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Youth Development In Community Settings:
A Community Action Framework

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is two-fold: first, to present the community action framework for youth development shown in Figure 1[1]; and second to provide examples of the framework's application to planning, managing, evaluating and funding community-based youth initiatives.

The early sections of the paper discuss why such a framework is needed to mobilize and guide community action on behalf of youth. We then unpack the framework's elements, place them in historical context, and locate them in existing youth development frameworks.

The final sections present examples from our own work of the framework's application to various community-based youth development initiatives. We then conclude with some specific suggestions for building the field's capacity to use such a framework to guide current and future community-based, youth development initiatives.

Why Do We Need Another Framework?

One look at conference proceedings, reports from intermediaries, and the writings of academic researchers tells us that the youth development field has no shortage of frameworks seeking to explain how youth develop — the stages and processes they go through, the assets they possess, the competencies they can achieve, and the basic supports they need. Recently both academic and applied researchers have emphasized the role *communities* play in the development of youth — which community conditions affect young people and how these conditions shape their skills, attitudes and behavior.

These frameworks go a long way toward providing deeper understanding of the process and outcomes of youth development. In so doing, they establish an important and necessary foundation for the future of the field. Now, communities that seek to improve the life chances of their young people need to know how to translate this basic knowledge into action. What collective action can communities take in the settings where young people spend their time to support youth development? How can the people who spend time with youth change what they do? And how should we realign resources and policies to make these action strategies possible and sustain their effects?

The framework presented here seeks to integrate basic knowledge about youth development and the community conditions that affect it with emerging hypotheses about what it will take to transform communities into places where all young people, and particularly those young people currently least likely to succeed, can achieve their fullest potential.

In an earlier paper (Connell, Gambone and Smith, 2000), we made two core arguments for such a

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[1] This framework was originally presented in a working paper by Connell, Gambone and Smith, 2000.

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framework. First, youth development as a field of practice has promised a lot — to build character, competence and compassion; to improve the life chances of all youth; to make sure youth grow up to be healthy and productive citizens. To deliver on these promises, we will need to broaden our view of the relevant settings for youth development practice beyond traditional youth serving agencies and programs to encompass neighborhoods, families and public institutions. Second, in designing interventions at the programmatic, institutional or community levels, we need to focus our attention on some key "non-negotiables"— standards that define the approach in all settings and that, when achieved and sustained in key settings, are likely to yield improvement in important youth development outcomes. We claimed that the community action framework in Figure 1 responds to these challenges.

In this paper we return to these themes, but also explore three other sets of issues: the framework's historical roots, empirical evidence, and its applications to community-based, youth development initiatives. We also offer a series of specific recommendations for activities and investments to support more effective and widespread implementation of community action strategies.

II. THE ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNITY ACTION FRAMEWORK

Over the last decade, the youth development field has made significant progress in shifting from the unsuccessful "quick fix" philosophy that focuses on correcting deficits to a more proactive philosophy of supporting adolescents' natural process of development. This progress has resulted largely from continuing efforts by many organizations and individuals to define the complex developmental process that occurs for all young people as they move from childhood through adolescence and on to adulthood (approximately ages 10 – 20).

Policy-makers and investors in the youth development field are beginning to accept the basic tenet of these developmental frameworks: the key to healthy **long**-term outcomes is the process of youth accomplishing developmental milestones (or outcomes) as they grow up. Now, the field's focus has turned toward how to use what we know about youth development to shape the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs, organizations and institutions that significantly affect the lives of youth.   As those in the field work to apply the general models of youth development to their everyday work, they quickly face central questions: how do we measure the developmental outcomes that are supposed to mark a youth's progress toward healthy long-term outcomes? What are the kinds of experiences we should be providing youth to make sure they reach these outcomes? How will we know whether a program, organization or community is providing these experiences? And how can we identify the most strategic ways to redirect and invest resources to do so.

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The framework presented here builds on three main sources: some existing frameworks that are currently influential in shaping the field's thinking on these issues; academic theory and research on adolescent development that we have used here and elsewhere (Connell, Aber and Walker, 1995; Gambone, 1997, in press; Public/Private Ventures, 1994); and the lessons we have learned either directly or indirectly from the following initiatives:

- Public/Private Venture's *Community Change for Youth Development*;
- Center for Youth Development and Policy Research's *Youth Development Mobilization*;
- Search Institute's *Developmental Assets for Children*;
- National Urban League's *Community Youth Development Mobilization Initiative*; and
- Development Research and Programs Inc.'s *Communities That Care*
- Community Network for Youth Development's: *San Francisco Beacons Initiative and Youth Development Learning Network*
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation's: *Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnership*

The framework reorganizes this information in terms that explicitly seek to translate developmental principles into a systematic approach for planning, implementing and evaluating activities and investments for youth.

The Community Action Framework

This framework (see Figure 1) seeks to address five questions that can, and should, guide intentional actions on behalf of youth:
1. What are our basic long-term goals for youth? (Box A);
2. What are the critical developmental milestones/markers that tell us young people should be able to realize these long-term goals? (Box B);
3. What do young people need to achieve these developmental milestones? (Box C);
4. How do we strengthen key community settings so that they offer all of the critical supports for development? (Box D); and,
5. How do we mobilize stakeholders and strengthen the capacity of individuals, organizations and institutions to create more developmentally supportive communities (Box E).

A: Early Adult Outcomes

Long-term goals, and the language in which they are framed, are a critical starting point for any action framework for youth development. They solve not only as markers of the success or failure of efforts to support development. They also have a profound impact on shaping the approach we take to achieving these ends.

Historically, public policies and funding, as well as private-sector investments in youth programs were based on the premise that the public good was served by reducing the number of young adults on welfare, addicted to drugs or alcohol or committing crimes. Much of this investment was

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motivated more by the perception that the significant numbers of youth experiencing these negative outcomes was harmful to the general public's quality of life and a drain on public resources; rather than a notion that the general public (or "village" if you will) was responsible for the outcomes of all children. Trying to stop these problems legitimized the authority of governments and organizations to intervene in what was otherwise seen as a firmly entrenched private right of families — to raise their children as they saw fit.

As a result, these investments targeted teenagers who had already exhibited negative or "high risk" behaviors, such as dropping out of school, having babies, using drugs or committing crimes, and intervened through programs designed to change their behavior.

As these programs showed little appreciable success over time, early advocates of youth development convinced decision-makers that trying to change these outcomes in the late teen years was unsuccessful because they were the end result of a developmental process, rather than simple behavioral choices that could be redirected in early adulthood. As a result, funding began to flow not only to programs for "high risk" youth, but to prevention programs for younger, "at risk" youth with the same end in mind — reducing the numbers of young adults exhibiting unhealthy, unproductive behaviors. But again, as young people were taught to "say no" to drugs, violence, crimes and unprotected sex, the numbers of young adults in the welfare, criminal justice and other public systems was not being significantly reduced.

While a positive step that allowed more flexibility in the use of resources, these programs still did not represent a "youth development" approach. They remained focused on negative behaviors rather than on the positive developmental milestones young people must achieve if they are to become healthy adults. Many of the early youth development frameworks (see Table 1) evolved precisely to make this point. They sought to shift the focus away from directly reducing negative long-term outcomes, to promoting healthy developmental outcomes (e.g., employment, healthy personal behaviors, healthy family formation, etc.) that would subsequently lower the occurrence of negative long-term outcomes. These frameworks then focus intervention strategies on providing young people access to the relationships and experiences that promote healthy developmental outcomes.

Despite the success of these frameworks in shifting the field's focus to developmental outcomes as the goal in the shorter term, they have often left the longer term outcomes implicit or excluded them completely, which has caused some confusion in the field. Should youth development programs be expected individually or collectively to change young people's long-term life chances or not?

Historically, the youth development field has been narrowly defined in practice as primarily community organizations that work with youth[2] (see Connell, Gambone and Smith, 2000). Since these organizations only touch the lives of youth for limited portions of a day over a constrained number of years (depending on the structure of the organization), they alone cannot have enough impact on young peoples' lives to ensure a healthy developmental process. Even if they implement a youth development approach, they are still unable to promise the long term outcomes investors ultimately seek.

In contrast, the framework proposed here calls for implementation of community action strategies that involve all of the significant influences on a young person's development, with the expectation that sustained efforts over a long enough time will result in larger numbers of youth becoming more healthy young adults. In this framework, the long-term outcomes are explicit and are used to generate the "earlier" elements in the action framework. Specifically, if our eventual aim is healthy adults, there are implications for which developmental milestones we focus on, which aspects of the environment are critical for healthy development; which settings have to be included in our community based efforts; and which stakeholders have to be mobilized and prepared for action.

