing energy and idealism that results in undermining these qualities. They are real and important. You can't have change without an idealistic vision and values about what is right and wrong. As adults age, you lose that idealistic clarity and yet, it is very important to have in a healthy society. Investment at every stage in human development is critical in order to have a healthy society. As a society, we have not paid enough attention to the things that have been eroded in the past 50 years, like public values, public spaces and public participation."

COLLABORATION:

Collaboration is simply a built-in element of the Centre's structure and strategy. At its broadest level, the Centre has an 'open-door policy' to partnership, meaning that any relevant organization that is interested may connect with the Centre, share its expertise and benefit from its learning. Such a policy helps the Centre fulfill two of its functions – education and training and network building. At a more intimate level, the Centre is run by an inner circle of core partners which include youth, youth-led organizations, youth-serving

organizations, universities, a hospital research arm, and a francophone-specific organization. This diversity helps the Centre push the boundaries of its mandate.

SUCCESS:

One major success for the Centre to date is shifting the two universities. From its outset, the cultural differences between academic institutions and researchers on one hand, and youth organizations and practitioners on the other, were clear and vast. Despite having 'mavericks' leading the research process, it was clear early on that as individuals and institutions, the academics would need to also shift in their understanding and application of youth engagement. The reverse was also true; youth, who were not involved with school, needed to shift their attitudes and perceptions of "researchers." Within year one, the Centre had managed to get the ethics committees of the universities to lower the age of consent to 16 so more young people can share their experiences of engagement or exclusion without adult consent. Alongside such a structural victory, are more informal and perhaps more profound developments in the researchers own recognition of what it means to truly engage young people in research and to begin work towards their goal of changing how research is done so that it is more accessible and relevant to youth. The shift has been significant too, as youth and program staff adopt research tools, in their work and language, and see the role of partnerships with academic work.

CHALLENGES:

The biggest challenge for the Centre to date in terms of their research goals is maintaining the shift they have achieved in people and institutions like academia. To illustrate, Centre Director, Stoney McCart describes the ongoing struggle with the development of a survey for a longitudinal study on the effects of conference engagement on young people. "As we prepare to administer the survey again, the researchers are busy trying to shorten it. But for efficiency, which is normal behaviour, they are back to doing it by themselves without consultation, especially

with youth. Inadvertently and unintentionally, as they "edited", they removed every piece that was put in by youth in the first process. They had forgotten totally the lessons, but were quick to respond when it was pointed out to them. The learning has not stuck yet. They have not remembered the big success stories where young respondents most liked the parts of the survey that their peers from the Centre included. They are not there yet in their everyday thinking. Part of me wants to bang my head against the wall with frustration, but then the light bulb goes back on and I remember the point of having the bigger circle in the Centre. Maybe they won't remember the learnings forever so that the youth voice must be at the table. We need to figure out how to do this so that the voice is there in the work they (adults) do on an ongoing basis."

Language is also part of the struggle. Just like Stoney McCart's suggestion that maybe the word, research, has to change in order to help the Centre fulfill its goal of having youth use and own research, she also feels maybe they are not asking the right questions. "Perhaps, we do not know what the right questions are yet in order to be engaging or interesting and engaging. You can walk up to a young person and say 'how does it feel to be engaged and they will look at you blankly. Now some of us know how to do it right, but we've almost been sucked in and seconded by the 'we're now a research center.' We're doing research and we're going to look at this concept called engagement' and we almost forget what we already know from programming and become more esoteric. I laughed recently at a Core Meeting, when the academics were all using plain language and the jargon was coming from youth who have been on the team for awhile."

RESPONSE:

The overall response to the Centre has been very positive to date in its various stakeholder communities. It is worth noting though, the responses from the academic partners and youth organization partners in reaction to each other's style and pace of work. They certainly speak to the different worlds

which the Centre collaboration and relationship-building, are bringing together. The researchers "think we are moving at breakneck speed and I am completely underwhelmed by where we are at in terms of developing the research tools and academically publishing about our work. Now they have the summer for writing and reflecting and I think wouldn't that be lovely. They are being pushed to be more action-oriented and, hopefully, we on the program side will get the chance to do more reading and reflecting... to do that kind of preparation for innovation."

GAPS:

"I look at the impact we could make with the Centre carrying on beyond our Health Canada mandate and the day I just spent haggling with other project funding proposals for a relatively small amount of dollars and then the impact we have had in the ten years of The Students Commission (the Centre's administrative lead organization which Stoney McCart also heads) and think that someone should fund us to keep doing the core of our work, enabling us to become even more effective and innovative, without being sidetracked by constant project funding," shares Stoney McCart.

Funding core activities of such innovative organizations and networks, providing the breathing room to reflect and improve, is a very large gap that more funders need to fill.

Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

For the past 30 years, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation has been committed to improving the lives of people from low-income communities. For the past two years, the Foundation has been working to shift the bulk of their resources and energies toward strengthening the field of youth development and assisting key organizations with their new Institution and Field Building approach (IFB) to grantmaking. By 2004, the Program for Youth Development will become the sole focus of the Foundation with the overriding

goal, according to Foundation President, Michael Balin, of making investments "that produce measurable social returns and that make a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of young people."

Strategic Initiative Name: Institution and Field Building

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

IFB, the key program of the Foundation currently, is essentially, trying to get behind organizations who have a promising product that is making a difference and helping that organization improve the quality of their services and get that product out to more people – "in our case, kids."

INITIATION:

The process of transition at the Foundation can be best described as two parallel tracks that have come together as one strategy over the past year and a half. "On the methodology side of our grantmaking – how we invest and with what set of principles and values – we made a shift from our historical focus on public systems reform – how do we help create longer lasting systemic change at the systems level, whether it is the child welfare system, or the education system, etc. – using what I would call an initiative style of grantmaking where most of our money went into project support for different initiatives that our staff at the Foundation would craft themselves. So we would hire a brilliant person in child welfare, they would come in with an idea of what the field needs, and we would craft an initiative and essentially would be giving project-based support to states and localities, sometimes community-based organizations," explains Nancy Roob, Foundation Vice-president.

Our board began to really question in general that approach to grantmaking, whether working through these large public systems would create any kind of return on our investment, and we began to think differently about the methodology of our grantmaking. So institution building in particular, is a different way of us doing our grantmaking."

Philosophy Category: Capacity-

Building

PHILOSOPHY:

While IFB became the way in which Edna McConnell Clark does their grantmaking, youth development became the substantive area in which to make grants, building on the Clark Foundation's historical interest in children and family issues. "When we began our exploration of where, given our approach to institution and field building, could add most value, we scanned a number of fields (doing work in child welfare, youth employment, education and youth development and out of that process of thinking where again we can have the most impact, we landed on youth development." Youth development is also the area where the current President of the Foundation is most passionate.

Part of the attraction to the youth development field was the opportunity to develop the field in one of its basic need areas, contributing the Foundation's new institution, investment approach to grantmaking. "In our view, one of the fundamental things it [the field] needs at the basic level are examples of organizations that are actually driving any kind of outcomes for young people in out-of-school time. There just are not enough examples of what works and what doesn't work and then those organizations and those best practices aren't well positioned to get to any kind of scale in order to reach larger numbers of kids. But in order to move the various forces in the field, public funding, whatever else it takes to get those kinds of practices to scale, one had to start at this basic level of building some institutional capacity behind organizations who really do have promising products, of which, there are very, very few."

GOAL:

"At the end of the day, what we are hoping to do is advance more opportunities for low-income youth in out-of-school time and strengthen capacity of highly promising youth development organizations to deliver better quality services to more young people," Roob summarizes. "Yeah, you can point to Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Big Brothers and Big Sisters and then there is just this

huge void. So what we are doing is finding in local communities, emerging, highly promising organizations, and we try to get behind them and help those organizations over time get some ground, even if its just in the context of a neighbourhood. Some of them will probably get to replicate in multiple places; some of them will just grow within a community context. To be able to have ten of those to point to, that would be a pretty major step forward given the state of the field in this country right now."

INVESTMENT:

There are seven organizations currently involved in the IFB fund, with an expectation of no more than 20 over a 5-year period. Nancy Roob admits that the Clark Foundation is "making pretty big bets on a small number of relationships."

The current level of investment per organization is \$2-3 million over 5 years. However, there will be more variations in investment as they move forward, more reflection on their strategy as other organizations join the fund, since not all will be able to absorb this kind of investment while larger organizations may be able to handle more. There is certainty at this stage that five years is just not long enough so a longer timeframe must be factored into the strategy formulation.

One hundred per cent of the Foundation's \$25-30 million annual contributions will be spent on the youth development fund. In addition, the Foundation has a staff capacity of 27 (including evaluation, communications, portfolio management and various other administrative functions) invested in this strategy.

(IN TRANSITION TO) SINGLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

"The questions we were asking ourselves were all about the reality that we spend \$25-\$30 million a year, but how do we know we know that that money is really making any kind of social impact and what can we be doing to further drive change in a way so we can see some measure of social outcomes? So, we also started to question these very limited resources. Does it make sense to have our dollar spread across all these different areas of interest or

should we think about how we can get behind one outcome area? Given the methodology we are now adopting, IFB, from the field building side, is there one domain, one area we could be efficient in focusing our resources? We spent some time thinking through some different options and we landed on focusing on youth development, how do we advance opportunities for low-income youth in out-of-school time because the field is so underdeveloped," explains the Foundation's Vice President.

She elaborates: "Part of why we moved in the direction we have, again on the methodology side in terms of our institution building approach, is because of the ways in which we have seen the limits of our effectiveness as a funder, meaning you can pump a lot of project-based money into organizations but if they don't have a lot of infrastructure to actually sustain those projects in the long-run, and if those projects were never central to their missions to begin with, you just have a recipe for no-effectiveness. You just don't end up with any results. That is the story basically of most funding, at least in our country. It's every foundation doing its own initiatives and driving its particular agenda with nonprofit organizations. The nonprofit organizations that want to stay focused on their missions and want to deliver their products, end up getting twisted in all sorts of directions to meet the expectations of other foundations, basically. And in the end, what happens on the ground in low income neighbourhoods and for different constituencies that get served, you end up with piecemeal kind of efforts that don't really have any impact."

Coming from a strong market orientation in her analysis of philanthropic strategy, Nancy Roob explains that the major reason that "even the most effective efforts [fail] to get to scale is because the capital markets, at least in our country, don't work rationally like in the private sector. So once you get your project proven in some way, foundations start walking away from you versus deciding that this is the point to start putting in larger dollars. Government funding doesn't necessarily only reward the things that are working. It is often politically driven. It is just not

rational."

Therefore, the Foundation selects organizations for IFB which engages them in an extensive process of planning, development, and evaluation. They have a partnership with a consulting firm, which handles the business plan phase with the grantees. It is very likely that overtime, more intermediary relationships will develop to execute the strategy.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

"We have a due diligence team which represents a combination of different skill sets – we have an evaluation unit, a finance and administration unit, we have a person we call a portfolio manager with expertise in organizational development. We pull a team together that conducts our due diligence on organizations. Basically, this is the way we go about making the decision about whether or not to invest. We have had some preliminary meetings about a next step for us – to engage young people on the due diligence team so that they're apart of helping us make the assessment of whether or not the organizations we are considering for investment are in fact working effectively with the young people that they are serving."

Nancy Roob is determined within the next year that the Foundation will have this youth involvement in place in their own decision-making process.

In the meantime, to be able to "see when it is smoke and mirrors and when it is real," the due diligence team does extensive interviews with all the young people that are named by the organizations in decision-making capacities, such as youth who are claimed to be on the boards or program design committees. This process to date has led to the rejection of organizations that make claims of engaging youth in ways that they really do not.

YOUTH-LED v. YOUTH SERVING:

"Whether or not an organization is youth-led, youth participating in decision-making is one of the key ingredients in our view of what makes a youth development organization successful. So when we do our due diligence on organizations, we

are really looking for what is the role of young people in decision-making around service program design, governance and other kinds of key issues where we feel it makes a critical difference to have youth engaged. So that is true whether or not the organization is actually run by a young person," states Roob.

The way the fund is shaping up is to have some diversity regarding youth-led and youth-serving organizations. For example, Boys and Girls Club of America, which is a fairly traditional service provider, is at one end of the continuum and a recent investment, the Bell Foundation where the founding and current leader is a young person, and where young people are heavily involved on the board and in other elements of decision-making. "We don't have a principle that says that we don't fund youth-led organizations, or we don't fund non-youth-led organizations. What we are looking for is organizations, regardless of their leadership – we have a whole set of criteria around leadership – that suggests that the organization is poised to grow, that the leadership, whatever it is, has an understanding of what it actually takes to take the organization to the next stage of growth, that it is producing results and of course, young people are in decision-making roles."

SUCCESS:

The Foundation has been working on their framework to define success. As part of the framework, they would like to see organizations they work with, be able to demonstrate their effectiveness since currently, most are at the "apparently effective stage" without any evaluation data to suggest they are at the "demonstrated effectiveness level."

The Clark Foundation would certainly define success as having:

- (1). More kids served.
- (2). An increase in the organization's strength in terms of their finances, and leadership that can withstand change without disrupting the organization's core business.
- (3). Created understanding and knowledge in the field about quality standards in youth development.

CHALLENGES:

The greatest challenge by far in the Clark Foundation's transitioning process is "the transformation of basically taking a very well-established foundation and essentially creating a startup business. That is it," Nancy Roob affirms.

A smaller but important challenge is finding enough organizations to invest in.

RESPONSE:

The Clark Foundation has had relative success in their exiting process. Nancy Roob credits the relative ease to the four-year length of the transition process and the due diligence with which they have spent exiting out of their existing community commitments responsibly. "In each case, we have had an exit strategy in which we have tried to integrate the institution building principles and approaches into how we exit and we have spent a lot of time with the constituencies we worked with so they can understand our exit."

For example, in child welfare, the Foundation established a new institution in partnership with three other entities to carry on the work that the Foundation started. The Foundation has solidified this work with a financial investment. In New York Neighborhoods, more of a community-development effort, the Foundation has helped each of the organizations that it has funded for the past seven years develop business plans, like is done with other IFB organizations in the youth development Fund. They then made substantial final financial investments against each business plan and brought other funders in so Clark's exit leaves these organizations in strong positions.

"I am sure there are folks out there who are, gosh, we wish the Clark Foundation would continue to give thousands of grants and give us money and we wish they weren't leaving x and y areas. But we have actually done focus groups on this and for the most part, the feeling is we have done a pretty good job in the exit process. I think in terms of our new work, it is completely untested. We have no proof. We have not delivered any results yet. There are tons of questions about what it is that we are

doing," adds Roob.

The sector is in a very transitional place right now around a lot of the issues and values and principles that underscore some of the decision-making that the Foundation went through. So, "there are a lot of folks that see it very threatening to see a foundation move in this direction because if we are in fact, really effective, it puts into question a lot of the ways other foundations go about doing their business. On the other hand, lots of folks wish they could move their foundation in this direction but the pressures of board politics and other kinds of issues, often can inhibit one's ability to make the kind of changes that we are making, and I wouldn't even necessarily recommend it to every case because it has been very hard getting to this place and again, we don't have any results to prove," admits the Vice President.

"There are other constituencies that would really like to see us succeed because it will help them make the case for their foundations that perhaps this is a better way to go about doing [their work]. I think that one of the things we are seeing at the grantee level, they feel like their organizations have been pretty significantly transformed already just by going through the business plan phase with us so the word on the street from these organizations is really positive and what we are seeing is that while some folks may have been skeptical, there are some group of lucky nonprofit organizations that seem like they are better off, so what would it take for me and my organization to be one of those organizations?"

The reality that Edna McConnell Clark is a national foundation, and not a community foundation, means that there is not a grassroots, neighbourhood base that they are connected to. This means that they have to contend with far less local response and pressures. Perhaps the only slight exception is in New York where they are headquartered and for their home state where they have a slightly different approach.

GAPS:

For Nancy Roob, funding and services for 18-24 year olds is an area in need of more effective service delivery, especially

on the preventive side.

Do Something

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

Do Something is a nationwide network of young people who know they can make a difference in their communities and take action to change the world around them. As part of Do Something, young people are asked what they want to do to make things better and then given the resources and support to bring their unique visions to life. Through the Do Something Network in America's schools, young people are inspired to look beyond themselves and take action to improve the world around them. With the support of caring educators called Community Coaches, young people create their own vision for a better community and design and implement their own community projects to turn their ideas into action.

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Currently, Do Something has one main program, a national program where they work in schools to create change. Using the school infrastructure is effective because it is a place where young people are already gathered and captive. The Program Director for the national program describes a "crisis" where young people are graduating throughout different points in their lives without gaining key leadership skills. The Do Something program is designed to help young people gain vital leadership skills, whether their in organizing a project or participating in a project, all while improving their community. The program gives them the attitudinal skills so that they can become an active citizen for a lifetime.

INITIATION:

Do Something started in 1993 with actor Andrew Shue and his friend, Michael Sanchez as founders. During that time, young people were "really getting a bad rap" with media messages that they were slackers and Generation X and so on. For Shue and Sanchez who had been surrounded by youth leaders and had average upbringings in suburban schools,

these messages just seemed wrong. They did not describe their reality, so they created an organization to combat these negative images of young people and to show the world that youth are untapped resources and can be great catalyst of community change.

In the first incarnation of Do Something, they started with a \$500 grant program to fund young people directly. They played around with different strategies over the years until they found a way of working that is sustainable, has potential for a large impact, and is cost-effective.

Philosophy Category: Youth Leadership

PHILOSOPHY:

Do Something's philosophy is that if young people are to make change, they must lead their initiatives. If they do not own it, the initiatives will die or fail. So in working with educators as Community Coaches, the program supports them unlearning their 'in front of classroom control' and learning to move to the side, letting young people take the initiative and letting them fail and experience success. Their role as Community Coaches is to guide youth along the way.

In five succinct points, Do Something captures the philosophy behind the program's structure and components:

(1). Start Younger: Young people must work with young people. It is important to inspire lifelong commitment to engagement.

(2). Youth-led Participation: Young people create their own vision for their community.

(3). Learn By Doing: This is the most important, to challenge oneself to actually 'do something', take action, make mistakes and learn.

(4). Ongoing Action: A pattern in life is being formed.

(5). Youth-Adult Partnerships: Such partnerships are important in opening the doors to a deeper relationship between youth and adults.

GOAL:

At the end of the day, Do Something's goal is for young people to gain these vital leadership skills and attitudes that engage

them in their communities and transform them into active citizens.

SINGLE FOCUS STRATEGY:

While the preoccupation of the founders helped develop Do Something as leadership organization that has youth as its sole strategy, a very large part of the organization's strategic components to accomplish their mission have taken them to focus on training and supporting adults in schools. Lara Galinsky explains, "In our model, we train educators to become Community Coaches, creating a new position in society, and a new position in our schools. These educators are connectors between the community and the school. The message to teachers is to 'start from where you are. Start from where the young people are and try not to make enormous leaps. Start small. Take time to encourage students to adopt a project, and let young people lead'."

To cope with their need to implement national staff support from a single locale, New York City, Do Something developed program standards, the Terms of Membership, to help create consistency but still allow some measure of flexibility so that individual schools can shape their program. A standard core curriculum that any school can download from Do Something's educator's website helps ensure that schools comply with the critical elements of the national program. Members then start the year with a Speak Out, the visioning and exercise curriculum, and they end the year with a Celebration.

Do Something is a service-oriented program so the whole idea of doing projects to also learn and identify the learning is key. Educators also support young people as they use Path to Change, a strategic plan template. It is essentially Do Something – this whole agency and methodology of learning and thinking about a project. Finally, connecting with educators, administrators, and other people is also something they ask young people to do. It is not just something that is in a vacuum. In a true community project reaching out to other people is very important.

Their philosophy is also something that that want to ensure that all educators

adhere to, including starting small from where they are and letting young people lead. Consequently, Do Something's strategy also includes an arm of the organization for teacher training and support. Community Coaches receive a day and a half of virtual or in-person training over a three day period. Later on, support is critical so that educators don't feel isolated, especially given the geographic distance, and the two-year commitment that membership requires.

There are two levels of participation. (1). Any school in the United States can download and use the Do Something's age-appropriate curricula which helps young people develop leadership skills, increase self-confidence, build character, and take positive action in their communities. The curricula – tied to National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Core Content Curriculum Standards – provides engaging classroom activities, a school calendar of community-building events, skill builders to improve students' leadership skills, action steps for Do Something projects and templates for school outreach and community recognition. For example, they created specific curriculum that taps into the structural practice in schools, like doing food drives around thanksgiving, and pushes them to the next level in order to help students create projects around root causes (of hunger, for example), and to move them away from a charity mindset to civic engagement action and understanding. The Path to Change curriculum helps address questions of root causes. Do Something's Kindness & Justice Challenge is the curriculum created for teachers looking to teach around Martin Luther King Jr. Day where young people are challenged to devise acts of kindness and justice, all while learning the virtues that Dr. King exemplified in his lifetime. The Challenge has proven highly successful with over 4 million students recently participating.

Once schools register on the Do Something Educators' website to download curriculum, they become a Do Something School on this first level. (2). The second level of participation is more involved, beginning with training which give

educators concrete tools and strategies to support your students' community-building efforts in a year-round program in their schools. Typically, there are three different models for year-round school programs:

(1). A Do Something Club or Group like an after school group not directly linked to academics. This is the most popular model.

(2). An Infusion Model was just created in a training in Wisconsin where the essence of Do Something becomes infused in the school day as part of classes.

(3). A Do Something Elective Class.

There are \$500 grants for the Do Something clubs, groups or class. They are usually used as startup costs. "Grants are not as much necessary for financial reasons, we found. The expenses are not huge. They can be easily raised." However, the Program Director notes other critical reason for grantmaking to schools in the program. "They're huge for buy-in. They're huge for energy-building. They're huge for celebration purposes."

The Do Something Club application gives students not already involved in Do Something, the opportunity to bring the program to their schools. The application provides young people with a step-by-step guide to identify issues for community change, mobilize peers to take positive action and work with an adult mentor to support their community-building work. In walking the talk, it has been critical for the organization to support the initiative of young people as part of the national program strategy.

Perhaps unique to the Do Something context given its founder's celebrity as an actor, is the communication strategy that it employs using high profile teen and pre-teen identified music celebrities in order to mainstream their messages, reach a broader group of young people and have greater influence on popular teen culture.

Overall, Do Something's strategy includes not only these programs and communication components, but also outreach and policy components as well.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

Youth-led action is not absent from the Do Something strategy, assures Galinsky. "We wanted to create a vehicle for young

people directly to start Do Something at their schools as well because we also wanted to be true to our message – 'young people lead, young people lead' – so we wanted a way for young people to actually implement Do Something. We created a Do Something Club application. They start this in their schools and identify a mentor. An important challenge for us was to secure a year-round program so eventually, we want to train the mentors to become Community Coaches but it's guided by the young person who started Do Something at his or her school."

Their large focus on teachers is in part to achieve continuity and sustainability in schools. The Program Director admits that they grapple with this a lot. "We thought maybe it seemed as if we aren't youth-led and youth-initiated if this were to go through the teacher. In fact, we found the opposite. The teachers, if they created a program with that as the guiding force – youth-led, youth-initiated – it still had that feeling. Just because there is a teacher at the school who starts the fire the first day does not mean that it is not youth-led. We also found that the teachers who gravitate are people who share a philosophy and most likely the ones that young people would have identified as a the 'cool teacher' at the school. They are the teachers they would have selected as mentors anyway."

Do Something has also been very successful in schools and classes of students with learning disabilities or at-risk students, and in alternative schools because teachers have more flexibility in their classrooms and the Do Something model has demonstrated to help improve the self-esteem and confidence of these students. "Our vision for educators is to think about getting a person from every lunch table and then to organize your outreach strategies so that you do achieve that. So from this approach, we get wide a range of youth participants, not just the achievers. Do Something is successful if it permeates the school culture," states Galinsky.

In Newark, for example, a Do Something Club is this vision coming to life: The teamleader is a quiet, artsy guy who did not do well academically, but given his

good looks, his mere involvement got lots of girls involved in the club. The student body president and the techie kids also made up the core group. These are students who would never come into contact with each other otherwise but through the Do Something club, are able to do some incredible projects together.

COLLABORATION:

As a national organization that wants to be working locally, Do Something is sensitive about simply dropping into communities. Instead, they want to build so collaborations become necessary for success. School programs does not survive without buy-in from the school. Sometimes, securing such buy-in means building relationships with other educational bodies. The infusion model, for example, was piloted by Do Something with the Department of Public Instruction (the standards department) which helped the organization get into the educational system and eventually get to 40 groups. Do Something also works with many nonprofit groups. They also collaborate with a lot of media groups and corporations. The tour they did with pop singer, Christina Aguerilla in order to create an image that community involvement is 'cool' is becoming increasingly common in their partnerships.

SUCCESS:

In Lara Galinsky's six years working with the organization, there have been so many achievements that it is difficult for her to even begin to state them. "We have been able to sustain these programs across the country and we are providing vital leadership skills. We are taking the kind of a comprehensive approach to a program and then to policy and are now being written into initiatives from State Senators' offices and Congress people's offices as well. We are also doing a media approach, making sure that our website is not only Do Something but aligns ourselves with groups that are going to help permeate and get into the hands of young people so that we help change that culture, we help get youth involved, we help inspire them and give them the tools to help make

their dreams a reality. This is our comprehensive approach. In our Portfolio Project, we want in 20 years from now when people ask a you what you did in your youth, you will think of your project because it is pivotal in your life. Being deemed as an expert when it comes to youth is a mark of success. The fact that you are calling me is a big boost."

CHALLENGES:

The biggest challenge for Do Something is supporting teachers from a distance out of their one New York office. Getting into schools also takes a long time and needs to be about building relationships. As an organization, they are constantly moving but need to be more patient at times with their pace. There are tons of layers, and educators are being boxed into teaching for the test. So, "it is important for us to emphasize that this is not just a feel good program, that there are important benefits for youth – and academic achievement may be one of them."

Doing so is critical to securing teacher/administration buy-in. As a result, Do Something speaks to these stakeholders with a concentration on three skill areas that a well-rounded citizen has: communication, teambuilding and planning skills.

RESPONSE:

In piloting their youth-directed strategy, Do Something discovered that there is no difference in the ability of youth-initiated school programs to gain adult support and to become sustainable. "We have been really proud of the results, but a little surprised of how well it took off. The buy-in has been great because they helped identify educators. They are doing the outreach for us."

GAPS:

Broadening the mindsets of funders is identified as an area in need of more attention. Youth programs need support that is versatile and comprehensive, rather than focused on crisis intervention. "Funders need to have a unique and innovation approach to youth leadership

and engagement," states Lara Galinsky.

Kellogg Foundation

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to apply knowledge to solve the problems of people. Its founder, W.K. Kellogg, the cereal industry pioneer, established the Foundation in 1930. Since its beginning the Foundation has continuously focused on building the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to solve their own problems. Grants are made in the four areas of: Health, Food Systems and Rural Development, Youth and Education, and Philanthropy and Volunteerism. All programming in these four interest areas is tailored to meet the needs of each geographic region.

Strategic Initiative Name: Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships (KYIP) started in 1987 as a commitment to work in three different communities – a neighbourhood in Detroit, Calhoun County (includes Battle Creek where Kellogg is headquarter), and Marquette and Alger Counties – in partnership to try to help them find more effective ways to rear their children.

Kellogg Foundation is currently doing a lot of work in the Mid-South, taking a lot of lessons from KYIP about place-based programming lessons about how you enter a community, how you engage a community and how you exit it to strengthen their strategies. They have learned that it is best to use local people in an area, to enter a community and to enter and address an issue.

SPARK is their newest initiative working on school readiness with eight states. Those states select communities, and have communities decide what their approach to school readiness will be. They use the KYIP approach to SPARK in terms how to enter, how to identify the stakeholders and

how to bring them to the table and figure out how to keep them at the table long enough for some cooperation and relationship-building to occur.

In Detroit, the Kellogg Youth Development Seminars taught the Foundation that "relationships help people interpret Foundation policies in new and different ways." Detroit liked the Kellogg Youth Development Seminars and continue using them because they build a leadership cadre and build relationships.

In Kellogg's new initiatives, they said that leadership is important but have not told communities how to do that. Positive youth development is an ongoing feature in the Foundation and their approach is that communities have assets that can be leveraged. According to Dr. Baines, Program Director, "I haven't found drawbacks but what happens is people have been told that 'you don't have any [assets], you don't have any.' To counter that, we have to say very loudly, 'you do have assets' in order to overcome the negative voices. It is a hard job because we are working with a lot of policies counter our messages."

INITIATION:

Kellogg's original intent was that the communities had to own the KYIP process if it was going to work. But they discovered early on that the communities weren't prepared to implement the programs, so Kellogg shifted their plans to work with the communities, invest in developing their capacities and then they would fade out and the communities would continue the initiatives. Their fairly solid conceptual vision from the beginning lacked a very specific strategy about how this transition would happen. "Although we had stages of the project, and there was a particular stage that we called Transition that was supposed to happen, and we had listed some activities that were going to happen during Transition, there is a difference between activities and a process," admitted Dr. Baines

The difficulties of this difference emerged when the Foundation decided to speed up the Transition process several years ahead of schedule. "I think in the speeding up process, we probably didn't

do the best job of communicating how we were going to do that [the handing over to communities], so we sped up," explained Dr. Tyrone Baines. "If I had to do it again, I would do it a bit more strategically. I would start preparing the communities, for example, a little more ahead of time, telling them 'hey, we are speeding it up. Let me tell you why.' We did it without the necessary communication background and what that did was cause some hard feelings. It felt abrupt to the communities. When you change the timeline, unless you communicate to people very carefully about why you are doing it, it can cause people to have misunderstandings about why and start second guessing your motives."

Philosophy Category: Youth Development

PHILOSOPHY:

Dr. Tyrone Baines, Program Director at the Kellogg Foundation articulates Kellogg's overriding philosophy as: "we believe that its the people that count, that the people who own the problem, have to define the problem, have to propose the solution and be part of the change. Our overriding vision is that we will get fewer people trying to parachute into communities and fix things and parachute out. Instead, you will see state, federal and nonprofit people who see that people have assets. Their approach is based on the belief that people have assets and you should start planning with them and not for them. You should insist they participate rather than doing things for them."