The long-term outcomes in this model are economic self-sufficiency, healthy family and social relationships, and community involvement (Connell, Gambone and Smith, 2000):
- For economic self-sufficiency, all youth should expect as adults to be able support themselves and their families and have some discretionary resources beyond those required to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. They should have decent jobs and the education or access to enough education to improve or change jobs.
- For healthy family and social relationships, young people should grow up to be physically and mentally healthy, be good caregivers for their children and have positive and dependable family and friendship networks.
- Contributions to community could come in many forms, but we hope that our young people will look to do more than be taxpayers and law-abiders — to contribute at a threshold level where they give something back to their community, however they define that community.

By highlighting these "positive" indicators, we do not mean to exclude "negative" markers of outcomes in these three areas. Meaningful decreases in welfare rolls, behavior-based physical and mental health problems, child abuse and neglect, and incidences of violent crimes are important, but less ambitious markers of these same three long-term outcomes.

B: Youth Development Outcomes

As the field of youth development struggled to extend policy and program discourse from reducing

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[2] There are a number of proponents of youth development who have been trying for some time to have the field more broadly conceived of and supported. However, for the most part resource allocation to "youth development activities" has been primarily channeled through youth organizations.

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negative behaviors to promoting positive development, a clearer definition of "youth development outcomes" became pressing. To meet this need, key organizations conducted broad reviews of the academic research on adolescents and incorporated into their frameworks variables found to be related to desirable outcomes in adulthood. These correlations with longer-term outcomes made the youth development outcomes worthy of investment for many funders and policy-makers.

From one of these reviews (Connell, Aber and Walker, 1995) come the three youth development outcomes we have included in this framework: learning to be productive, learning to connect and learning to navigate. All three predict important accomplishments in early adulthood (Connell, Grossman and Resch, 1994; and Hyman, 1998 for summaries of these studies). These three outcomes and, more importantly, their respective indicators reflect both a narrowing and expanding of other frameworks' content in order to better guide community action. For example we do not include personality characteristics and other internal traits, many of which are included in other developmental frameworks. But we do include avoidance of negative behavior and standard educational outcomes such as high school graduation and academic performance as youth development outcomes. Why was this reframing necessary?

 Too Many Outcomes and Too Little Support to Achieve Them.

The academic literature on child and adolescent development tends to organize development into domains, such as cognitive, social, moral, interpersonal, emotional, physical. Some descriptive frameworks have followed suit (See Carnegie Council's Matter of Time). Other frameworks follow applied research and program evaluations that tend to parse youth development into strands: either personality or character traits (e.g., healthy identity, sense of competence, self-esteem, strong moral values, empathy, empowerment, etc.) or acquired competencies or skills (e.g., conflict resolution, decision-making skills, social skills, etc.) (See Search Institute, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research) (from Gambone, in press). These organizing principles alone offer over 70 different youth development outcomes — all of which have been shown to have at least some correlation with the long term outcomes included in our framework (see Table 1).

These long lists of desirable youth development attributes were sold to funders and policy-makers as the interim outcomes along the road to reduced social ills. While these compendia of outcomes did broaden these funders' and policy makers' views of youth development, they raised some difficult questions as well. For example, how are community stakeholders and other investors to know which of these outcomes to plan their initiatives around? Around which ones should they hold their programs and organizations accountable? In answering these questions, most funders, organizations and program operators have opted to invest in these outcomes one at a time or in clusters and then expect that some combination of discrete programs and activities will cover all the bases. This way of thinking has perpetuated a fragmented approach to dealing with youth and created new forms of unrealistic expectations for youth development programs and organizations. These consequences were unintended, but must be understood and corrected.

Why did programs and activities go directly from trying to fix discrete problems to promoting discrete strengths (e.g., self-esteem, problem solving, and character building programs)? Underlying these skill-building and competency-oriented programs, which were labeled "youth development approaches," was still the basic notion that we could affect an individual's long term outcomes by intervening in their lives in a limited way. We replaced fix-the-problem approaches with inject-the-solution approaches. The end result of such thinking was that programs overpromised, funders underinvested, and all involved are still unclear what our approach can and can't do. Until and unless we revisit these compendia of skills, traits and attributes as targets for youth development initiatives, these trends will continue.

…And the Wisdom to Know the Difference

There are specific reasons why we seek to narrow the outcomes that drive implementation and assessments of youth development initiatives. We believe that personality and other internal traits, along with complex skills and abilities, are important to understanding youth development. Children's skills and traits contribute to how quickly or easily they learn to be productive, to connect and to navigate. Knowing individual youths' levels of self-esteem, problem solving capacity or empathy contributes to explaining why youth differ in their pace of development and in their responses to particular interventions. As useful as they may be as diagnostic tools, they are problematic as targets of interventions. Why?

First, many of these attributes we are trying to change with time-limited targeted programs are grounded in an individual's basic temperament and their influence on behavior is shaped by complex social interactions across multiple settings over long periods of time. Achieving high levels of these attributes, having them remain stable over time and across situations, are elusive goals even for the most "successful" adults. Why would we expect young people to achieve these goals while moving through major developmental transitions? On the one hand, these kinds of goals are unrealistic for programs or initiatives targeting diverse groups of young people, even for initiatives as broad and sustained as we are recommending in this paper. On the other hand, even when positive change is seen in these attributes due to a particular set of experiences, we have no idea whether these gains will persist over time or in different situations.

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Second, the reality of social and economic life demands that even if all of these attributes are <u>not</u> at high levels, young people still need to move on to the challenges of adulthood. Their community's (and society's) job is to give them a fighting, even a good chance for success. Fortunately, research and common sense demonstrate that many youth do move on and succeed without high levels of self-esteem, with serious bouts of selfishness and with less than astute problem solving in some situations. While high levels of these attributes may be <u>sufficient</u> for success as adults (if you've got all these attributes, you'll probably do just fine), they are clearly not <u>necessary</u> (you can often do just fine without them). In designing and evaluating programs and initiatives for youth with limited resources, we believe the focus must be on providing what is necessary <u>and</u> sufficient.

What then are the accomplishments that youth <u>must</u> show in order to have a good chance of achieving economic self-sufficiency, to have healthy family and social relationships and to contribute to their communities?

Redefining Youth Development Outcomes

Our alternative accepts the fact we need to plan for and monitor interim steps along the developmental path toward the long-term outcomes we seek for youth. We want to prioritize outcomes shown to predict success in adulthood.. But we have tried to keep the list short, focused on behavioral accomplishments rather than internal traits and abilities, and feasible for all youth, but still sufficient to give them a strong foundation for a successful adulthood. Some of the ways we measure developmental progress for <u>younger</u> children meet these criteria. For example, we look at their ability to wash and dress themselves, to play cooperatively with other children, deal with minor peer conflict or difficulties without adult intervention, and to engage in reading and learning numbers as indicators of their readiness to move on to more complex social roles and cognitive activities. We need to do the same for older youth.

In this framework we define youth development outcomes as learning to be productive, learning to be connected and learning to navigate (Connell, Gambone and Smith, 2000):

- Learning to be productive — to do well in school, develop outside interests and acquire basic life-skills (e.g., show up in school and acquire important knowledge and learning skills, use free time in constructive ways, learn to take care of their basic needs).
- Learning to connect — to adults in their families and community, to peers in positive and supportive ways and to something larger than themselves (e.g., have adults and peers who you know well and are important to you as you are to them; identify with and contribute to something larger than yourself)

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- Learn to navigate — to chart and follow a safe course through different settings, situations and challenges. This third task takes multiple forms.
  – Youth must learn to navigate among their multiple worlds — their peer groups, families, schools, social groups and neighborhoods — each of which may require different ways of behaving and in some cases, even different languages (e.g. understand and demonstrate that different behaviors are appropriate in different settings).
  – Youth must learn to navigate the transitions from being taken care of to taking care of others, and to assuming responsibility for their role in the world.
  – Youth must find ways to navigate around the lures of unhealthy and dangerous behaviors (including premature sexual activity, substance use and other high-risk activities) and to handle experiences of unfair treatment, rejections and failures. All youth face these challenges but they are much more prevalent in the lives of youth living in economically disadvantaged circumstances.

Learning to be productive, connect and navigate are not discrete, internal skills or traits — they are accomplishments. Like traits and skills, they can be measured in terms of degrees of accomplishment: doing average in school versus very well; having lots of trusted friends versus having some or no trusted friends; going to church occasionally versus going to church regularly; abstaining from premarital sexual activity versus infrequently engaging in protected sex. Like traits and skills, these outcomes have been linked empirically to the long-term outcomes in the framework (Box A). However, unlike traits and skills, they lend themselves to observable, understandable and defensible thresholds that all youth can and should achieve. For example, setting the goal that all youth in this community will finish school with the knowledge and skills to get a decent job or go to college sets a clear threshold; setting a goal that all youth will have high enough self-esteem does not. Similarly, whether youth in this community have a set of friends, that they and their parents trust is clearer than whether youth have enough empathy and compassion; whether youth in this community treat diverse peers and adults respectfully, manage to avoid serious involvement with drugs and alcohol, do not overreact to minor rejections by their peers seems a clearer standard than whether our youth are good enough problem-solvers.