GOAL:

The goals of KYIP were:

- to work with the community as a whole to help move youth up the community agenda;
- to encourage and support innovation and development of programs to fill gaps in the community in terms of youth development;
- to mobilize the community to get better outcomes for youth; and
- to promote the important belief that WKKF and the communities had about youth.

MULTIPLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

The Kellogg Foundation and its Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships are of interest partly because of their strategic decisions to spin off three very significant Foundation programs into independent entities. Despite a vague and quickened transition process, the three sites have finally emerged.

Detroit Youth Foundation is up and running with a board, a strategic plan, policies in place, and an adjusted mission in a way that is sustainable. They were the first site up and running and they are moving along fine. In Calhoun County where the Kellogg Foundation is based, they found an existing nonprofit that had a similar mission to KYIP and transferred the mission to them. Kellogg first made a capacity-building grant to this organization and now a longer-term grant to help it establish itself. In Marquette and Alger counties, the third site, the Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation, also with a new mission, staff, and its programs and funding sources has been created.

"The other sites are now grantees," explains Dr. Baines. "The grantee relationship is certainly different than being our program. They were staff then. Now, they submit a proposal to us to be funded. We look at it, evaluate it, make suggestions for changes like other grantees, we have site visits. They are independent otherwise. They are committed to their revised missions."

INVESTMENT:

An estimated \$100 million was invested by the Kellogg in the three county sites over the course of KYIP.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

While the Kellogg Foundation has a wide focus, they started out as a youth foundation so young people pervade every thing that they do. Consequently, the Foundation has made several attempts to involve youth in their operations. According to Dr. Baines, "The young people I encounter call us youth-friendly. We have youth advisors. For example, we have several projects that involve young

people so they advise us. We have a program called YES and now kids who say they are consultants for it. I would like to see some young people on an advisory board to our Board of Trustees. The way you get young people involved in our grantmaking, is to hire people who have a mindset to see youth as resources and consult them. A real step would be to have a young person on our board. What we have learned from KYIP is that you can't put young people in roles that are not appropriate for them. It is an error not to understand how to use them effectively as resources. If you want to support them, you understand what is important to them and what their priorities are. One has to figure out how to effectively use young people. It is one thing to articulate positive youth development, it is quite another to effectively involve young people. We learned that in those Kellogg Youth Development Seminars."

SUCCESS:

Successes were different in different spots. However, generally, in all three sites, they created a way of thinking about youth development that caused these communities to never go back to their old ways. All these communities now have a language and people who understand positive youth development. In all three sites, the Kellogg Foundation created a cadre of adult leaders that understand positive youth development and are advocates for it, a lot of people who share a common leadership experience and can talk. This is probably a change that won't go back despite the fact that a lot of federal and state programs still come down the pipe with a deficit model that stresses what is wrong with youth and that they need to be fixed.

"In Marquette, we have provided more opportunities for young people to develop than existed there. There is a growth from seven organizations to over 20 now that see themselves as fostering positive youth development. When you create that many more opportunities, you create a greater chance for young people to develop positively. We helped them think differently about resources and what it means to be a low-resource community. After meeting

and working with people, they started seeing that a basement can be a youth centre. They saw resources in a different light. That's a challenge that rural people face. You can't build a youth centre for 15 kids," remarks Dr. Tyrone Baines.

He adds that in Detroit, they helped people to collaborate. "They knew how to run programs, were used to getting grants and money but it was all in a competitive mode. We focused on putting together collaborative models and ongoing funding streams that have taxing ability or money that is coming down the pipe so people who were not working together, were encouraged to take a collaborative approach. In Detroit where you have all these years of neglect, a lot of people were dealing with this entitlement piece – 'I have to get my share of what is owed to me, what is out there to get.' With the help of the extensive work of KYIP, the focus shifted from me getting my share to focusing on the real issue which is youth. No body said that. It was not articulated but it was an issue. I saw some of that changing. That shift happens because you stay long enough. You have to stay long enough so that trust is built and that sense entitlement is over so the focus can begin to be on something else. With Kellogg investment and collaboration, we made it so everybody had a grant, everybody is deserving. In Detroit as well as Marquette, we had the notion of trying to overcome the expectation that we are the government and we are trying to help. We had to overcome that trust piece. The single most important thing was hiring local staff from those communities to operate in these places."

Calhoun County is a composite of rural, small towns and cities. In the rural areas, Dr. Baines explains, "we started to get people to think that they could do something about youth. We helped some smaller communities to get the confidence that they can do something for youth – the whole notion of how you build the confidence that 'you can do' until it turns into 'yes, we can do.' We had examples of collaboration in the later years that was not going on before."

CHALLENGES:

A major challenge for the Kellogg Foundation is getting the funders in the communities to not require the organizations they are working with to keep focusing on the deficit model. They have agencies that are working from a positive youth development perspective, but funders who are still expecting and requiring organizations to work in the negative, deficit mode.

Dr. Baines adds that another major challenge is the expectations of funders that encourage organizations to over promise on their outcomes. "I am very happy about the lessons we have learned and the project did what I hoped that it would do. We could have done better at managing everybody's expectations about what the outcomes can be. Funders think that the amount of resources they have can have greater impact on the problem than is realistic."

GAPS:

"I'm concerned about African American men and other men of colour who are in prison," admits Dr. Baines, "and the role of men in the lives of children generally. I don't know if it is because of the pressures in society to succeed, because of economic and social discrimination, because of prescribed male and female roles or what. I think that all those factors play a role. The role of men in the lives of children runs the same pattern all up and down the economic spectrum, from the rich guy to the poor guy more attention needs to be paid to the role of men in children's lives."

Laidlaw Foundation

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

The Laidlaw Foundation is a public interest foundation that uses its human and financial resources in innovative ways to strengthen civic engagement and social cohesion. The Foundation uses its capital to better the environments and fulfill the capabilities of children, youth and families, to enhance opportunities for human development and creativity and to

sustain healthy communities and ecosystems. The well-being of children and youth are central to the Foundation's mission. A life chances perspective frames much of the Foundation's work. This framework recognizes the multiple influences that shape the social prospects and life outcomes of children through predictable developmental transitions.

The Foundation currently focuses its grantmaking in three areas – the Arts, the Environment and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth.

Strategic Initiative Name: Youth Engagement Programme

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Youth Engagement Programme is supported by a staff person, who works with a Youth Committee. The Committee sets programme direction and has implemented the following strategies:

- (1). Building youth's capacity for engagement;
- (2). Building organization's capacity to engage youth; and
- (3). Knowledge-sharing and collaboration.

Under the first strategy, the YEP provides grants to youth programs where young people 12 to 24 are leading. Under the second strategy, the YEP provides incentive grants to programs that will increase youth involvement in decision-making and increase an organization's capacity to engage youth regardless of whether youth are currently in the lead or not. The final strategy is not a granting stream. The YEP initiates information sharing, training and networking opportunities to youth, organizations and other funders.

INITIATION:

The children at risk programme of the Foundation contributed much to the understanding of early years development and research. The Laidlaw Board realized, that the proliferation of this research was driving a flow of resources to the critical early years. As a result, not much focus was being placed on children in their adolescent years and early twenties. In 1996, at a retreat, the Laidlaw Board hit on

a theme and picked up on an emerging trend: there was a concern that young people did not seem to have the same opportunities to participate and be heard in public life, and more closely to home, that the Foundation itself rarely benefited from the wisdom and perspectives of young people. As a result, two new positions were created on the Board for young members. The Board also made a commitment to see young people involved in every Foundation programme, beyond the YEP.

Philosophy Category: Youth Engagement

PHILOSOPHY:

Programme Coordinator, Violetta Ilkiw describes using the terms engagement, participation, capacity building and leadership as the philosophical underpinnings of YEP. "When I came into the program, a variety of directions recommended for the Youth Engagement Programme. Research had been completed on youth governance and leadership, and how to adapt resilience models to minimize or overcome potential developmental risks.

"A youth committee was recruited, and we worked through a participatory process to identify gaps in youth programming and opportunities for youth. We functioned from and were attracted to the model of 'positive development' coming from the United States.

Ilkiw also has a "fundamental belief that the role of foundations is not as the primary agent of change, but as a catalyst toward change by contributing the resources, tools and knowledge to help individuals and groups to create positive social change."

GOAL:

Most simply put, the goal of the YEP is to enhance youth engagement in communities and to contribute to a shift in society where youth involvement in decision making and governance is valued.

When the Committee sat down to analyse and understand where young people are at and what the gaps are, young people spoke from their own experiences and networks and revealed a strong feeling, simply put, that young

people are seen as the "other" in society, that they are thought to be a homogenous group, and that they are seen as a problem – an issue to be worked on. The youth committee did not want a program that would enhance or feed into any of these negative perceptions. They also felt it important to provide direct opportunities for youth by funding youth-driven initiatives but debated whether the programme should be exclusively so. "If we want to achieve a societal shift, we need partnership. But youth don't have access to funding and foundations. This program is a first step to getting funding experience. It enables young people to take a risk and learn to access the funding world. The challenge is how to make sure funding is accessible to young people without the process being too easy. You want a process that falls in line with demands from other funding agencies. Otherwise, youth would be set up for future failure. We wanted to ensure youth gained confidence, knowledge and skills to access other funders, and to initiate their own projects."

MULTIPLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

Every Laidlaw programme area has a committee that is made of community volunteers or experts in that programme area. Committees are Board nominated and approved, and entrusted with the power to make grant decisions in that programme area on behalf of the Foundation. The Youth Engagement Programme Committee does not function like the Youth in Philanthropy models used by community foundations or some of the models in the United States. . In these cases, the YAC's as they are often called, are considered philanthropists in training, and learn how to fundraise, build their own endowment, and are able to usually make small grants (often \$200 - \$5,000) with adult staff supervision. The YEP Committee, has equal status in the Foundation as other programme committees. Once programme directions (recommended by the committees) are approved by the Board, the programme committee is responsible for implementing the programme, makes all granting decisions, and setting out a process for programme evaluation, review and

revision. The YEP Committee has proven to be harder on grants than any of the other committees, and hold strongly to their vision and understanding of youth engagement.

Violetta Ilkiw took a participatory approach to developing the YEP guidelines with the Committee, to ensure the young people felt ownership over the programme, and to give voice to their ideals, vision and values. As a result, a great deal of time was focused on process, not product, which had its challenges and created some tensions. The commitment to youth engagement was strong in Foundation, but methods used might have been a bit of a departure from the way things had been done in the past. It took time for the Committee to develop sophistication as funders. Within the first six months, a set of guidelines were developed, that were fairly broad and open to youth and youth serving agencies. These did not attract the number of youth applicants hoped for. After two funding rounds, the committee came to a consensus that greater focus and creating a grant specifically accessible for young people was paramount.

The programme is based in three primary strategies:

- 1) Building youth capacity
- 2) Building organizational capacity for youth engagement
- 3) Knowledge sharing and collaboration.

It is in the implementation of these strategies that the accessibility and success of the programme lies.

An important element of the Laidlaw strategy is to support the process of learning and education among young people – including Committee members, youth grantees and potential youth applicants. It took a year and a half between the Committee's first meeting to its completing the current set of guidelines and evaluation plan. An important part of the timeframe was to give the Committee the room and support to understand what it means to be a grantmaker and to learn by pilot, trial and error. Part of the Committee's role is to also promote the guidelines; therefore the Committee is seen as part of the marketing plan for the

Programme.

In addition, the Programme Coordinator works closely with potential grantees and grantees in both strategies (youth and organizations), conducts proposal-writing workshops and other outreach and training.. Violetta Ilkiw advises youth and organizational applicants to help them develop quality proposals, for final Committee review. Applicants receive feedback on all committee decisions, comments, questions, and are welcome to reapply if initially declined. Strong commitments to a 'continuous learning' approach in the programme led to the creation of practical, participatory methods and tools for evaluation, programme monitoring and support to grantees. Contact with grantees is ongoing, with tremendous informal communication and support provided, at times even after a grant has closed. In addition, grantees are brought together annually to learn from one another, share challenges and successes, and advise the Foundation (this may include identifying common issues across sectors, helping identify gaps in programming, funding, expertise, research, etc.)

YEP is also able to uniquely link to the other Foundation programmes, since arts and the environment can be used a vehicles or tools for meaningful youth participation. The Foundation is committed to infusing youth engagement in all their programmes and throughout the Foundation, but has a ways to go yet.

The Foundation has started providing essential 'core' funding to key organizations to strengthen their capacity. The Environment Programme is currently administering two such grants and Youth Engagement has started with one to the Ontario Young People's Alliance. Such core capacity grants are given to build either programme or organizational capacity in organizations that directly help fulfill the mandate and directions of the Foundation. An agreement is generally made to commit funds for up to three years, through a memorandum of understanding that clearly sets out mutually agreed upon goals and objectives, with annual milestones and a full evaluation in the third year. The Youth Engagement

Programme, according to its budget realities, has limited itself to a maximum of three such potential 'strategic partnerships'.

INVESTMENT:

At Laidlaw, the role of staff is to support the committees and the funded projects. Given the different emphasis and requirements for the youth in philanthropy committee, the Foundation invested a considerable amount in the process of the Youth Engagement Programme Committee. The Project Coordinator for the Youth Engagement Programme in particular spent a significant amount of time developing the Committee because the focus was not only on the development of the program guidelines and documents, but also on informal training and discussions. Violetta Ilkiw describes the process as "very participatory, very circular, sometimes painful and often somewhat argumentative. It was not very clean."

Yet, the results of such investment have truly paid off, having Laidlaw's way of involving youth in philanthropy recognized in an American research report on youth in philanthropy programs completed by the Youth Leadership Institute for the James Irvine Foundation.

Despite this success, the Laidlaw program coordinators don't work full-time. For Violetta Ilkiw, this reality means that she doesn't have enough time to focus on the content side of her work and strategy. "There is so much information, I'd love someone that would just narrow it done for me because I simply don't have time," she explains. "Once the program got going, we began getting constant calls for more information and requests. The recognition to teach, learn and share means spending a great deal of time with grantees and potential applicants. . So, you end up being forced to limit the number of grants and how many groups can be met with personally, because there is simply not enough time. This could be a full-time job and then some. There are so many ways to build on our strategies and what we have implemented thus far. . It feels we are just scratching the surface."

The Youth Engagement Programme is

equal to the others in the Foundation with Arts being the largest. YEP has an annual budget of \$500,000, which means that the Programme must be strategic about how to best leverage its limited resources. A partnership has been explored for example, with the United Way to find ways to provide non-monetary resources and support to youth grantees (for example, linking with volunteer lawyers to aid organizations seeking charitable status, board development and training initiatives, etc.).

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

The Youth Engagement Programme grappled with their definition of youth in terms of age, capacities and societal expectations, and shifted it several times until finally deciding on working with ages 12 to 24. This is a range that speaks to a good starting point when youth are beginning to feel their own power, that allows for youth-to-youth mentorship and collaboration, and that ends at an age where initiation into adulthood is beginning to take route. This range does get extended depending on the constituency, for example, when working with street-involved youth, who may not experience the same opportunities in their adolescent years as mainstream youth. Yet, while remaining flexible, the Programme strives to keep the majority of youth it works with under age 24.