Having diverse stakeholders know what youth development outcomes actually look like and agree on how good is "good enough" are important early tasks for any community-based youth initiative. Such concreteness and clarity are also tremendous advantages for planning, managing and evaluating youth development initiatives and programs, as will be seen in the later sections on applications of the framework.

Like the long-term outcomes, the youth development outcomes have implications for every element of an action framework. Setting our sights on youth becoming productive, connected and able to navigate shapes how we think about the supports and opportunities they must find in their environments to achieve these milestones. The next element of the framework describes these supports and opportunities.

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C. Developmental Supports and Opportunities

Two critical points govern our thinking about what young people need in order to achieve the development outcomes that will facilitate a healthy transition to adulthood. First, we know the social environment is critical to the pace and progress of development from birth to adulthood. Second, a review of the literature on development reveals a common, fairly short list of supports and experiences that appear to be key across all settings in which youth spend time.

Historically, our efforts to improve the life chances of adolescents have, in many ways, ignored this first point about the role of the environment in human development. We know that:

> If adolescents are to move from the less mature and responsible ways of thinking and acting that are a natural part of childhood to the more mature and responsible judg-ments and activities that are the hallmark of a socially productive adulthood, certain supports for development must be present in the environment… The presence or absence and the quality of these supports in the environment will significantly affect the trajectory of development for all adolescents…In every [theoretical] formulation of notions about how youth become socialized and adopt the practices and beliefs valued by society, the interaction between the individual and his social environment is critical. In the natural course of human development, most individuals actively seek that interaction. Thus, development of some kind occurs, no matter what the individual's circumstances. But the [pace of development] that result [s] from that interaction [is] shaped by the level of support and the kinds of challenges and opportunities offered by the social environment…The social environment can impede or support the process, depending on the opportunities and supports it contains. (Gambone, 1993; emphasis added)

As proponents of youth development have worked to incorporate this core tenet into policies and investments, every youth development framework has included a summary or list of the experiences youth must have in order to achieve the developmental, and ultimately the long term, goals we seek. These experiences may be labeled differently — as "supports," "inputs," "assets," "resources," etc.— in individual frameworks; but across frameworks (and the research literature on development), a common set of supports and opportunities can be extracted (see Table 1):

- Adequate nutrition, health and shelter;
- Multiple supportive relationships with adults and peers;
- Challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences;
- Meaningful opportunities for involvement and membership; and
- Physical and emotional safety.

Research supports the link between each of these experiences to developmental outcomes and/or to the long term outcomes specified in youth development frameworks.

Adequate Nutrition, Health and Shelter. This first developmental need stands alone among the supports and opportunities as a necessary precondition for youth to benefit from the others. If a young person is hungry, ill or inadequately sheltered, that youth cannot experience gains from even the most developmentally enriched social environment. The effects of inadequate nutrition on both early development and performance in school are well documented, and nutrition's importance is reflected in the nearly universal acceptance of feeding programs sponsored by both federal and state governments. For example, **nutrition** deficits are associated with lower scores on tests of cognitive functioning (Korenman, et al., 1995), lower IQ test scores (Wilson, et al., 1986), poor short-term memory and slower cognitive and socioemotional development (Korenman, et al., 1995). Poor **health** is also one of the major factors that put young people at risk for poor cognitive functioning (Pollitt, 1994) and poor school performance (Sartain, 1989). And a review of research on the impact of homelessness on development links inadequate **housing** with hunger and poor nutrition, health problems, developmental delays, psychological problems and academic underachievement (Rafferty and Shinn, 1991). While every setting and organization may not be capable of fully addressing all of these needs, they must be aware of them and in some way responsive to them if young people are expected to develop in a healthy way.

Supportive Relationships with Adults and Peers. The research is clear: from infancy experiencing support from the people in their environment is one of the most critical factors in the healthy development of all individuals. Supportive relationships are those where adults make a commitment of time and interest; communicate a positive affect to youth; support youth's personal responsibility; set clear and consistent expectations; and deliver consequences that promote competence rather than emphasize failure (Connell, 1991; Private/Public Ventures, 1994). Supportive relationships with both adults and peers are sources of emotional support, guidance and instrumental help that can contribute to better decision-making, lower levels of stress, higher academic achievement, healthier relationships and lower levels of drug and alcohol use (Eccles, et al., 1993; Erikson, 1986;

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Furstenberg, 1993; Rutter, 1987; Scales, 1991; Sipe, Ma and Gambone, 1998; Tierney and Grossman, 1995; Werner and Smith, 1982).

Challenging and interesting learning experiences. We know these experiences, which can also be fun, are key for youth, especially adolescents, to experience a sense of growth and progress in developing skills and abilities. Whether in school, sports, arts, a job or other arenas, young people are engaged by, and benefit from, activities that give them a sense of competence and productivity (Epstein, 1988). Conversely, they are bored by activities that do not challenge them in some way (Hultsman, 1992; Medrich, 1991). This "boredom" can lead young people to participate in too many high-risk activities (like drug use, vandalism, etc.). They are more likely to avoid these dangers if they have healthier options in their lives that contain the appropriate blend of challenge and accomplishment (Schinke, Orlandi and Cole, 1992; Sipe, Ma and Gambone, 1998).

Meaningful Opportunities for Involvement and Membership.. As young people move into adolescence, they need ample opportunities to try out adult roles. There are a number of ways in which this can be accomplished. To meet young people's growing need for autonomy, they need the opportunity **to make age-appropriate decisions** for themselves and others, ranging form deciding what activities to participate in themselves to setting group rules for classrooms, teams, organizations, etc. They also need opportunities to take on **leadership roles**, such as peer counselor/mediator, team captain, council member, or organizational representative etc. that allow them to begin practicing positive adult roles. These opportunities help foster a greater sense of shared responsibility, respect, self-efficacy, better decision-making, fewer risk behaviors and a greater sense of belonging and membership (Collins, 1984; Conrad and Hedlin, 1982; Grolnick and Ryan, 1987; Midgley and Feldlaufer, 1987; Scales, 1991; Sipe, Ma and Gambone, 1998). A **sense of belonging and membership** is key to forming a feeling of attachment and responsibility to something outside oneself. Young people develop these connections through active participation in groups, such as clubs, teams, churches and organizations, and benefit from them. Such participation fosters a greater ability to take the perspective of others and a greater sense of responsibility, both critical to decision-making, a sense of competence, better performance in school and a decreased likelihood of gang involvement, delinquency and violence (Benson, 1990; Conrad and Hedin, 1982; Erikson, 1986; Lerner, 1995; Scales, 1991; Slavin, 1991). Adolescents also need to experience themselves as individuals who have something of value **to contribute** to their different **communities**. These opportunities for meaningful involvement and membership are linked to a greater sense of competence and self-respect, attachment to community, greater tolerance of others and fewer risk behaviors (Lipsitz, 1984; Newman and Rutter, 1983; Switzer, et al., 1995; William T. Grant, 1988).

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<u>Physical and Emotional Safety.</u> Finally, a sense of safety is basic and critical to youth. Its absence can have profound effects on their choices and decisions; they can doubt the prospect of a future at all and develop the "learned helplessness" often associated with victimization. When young people do feel safe, they are less likely to participate in too many high-risk behaviors they can derail or delay healthy development (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992; Medrich, 1991; Panel on High Risk Youth, 1993; Pittman and Wright, 1991). (Cited from Gambone, in press)

In terms of the community action framework, these supports and opportunities represent the experiences we need to provide individual youth **and** the characteristics that must be available in any setting where youth spend time if it is to be considered "developmental". Unlike the long term and developmental outcomes, the supports and opportunities <u>do</u> represent elements for which every activity or organization focused on youth can, and should, be held accountable if they are promising a positive impact on youth development. Only with the type of intentional, community-wide action proposed in this framework can we ensure that young people get enough of these experiences consistently, across settings and over time to yield meaningful and wide spread improvement in the developmental and long term outcomes desired.

D. <u>Community Strategies</u>

The first three elements of the community action framework — long term outcomes, developmental outcomes and supports and opportunities — represent a model of adolescent development that describes components of the process **for any youth**. Next, we discuss strategies that communities can implement to strengthen developmental supports and opportunities. At this point, our focus needs to narrow from universal elements of a youth development approach to particular community contexts.

Young people who grow up in economically disadvantaged communities make up a disproportionate number of those who fail to reach the critical developmental milestones and hence to become productive, healthy adults. These communities are therefore the targets of most efforts to plan and implement strategies to strengthen conditions on behalf of youth. For this reason, the strategies in this framework apply most specifically to economically disadvantaged communities.

The community action strategies in this framework are:
• Strengthen the capacities of community adults (parents, families and primary caregivers, neighbors and employers) to provide supports and opportunities for youth;
• Reform and integrate schools and other public institutions and services affecting youth;
• Increase the number and quality of developmental activities for youth; and
• Realign public policy and resources to support these community strategies

Two types of support undergird these strategies: empirical and common sense. Empirically, they reflect the current evidence on how growing up in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods

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affects youth development. In common sense terms, they recognize the realities of young people's lives, as well as, the policy and funding context of community change initiative. Together they offer a framework that is both focused enough and inclusive enough to be useful in assessing community conditions and in planning action to support youth development.

Research on the effects of poor neighborhoods on youth development is itself in the early stages of development. We know that youth from neighborhoods with high concentrations of poor families, few middle class families, large numbers of unemployed adults and large proportions of single-parent, female-headed households tend to fare worse than other youth in terms of both development outcomes across childhood and longer term outcomes of early adulthood (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1997; Jencks and Mayer, 1990; McCloyd, 1990; Wilson, 1987). But it is only recently that published studies have looked at **how** and **why** these conditions come about in neighborhoods in the first place and affect the development of youth (Duncan, Connell and Klebanov, 1998). The most comprehensive set of analyses of evidence to explore these connections between neighborhood poverty and youth development were conducted by the SSRC and published in 1997 (Brooks-Gunn, et al.,1997). The findings from these studies, which represent a great step forward in our understanding of poverty, and other neighborhood-based research lead to two conclusions that are relevant to the community strategies included in this framework.

First, this research shows that while neighborhood conditions are often significant predictors of children's development, family-level factors are more important (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1997, Vol. I). That is, the degree of poverty in a neighborhood (as measured through SES, household structure, employment rates, etc.) did predict how well children fared in terms of outcomes (including health, cognitive abilities, schooling, behavioral, etc.), **but** family factors (such as home environment, provision of learning experiences, relationships with mother, support for mothers, etc.) were more important. This suggests to the editors that "…it appears families still should be viewed as the key agents in promoting positive development in children" (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1997, Vol. I; p.281).

Second, after the critical family-level factors, two primary dimensions of neighborhoods have important effects on development: institutional resources and social capital and relationship. While the research evidence is still accumulating on exactly how these neighborhood factors affect the family's ability to raise healthy children, some interesting areas are now being explored. Following Coleman's (1988) theory of social capital, researchers have begun to examine how social relationships in neighborhoods affect development both directly and, through their effects on parenting strategies, indirectly. For example, neighborhoods with a high "child care burden" and low "supervision and control" of children have higher levels of child maltreatment and poor outcomes (e.g., violent crime, drug trafficking, juvenile delinquency, teen childbearing). This correlation is thought to result from low numbers of adults available to "supervise, care for, and support children and involve themselves in neighborhood institutions" (Korbin and Coulton, 1997, p. 69).

Researchers have also begun to examine the evidence that supports a "neighborhood resource theory" that the quality and quantity of local resources available for families and their children affects developmental outcomes. That is, evidence is mounting that neighborhoods with good, accessible institutions and services, such as parks, libraries, child care facilities and schools, are associated with better cognitive and behavioral outcomes for youth (Gephardt, 1997; Jarrett, 1997).

Thus, research supports an approach to strengthening communities for youth development that entails strengthening the capacity of families and other adults to provide good developmental experiences for youth. This in turn means strengthening the institutions and organization available to families and young people in their communities.

Common sense tells us that the strategies included in an action framework for development need to focus on strengthening the institutional capacities and social exchange processes in communities and finding the resources to do it. Most simply, families, schools, and neighborhood adults and organizations are the people and places that comprise the daily life of youth. There is no definitive research on how to address all of the influences that affect youth development in a community. It has not yet been done successfully. This is where "common sense" comes in; there is a certain "leap," based on experience and practice that needs to be made from discrete pieces of research to a holistic plan for community action. This leap informs the thinking here about what reasonable set of activities, when taken together, can be expected to yield better outcomes for a community's youth and the necessity to realign resources to put these strategies in place.

For each of the four community action strategies in the framework, we have drawn from research and experience to develop a list of the specific features that should be present in communities to assure the developmental supports and opportunities for youth across the years from late childhood to late adolescence and across all of the important settings. These features then guide the implementation and evaluation of the community action strategies.

Strengthening the Capacity of Community Adults to Provide Supports and Opportunities for Youth.
A broad range of outcomes — including physical and mental health, maltreatment, cognitive development, school performance, school completion and high risk behaviors — are influenced by youth's relationships with the significant adults in their lives and by the relationships among the adults with whom they interact. Recent research has begun to focus on how these influences differ for youth in economically impoverished neighborhoods and their peers living in more advantaged neighborhoods; and on how young people with healthy outcomes differ from those with more negative outcomes, even when they live in similarly impoverished communities.

Based on this research, this framework includes the following indicators that community action strategies have strengthened the capacity of adults to "raise their youth".

Parents and Families:

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- Have access to strong support networks among other families of youth;
- Know about, and have affordable and reliable access to alternative care and positive activities for their youth;
- Have effective communication networks with other adults who care for, or who can provide needed service for, their youth; e.g. childcare workers, counselors, teachers; and
- Are knowledgeable about effective parenting practices.

Not surprisingly, youth from disadvantaged neighborhoods — like any youth — are most profoundly affected by the quality of parenting they receive. Parents and other family caregivers who use "authoritative" parenting techniques, characterized by a commitment of time and interest, positive affect, encouragement of youth's input and responsibility, clear and consistent expectations and discipline strategies that emphasize rewards for good behavior, tend to raise children who experience healthier outcomes, especially in disadvantaged communities (Furstenburg, 1993; Jarrett, 1994; Public/Private Ventures, 1994). But parents in these neighborhoods also affect the developmental course of their children in other ways. A range of more positive outcomes for youth (health, education, psychological development, delinquency, etc.) (Furstenburg, 1993; Jarrett, 1994, 1997; Walker and Furstenburg, 1994) is also associated with parents' ability to guide their children through situations fraught with danger and teach them strategies to deal with some of the negative conditions of impoverished neighborhoods, their ability to monitor and control their children's behavior and their ability to access safe, supervised programs for their children.

The social environment for parents also affects their ability to ensure good outcomes for their children. Living in neighborhoods where there are other adults and institutions available to share the "child care burden" (Coulton, 1995; Korbin and Coulton, 1997), having rich networks among parents (Jarrett, 1994) and experiencing role modeling and support from other parents (Furstenburg, 1990) are also important factors associated with better outcomes for youth in disadvantaged communities. Young people, especially teenagers, also seem to benefit indirectly from good parenting when they associate with peers who grow up in families where good parenting practices and strategies are used (Darling and Steinberg, 1997; Fletcher, Darling, and Steinberg, 1995).

Neighbors:
- Know and initiate constructive interactions with, youth living in their community; and
- Communicate openly and constructively with each other, with parents of youth and with other adults responsible for youth.

The other adults in impoverished neighborhoods also play an important role in young people's development. Neighborhoods where "informal social control" is strong, where adults other than parents are also active in monitoring the activities of youth, have lower rates of delinquent behaviors by youth than neighborhoods where this type of involvement is not present. This is especially true concerning teenage peer groups in public spaces. Neighborhoods with this informal social control

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are characterized by a high degree of community monitoring, high numbers and quality of social ties among adults, organizational participation by adults and consensus of values around youth behavior (Gephardt, 1997; Sampson and Groves, 1989).

Employers of youth:
▪ Structure work for youth as closely as possible to youth development principles.

Finally, employers can play a significant role in development as young people take jobs during their high school years. While there is currently no research focusing explicitly on the effects that employers have on youth from disadvantaged communities, there is a large body of findings on the effects of employment on teens. We know that jobs, especially for impoverished youth, can be a powerful developmental experience (Gambone, 1993); but they can also have a negative effect on outcomes if they are not developmentally supportive. Jobs where young people work too many hours, are poorly supervised and learn no new skills are often associated with poorer school performance and an increase in risk behaviors (stealing, drinking, smoking, cutting school, etc.) (Steinberg, Fegley, & Dornbusch, 1993). However, jobs where youth work an appropriate number of hours (under 20), have a good relationship with their supervisor, have some input/control over their work and learn new skills are associated with more positive outcomes for youth (Mortimer & Johnson, 1998; Mortimer et al., 1996).