The Laidlaw Foundation demonstrates its commitment to youth involvement internally in several ways.

(1). Two young adults are part of the 12-member Board of Directors

(2). The YEP Committee that makes grant recommendations and directs the Programme are young people between the ages of 18 to 30 with a recruitment emphasis on youth under the age of 24. The Committee currently has an 18-month term of service but there have been no transition problems or departures. The Committee started out small (8 members) and increased to 12 members, where it is capped. This size allows the group to remain manageable in terms of working together and coming to decisions by consensus as often as possible. Like their

young grantees, the Committee members are also gaining valuable experience in the funding world.

(3). A commitment and desire to include youth in all Foundation activities. This is seen as an ongoing process, with constant renewal and recommitment required at all decision-making levels of the Foundation. Recently the Investment Committee recruited two young people under the age of 27. The Environment Programme recruited two young members in the past year. The Children's Agenda and Arts programmes are the only two that still lack youth participation.

YOUTH-LED v. YOUTH SERVING:

According to the Programme Coordinator, "the ideal is to have young people and adults working together. That is why we felt the second stream, to build organizational capacity for youth engagement was so important. The change doesn't have to happen with youth. The change has to happen with adults. Particular age groups, such as teens, want to branch out and try things for themselves, to test their ideas, understanding of the world, ways of being. We have found that often, a successful initiative does require some support and feedback behind the scenes of an adult or older youth. We try to provide some of this support (from staff or committee members) when it is lacking. It is vital for youth to be able to take risks and learn from these risks and challenges. We want youth to build confidence, not feel ineffective or demolished. The kind of support the Foundation has provided in these cases hasn't happened in any structured way. We just see the opportunity and provide it. Yes, we are funding things we want driven by young people but it is okay if it is not youth-for-youth. Actually, we encourage youth groups to work with others in the community to solve an issue or a problem. What is paramount, is that key decisions are made by young people. We want them to have creative and budgetary control."

The youth-led terrain is complex. In some cases, a little cash infusion will get an initiative started. Others are about

learning. Many are short-term interesting ideas, innovations or recycling of older approaches in new ways. The focus here is on longer term gains or learnings rather than one shot events or projects that are exciting but leave no lasting effect. Maximum programme disbursements can be up to \$25,000, and applicants can reapply to build on or continue an initiative they have begun after the grant term has ended. The emphasis here is on "learning and growing. Even if a project fails, youth need to know why it's failed and what they might do differently the next time. That is part of the development," explains Ilkiw.

In terms of accountability, YEP tracks all programme grants and requires financial reports of funds spent. The Foundation forms Agency Agreements with groups who do not have charitable status under Revenue Canada guidelines. This allows the YEP to fund grass-roots and emerging initiatives that some funders may find too risky. Agency Agreements require grantees to submit invoices and detailed financial accountings of moneys spent. While an administrative burden, given the overall focus on learning through YEP, this step seems to work with youth groups going through the process of learning how to do this, since it forces them to maintain good records. Prior to grant approval, the regular due diligence process applies to youth grants. That is, community partnerships are investigated, capacity to carry out the project reviewed, site visits are conducted when possible, etc.

Many youth-run organizations need capacity-building support in terms of policy, staff, liability issues, training and so on. While this is not unique to youth organizations, these issues are compounded by the transitional nature of youth, and reflected in the organization when members age-out, leave to pursue other goals, and generally move on with their lives. To aid with some of these challenges, the YEP Programme Coordinator extends the 'human resources' piece of the Foundation mandate to provide a great deal of

support to help organizations prioritize and develop systems that will keep the organization stable through such ongoing transitions. . . This has paralleled with the formation of 'strategic partnerships' to aid in these capacity building efforts. The core capacity grant currently made to the Ontario Young People's Alliance is part of this parallel track to also build the capacity of youth organizations to fulfill their mandates.

COLLABORATION:

Given the Programme's interest in knowledge-sharing, initially, Violetta Ilkiw was more aggressive in pursuing collaborations with other funders but their slow response has lead her to now focus on knowledge-sharing with grantees. With one year of the grantmaking under the new guidelines, she is now waiting for tangible results to emerge before pursuing funder collaborations again. The desire to build stronger links with others is based in a recognized need for more forums to share and discuss effective grantmaking strategies – to youth groups, organizations and across sectors. "There are traditional ways groups are expected apply for funds and interact with funders. We are asking for a process of honesty, sharing what we know and don't know and development toward better grantmaking. Youth don't have to have a lot of experience with funders to develop cynicism and mistrust. We are trying new approaches to build real relationships and create an environment of learning and trust to encourage grantees and funders to learn more and be honest about our challenges or failures."

As mentioned previously, developing a partnership with the United Way is an example of direct collaboration for practical purposes, like testing out consultants and extending volunteers.

SUCCESS:

Success in the Laidlaw Youth Engagement Programme to date is defined by its Programme Coordinator in relation to its extensive developmental process. "Having the kind of committee that exists right now in the Foundation is perhaps breaking down my own assumptions about

how foundations work. But having that committee grounded and respected in the Foundation has been a huge achievement. This has been a process of change and changing perceptions and understandings of what young people might do with \$500,000. It's a case where you've got a slate of young people where other members may be asking, 'who are these young people? I know who Lorna Marsden is, but who is this young person from some neighbourhood over there that is just happens to be doing some cool stuff.' The fact that the committee is not treated as a group of philanthropists in training'– is wonderful and the Foundation should be commended for that."

A second success is having a group of non-funders create a set of guidelines that are attracting a great deal of attention from youth and other sectors... The types of requests, and the groups we are getting them from speaks to the numbers of youth who are interested, involved, and finding ways to participate who are not already designated leaders or student council presidents. YEP has funded some really great initiatives, and is exploring and learning about the continuum of youth involvement in community. A group in west Toronto is using hip hop to bring different communities of youth together and promote an anti-violence message. A group of five street-involved youth organized a train-the-trainer harm reduction program with high school students. "It's not just the savvy activist youth who are out there, who may be better connected, know the language to use and feel more comfortable contacting funders, government, or community leaders. The programme is revealing the continuum of possibilities of youth engagement. One of the discussions we had recently was about having spent so much time to a place of agreement over the programme strategies, that there is a risk and fear of becoming too dogmatic – holding too high an expectation from applicants. We are setting the bar to aim toward our vision, of what we would like to see. But we need to recognize when groups are struggling to get there and we need to fund them in the process of getting there."

CHALLENGES:

YEP is asking for people to think differently in how they work with youth. This challenge is pronounced in attempts to access our second strategy, Building Organizational Capacity for Youth Engagement. Here we work with organizations intensely over a year or two to help them implement effective and meaningful ways of including youth in all levels of the organization. This often means the organization experiences significant organizational changes – which can be frightening and challenging to manage. Ironically, groups that have been most open and successful in accessing this grant have been sectoral groups that do not specialize or deliver services for youth per se. It has been a challenge to get youth-serving organizations to think differently about how they work with youth.

We have had instances where a group of youth within an agency would like to apply to implement a project through that agency. The agency is reluctant to give support because they fear the project will fail. In this way, we are also asking grantees to relate differently to us as a funder. We want honesty and reflection in their reporting. We want to know what failed, because there is mutual learning to gain from this.

In many youth serving agencies, youth aren't being asked in any structured, conscious way what they want, what they would like to see, what works for them. "Organizations that work with youth need to put their money where their mouth is which means having a line item which speaks to youth in their operational budgets. This may apply to training; youth programme development, working with youth volunteers, etc. It is thinking through a strategy and saying because youth are so important to us, we need to think about how we treat them throughout the organization and I don't see a lot of organizations doing that. It's a challenge that we have put out there but it is also a challenge we are struggling with in the Programme as well."

Ilkiw also identifies current funding practice as another important challenge that affects many of their grantees. "There are pockets of funding for youth so if you

are trying to run a program, you may also be trying to fit into 3 or 4 different requirements from different funders. There is not a consistency of what is expected from youth programming and there are pet projects or attachment to trends – a sole focus on employment or risk issues, without acknowledging the needs of the whole person. Funding is not holistic and is not addressing the needs and wants of youth. Often, outcomes and programme expectations, understandings of how a programme should run, by their very nature, these can become ways that exclude the involvement of young people. So youth become a service recipients or consumers of a program rather than participants in any meaningful process."

Pockets of funding can be accessed from government, public and private foundations, but exiting traditional views about young people get translated into what gets funded and how those programmes get delivered. "That's a challenge for us. YEP is up against some of those notions. We are an idealistic program that is not just funding youth activities, but funding it in a particular way," admits Ilkiw. "It's almost saying that we don't believe those traditional ways work."

EVALUATION:

Youth Engagement has a three-year evaluation plan, with every intention of being part of a long-term strategy in the Foundation.

RESPONSE:

The response to the programme has been very positive from different sectors and groups. Community groups and organizations are encouraged by this approach, and are often surprised that the foundation has taken such a strong direction. Some organizations have indicated they are constrained in their own work with youth, and in attempts to work toward change. . Again, it speaks to that challenge and contradiction where there are adults who honestly are trying to advocate for youth, and to work with youth. They want to use the language that describes what they are really doing, to say they are working towards some sort of

social justice and define what that means. But within the context of the organization, groups have felt constrained by feeling the need to respond in a particular way for their funders, for fear of losing a funding source, and do not feel supported at higher levels of the organization to challenge this. Generally, people immediately understand what we are doing or they don't."

GAPS:

Arts, theatre and sports recreation are areas requiring more attention. Youth in some communities are becoming cynical – there is no space or place for them to gather and play, learn, risk, challenge on another. This is evident in pockets of the downtown core, and is increasingly so in the suburbs. Rural youth have been marginalized by massive municipal amalgamations across the province. This has led to youth needs and issues dropping off local agendas, when scarce resources must be directed toward safe water, roads and infrastructure building. Attention needs to be focused on these issues. YEP has also noted that the programme is not readily accessible for youth with disabilities. Also, we are very interested in youth in and from care issues and in working with the National Youth in Care Network. Groups of youth in care are more difficult to get to and work with, partly because many youth do not want to self identify as being in care. The at-risk labeling becomes a barrier to accessing them so more work is needed here as well.

Finally, there need to be more and deeper discussions to better understand what is safe and meaningful youth participation. What capacities are needed? Can we use age as a guide to competence? What levels of involvement and in what? Youth participation must be measured against adult access and participation – if certain groups continue to be marginalized from fully participating in our society, then the question of youth participation within those groups becomes moot.

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

The Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation (MAYF) in Marquette, Michigan, established with a \$5.4 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), is a charitable and educational organization designed to promote positive youth development through research and dissemination of best practice information. It assumes ownership of the Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships (KYIP) and builds upon the successful program, which for the past 12 years was operated by the WKKF and has now been transitioned into the community as a partnership with six community organizations. Through strategies of positive youth development and asset building, MAYF works to advocate, mobilize, catalyze, and convene to lead the community in planning, implementing, and investing in youth and their future. The Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation hopes to engage the whole community in asset building for young people. This is truly the only way no youth will be left behind.

INITIATION:

Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships (KYIP) started in 1987 as commitment to work in three different communities – a neighbourhood in Detroit, Calhoun County (includes Battle Creek where Kellogg is headquartered), and Marquette and Alger Counties – in partnership to try to make them the best possible communities for children (healthy community and healthy kids). The goals of the KYIP were to work with the community as a Foundation to help move youth up the community agenda, to encourage and support innovation and development of programs to fill gaps in the community in terms of youth development, and to promote the important beliefs that WKKF had about youth. The new foundation, the Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation "allows the community to climb into the driver's seat while the Kellogg Foundation continues to provide support," explained Dr. Baines, WKKF Program Director.

"The first five years in the KYIP were

about building relationships. Other than in Battle Creek, the Kellogg Foundation was not really known so we did work to build those relationships. We started the Kellogg Youth Development Seminars and we evolved to a point where we had half youth and adults participating. The Seminars were a 2-year training program in order to understand healthy youth development, to learn about community, to identify and see other models to adapt, and to foster intergenerational collaboration among youth and adults around positive youth development. Then we were also engaged in grantmaking with a pretty broad focus to respond and work in the community on almost every sector of grantmaking that connected to youth – education, health, juvenile justice, sports, youth development programs, etc. As a result of that, over 13 years, we had invested \$18 million in Marquette-Alger counties and we were the smallest of the Kellogg sites."

Back in 1999, the decision was made that the three sites needed to transition back into the hands of the community earlier than the 20-year time frame. In 2000, Marquette-Alger decided to create their own institution because of the size of their assets and programs. They created their own supporting organization with six member organizations, each placing a Director on the board. In the summer of 2001, they went through a strategic planning process to transition from full Kellogg support to developing an endowment and attracting other funding. They changed their mission statement from identifying, strengthening and sustaining the healthy development of youth which had suggested that it was the Foundation's role to do this – when it was really the community's responsibility – to identifying an appropriate role for the organization. According to the foundation's President and Director, "We have determined that because information can leverage change, and the asset model and the focus on understanding young people is so powerful in our community, we have made the transition from a grantmaking organization to a learning organization that disseminates information. We have a new mission statement which is to be the catalyst of the development of healthy

youth through research and dissemination of best practice. So we have moved away from being a source of money to the community to being a very strategic, focused source of youth development information in the community."

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

In the Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation's new strategic plan, there are currently four primary areas of work:

(1). Information – MAYF works to learn more about young people in its communities and what best practice in youth development looks like.

(2). Measurement – The centre piece of measurement is the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets. The Foundation administers the Search Institute's Attitudes and Behavior Survey every two years in grades 8, 10, 12 to over 2000 youth in 14 school districts.

(3). Innovation – MAYF seeks innovative programs that will allow the Foundation to learn deeper insights on best practices and youth development.

(4). Convening and Involvement – The Foundation is playing a strong convening role to bring others together to share insights, link organizations, and promote efforts to build assets in youth.

Philosophy **Category:** Youth Development

PHILOSOPHY:

The philosophical underpinnings of the work in Marquette and Alger Counties have experienced significant transition. "We started with a deficit approach model but by 1993, we had shifted to a strengths-based approach and truly took on positive youth development. Our core beliefs as we transitioned from KYIP in our community and established Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation included that it was more effective to help youth develop positively rather than to focus on their problems. Every child needs to have caring and consistent adults in their lives. We believe in the youth as resources concept - that youth can contribute significantly to their community. They will benefit from those opportunities and the community will benefit. We believe in holistic and

comprehensive approaches to youth development, rather than single-focused efforts. A focus on collaboration is a high value of ours – to promote collaborative relationship in the community, bring people together. We work to integrate our work across programs and services to make a stronger youth development community."

Search's 40 Developmental Assets was introduced in the community in the early 1990's and now is the core conceptual framework for youth development. "People have told us that the framework is as valuable, if not more valuable, than the investments we have made because it changed the way people thought about young people. It changed the way they thought about how communities impact the development of youth," explains Judy Watson Olson.

For example, as a funder, the Foundation helped a local agency create Better Futures, program for youth that are referred from Juvenile Court. Better Futures works to increase the competencies and strengths of youth, than punish the young person. Better Futures does an intake using the 40 assets in order to identify the assets a youth has and doesn't have, then pairs him up with a mentor who helps him develop some of those identified assets. "As a result of Better Futures, we see that many young people do not return to recidivism in terms of breaking the law. They build strong relationships, tend to do better in school, and it has helped to improve family relationships." Another example is the housing program that created a youth centre because they began to understand the development needs of young people as part of building a healthy community and healthy families. Today, children and young teens gather after school at the center for snacks, homework help, caring adult interaction, and time with friends. The connections are being made for healthy youth development."

GOAL:

Judy Watson Olson describes the Foundation's vision as a simple one: "That all youth will grow up healthy, competent and caring. Our struggle with that as an organization is that really needs to be a

community vision, rather than an organization vision. If I took it out one more step, our vision would be that the community is committed to and responsible for the healthy development of all children."

INVESTMENT:

To complete the Foundation's four priority areas of work, they have a staff of five and engage 2-3 consultants part-time on substantive areas. They carry about an \$800,000 budget annually which includes salaries, operating costs, resources for grantmaking and their investment in their endowment.

SINGLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

The Foundation's core work falls into four areas:

(1). This fall will be the third time that the Assets survey will be administered to over 2000 youth. In the past, the Foundation has worked with the schools to administer the survey, sent the completed forms to the Search Institute to compile the results and then the Foundation prepared and delivered the local report back to the community. Now, Marquette-Alger is amending this process to involve the community right from the start. The Foundation has held meetings principals and counselors in all the middle and high schools and met with collaborative groups in the community to identify the concerns about the process, how they have used the survey information in the past, and how they might now use the results. They also asked if there were other questions the community or the schools had that could be administered in a sidebar survey. According to Judy Watson Olson, the purpose of this change is "to make a shift from pushing the data after we have completed the survey, to developing data pull so the community is anticipating this information, has developed plans about how they want to use this information and are ready when it actually comes out so that they can incorporate it and put it to work in their community setting. Just in a matter of a couple months, we have seen a huge change in attitude and process. We hope there will be more application of the data in youth development settings leading

to increased asset building efforts."

(2). The Foundation is also working on the development of a learning network based on the results of the 2000 survey that indicated that 20% of the youth have just 0-10 assets. This significant number of youth with very low assets has been "more or less hidden" in previous years when the focus of the Foundation has been on the youth in the middle-range of assets (11-30 of 40), the same group of youth that youth programs most likely concentrate on and schools do their best work with. The Learning Network will be a group of service providers who become a continuous improvement peer learning group. The Foundation will provide them with opportunities to learn about best practices and to explore in their own organizations how there can be increased efficiencies and effectiveness by using Total Quality Management tools and concepts. Recognizing the lack of attention to low-asset youth, the first learning network will involve organizations that either serve low-asset youth or have tremendous passion about this group of young people, including an alternative school, a foster care agency, a regional mental health organization, a regional school district, and a regional substance abuse treatment agency. The Learning Network will work to form a common picture of what low-asset youth look like, what services they need, what is working and not working, and how the community can best build their assets, resiliency and potential in the future. Each organization will strive to make improvements in services to low-asset youth and their families.

(3). Marquette-Alger is also developing a State of the Youth Report which will provide a picture of how youth are doing in the community. In the development process, the Foundation will carry out various assessments and gather information in the community, capturing thumbnails of local best practices, using results of surveys they administer, and the asset survey.

(4). The fourth area of work for the Foundation is about creating a child-centred touchstone for the community. They have been mapping the youth development community using an

ecological framework for looking at community. Using an ecological approach, they have developed a community map with the child in the center surrounded by the systems that can influence a child's life. For instance, youth experience the most immediate and early influences from the microsystem, which includes the family, the school, peers, and religious institutions. The next ring out from the center includes agencies and organizations that provide services to children and families such as the health department and youth programs. "We are building the map with actual identified local players so that this map can be used to better understand the interactions between systems and the impacts on young people and their lives. The map is now on computer and we are taking it out in the community to test it and build upon it so that it will help us learn and better connect to support the healthy development of young people."

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

While the Marquette-Alger Youth Foundation has made progress in terms of their own youth involvement, Judy Watson Olson acknowledges that the Foundation still has work it needs to do. "We have tried to integrate youth in what we do, but we could do better."

However, to date, the Foundation has taken the following steps:

- The Foundation has 13 member board which has two youth members with full voting responsibilities. One of the youth members is the current board secretary. A new state law allows youth 16 or older to serve on boards.

- The Foundation also tries to model for the community, having youth in important roles and having a voice. For example, when the results of the Youth Asset Survey are presented in the community, youth make the presentation. Also, the Foundation has been fortunate to have youth interns working in the program for the last several years. "We are trying to be a good corporate members in the community in terms of taking leadership about involving youth and making them true community partners."

- The Foundation will take the Youth Asset Survey results back to the youth

directly for the first time this year, and engage them in dialogue about the results. In the past, youth have come to community meetings to discuss results but the results were never brought to them directly as the key constituency. This development seems critical especially when survey results indicate that only 17 per cent of youth respondents feel that they are valued by the community despite the work done to date at the community level. Talking to young people themselves about the results will not only be about demonstrating their value, but also about recognizing that youth can build their own assets.

- "Now let me tell you what we haven't done. We don't have youth on our staff full-time that sit down and help us to plan that survey. I have seen organizations that do that. Our focus is much more adult-oriented as we strive to change adult behavior around youth issues. I have visited and learned about organizations where young people are engaged in every step of the organization's work because they are truly youth empowerment organizations. We're clearly not that in my mind," admits the President and Director.

She uses the term 'youth' to mean all children and young adults – "from birth through college age" – and is sure that her definition impacts the Foundation's definition.

"Most recently, we have been challenged to think even beyond college-age in terms of young people. We want to do some exploring in the literature about what other people are doing and saying. We believe that for young adults in the 20 to 27 range, it is a very vulnerable time for being able to create adult self-sufficiency and it is a challenge for young people to make those transitions to adulthood."

SUCCESS:

Clearly, success in Marquette and Alger Counties have to be defined by the Foundation's ability to have helped grow the youth development field in the community. Language has been developed in the community through the adoption of the Search Institute's asset framework as a way of thinking of youth development. Youth are now being recognized as a resource in the community.

There has been substantial growth. When KYIP started, there were a handful of youth development programs in the area and today, with Foundation seed funding, there are over 20. There has been a lot of growth in philanthropy in terms of community investment. In the five years between 1995 and 2000, over \$10 million was invested in the community for youth development and families including the expansion of the community library which includes a youth library, a new YMCA and a children's museum that did not exist before.

CHALLENGES:

Judy Watson Olson speaks of two main challenges. The first is "about sustainability – our infrastructure in philanthropy is very shallow and times are tough for nonprofits. To design supportable and sustainable organizations is a very important challenge for the community. We have important work to do to consolidate and streamline the organizations in the community. [Second,] we need to make systemic change and go deep enough to enable societal change. For example, we can do all the application of youth development in the community we want, but if we don't have more parents playing significant roles in their children's lives, we probably won't get anywhere. Without going deep, any of our applications will come and go."

RESPONSE:

"The response to the change from a granting organization to a learning and information organization has been very positive from the school community, the business community, agencies, and the service community. The hardest place for this information to fall is in the nonprofit and youth development community because we had been the largest funder of youth development in our community. The lack of major funding sources in rural areas like Marquette and Alger Counties is a marked difference from Detroit [another KYIP site] and urban areas which have lots of funders and big corporations."

"One of the things we've known right from the beginning was the importance for our community to sustain its programs.

Over the years, we have put a lot of emphasis in capacity-building, in terms of fundraising, program planning, and grant proposal-writing. We tried to ask the hard questions before we would fund something regarding whether or not there was commitment and capacity to continue the program after grant funding. In many ways in the nonprofit community, it really is about survival of the fittest and a lot of that has to do with leadership and board make-up," admits Judy Watson Olson.

GAPS:

"Young people need to have the basic social skills and living skills that will allow them to be productive and caring in all parts of their lives. I'd say the greatest gap is in the values area – we need to promote and model positive values for our youth, encourage and support adults and parents in the community around positive values, and then work through our institutions to help children develop the values of caring, civility, etc., " notes Judy Watson Olson. "There is currently such a decline in the core values culture, even in teenagers. This of course, impacts the health and well-being of our children. A second area for more attention is the return of the caring community, building supports across families and neighbourhoods, however diversely defined. We need to strengthen that net of caring adults in young people's lives and involve youth in service learning and volunteering."

Search Institute

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

Search Institute is an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to advance the well-being of adolescents and children by generating knowledge and promoting its application.

To accomplish this mission, the institute generates, synthesizes, and communicates new knowledge, convenes organizational and community leaders, and works with state and national organizations in the areas of research, communication, networking, community supports and training.

A major focus of the institute's work is

the framework of 40 developmental assets, which are positive experiences, relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring and responsible. Created in 1990, the framework is grounded in research on child and adolescent development, risk prevention, and resiliency. Surveys of over 1 million 6th-12th grade youth across the United States consistently show that young people who experience more of these assets are more likely to make healthy choices and avoid a wide range of high-risk behaviors. It is the relative absence of these assets in the lives of young people that has mobilized over 500 communities on behalf of youth. Fundamental to the asset approach is that society has focused on the negatives and risk behaviors in framing its relationship with young people. The asset framework builds from the positive qualities and experiences that all young people need and brings multiple sectors across communities into collaborations on behalf of youth.

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Laura Lee Geraghty explains that Search Institute's uniqueness partly lies in its self-description. "Most organizations are dealing with programs, whether it is an agency that is delivering services in the community or working with youth in the community, or foundations. Most often, the focus is on programs. We are a research-based social change organization devoted to bettering the lives of kids. We recognize that programs are only one way in which that happens. There are larger issues of relationships within the community – adult-to-youth relationships, youth-to-youth relationships, youth-to-younger children relationships and that kind of thing. We have found that the supports that young people need in order to be successful are often the same things that communities need in order to be successful. So it goes beyond programs to some of the more informal kinds of relationships that are developed that can for instance, impact public policy and how public policy impacts young people. Our asset framework helps communities look at policies and practices within organizations

and in terms of how youth are involved, treated and even thought of in terms of the decisions that are made internally with them. I think you will find us different because our platform ... a framework ... is different."

INITIATION:

"Search Institute is 42 years old and in that entire time, we have been devoted to conducting research to bettering the lives of kids. What has happened in the last decade or more is that we have focused in on the 40 developmental assets, recognizing that, to a large extent, the level of frustration over the propagation of programs to deal with youth problems has not really changed anything in the long-term happening with youth... and has not really changed society as a whole," explains Geraghty.

Philosophy Category: Youth Development

PHILOSOPHY:

Search's Laura Lee Geraghty affirms that "adult-youth relationships are necessary for what youth need to be successful but also for what communities need to be successful. This is about kids but it's not young people who need to change, it is the rest us."

SINGLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

Today, Search's focus is on two different platforms. (1). One is on the developmental assets framework. All the time, Search is going deeper and deeper into the 40 developmental assets to see how young people get those assets, what are the kinds of support systems needed in organizations to get those assets, how do assets relate to academic achievement, how do they differ according to gender, ethnic and economic differences, etc. So there is still a lot of research being done in this arena.

(2). The other arena of extensive research is in the area of social and community change, delving into issues like what is social marketing, how do you take something like this and get it embedded in the hearts and minds of individuals, how does change happen at the neighbourhood level, how does change happen in cities,

how does change happen within public policy and so on. The ultimate goal there is to better the lives of young people and to help them become successful adults that will benefit the community as a whole.

"Your [McConnell's] change agenda is what we are working with," acknowledges Mary Ackerman. "It's about kids. The change is for young people but it is not the young people that are going to have to change, it's the rest of us. What is very clear and exciting is that youth are part of making that change happen."

The core of Search's strategy is simple: to reach everyone tomorrow in as many places as they can. Thus, it is multi-faceted. Search holds a national conference every fall, including many Canadian participants. "To see that and to be there really helps people understand that to work the strategy is to work on some larger levels in terms of researching what is good for society, what is good for kids. To then work at creating change that happens with individuals – that's about personal transformation – then organizational change and program change within those organizations, and then the larger community coming together and being able to do in many different corners so that is community change, and then public policy change."

According to Laura Lee Geraghty, Search's new Director of Strategic Initiatives, "now that's a strategy that has a lot of different fronts and a lot of different people involved. You will find that if you come to a national conference, that there are church leaders there. There are elected officials there. There are prevention folks in health. There are educators. Our conferences are usually 20 to 25 per cent young people themselves. There are community leaders there. It is the most diverse group you can ever imagine and it about 2000 strong. It has been our strategy and it would have happened that way anyway because you are talking about social change and there is no one road to reach that."

As a research-based social change organization, the Search Institute is clear about their role and the end points to that role. "We are not out doing this. Everyone else takes our framework and infuses it in

what they are doing and we have empowered them with resources and information to make the change. We are reflecting and convening. We bring them together so they can learn from each other and we listen in and build better resources and get back to them with better ways of doing. We also encourage communities and organizations to use other frameworks and strategies with the asset approach. We know there is no one way to make this happen."

The Institute created a paper and pencil survey that is taken by young people, usually in schools but it does not need to be. It is known as the Profiles of Student Life Attitudes and Behaviors Survey. The outcome is an aggregate report, not by name or identity. Many times, schools or communities use the survey in the 8th, 10th and 12th grades. It describes to the community how young people perceive their lives and their place within the various external communities (i.e. their families, their schools, their neighbourhoods and so on) and what also makes them tick as young people. The 40 assets are internal and external and when the community does the survey, the results describe for the community, which assets their young people say they have, to what extent and the young people's perception of the world.

Mary Ackerman adds, "What happens then is that communities get very mobilized and empowered about what they heard through the survey. It is the student voice coming back to them through the survey. It really gives them a snapshot and an opportunity for further discussion about what their young people are saying. We know through the research that we did to compile the 40 building blocks that young people need, what typically comes back in almost every community across the country, whether big or small, North, East, South or West, is that young people typically have fewer than 20 of the 40 assets. So that is what mobilizes a community to say, 'wait a second, our kids were looking good. We were sure that our kids were going to come up with more than that even though Search Institute says that most communities have fewer than 20, we were sure we were going to have 27.' The mobilizing comes when adults see their reality and ask how

will community change to provide the assets that young people need? It is the very first step for many communities in changing because they see that they can do a little bit, and congregations can do a little bit, and maybe the mayor's office can do a little, and maybe the extension service can do a little bit and maybe the YMCA can do a little bit. It is a very strong call to action for broad sector involvement. What we really put forth in the asset language is that when you go out there to mobilize sectors, you need the youth voice at the table. They will tell you what is missing, what they have, and maybe how to get it. It is not just community change, but bringing young people into the conversation for the change."

Some Canadian communities have taken the survey but Search Institute has not been engaged in research or validity in Canada. YMCA- USA and YMCA-Canada are working to deeply infuse the 40 assets into all of their work. The initiative is called Abundant Assets. They are seeing their work as both organizational (in their Y's) but also in terms of how the YMCA helps change the surrounding community for young people. They are seeing it as both programmatic infusion and movement infusion. Experience suggests that the Canadian Y's have understood the asset-based community change piece much better than USA Y's, who are far more programmatic. The Boys and Girls Clubs in Canada have also been asset-steeped. Given the existing interest in Canada, Mary Ackerman admits that "if there is enough responses from Canada so that we can really get some Canadian-based data, that would be helpful, not only to your foundation but would be very helpful to the youth engagement groups that they set up."