Reform and Integrate Schools and Other Public Institutions and Services Affecting Youth. Research on strategies to reform schools in disadvantaged communities has made great progress over the last decade.. Research on reforming other public institutions for youth has not been as conclusive in its findings. However, reforming and coordinating public institutions to provide the supports and opportunities needed by youth has been, and will continue to be, a formidable challenge. It is a challenge we must meet if young people are to achieve the outcomes we seek.

Based on research, practice and common sense, the indicators of strong schools and public institutions supportive of youth development are presented below:

In Schools:
• Students interact with adults in small groups (about 15) on a regular basis, over extended periods of time during the school day and over multiple years;
• Teaching methods reflect established best practices for maximum student engagement and learning;
• School policies and practices ensure collective responsibility for educational professionals and provide opportunities for parents and other community adults to monitor and contribute to student success;
• Schools and other institutions are linked in ways that maximize: 1) continuity and consistency across settings, and 2) ease and quality of communication with youth and their caregivers.

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In our earlier paper (Connell, Gambone and Smith, 2000), we stated:

> "schools are, outside the home, the main environment for young people. Long before youth development became a widely accepted concept, there were clamors for those institutions to change, to become more responsive and effective. "School reform" is still a central topic in most large cities. Yet public education is an immense and densely packed institution — at times defensive and at times quite justified in being so. It also has a thicket of peripheral organizations to service, improve, and reform it and its core activities have remained outside the scope of youth development efforts. Because it has seemed too tough a nut to crack, schooling has been avoided."

Both research and practice in the field of educational reform are now yielding evidence about the critical features of successful school and school district reform. The needed changes in the way schools operate should become focal points for community action strategies to strengthen public schools.

First, reform should focus on building stronger relationships among youth, educators and parents. Specifically, schools should lower student-adult ratios to no more than 15 to 1 during core instruction and should keep the same group of adults with students for longer periods of time during the school day and across multiple years. Through these commitments, the schools recognize the importance of building stable, intensive and mutually accountable relationships between educators, youth and the families of youth. Research on urban schools implementing these critical features demonstrates significant gains in quality of relationships, student conduct, and student academic performance (IRRE, 1996).

Second, the community's schools should deliver standards-based, instruction using strategies that maximize student engagement in their learning. Schools and their respective school districts will need to set and communicate high, clear and fair standards for student behavior and for what students will know and be able to do they must also implement the in instruction necessary for student to meet these standard. Many successful urban schools employ instructional strategies that are driven by careful analysis of individual students' work in relation to these standards. These schools implement instructional strategies found to close the gaps between current levels of student work and the performance standards (IRRE, 1996).

Third, schools and school systems should adopt and implement policies assuring collective responsibility for student success: among the professionals working with students in the schools and school district; and among other school and district personnel, parents and other community stakeholders, including the staff of other public institutions serving students. Toward this end, district policies should: enable school staff to allocate available resources (including time, staff, space and money) flexibly so they respond to student instructional needs at the school level; encourage

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parents to participate in an ongoing and informed way in the monitoring and improvement of student learning; and make sure other agencies working with their students live up to joint commitments to particular outcomes and standards for practice (Connell and Klem, 2001).

Finally, by all three sets of critical features must comprise an overall action strategy for transforming schools. Community stakeholders must recognize that any one or two of these alone are not sufficient to assure that all youth in economically disadvantaged communities experience the supports and opportunities their educational experience must contribute to their overall development.

In Other Public Institutions (Parks and Recreation, Juvenile Justice, Law Enforcement, Housing, Welfare, Social Services, Transportation):
• They have located services for youth and their families in the community;
• They have cooperative relationships with each other and with families of youth;
• They are accessible, affordable and reliable; and
• They employ individuals who are equipped, empowered and expected to: 1) respond to community needs, and be accessible and respectful to community youth and families, and 2) establish the practices necessary to provide the supports and opportunities to youth in direct contact with their systems.

Other institutions (such as health, juvenile justice, and welfare and law enforcement) have also been trying various avenues to achieve systemic reform in order to attain better outcomes for adults and youth over the last ten years. But research has been much less conclusive in this area than in others included in the framework. We do know some things about what practices yield better outcomes for residents of impoverished communities, but we are still unclear on how to make effective, large scale changes in the way many of these systems operate. Our best information, garnered mostly from reviews of effective community programs (like reviews by Schorr, 1997; Dryfoos, 1998; and the Department of Education, 1998), give us ideas — through examples — for strategies these institutions could use to improve their effectiveness in economically disadvantaged communities. There is also research on the barriers families and youth in these neighborhoods encounter when trying to access the services of these systems.

For example, we know that accessibility is critically important: where services are located, the hours they operate and their cost can affect whether babies and toddlers are immunized, teens use health clinics (especially for contraceptive services), whether city recreation department centers are used and whether adults can take advantage of employment training.

We also know that families and children in these communities fare better when there is a coordinated, cooperative approach across institutions than when services are fragmented and isolated. When programs and services that are brought into the community involve families and youth cooperatively in their efforts and are responsive to the particular needs of individuals and

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neighborhoods, they are better utilized and more effective. For example, some of the community-based safety efforts have shown significant effects in decreasing the crime rate in the targeted neighborhoods when police and community members together run Police Athletic League centers (e.g. Baltimore; see Department of Education, 1998), where police officers live in the community and participate in sports, family and other activities at community centers and work closely with youth counselors and advocates (e.g., Puerto Rico; see Dryfoos, 1998), or where police officers are incorporated into community youth activities and act as mentors and advocates (e.g., Boston; see Dryfoos, 1998).

And we know that the type of training staff receive, especially regarding practices with youth and responsiveness to families' and youth's needs, is critical and often underestimated in importance (Schorr, 1997).

While the research on developmentally supportive features of other institutions included in this framework is less conclusive than the research behind other elements, we believe that common sense, practice and what we know about other organizations and institutions provides a strong enough basis to begin moving to action to strengthen these institutions in communities.

Increase the Number and Quality of Developmental Activities for Youth. Young people have, on average, between six and eight and one-half hours of free time available on school days. The average youth spends about one half-hour a day on homework and another half-hour on household chores, leaving between five and seven hours available for other activities each day (Sipe, Ma and Gambone, 1998). In the summers, this time can be expected to double for those young people who are not employed. As reviewed earlier, multiple benefits accrue when young people are engaged in developmentally supportive activities (those that provide the supports and opportunities in Box C of the framework).

We know that impoverished communities have significantly fewer of the institutions and organizations that can provide developmental activities to youth that fuel a healthy growth process (like youth organizations, sports leagues, summer camps, after school programs, etc.) than do more economically advantaged communities (Carnegie Council, 1992; Littell and Wynn, 1989). We also know that many youth in poorer communities — especially older adolescents — are not engaged in activities that provide developmental supports and opportunities (Sipe, Ma and Gambone, 1998); and that some parents in poorer neighborhoods are either unaware or unable to connect to some of the organizations and resources for youth that do exist in their communities (due to cost, transportation, timing, etc.) (Jarrett, 1994; Walker and Furstenberg, 1994).

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Wherever these free time activities and programs are located — in schools, youth organizations, recreations centers, churches or parks — research is converging on a set of organization and program indicators of quality that translates into high levels of support and opportunities for youth participants to provide developmental supports and opportunities (Department of Education, 1998; Gambone and Arbreton, 1997). Many of these characteristics mirror those of schools, but some are unique to these settings. The indicators that these features are in place include both organizational characteristics and practices.

Gap Period Activities (before and after school, weekends, holidays and summer) are offered by:

Organizations That are Structured to Provide:
• Effective adult/youth ratios
• Safe, accessible and reliable activities and spaces
• Continuity of care between and within activities

Organizations Whose Policies Include:
• Ongoing, results-based, staff and organizational improvement process
• Flexibility in allocating available resources
• Engagement of staff in the local community

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Organizations Whose Activities Include:
- Range of diverse and interesting skill building activities
- High, clear and fair standards
- Youth involvement in organizational decision-making

Realign Public and Private Policies and Resources to Support These Community Strategies.. A major realignment of public and private resources and policies will be required to implement, at scale, the community action strategies just described[3].. Unlike many of the hypotheses represented in earlier elements of the framework, no empirical studies or even well formulated theories support this claim; fortunately, common sense makes the case quite nicely.

This realignment of resources and policies will have to take place within and across existing institutions and organizations. Likewise, policies and resources from governmental, philanthropic and private sector systems within which these organizations operate will have to be shifted as well. Indicators that such realignment has occurred are that that public and private policies and resource providers:
- Give high and real priority to implementation of these three community action strategies and their associated activities; and
- Have internal and external accountability structures that make successful implementation of these strategies an important determinant of individual, institutional and organizational rewards and consequences.

When should these realignments occur and under what conditions will they be most effective in supporting successful implementation of the community action strategies. Here we offer two suggestions.

First, a mechanism or vehicle should be identified for convening and sustaining these conversations about resource allocations and policies, for disseminating and communicating their products and then for monitoring and readjusting these "investments".

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[3] Out of these conversations could come the following realignments:
- A board of education in an under-performing urban school district requires and retrains its entire central office staff to support whole-school reform in all of its schools.
- A major private employer realigns its resources and augments its benefits package to ensure effective health care options for the children of all of its part- and full-time employees.
- Five city social service agencies agree to co-locate 85% of their personnel in neighborhoods and establish clear and public standards of practice for these community-based teams.
- A community's five major philanthropic foundations pool 30% of their combined resources to instigate and sustain indefinitely diverse sets of summer programs for all deserving youth in a community.
- A mayor shifts significant resources from targeted programs for juvenile offenders to community-based, early intervention strategies (or vice versa).

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The "governance issue" raises some immediate practical questions: How to bring together and keep together diverse groups and the right groups of busy stakeholders to do this work; how to support and pressure these groups to carry through with their commitment to see the community action strategies in the framework implemented, in part by realigning policies and resources; and how to sustain a process of critical reflection on results and readjustment of these strategies.

Participants in these conversations should include resource-providers, policy-makers and the other key stakeholders responsible for implementing community action strategies (e.g., youth and adult community residents, program operators, and service providers).

Experience from community-based initiatives thus far (Brown, Butler, & Hamilton, 2001; Hahn & Lanspery, 2001) suggests that diverse types of organizational structures and entities can fulfill these roles — for example, intermediary organizations, advocacy groups, stakeholder coalitions — but that somebody has to wake up in the morning with the responsibility for doing it. Furthermore, that somebody has to have already, or build quickly, credibility with initiative stakeholders who are going to effect, and be affected by, the resource and policy realignments being considered.

Second, conversations about resource and policy realignment should occur after there is collective acceptance of a community action framework; these conversations should be driven by what's required to implement the community action strategies to which stakeholders have agreed.

By doing so, current and proposed policies and resource allocations are critically examined in pursuit of strategies that have stakeholders' support on their merits not just because money is available or new regulations are in effect. In the next section of the paper and in our examples, we will speak to how commitment to the framework and its action strategies can be built among diverse stakeholders, including resource-providers and policy-makers.

We would propose that both suggestions offered here should be followed if resource and policy realignments are going to effectively support the implementation of the first three community action strategies in Box D of the framework. A credible vehicle must be established to engage and keep key stakeholders involved in framing and implementing the initiative in a focused conversation around what it will take — in terms of resource and policy realignment — to implement a specific set of strategies that all parties believe are necessary and sufficient to move their community toward meaningful improvement in the life chances of their young people.

The preceding section of the paper provided evidence, reflections on experience and some common sense claims that stakeholders can use the community action strategies in Box D as levers to increase the supports and opportunities available to youth. In turn, these changes should lead to important improvements in youth and adult outcomes. The next section discusses some suggestions as to how stakeholders can be supported to embrace such a framework and then

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begin planning and implementing the community action strategies.

E. Build Community Capacity and Conditions for Change

What conditions will stimulate and help sustain serious conversations about community action strategies and their intended effects on youth?

What conditions will permit, support and pressure policy-makers and resource-providers to behave planfully and responsively and to act on a very long view of their investments of money, time and political capital?

What will counteract the understandable reluctance of community residents, front line service providers and community workers to engage in frank and self-revealing conversations with these influentials about "what's best for their communities?"

And what will permit all of these stakeholders to move from calling for and planning change to making change? We don't know for sure, but we think a couple of elements are essential.

First, there must be a sense of urgency among all stakeholders — a sense that something that I care about is very wrong and must be made right.

Second, stakeholders must believe that these community action strategies can be implemented and will produce their intended outcomes.

Third, people and organizations asked to risk their comfort with the status quo have to see others doing the same; they have to sense equity in the pain and gain of change.

Finally, the decline in supports and opportunities available to youth in many economically threatened communities over the past fifty years has been clear and dramatic. It appears, at times, to be inexorable. Conversely, intentional programmatic investments to enrich these supports and opportunities over this same period have been intermittent, erratic in approach and ephemeral in impact. Therefore, this new generation of community initiatives needs a collective sense by all stakeholders that "this is the big one", that this too will not pass, or the energy necessary to implement these bold and high-stakes strategies will not be there.

Creating these conditions is a tall order, but we believe that activities can successfully build stakeholders' awareness, knowledge, engagement and commitment to the story this framework tells. For example, stakeholders can create a sense of urgency in others once they themselves see the gap between where youth they care about are and where they need to be. Having stakeholders interact with youth and adults in other communities like theirs, where concerted effort has led to the closing of this gap, can create a sense of possibility. Achieving a sense of equity will require that

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stakeholders across existing power relationships engage in honest discussions about the risks involved in implementing these strategies and the supports they will need from each other to pull it off. Finally, change of this kind only becomes inevitable when key stakeholders — those who control political and financial resources in the community and those who have immediate and persistent impact on the lives of youth — jointly agree that the risk/reward ratio makes business as usual the more painful and unacceptable option.

In the next section of this paper, we will be describing some examples of our own efforts to work with communities on building these capacities and conditions for change.

III. APPLICATIONS OF THE FRAMEWORK

In our work with our clients and partners, we are using this framework as a planning, management, evaluation and investment tool. We have sought to build on the efforts of others also working with communities to accomplish similar goals.

The examples we use to illustrate <u>how</u> the framework can be applied — to planning, management, evaluation and investment — are drawn from the work of the Institute for Research and Reform in Education (IRRE) with diverse community initiatives focusing on youth development. These initiatives had diverse origins, and our partners in this work include private foundations, both individual and consortia; state- and community-level agency partnerships; school districts; community-based organizations; national intermediaries; and local public/private partnerships.

All of this work has been initiated within the last two years and thus is still in its early stages. Our brief descriptions here are meant to illustrate how the framework can be used and, where available, provide preliminary evidence for the framework's effectiveness as a tool.

Planning Community-Based Initiatives for Youth Development Using the Framework

The planning process we are going to discuss places considerable pressure on policy-makers, leaders of resource-providing entities and community residents to engage in new forms of dialogue with each other. For example, these conversations will have to transcend outside investors "getting community input" on specific programs or policy initiatives. When skeptical community residents see themselves as having little influence in creating or sustaining such efforts, they view these opportunities for "input" with justifiable suspicion, if not downright cynicism. They see stakeholders with influence seeking to extract superficial endorsement and political cover for preordained decisions. Given this view, these community stakeholders either don't show up, show up looking to protect and defend their own current interests, or show up looking to expose the true motives behind the sessions.

What the community action framework provides are the topics for these new conversations — the

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community action strategies and evidence that their implementation will their capacity to better the lives of youth and the community as a whole. It also provides clear outcomes against which realigned investments and policies can be evaluated and assessed. The successful implementation of the three community action strategies are the early outcomes of these realignments; the increased supports and opportunities for youth are the intermediate outcomes; and the youth and young adult outcomes are the longer-term outcomes.

The framework is designed to encourage flexible and creative planning, framed by three commitments: first, to track the early outcomes of initiative activities and make adjustments based on these results; second, to use clear performance standards in judging intermediate results (for example, that youth experience all five supports and opportunities in settings where the initiative is focusing investments (Box C)); and third, to engage in ongoing planning, partnering and capacity-building to eventually implement all four of the community action strategies (Box D).

With these commitments in hand imagine a diverse set of community stakeholders using the framework as a lens through which to do the following:
- Gather information on how and how well the community is currently supporting the development of its youth;
- Identify and discuss the gaps in the existing network of support;
- Decide which gaps are the most important to close in the short, medium and longer terms;
- Discuss what resources are necessary and available to close these gaps;
- Determine who is going to be responsible for planning and then implementing the community action strategies; and
- Agree to track and report progress and hold each other accountable for making progress.

In this section, we will describe some of IRRE's efforts to support community stakeholders in initiating and then moving through this process.

In one of our community-based projects, the community action framework was presented to a diverse group of approximately 150 youth development advocates, workers and organizational leaders in a medium-sized, urban/suburban area. It was described as a synthesis and summary of various academic and field-based frameworks, to which this group had been exposed through a seminar series over the previous five months. Small and large group activities enabled these early stakeholders to discuss the key elements and logic of the framework and the evidence undergirding it. As part of this consensus-building process, these stakeholders were asked to work with each other to study activities that this community is now doing, planning to do or should do under each of the four sets of community action strategies (Box D).

This process required three full days from each participant over a three-month period. All sessions were facilitated by a lead consultant deeply conversant with the framework along with two or three associate consultants from the community whom the lead consultant had prepared for the meeting.