Overall, the Search Institute does not consider itself international but does do some work with Mexico and Canada. This work is limited because language is an issue and so is distance. In the case of the former, language was a key issue in conversations between Search and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. They needed the survey and assets in French and it is time intensive and an expensive project given the necessary scientific and validity studies for the survey to be reliable. In the

case of distance, rather than journeying to speak in Canada, Search is developing collaborations with many organizations in this country who can do some of the training and support

YOUTH-LED v. YOUTH SERVING:

The youth-led versus youth-serving debate is not a debate that has happened internally in Search, but one that is happening in communities involved in youth work. Search does not know of anyone who has done any studies about trying to examine both and/or developing a tool to measure what the change is in the individual, in the organization and in the communities. Having such data would be very interesting.

"One of our answers if this debate came to us is that it would have to happen everywhere – that there is no one way to change society. The more paths we can get this into, the greater the opportunity for real change to occur," remarks Mary Ackerman, Search Director of National Initiatives. "If it only happens with youth-led organizations, it will take at least a generation before we see any long-term impact, and it won't totally change everything. What we need to take the broad approach...to think about how mayors and public policy leaders think differently? How does the director of a health organization think of youth differently? We are talking about total societal change. Now, if a youth-led organization could, in fact change the attitudes of every single young person in Canada so that when they became the leaders of these institutions, they will do things differently, that would be real societal change. But that is a pretty big thing to do."

The Director of National Initiatives continues: "I was just talking with someone this morning who is another old warhorse out of the community organization movement and we were talking about the fact that there really needs to be another passionate goal for young people to rally around. For so many of us who were involved in the anti-war movement against Vietnam or the civil rights movement or the women's movement, etc. who are still in

either public service and in jobs like mine, these are the experiences that changed our lives. It changed how I have done everything and the decisions I have made with my family, with the jobs I have taken, with the kinds of work I do, with the kind volunteer work I do. It's where we learned that we could make a difference. It's where we learned our own empowerment and that it is okay to take risks, that it is okay to fight the system, and that it is okay to not be liked by large numbers of people if in fact you were working for a just cause... and you had a cadre of people around you that supported you in that. We do see asset development and positive youth development as a movement in this country, whether or not we can instill the same passions in large numbers of young people today like 25 years ago."

SUCCESS:

The majority of the success at the community level inspired by the Search Institute developmental assets and research is told through anecdotes "but we see it every day and it is so truly exciting."

Jostens is a funder that is working with Search to recognize the wonderful models that are out there and to give small grants of \$40,000 grants over 2 years to them. It's the Our Town Award. A panel of community leaders, Search Institute and Jostens reads proposals each year from big and small towns to help choose the awardees. Search profiles a group of these winners in their quarterly magazine because they show how communities are changing. For example, in one of the tiny towns asset champions decided that one of the crucial places where change could happen is in beauty parlors and barbershops. They trained all these folks in assets and now each station has a little sign that is framed that says 'ask me about assets.' They are going to change their community beginning one person at a time.

Another indicator of success is that a growing number of youth now want to do this work as their career, having seen and experienced the value of community-based youth asset development.

CHALLENGES:

The constant challenge for the Search

Institute is the volume of work that needs to be done. The second challenge is not having multiple ways to measurement success. This is a challenge for Search at the institute level, for communities, for organizations and sometimes for the individuals who are trying to do this work. "...because, whether or not we should be measuring that, that is the way we have been taught to think about almost everything, and certainly that's how the funding goes whether for foundations, governments, corporate America or elsewhere."

Currently, Search is aware of over 500 communities across the US and Canada involved in community initiatives with multi-sector involvement, genuine youth involvement, information sharing, and doing it all with the assets framework as a prominent feature. No two communities are doing it the same way. With a grant from the McKnight Foundation, Search is looking at a series of case studies to see what is changing, how it is happening and the tools that have been tried, but no one formula has emerged. To date, they know there are some strategies that are successful, and have confirmed that the powerful piece is using the survey to mobilize communities and youth as leadership in this movement enhances the community change processes.

The survey was not designed so that students can take the survey the next year and see the impact of the changes made in the community during the past 12 months. It is not a pre and post survey. It was really designed as a mobilizing tool since it is based on aggregate data. The measurement question is: how communities and the Institute know things have changed once communities are intentional about building assets. One of the things that Search is beginning to think about is a tool that can assess community change. They are thinking about what that might be and how to put it together. In the meantime, they are looking at some other things like how does school climate impact asset development. They have developed a survey that can measure climate as a pre and post test. They are doing some work in the arena around after school programs and what difference does it make when an

after-school program is infused with assets. However, Search is just in beginning stages of even these so pre and post information is 3-5 years away. The long term view necessary to real asset development in young people is challenging to folks because our accustomed way of funding things – the normal government and foundation strategy demands answers and change within the year or funding cycle. "But what we are talking about here is social change that is going to happen over decades. We are talking about changing the culture of society so the easy fixes aren't going to happen and the easy measurements aren't going to be there either."

"Foundations are saying how do we know that we made a difference as funders and our communities are struggling with how they do this, as well. There are many ways of assessing how they are making change. Just like there is not one community model, there is not one evaluation or impact model. Any help that foundations can give to communities to help them in assessment strategies will be terribly welcomed," remarks Geraghty.

GAPS:

Recognizing their bias as an institute to encourage as much youth development asset-building as possible, Search Institute leaders see several gaps that relate to how to support people doing this work.

(1). Greater attention needs to be paid to informing them about resources, training, convening, etc.

(2). There is a great need for sharing information and support and not reinventing the wheel every time some new group enters this arena. Supporting communities as they do this work through social marketing, for example, is also critical.

(3). The whole arena of impact and measuring change and impact at a sociopolitical level especially also needs more attention and focus.

(4). More research is needed about how collaboration impacts the speed of community change as well as how different community change frameworks can blend to make change happen. And, the whole arena of how young people's engagement

accelerates community change is open for new exploration.

Surdna Foundation

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

Established in 1917 by John Emory Andrus to pursue philanthropic purposes, the Surdna Foundation is interested in fostering catalytic, entrepreneurial programs, which offer viable solutions to difficult systemic problems in the areas of Environment and Community Revitalization, Arts, Effective Citizenry Nonprofit Sector Support and organizational Capacity Building.

Strategic Initiative Name: Effective Citizenry

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Deeper in Surdna's Effective Citizenry framework is their interest in funding programs that are looking at multiple levels of change.

(1). Individual youth would grow and develop their capacities by being involved in programs the Foundation was funding.

(2). By involving young people in more central roles in organizations, giving them decision-making authorities and giving them a chance to work on serious community and social issues, Surdna assumed that the institutions would change from very adult-centric to being more intergenerational.

(3). Whatever social policies young people were working on, Surdna hoped that youth would be able to move the needle at least a bit.

INITIATION:

The Effective Citizenry program is seven years old. When it was initially conceived, it was not exclusively youth focused though a lot of its programs took place through school districts or NGOs working in schools. The umbrella over the whole program was participatory democracy. They looked first at the skills and opportunities to develop the capacities to participate in meaningful ways in building community life and being an active citizen in community life. Thus, the program

supported emotional learning for schools because they were concerned that without the development of empathy for others, coming together for collective work was going to be less likely. They were active in the community and school-based conflict resolution world because they believed that the ability to work collaboratively and to get past those blocks that would arise would be a feature of active communities. They funded community organizing, public dialogue processes and so on. On the adult front, Surdna looked at barriers to civic engagement and were very interested in Robert Putman's 'Bowling Alone' work and thinking through responses to the decline in public involvement in America.

About three years ago, it became apparent that the program was making some interesting grants but lacked a tight focus or strategic direction and it had also bitten off more than it could chew within the financial restraints. They engaged in a nine month strategic review process, thinking through "what the trends lines were we're seeing and where was a niche we could carve that could really make sense. I thought the trend line we were starting to see was away from skill-building as a focus that was really looking to some future date that good skills might be used in some indeterminate way, sort of betting on the future approach, as opposed to seeing the grantmaking today as yielding the concrete results of democratic involvement that we were looking to have. Looking at where our grantmaking really had been effective and where the gaps were that we might occupy, we built on the idea that we would build a program for teenagers and young adults that would focus on young people taking direct action to solve serious problems in their schools, neighbours and larger society. So teenagers and young adults working in school and out-of-school settings, working today, through their own actions, to solve their problems. And we actually decided that you could define problems in many ways but we were talking about the serious challenges faced by communities – education policy, criminal justice policy, community safety, environmental justice and degradation. These were the kinds of concerns that we believe young people were effectively and

were certainly ready to begin addressing," explains Sherman, the Program Officer for Effective Citizenry.

Young adults doubtless were ready but actually not finding the vehicles, and teenagers themselves are in a state of readiness, but could not find the right program to effectively engage.

Philosophy Category: Civic Engagement

PHILOSOPHY:

"Once we were looking at the question of individual and community change, we found that the field that anchored the work for us really was the youth development field which talks a great deal about the supports and opportunities and capacities that young people needed to grow up healthy and sound. What we found is that we are carving a little bit of a niche by ourselves by seeing social activism, community organizing, civic engagement, seeing that as a youth development strategy. That the opportunity to participate in making a better community with others through collective direct action, in fact, answers some of the youth development needs that teenagers and young adults have. Through the help of some consultants and writers and thinkers in the youth development and youth organizing area, we developed a point of view that when young people effectively come together to take direction action to improve their universes, that they in fact develop better as people themselves. So that youth development and community change outcomes are two rails that the same train rides on."

Thus, Surdna is particularly interested in programs which (1). recognize and work toward multiple levels of change: from developing the skills of individuals and groups, to opening up institutional culture to allow meaningful and effective youth involvement, to improving the community, to reforming policy; (2). that bring young people and adults together in effective cross-generational partnerships; and (3) .that actively address and promote core values that are important to our democracy: equity, justice, fairness and inclusion in decision-making.

GOAL:

The goal of the Effective Citizenry program is to support young people to take direct action to solve serious problems in their schools, neighborhoods and the larger society. To accomplish this goal, the Surdna Foundation funds efforts that:

(1). Help young people (primarily teenagers and young adults) be effective, problem-solving citizens TODAY.

(2). Improve practices and performance of organizations that help young people move through leadership development and into PRODUCTIVE ACTION.

(3). Advance and build theory, research, documentation, training, technical support, networks and policies that will anchor and expand this work.

(4). Develop a network of activists, allies and funders who can build a field of effective citizenry.

INVESTMENT:

The budget for the Effective Citizenry program is \$5 – \$6 million per annum. Three people work on the program – the director, an associate program officer, and a half time admin. support person. Robert Sherman certainly feels that the program could use another staff person, but they do well with what they have. Effective Citizenry is a long-term commitment for the Surdna Foundation, and annually, program are examined closely, and then the Foundation undergoes a full blown strategic review every five years.

MULTIPLE FOCUS STRATEGY:

Program support under the initiative follows two primary themes:

(1). Young people taking direct action (the work itself). For example, Effective Citizenry promotes:

- Service-learning tied to school curricula;
- Youth organizing focused on schools, other youth-serving institutions and broader community problems;
- Active resolution of contentious community conflicts: within schools, and in the wider community;
- Youth communications, through traditional and newly developing media (on the Internet) focused on helping young

people express their own views, and improving public attitudes toward youth in the broader society.

(2). Strengthening the groundwork for meaningful youth involvement (building the infrastructure to make the work good). For example, Effective Citizenry promotes:

- Documentation and evaluation of effective practice which leads to stronger understanding of the productive roles young people can play as citizens;
- Intermediary organizations and networks which provide training, evaluation, organizational development and generally help build the field;
- Active linkages between youth development and community change/policy change efforts. We work with organizations that help build that bridge between the different field in which we are working – community change, community organizing, policy change side and with fields like youth development to bring them together.

How does change happen? "I think that a lot of change tends to happen in a deeply local way first and that is where people cut their teeth is in local institutions with local problems. For instance, in youth organizing for educational reform, the first starting place that most organizations work, is inside an individual school building. Teenagers find conditions unacceptable and they get busy working on them. So for instance, getting doors to the toilet stalls in a bathroom, getting training for security guards at a high school, or making textbooks available for every body. These are the things that young people might organize for right in their own high school. What we have seen is that like minded efforts or organizations go from one site to multi-sites. Now an organization started in one high school is now working in ten and if one of those has some level of local victory, the question now becomes how does the organization unite the ten to a larger set of challenges? So that may be lowering the cost of transportation to get to school because poor children are choosing between lunch and getting to school. Or maybe looking at how schools are financed. Suburbs versus inner city. Our theory of change is that we need the multiple levels, from policymakers

down to just the individual actor person taking action, and that we need organizations taking from the local and then moving up the policy food chain so we look for that progression. It is very hard to start at the top and organize against federal policy. It almost always works from the grassroots. Our strategy has both top down and bottom-up, components to it, favouring, dollars-wise, the bottom-up but we certainly do not deny the need work with influential policymakers as well."

A recent grant approval illustrates how Surdna works with intermediaries. Data Centre is a very sophisticated research firm that does all sorts of quantitative, mapping and research that supports social change work, working for adult and youth-led organizations across the country. They were retained by a group called Youth United for Community Action in East Palo Alto, a poor town right on San Francisco Bay that has been neglected from an environmental point of view. Youth United are a group of teenagers working on toxins in their town, really trying to get a handle on what the companies were spewing out into their community. They were worked with the Data Centre to develop an awareness of what the chemicals were that were being manufactured, what the processes were, what environmental regulations were involved. The Data Centre supported the young people as they were putting together a campaign to protest against one particular toxic local polluter. This is an example of an intermediary that did training with young people on how to research the issues, how to get help in explaining the chemistry, and how to communicate the data to youth and adult audiences.

Another example is Listen Inc. in Washington that works with emerging youth organizing groups on the Eastern Seaboard. It will help a group develop membership strategies for member-recruitment, will help them think through how to do fundraising, will help train its members on how to define what campaign they wish to mount, how to create an effective campaign, and how to evaluate midcourse and correct.

Finally, the Effective Citizenry initiative also uses just adult-only intermediaries who

work with influential policy people. “We just made a grant, for instance, to the America Youth Policy Forum which works with members of Congress in the US and other influential youth policy types to bring awareness to them about the kind of youth activism we have been talking about. This would be building the infrastructure side of our work. It is not youth-led but its effects, potentially in the mega-millions, billions even, how youth policy gets developed and where the federal dollar is going to go here,” explains Sherman.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

Mainstreaming ‘youth’ into Surdna’s other program areas is not necessarily an important goal for the Foundation. There is a lot of inter-program grant-making. Since Sherman sees himself as “being in the community change business,” Effective Citizenry often overlaps with the Community Vitalization Program, for example, though they are operationally quite distinct. There is also a lot of overlap with the Nonprofit Sector Program because it supports all of the fields Effective Citizenry works in. “The programs naturally weave together but we don’t have a deliberate intention that they must or should. They all have their own integrity and their own guidelines. The fact that we do cross over is a sign that the work has some sync to it but that is not by design. I think we would feel here that [infusion] would be too much of a stretch... and to stretch for it, might create some very artificial grantmaking,” admits Sherman.