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The process culminated in this group of 150 stakeholders achieving consensus around five key issues:

First, that meaningful improvement in the developmental and long-term outcomes in the framework (Boxes B and A, respectively) were legitimate and important goals for their community's investments in their youth;

Second, that the supports and opportunities (Box C) should become the "non-negotiable commitments" that their community makes to all its youth;

Third, that these "nutrients" for their growth should be available in key community settings where youth spend most of their time across the years from age 10 to 18;

Fourth, that the four sets of community action strategies (Box D) would need to be implemented to fulfill these commitments; and,

Fifth, that an effort to mobilize key stakeholder groups in the community and seek a still broader consensus around these four commitments was the next step toward implementation of these community action strategies.

The framework now provides this group of early stakeholders with a foundation, a shared vision and a common story to focus and extend future conversations on what expectations the community can have for its youth; what strategies might be required to meet these expectations; what kinds of information about current community investments in youth are most important to have; and what kinds of outcomes — early, intermediate and longer term — will be most important to track in the future.

In a second community-based youth development initiative, the community action framework is being integrated with another conceptual framework that has guided this initiative's activities thus far. This multi-site foundation-sponsored initiative is using the community action framework as a planning tool: a) to tighten the links among the investments (financial, human and economic) the foundation and its community partners these communities are making on behalf of youth, the activities these investments generate, and the youth outcomes these investments are seeking to achieve; and b) to guide the prioritization and planning of longer term investments in youth.

Most useful thus far has been the use of community action strategies to strengthen the links among investments, activities, and outcomes. Before using this framework, stakeholders had already reached consensus around initiative "outcomes," many of which match up well with the supports and opportunities (Box C) and the youth outcomes (Box B) in the community action framework. Current planning and mobilization efforts in these communities now focus on identifying and prioritizing key gaps between existing and desired percentages of community residents (adults and youth) experiencing successful implementation of community action strategies (Box D). Attention will then turn to involving other key community stakeholders in detailed planning for improved implementation of these strategies.

Managing Community-Based Initiatives Using the Framework

As in planning, experience using the framework to guide management of community-based youth initiatives is still in its early stages. Three of the initiatives with which IRRE is currently involved are now using the framework as a management tool. Each is using the framework's elements as a foundation on which to develop work plans, timelines, assignments of responsibility, accountability plans and budgets.

An urban educational reform initiative has undertaken planning, mobilizing and capacity-building activities (Box E), all of which are aimed at the successful implementation of whole-school reform in all of the community's public schools (Strategy II in Box D). Through new resources provided by a foundation partner and significant reallocation of resources by the participating school district, these activities are now being implemented.

An executive committee for the initiative developed a "mutual accountability plan," and assigned responsibility for the completion of these activities to the three partners — funder, school district and technical assistance provider. The mutual accountability plan includes benchmarks describing what constitutes satisfactory completion of the activity, timelines for doing so and source of funds/people/facilities for doing so. The committee conducts formal reviews of progress every six months and confers once a month to track short-term progress. Funding from foundation and district sources is contingent on these formal reviews, which also lead to reallocation of funds when adjustments are needed.

Other management activities tied to the framework are:
- Baseline assessments of the breadth and quality (Box C) of implementation have been conducted in the first cohort of participating schools;
- Annual change thresholds — statements of how much change from these baselines is good enough – are being set by representative stakeholders from school communities and the district; and,
- Resource and policy realignments and other reform activities will be reviewed once actual change data are compared to expected change thresholds.

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In a second community-based initiative, stakeholders in one urban metropolitan area have planned and are now implementing school-based community centers for youth and other community members in multiple communities. The directors of these centers, members of their staff and community members (youth and adults) participated in a planning process, during which they agreed that key elements of this framework should guide their work. This process also included the funders, managers and system partners of the initiative who comprise its steering committee. The initiative's managing director, who is based in a local youth development intermediary, has worked with the five directors of school-based community centers to enhance and assess the number and quality of developmental activities for youth (Strategy III, Box D). He is using the critical features of successful implementation as an important tool to guide these discussions.

In addition, the managing director and the steering committee of the initiative use a common report format, designed around the completion of activities pointing toward the successful implementation of this community action strategy, to review work plans and budgets.

The work of the technical assistance providers focuses on building the capacity of site leadership and staff to plan and implement these developmental activities (Strategy III, Box D) and to create environments in which the five supports and opportunities are present and accessible to all participating youth Box C).

Finally, members of the steering committee, the technical assistance provider and site representatives have endorsed a set of expectations for the steering committee's contribution: first, to building and maintaining the capacity and conditions for change with key community leaders and the public (Box E) and, then, to sustaining and growing the initiative, contingent on achievement of key early and intermediate outcomes at the school-based community centers.

While these two initiatives focus on different community action strategies (education reform, gap period activities), they both use key elements in the community action framework to manage their resources and guide the ongoing work of all key stakeholder groups: site-level participants, technical assistance providers and investors.

Using the Framework to Inform Evaluation of Community-Based Youth Development Initiatives

The youth development frameworks summarized in Table 1 have affected how the field evaluates traditional youth development programs and initiatives. For example, evaluations now generally include measures to assess outcomes included in Boxes B and C of the community action framework — outcomes that span positive accomplishments of young people as well as their experiences of supports and opportunities in various settings. Immediate and dramatic changes in risk behaviors, while still longed for by all of us, are no longer viewed as the sole standard for a

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successful program or initiative. However, as discussed earlier, the new list of outcomes is long and far-ranging — from psychological traits to specific competencies, from reports of positive experiences to descriptions of youth-friendly program characteristics. Many evaluations also lack clarity around what thresholds for these outcomes a given intervention is expected to produce: How much positive well-being should we expect? What groups of youth should achieve these thresholds – all youth exposed to the program, all eligible youth, all youth going to school in the community, all youth living in the community? In our view, all parties need clarity up front about which outcomes count as the really important ones, how much change on these outcomes for whom is "good enough" and when these changes should be expected to occur (Connell and Klem, 2001 and in press).

So, who should make these important judgments, how should they be made and when should they be made? Ideally, all stakeholders — investors, operators and participants — should reach consensus early on about these issues. The planning process IRRE is using in its work incorporates these decisions up front in the design of community-based youth development initiatives (Connell and Klem, 2001)[4].. These planning decisions then carry over into the design of the evaluation. In ongoing initiatives seeking to structure an evaluation, we recommend that stakeholders be encouraged to ask these questions about their current and future work using a framework such as this one to guide the discussions. In our experience, the community action framework brings needed focus to these conversations.

In the examples below, we briefly describe IRRE's work using the framework as an evaluation tool in two very different types of community-based youth development initiatives, both of which we've described earlier. The first initiative seeks to enrich the supports and opportunities experienced by youth during gaps periods (Box D, Strategy III) in multiple neighborhoods within a single urban area; the second is a district-wide, urban education reform initiative (Box D, Strategy II). Both evaluations are longitudinal, multi-method studies; and both are being conducted by outside organizations (not IRRE). The details of the two evaluation strategies will soon be available; but we would like to use these examples to discuss two "generic" lessons learned in applying the community action framework to evaluation.

The first lesson is that the supports and opportunities for youth (Box C) can serve as a linchpin for evaluating diverse community-based youth development initiatives and programs. Consistent with the framework, both initiatives have focused significant evaluation resources on tracking such supports and opportunities. In the first case, community center directors and the initiative's managers have agreed to assess the supports and opportunities experienced by youth participating in the centers' after school programs and services.. Evaluators are now taking baseline assessments of these supports and opportunities. "Change thresholds," target populations and timelines will be established for these outcomes and then tracked against the baseline assessments as part of the

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[4] In this paper we provide a "rubric" for use in urban education planning and evaluation. This rubric includes examples, indicators, target populations, thresholds and timelines for early, intermediate and longer-term outcomes of such initiatives.

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evaluation and the mutual accountability plan guiding resource allocation.

In the second case, these supports and opportunities are being assessed <u>within classroom contexts</u> — again using survey, observation and interview techniques adapted to this setting. Baseline assessments have already been taken, target populations identified, thresholds set and timelines for achieving thresholds are now being negotiated on a school-by-school basis throughout the district.

Lesson two is that is important to distinguish between *"accountability"* and *"descriptive"* outcome*s* in using this or another such framework as an evaluation tool. The framework is intentionally comprehensive in its elements, ranging from long-term individual level outcomes (Box A) to initial community-level assessments of readiness for change (Box E). The temptation is to incorporate all elements into an initiative's or community-based program's evaluation strategy. We caution against yielding to this temptation, at least until distinguishing between the initiatives' accountability and descriptive outcomes.