As a private family Foundation, Surdna illustrates the importance of knowing themselves, their leadership, and the role they can and should play in a given process of social change. This is illustrated in (1) the placement of youth in the Foundation’s operations and (2) the areas and issues that Effective Citizenry focuses on. Robert Sherman describes this self-knowledge as understanding the ‘informal screens’ at work in the organizational culture:

(1). While the Surdna Foundation respects young people maximally and continues to invest in their current capacity to be involved in their communities, the Foundation culture does not allow for direct

youth involvement at the board level or in the Foundation’s operations. “I don’t want to over glorify that [youth] have to be in the lead of absolutely everything. I believe there are places for organizations like Surdna as they are currently configured to also play a meaningful role in this work. Just because it is about youth governance, doesn’t mean that we have to have youth governance. Maybe it would improve things, maybe not. I think there are a lot of different varieties in the world.”

Young people that Surdna interacts with and supports seem to share this philosophy as there appears to be no challenge to the adult-only nature of the Foundation. Youth do have influence through the Director, Robert Sherman’s constant meetings in the community and with them as grantees.

(2). The focus for the program is young people from poor communities. In America, that tends to mean young people of colour. The tendency to work on criminal justice reform also means working with communities of colour who are way over represented there. There is no policy, but it is a bit of an informal bias – Surdna finds that it is in these areas where the best organizing is happening.

“In this Foundation, we are not likely to be funding anti-globalization youth activism,” admits Sherman candidly. “It’s not the kind of community-based problem-solving that we are looking at here. It would also probably create conflicts on our board between people who have different and opposing politics around that. So we work on a range of issues that our directors are comfortable with and I think they are the right ones. There is a lot of work to do with education reform, justice reform and youth media. There is more than we can possibly fund with our limited resources.”

“A very important part of building your program is knowing your customers so that you can succeed,” says the Program Officer.

YOUTH-LED v. YOUTH SERVING:

Surdna’s focus on youth taking direct action would suggest that it has resolved the tension between youth-led and youth-serving when it comes to competition for

resources. According to Sherman, “There is no tension for us. We actually have come down on the side of looking to fund the youth-led side of things. That requires much more intensive level of due diligence, investigation and often support. I think we need to have a much better conversation in the funding world of what youth-led actually means. I think over time, I am coming to feel that youth-led means that young people are generating the ideas, doing the bulk of the work and are in decision-making roles. But in almost every organization we have worked with and funded, there is an adult. It may be a young adult (a 25 year-old, a 22 year old) but there is someone more senior who is assisting and that the projects in this community organizing front, this youth organizing front that get the farthest, are those that really build effective intergenerational alliances. Yes, youth-led. It is important to understand it. It is an important impulse, but it is not fully clean. It is not 100%. It is a nuanced idea so this kind of glorification of youth and youth roles at the expense of realizing that there is an intergenerational factor to much of this, I think is misguided. I think it is important that young people feel their power, but I think it is a little bit knee jerk and PC at this point. It needs to be tested a little bit more in what really happens in organizations. Yes, we come down on the side of supporting organizations where young people are in the leadership of decision-making, planning and action. On the infrastructure side, often the intermediary organizations that we work with are adult-led. But adults doing for young people, as opposed to adults developing the capacities of young people to do for themselves are very different and our intermediaries are on the second one of those, not the first.”

COLLABORATION:

Another part of Surdna’s strategy is convincing other funders that this strategy is important. This kind of collaboration is noted by Sherman as one of their successes. They have brought Carnegie money behind theirs in such strategies. They have helped Pew Charitable Trust invest resources into their own version of

this work. Sherman is also the co-chair of the Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing which has brought 26 foundations together to make their own grants in youth organizing and is working to build the field more effectively. Engaging in collaborations such as being a board member of the Grantmakers Forum on Community and National Service is simply part of his role as Director of Effective Citizenry. "I don't know how I would actually be able to do my job if I did not have free reign to be in major relationships with like-minded colleagues. It is impossible to do this work alone and it is not well-done alone."

SUCCESS:

Success for the Effective Citizenry Program is defined in terms of the niche they have been able to create in the youth development field. "The formulation itself is very solid. It has given us a narrow but very promising canvas on which to work. We have been able to provide leadership to a lot of colleagues because we really brought youth development strategies for helping young people grow up well into alignment with community change processes. I think that was a solid piece of work that has anchored our grantmaking in a good place."

CHALLENGES:

The greatest challenges for this strategy lies in the reality that understanding and supporting effective youth organizing is still in its early stages. "Community organizing has been around for years, but effective youth organizing is still in its early phase out there in the world, so we don't have a lot of documentation. We don't have a lot of very good evaluation. The groups are smaller, rather than larger so it is tough to work in developing a field as opposed to establishing a field."

When asked about the common challenge of the transitory nature of young people and the subsequent risk of investing in youth-led initiatives, Sherman replied, "It's always a challenge that youth actually grow up and move onto the next phase. For me, I think that in fact, the organizations carry the long-term sustainability, and not the individual young

people themselves and that's why these organizations that are focused on community improvement and community change, if they last for a while, young people actually step in a river that was moving before them and will after they step out. Building the organization integrity and capacity is as much a focus for us as watching the organization do its work with specific young people."

The wisdom behind this component of the Surdna strategy, building the organization integrity, is that the better together an organization is, the easier it is to withstand all sorts of transitions. In Alameda, California for example, the Foundation has been involved with what started out as an afternoon of school program for high-risk young people to think about what the youth of Alameda need to grow up better. It was 30 kids the first year, 50 the next, and they started doing some innovative and interesting programs. Surdna then helped the organization build its infrastructure: developing a strategic plan, focusing on how to solidify itself within the school district, what its physical growth needs would be, how it would train staff – a whole reorientation for adults on different ways to work with youth and how they would train for that effectively and find adult partners, make the work known, and so on. In this process, young people came and went in the program. "By spending a couple of grants and some good attention focused on the organizational side, then as more and more young people have come through, they came into a better organization with a plan that they stepped into. This did not determine what they were going to work on, what specific things they were going to do. But the infrastructure of the group was more solid to the point where last year, this past September, they realized a piece of their strategic plan and opened the first-ever youth-written Charter School in the state of California. So, there is an example where really paying attention to the organizational needs helps the program really mitigate against that organizational push that young people create when they grow up."

The intermediaries that Surdna funds often help organizations work with these

kinds of infrastructure challenges.

RESPONSE:

Kids are the community, and their response to the Foundation's efforts have been very positive.

GAPS:

(1). Sherman feels that there is still a tremendous amount of need on the teenage side, in the same areas as they are currently pursuing as he feels there is certainly not enough money invested there yet at all.

(2). Another gap area Sherman sees is opportunities for civic involvement for young adults – people in their mid-twenties. Young people are not voting, are disengaged, not connected to their communities, not seeing these things are critical to their lives. For youth who are captivate audiences in schools at all levels, there is much more opportunities to involve them. "Once people are more scattered out in the world, and they are not connected necessarily to community-based organizations, we do not have ways to involve them in stewarding their own community lives and thinking about the policy implications where they live. I think this is a major, major gap that we are thinking of ways to address," admits Sherman.

Wild Rose Foundation

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

The Wild Rose Foundation is a lottery-funded agency created by the Government of Alberta in November 1984. Governed by a seven person Board of Directors, the Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Community Development in Alberta is also the Minister responsible for the Foundation. Unlike their well-known counterpart in Ontario, the Trillium Foundation, which receives lottery funds and distributes them to grantees across many disciplines the Wild Rose Foundation is more focused on the Health, Social Service and Community Service areas, given that they are part of a province with several lottery-funded foundations/agencies who take funding

responsibility of other non-profit activities. The Wild Rose Foundation has a budget of approximately \$6.6 million for non-profit organizations province-wide in its issue areas, including:

The provision of funding assistance under the Quarterly Grants Program to volunteer-based, registered non-profit or charitable community service agencies and to non-government organizations under the International Development Program.

Through the convening of an annual provincial volunteer conference for those within and serving Alberta's volunteer sector, entitled Vitalize.

Through consultative assistance to thousands of groups and agencies.

Through support towards a province-wide focus to Volunteer Week.

Through Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program and a Youth Scholarship Program.

Through an International Volunteer Exchange Program that increases our awareness and knowledge of global volunteerism through the exchange of information on volunteerism.

Through a Volunteer Awards Program aimed at recognizing Alberta volunteers for giving to their community and a Volunteer Wall of Fame that will showcase these outstanding volunteers.

strategic Initiative Name: Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Winston McConnell describes the 5-year Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program as "very innovative and supportive to youth leadership development and volunteerism throughout the province."

The Program Coordinator elaborates: "The Foundation is trying to get the civic pride back into the youth in Alberta. There are many youth organizations/groups like student councils, municipal councils and youth committees from organizations that are doing innovative projects around youth leadership development, youth community participation and youth volunteerism in their communities. They cannot apply through the regular Quarterly Grants Program because they are not registered as

a society under the Society Act of Alberta. They are just an organized youth group. So, the Foundation Board set up the Initiatives Limited Grant Program to support these youth groups that support youth leadership development, youth community participation and youth volunteerism in Alberta."

INITIATION:

The Wild Rose Foundation helped establish four youth volunteer centers on campus in four university/colleges in the province through the Volunteer Centre On Campus Grant Program. A Youth Network Development Grant Program was established to assist youth groups develop framework and processes to share information, ideas and other resources through networking, collaborative partnerships, and community participation of youth through volunteerism and a Youth Innovation Pilot Projects Grant Program to provide funding for innovative projects that address youth issues or enhance youth leadership and community participation through volunteerism was also established. Together, these were the early formations that eventually came together as the Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program.

Philosophy Category: Youth Participation

PHILOSOPHY:

With a strong belief in the notion of volunteerism, Winston McConnell speaks about youth participation as a critical element in this area. Not only is the Foundation trying to support youth to participate, but to help existing voluntary organization recruit, retain and recognize youth. Many youth are available to volunteer and organizations need to ask them to participate. Youth on the other hand must be taught the value of community and be provided with opportunities to develop some leadership skills so that they are ready to become involved in volunteering in the sector. The younger the person is with an understanding of civic society through their formal, informal and non-formal education the easier it will be for them to become involved in volunteering and for existing

and future volunteer organizations across the province to recruit and retain youth volunteers.

The Program Coordinator for the Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program in the Foundation, Winston McConnell is very reflective about the changes between this generation of youth and the 'boomers' and notes several differences. First, "youth of today seem to have greater pressures – by peers, by parents, by the price of activity, by school, by employers, and by technology, leaving little to no time in their day or week to volunteer. Back when I was a kid there were pressures but there was a lot more time during the day or week to become involved in a voluntary capacity."

Do youth today have the same meaning of what volunteering is? "You ask my 12-year old daughter that is going into Jr. High School next year what volunteering is and its different then what we (baby boomers) see it as being," notes McConnell. "She does not see helping keep score at my son's community league basketball game as volunteerism. We do. She sees it as doing something she likes to do, so she participates. She thinks volunteerism is doing something that is asked of her to do (handing out soup at the Food Kitchen for the homeless), it's not her choice."

Today many High Schools have credits available for youth who participate in the community in a voluntary capacity. Many youth are volunteering to help them in their career pursuits. Where else can they get credibility and experience for moving into a job during and after High School without some volunteer experience. Many organizations could and have been taking advantage of youth who pursue this avenue. Is mandatory volunteering a good thing or a bad thing?

GOAL:

The main goal of the Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program is to build civic pride among Alberta youth by supporting the grassroots initiatives of young people in the areas of youth leadership development, youth community participation and youth volunteerism.

MULTIPLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

The Foundation's strategy includes

providing financial support to mainly youth groups that are not registered societies and a scholarship program for youth to participate in their annual Provincial Volunteer Conference 'Vitalize'. How does the Wild Rose Foundation prioritize funding to unrecognized groups? In their eligibility criteria, groups can be registered as societies or be a teen council, teen center, municipal youth advisory council, student council or youth group that is recognized by a municipality or a School Board within the Province of Alberta. Their membership must also be open to all youth in the municipality and area.

The grants are not large, explains Winston, yet "it is amazing what youth can do with it and what message they can get across to the community. They can make a major impact on the importance of youth volunteerism. Right now there seems to be a big push to develop leadership skills with youth, so many youth committees are focused there. Others are doing information and network sharing amongst the community about what exists in volunteering for youth."

The Wild Rose Foundation is part of the Volunteer Service Branch of Alberta Community Development. Winston is on the Branch Strategic Directions for Youth Services committee doing research on what should be the role of the Volunteer Services Branch with respect to youth leadership development, youth community participation and youth volunteerism in Alberta.

INVESTMENT:

While the Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program budget is small – a \$75,000 annual budget – and the grants to youth groups are only about \$3,000 maximum – extensive partnerships for funded groups, as well as the opportunity for more structured youth organizations that are legally registered Societies and Charities to apply through the Foundation's Quarterly Grants Program (\$50,000 maximum) for various programs/projects, ensures that youth are well-supported by the Foundation.

The grant program funds approximately 2 grants per month, usually during the spring, fall and month of January. Their

year-round funding approach works well but is on a first-come, first-serve basis until the budget is depleted – "It doesn't take long before the money is gone."

"I'd love to have a million dollars in the Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program and another staff person, a young person (under 25 years of age) who could go and talk to youth directly because youth talking to youth has great advantages than adults talking to youth," states Winston McConnell.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

Part of the research being done by the Strategy committee is on the definition of youth. Is it youth 13 –24 years of age or 14 - 24 or 13 – 30, which seem to exist depending who you talk with involved in youth activities.

Within the Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program there is a Youth Scholarship Program (\$25,000). This scholarship program helps pay for youth in Alberta to attend the Wild Rose Foundation's Provincial Volunteer Conference – Vitalize. "Our first year for the program, we awarded 82 scholarships to youth ages 18-24 from 23 different communities in Alberta. Our second year for the program, we awarded 120 scholarships to youth ages 14-20 from 47 different communities in Alberta. Both were very successful as we try to decide what the age definition for youth will be for the program. We have some youth over 20 who have volunteered for many years and are now interested in looking at becoming employed in the volunteer sector and we had youth under 20 who are still interested in obtaining experience in the volunteer sector as it pertains to career moves after finishing school or just because of an interest in helping their community."

"My personal opinion is that the definition of youth should be 13-17 years of age and 18-30 should be defined as young adults," says the Program Coordinator. "I will be looking at maybe a two tier scholarship program for Vitalize 2003 – youth 13 -17 and young adults 18-24, as there are many young adults that are still classified as youth working in the voluntary sector and volunteering in their respective communities and would very

much benefit from attending Vitalize."

"In terms of direct youth involvement in the Foundation, youth play a major role in the helping with the Youth Scholarship Program for Vitalize and are involved in an advisory capacity for the overall conference itself. Although we do not have any youth on the Foundation Board we do value their input on the various programs the Foundation operates."

"How do we get the High School youth to talk to Jr. High School youth to talk to Elementary School kids about civic pride, community participation, and volunteering is important to McConnell in terms of maintaining a value for volunteerism in communities in Alberta over time. The voluntary sector needs to endorse mentorship to help develop youth leadership development and future volunteer sector leaders."

YOUTH-LED v. YOUTH SERVING:

The Foundation does recognize that structural barriers exist to make accessing funding difficult for non-incorporated youth groups and organizations (which are youth –led) than those that are more established (often youth-serving). It is this understanding that makes the Youth Initiatives Limited Grant Program the Wild Rose Foundation's strategic move to tap into the places and spaces where youth are organizing to participate and volunteer. "This is mainly geared towards the groups that are not recognized by foundations and other funders. Unless they have a middle organization involved that have a charitable number, they do not have access to much funding support," McConnell acknowledges.

Even with their program to help level the playing field, McConnell acknowledges that the grants are small for youth groups (\$3,000) and there are still many advantages to being a structured youth-serving organization registered as a society or charity. The program is clear that what it funds must be implemented, organized and delivered by the youth. Information about the program is on our website – www.cd.gov.ab.ca/wrf and information is delivered throughout Alberta (i.e. Volunteer Centres, Constituency

Offices etc.) as a resource for groups and organizations to access. Many funders workshops are held throughout the province and groups and organizations can access resources at those workshops. "The Foundation has no problem giving out the grant funds," states Winston McConnell.

COLLABORATION:

"Youth need to seek out organizations and organizations need to seek out youth to help youth become involvement in the voluntary sector," states McConnell. "There are many partnerships and collaborative efforts that can be established with funders, government departments at all levels and the non-profit voluntary sector to move youth participation forward in Alberta. The Wild Rose Foundation is only one partner and hopefully through the Strategic committee the Foundation and Volunteer Services Branch of Alberta Community Development can work collaboratively and in partnership with the sector to involve youth in the future of volunteerism in this province," says McConnell.

GAPS:

With a lot of passion for his work, Winston McConnell sees several gaps:

(1). While he feels that opportunities are endless for youth, organizations need some training around the area of recruiting, retaining and recognizing youth volunteering.

(2). There is a need for youth to be educated about the need for volunteering in the non-profit sector.

(3). The value of community must be taught to the youth and even the children of the province.

(4). There is a need for youth to be asked to be a part of an executive board in organizations.

(5). There is a need for youth leadership opportunities related to career opportunities in the voluntary sector.

CONCLUSION:

"There is a great need to keep the volunteer momentum going, as was the case during last years International Year of the Volunteer. Youth should play a major role in this momentum if the voluntary

sector is to succeed in its future endeavours. Organizations need to recognize the need for youth volunteerism and education is needed to help them tap into a great source that will be the future of the voluntary sector – youth volunteers," states Winston McConnell.

The Wild Rose Foundation will continue to support the voluntary sector in its need to keep the sector strong in Alberta. It also will support the sectors need to recruit, retain and recognize youth volunteerism in this province.

Youth Leadership Institute

FOUNDATION DESCRIPTION:

The Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) is an 11 year-old community-based institute that works with young people, youth practitioners and the systems that impact them in order to build communities that respect, honor, and support youth. YLI is composed of two distinct yet interactive parts: a national training institute and community-based programs.

INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION:

As a community-based institute, the Youth Leadership Institute has two sides. On their community side, YLI runs programs in three counties in the Bay Area in California. Specifically, YLI works in three program areas which form their "learning laboratory":

(1). Youth in Philanthropy where they do youth-to-youth grantmaking and provide training support and evaluation for young people doing project at the community level

(2). They link preventive youth development strategies which also includes a philanthropic component where community-based environmental programs are funded

(3). Youth Governance and Policy where they do the Youth Commission, the Young Active Citizens project and conduct a lot of training for boards and organizations. They help foundations, community-based organizations and government look at how young people can be engaged in decision-making.

On the institute side, YLI serves as an

intermediary to provide training, technical assistance, capacity-building and funding for projects. Their funding extends only statewide, though their training and support is conducted nationally.

INITIATION:

"The catalyst for our organization," recalls founder, Maureen Sedonaen, "was really about having true youth-adult partnerships at a community level that were really going to provide young people with the support, opportunity and training that they needed, but also to have adults creating pathways and connections like in policy, governance and philanthropy where young people are traditionally the recipients of the directions or decisions if others and not necessary involved in the process."

Matt Rosen, Associate Director of Youth Philanthropy adds, "The other catalyst was that the systems that YLI was working in statewide in California, really had a problem focus s. They only saw young people as problems that needed to be solved or having problems to be solved as opposed to young people who had resources, assets and other things to give and needed to work with adults to improve their community."

Philosophy **Category:** Youth Engagement

PHILOSOPHY:

The Youth Leadership Institute best describes its philosophical underpinning as youth engagement. "Out of that, young people get leadership skills, they get a good sense of their community and how to participate in community and civic engagement. The engagement is on a couple of levels. It also is about the building of positive relationships with adults and their peers in the process. They feel more connected to their communities. These describe the standard practice that we strive for in most of our programs."

Maureen Sedonaen acknowledges, "Youth development is a pretty overused word but there has been a lot of really good thinking by different organizations and the field itself has really been refined. We have a common language now. There

is a pretty good understanding in our country of what youth development means and there is good work that has been written about that and we have done work on that ourselves. But for us, youth development is what happens to young people or a process that happens to young people. The way we make happen in our programs is through having young people engaged in their communities, getting leadership skills, connecting with their communities and feeling like they can influence their communities, working in partnership with adults, building good relationships with them. That's how we see it."

SINGLE PROGRAM STRATEGY:

Maureen Sedonaen says that "it's good to understand the breath [of our work] because the interaction is very deliberate on our part as to how those things interconnect. The challenge to that is that it is fairly complex and sometimes can be time consuming. [The basics are that] in each of our program areas, we have youth decision-making, there's a policy advocacy component, a philanthropy component and a community development component."

In their strategic plan, YLI made deliberate decisions about three areas – systems that support young people, adults who work with young people, and young people themselves – and how they want to impact each one of those. Then they prioritized how they are going to do youth development field promotion, and the areas philanthropy, governance, and policy and prevention were really the key because there are so many ways that young people experience or are involved in these areas and there are so many systems that crosscut all these areas.

YLI is finding that generally, the youth development fanfare in the last five years is slowing down and funders are getting uninterested in it. It is interesting to see that people are beginning to loop back to the very specific issue-based or problem prevention strategy. YLI's Executive Director credits a little of this retreat to the frustration that the broader youth development or youth involvement concept was nebulous to them and they couldn't see the direct impact. In some ways, it is hard politically

to sell to a foundation board that is graying and have a generation gap in terms of what is going on really at the community level and what people's perceptions are about how to deal with problems. So there is not the will to continue to promote it. Even in the foundations where the torch is being passed, especially in family foundations where there is a younger generation of people who are now sitting around the table, they haven't really had the training and support in philanthropic community efforts so that many times they just inherit or carry out the issues of their families rather than looking at new strategies. In this kind of climate, it is really becoming a challenge for the institute to carry out their initiatives and continue to be innovative and strategic in the upcoming years.

"One thing our organization did is that we created a strategy, we got clear about what we had to do, and then we structured our organization to help fulfill it. We created people who are responsible for this at a content level who are not necessarily in charge of running programs, but who are in charge of thinking, and acting upon and building the areas of Philanthropy, like myself or in Governance and Policy. We have a staff person responsible for big picture Training. We have a staff person really thinking about the intersection between youth development and Prevention. People aren't tied up running on-the-ground programs but are really focusing on not only what goes on in the program, but also what is happening nationally and making sure that research and the practical things people are doing gets married with innovative stuff that we are doing at the grassroots level in our programs," explains Rosen.

The Youth Leadership Institute is pursuing the following innovations:

(1). The School Reform Philanthropy Project takes what YLI knows about school reform and young people's involvement in an advocacy issue and partner that with their philanthropy strategy and provide training and support for young people to do youth-led projects that YLI have funded around school reform. It has lots of potential. YLI hopes to grow it so that they can start to do some comparative analysis

of different types of projects and different types of impact they have had either on the governance structure at a particular school or school district, but also the young people's engagement in their school or in their school community both before and after the project.

(2). The Youth-to-Youth Grantmaking program disburses \$200,000 per year to 50 to 70 youth-led projects in the San Francisco Bay Area. It provides not just money, but real support and training to young people and their allies in the community so that they can plan projects and carry them out successfully. This support helps build communities of young people that are carrying out these projects. Consequently, YLI sees itself as "not just grantmaking organization. We don't just do grantmaking. We do a lot of convening, we do a lot of training, we do a lot of networking because we see youth philanthropy as sort of a vehicle for community change and community-youth building."

(3). Under the notion of youth engagement in the summer of 2002, YLI will look at the Safe Environment issue because it is fairly hot right now in youth programming in California and across the country. Their desire is to understand what people mean by safe environments, what it looks like, whether there some kind of magical ingredient or standard which people have been able to capture, and so on.

"All of these initiatives are not just youth-led. A big part of what we are doing is youth-adult partnership and we are really looking at this statewide. The reason is that it takes it out of a project or program modality for adults in the community when when it is a youth-adult partnership. It is a really interesting dynamic, different lens that people put on it when it is youth-adult board rather than just a youth board. It gives it credibility and it also provides a lot more outlets for young people to be heard," explains YLI's Executive Director.

(4). YLI is definitely in the process of establishing youth in philanthropy initiatives, including convening a network of foundation, program officers and trustees with young people who are doing youth in philanthropy through a youth-

adult partnership philanthropy network. The institute has convened a meeting a year ago and will do a follow-up meeting in the summer of 2002.

INVESTMENT:

The YLI has about 26 staff and 6 student interns. Of the staff, there are 16 full-time and rest are part-time. They are planning to add two more positions which will be a welcomed addition given the organization's workload. As a community-based institute, YLI gets its funding from a variety of sources, including local governments, community, private and public foundations, individual donors and corporations.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:

The Youth Leadership Institute has a demonstrated commitment to youth involvement in its own structure and processes, as well as its programs. For example, youth are on the board of directors and are involved in every piece of what the institute does. There is a youth technical team which goes out and co-trains with the adults. Doing so internally is critical for YLI. "Part of what we are trying to do is to shift the experience of adults, particularly adult decision-makers and policymakers in the way they view young people and we believe the only way to really do that is through experience. I mean, data is good, but that will not take away human interaction."

Youth are defined between ages 11- 23 (25 and under) for YLI's purposes. "The United States as a country has put a lot of effort (and I am not saying that they have been successful, but that's another issue) in the under age 10 group. Then we sort of forgot about young people once they turn 12. We feel if they're lucky, they will make it through high school and be okay. So we really felt as an organization and as part of our original mission to focus on that 12 year-olds all the way up through college because there was not a lot of dynamic interaction in the community for them or place for them to go without trying to deal with them as a problem or to remediate their behaviour."

According to YLI, the youth that are valued in society, are very narrowly

defined. "If youth are not college-bound, they are completely separated and isolated from any kind of community institution which is a big problem given that they are really essential for any kind of community-building work because not only are they young, but they have a little bit more experience to connect with younger youth who are often in the best position to be part of change in the community. A lot of high school-aged young people are not connected to any community. It is a bit ironic that in our country, there are things like these mandatory community service hours so youth can graduate from high school and a lot of initiatives that try to push young people to be more involved in the community but we have very few vehicles to support their involvement. And the kind of service that we offer young people to do is really menial, does not engage them. It is not about them or addressing the critical issues in their community and trying to implement solutions to them. From our experience, these [youth not typically valued] are the young people that are creating community change. They really are leaders. They just need more people to validate that because they have pride, they have talent, they're bright. They are a little more idealistic, which is good. They are able to take risks and they want to take risks."

YOUTH-LED v. YOUTH SERVING:

This is a critical issue that has lots of complexity. There is definitely a need for services that ultimately delivered by adults. A major problem that goes on with adult service delivery to young people is that youth are not involved in thinking about what kinds of services they need. If it's talking about basic services like health care or education, young people aren't often at the table to set priorities about what they want. Youth-led projects that are providing services and getting other young people engaged – there is not a lot of thought being given to what kinds of support is needed for youth to do this on a long-term basis. What kind of resources do young people need and what kind of resources and training do adults need to work in partnerships with young people for these

youth-led projects to be successful over time. Says Maureen Sedonaen, "I think it's really unrealistic for young people whose lives are changing and are really in transition, and who are not getting paid to do this work, to assume that once they get the money to carry out a project, that they really are going to do it on their own. Certainly, we can't do that if there is not a really clear culture where that can happen. We really need to work with adults and train them to work in partnerships with young people for these kinds of projects where young people are leading so that they can be sustained over time."

For Sedonaen, the youth-led versus youth-serving dilemma describes "a David and Goliath reality happening for us. I mean so many more resources goes into youth-serving and youth service and so few resources goes into actually developing the leadership skills of communities to develop the capacities of young people. In my estimation, it's sort of an unfair argument to say that something (youth-led initiatives) have failed when it has never been brought to full scale."

Her colleague, Matt Rosen states, "Young people are accessing less than 1% of funds from foundations. So, adults at foundations are giving more than 99% of their resources to adult-led youth-serving organizations. In the Bay Area, young people are granting out \$700,000 to \$1 million in youth initiatives which is the largest in the country. But the Bay Area and Michigan are rare examples. Increasingly common is a lot more competition from adult for youth resources."

SUCCESS:

"I hope that is what our organization is sort of known for – helping a multitude of systems and initiatives look at youth engagement. It is certainly important to answer the WHY in each one of those areas (ie. community development, economic sufficiency, etc.). There are lots of articles and reports and a lot of thorough information about why it is important and the impact that it has. One of the things that I have been finding to be really compelling to adults is that it's not just about what is good for young people. It's great that they are having all these really good benefits

from being involved in the programs. But it is really good for the community and for adults who have power. If you just want to go down the social science route and look at what we've done in the last 30 or 40 years, even internationally, some of the most successful initiatives have had youth-adult partnerships. Some of the most dismal initiatives have had no youth involvement and have had very little impact on the young people they were trying to target. For every dollar you spend, you get three dollars worth of benefit because you are involving and engaging young people, but the community is benefiting and the adults are benefiting so you get a lot of return on your investment that way. Unfortunately, the vast majority of foundations are still thinking about funding youth services rather than the youth connections to community development,

economic interdependence and so on."

CHALLENGES:

The two main challenges for YLI centre around the innovation and breadth of the work they do. Their ideas are fairly innovative and progressive, so their partnerships with other foundations and organizations are often challenging because they are ahead and getting others there is not an easy process. Furthermore, such progressive complexity is a lot for an organization to take on. They struggle in balancing doing authentic work, innovating, training and disseminating.

GAPS:

Rather than being an area of no one is working in, YLI feels that more and more are needed in order to bring to scale at a systematic level the notion of youth

engagement at every level of youth-programming. There is also still such an economic disparity between youth engagement and punishment, power and control measures over young people that there needs to be stronger commitment to leveling the playing field. YLI also identifies enormous issues around race, class and economic disparity in terms of who gets services and support in a community in terms of youth and their families. Youth need to be involved in pushing for this disparity recognition and solution formation. There also needs to be a recognition of the demographic change in the of teens in our communities.