Accountability outcomes are those whose thresholds trigger continuation, discontinuation or reallocation of resources, based on preexisting agreements among stakeholders. Accountability outcomes are those that stakeholders see as achievable over a specific time period; they should happen if the plan for implementing the initiative's activities is executed. The level at which these outcomes are achieved is the basis for determining whether and how initiative strategies, specific activities and/or resource allocations should be modified at the end of this time period.

Descriptive outcomes are those that key stakeholders believe <u>could</u> occur over a particular time period and that they have decided to measure to further their own and others' understanding about the initiative's effects. Descriptive outcomes can be just as important to stakeholders, but are not designated as accountability outcomes at a particular point in time. Why not? Because their achievement:
- Is dependent on achievement of earlier outcomes;
- Requires the presence of resources that are not available;
- Can be undermined (or guaranteed success) by uncontrollable but not improbable external events; and/or
- Has not yet been adequately linked to initiative activities, logically and practically, in the eyes of the stakeholders.

Both accountability and descriptive outcomes can be measured at the individual, program, organizational or community level.

Using the framework, stakeholders can draw the formal distinction at the initiative's outset and at different points throughout the initiative between accountability outcomes and descriptive outcomes. When descriptive outcomes are high priority goals or even the raison d'être of the initiative, the initiative should seek to convert them to accountability outcomes as the initiative unfolds.

This distinction has been made in the community-based initiative focusing on filling gap periods with high quality youth development programming at school sites (Box D, Strategy III). This initiative has designated the following as accountability outcomes:

- Early outcomes (within two years of initial implementation) — residents view the community centers as attractive, accessible, reliable, safe and responsive to community needs (Box D); and
- Intermediate outcomes (within three to five years of implementation) — youth participants' experience meaningful increases in the key supports and opportunities available to them during gap periods (Box C).

On the other hand, some developmental outcomes (Box B) are being assessed in the evaluation as descriptive outcomes. For example, levels of school attendance and academic performance are serving as indicators of youth learning to be productive.

The urban school reform initiative has also drawn this distinction. Stakeholders are using evaluation results on successful implementation of the critical features of school site reform (Box D) to judge the success of their initiative's capacity-building efforts (Box E). Depending on these results, stakeholders will modify capacity-building and mobilization efforts to assure that desired thresholds on these accountability outcomes are achieved. Once achieved, measures of student experience of supports and opportunities (Box C) will immediately become accountability outcomes. Within a year of achieving designated thresholds on these outcomes, youth outcomes (Box B) will do the same.

Although this process sounds complicated, the investments being made in these initiatives and their evaluations — of money, sweat equity and political will — demand that we carefully consider the measures of accountability: when we should promise results and what these promises really should be. Community-based initiatives that set their sights on meaningful improvement in the developmental outcomes (Box B) or long-term outcomes (Box A) of youth at the community level, particularly in communities with high proportions of economically disadvantaged families and youth, should know that they are going where no initiative has gone before. Therefore, asking any single initiative — regardless of how comprehensive, well-resourced and well-implemented — to set these as "accountability outcomes" at the outset means setting new, as yet unrealized, standards for this community's work.

This is not to say that communities should shy away from making such a commitment at some point. The framework suggests that this commitment — to meaningfully improve the developmental and long-term outcomes for the vast majority of a community's youth — can only be made honestly when the prospect exists that all four of the community action strategies (Box D) will be implemented – deeply, pervasively and persistently.

When evaluating whether this is, in fact, occurring and paying off, evaluation resources should be

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used to track the intended developmental (Box B) and long-term outcomes (Box A). But early on, most resources should be dedicated to: a) finding out whether and how the activities that are part of the community action strategies are being implemented; and b) in which settings, for which youth and during what times these activities are and are not producing the key supports and opportunities for the community's youth. The two initiatives just described are following this course and thus far have benefited from doing so.

Using the Framework as an Investment Tool

Hopefully, public and private investors in community-based youth development initiatives will find the previous application of the framework useful in their work as well. For example, investors can use the community action framework to plan their investments in a new community-based initiative; to realign and manage their investments in an existing or new initiative; and, in either case, to track the progress of their investments.

In one community-based, multi-site youth development initiative, the investor involved is using the framework:
- To locate its current investments with respect to the community action strategies (Box D);
- To reprioritize the areas of investment; and,
- Align its future investments to these priority areas.

The steps in this process thus far are briefly described below.

Activity and Investment Mapping. Active grants and other ongoing foundation commitments in each community site were examined to see which of the community action strategies (Box D) and capacity building activities (Box E) it is supporting. This investment mapping process yielded the absolute amounts and proportions of dollars and levels of the foundation staff's effort being invested in each area.

Gap Identification.. Simultaneously, assessments are being made on the key indicators of successful implementation for each community action strategy (Box D). For example, what percentage of targeted youth in this community have families with strong support networks encompassing other families with similar-aged youth? Then, stakeholders from each community ask how big is the gap between this percentage and what will be needed for families to provide adequate supports and opportunities to their youth (Box C)?

Gap Prioritization.. The activity and investment maps and community status assessments will inform a process of establishing priorities. Foundation and community stakeholders will examine the implementation gaps for each of the community action strategies and then prioritize them for resource realignment directed at closing these gaps.

Other smaller scale applications of the framework as an investment tool are underway. The steps in the investment planning process are similar to those above, but the scope and expense of the process are adjusted accordingly.

IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this paper, we reiterate the call made by Connell, Gambone and Smith (2000) for a "community action framework for youth development." We reintroduce the framework and provide both an historical and practical context for its development and use. Examples are provided from our ongoing work with the framework in community-based youth development initiatives in four areas — planning, management, evaluation and investment. For all of these purposes, the framework's key elements and the sequencing of these elements allows and encourages stakeholders to place their initiative, its activities and intended outcomes in a larger context. By doing so, the framework can provide a touchstone for all stakeholders' work. It leaves room for a wide diversity of roles, but emphasizes a commonality of purpose and strategies. By using the framework as both a broader context for locating a particular set of community-based activities and a lens through which to examine specific activities and their intended outcomes, it becomes easier to home in on: a) what outcomes are relevant to the initiative; b) in what order to expect these outcomes to occur; and c) what other influences might come into play to influence their occurrence.

The ability of communities and organizations to implement the action strategies described in this framework will depend in large part on the extent to which those supporting their efforts — funders, technical assistance providers and evaluators — are willing to organize their activities in ways that support this approach. For this reason, we make the following recommendations:

For Funders:
- Take a community approach to seeking meaningful change in youth development outcomes (Box B). The hallmark of such an approach is to recognize that young people need to receive supports and opportunities across all of the settings where they spend time not just in programs or gap activities;
- Assist communities by investing in activities (and technical assistance) that equip and empower community stakeholders to use this community approach effectively;
- Provide funding and technical assistance to communities for developing new local intermediaries or for strengthening existing ones that can act as managers or conveners and monitor these initiatives (Box D);
- Provide funding for communities to assess the location and size of the gaps in implementation of the community strategies (Box D) and the community conditions and capacity for change (Box E); features that are needed to support youth development;
- Use this information to assess and augment: (a) community stakeholders' capacities to realign and obtain resources, and (b) individual funders' potential roles in making up the difference.

For Technical Assistance Providers:
- Assess your organization's strengths in providing assistance to communities across all the frameworks' elements (mobilizing and planning, implementing each of the community strategies, identifying implementation gaps, assessing progress through evaluation, etc.) and disseminate that information to communities;
- Use these organizational assessments to create strategic and cooperative partnerships with complementary intermediaries in order to offer the full range of assistance that communities will need to take this approach to supporting their youth.

For Evaluators:
- Develop and ways to generate compelling information on the validity of these initiatives' theories of change (Connell and Kubisch, 1998);
- Provide initiatives with menus of assessment strategies for early and intermediate as well as long term outcomes in these initiatives – menus that include practical as well as credible ways to gather timely and useful information.

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Early Adult Outcomes

HHS	- Economic Self Sufficiency - Positive Social Relationships - Good Citizenship	**A**
Pittman & Wright		
Matter of Time (Carnegie)		
Great Transitions (Carnegie)		
Peter Scales		
Search Assets		
Connell, Aber, Walker	- Economically Self-sufficient - Healthy Family & Social Relationships - Good Citizenship	
CCYD (Public/Private Ventures)	- School Completion - Employment - Reduction in Substance Abuse, Crime, Early Pregnancy	
Youth Development Mobilization (Center for Youth Development & Policy Research)	Healthy Adulthood	
Communities That Care	- Health - Well-being - Personal Success	
Oakland, Blue Print for Youth (Urban Strategies Council)		

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Youth Outcomes

HHS	• Competence • Connection • Control • Identity • Temperament • Age at Puberty • Cognitive Development	**B**
Pittman & Wright	• Health & Physical Competence • Personal & Social Competence • Cognitive & Creative Competence • Vocational Competence • Citizenship Competence	
Matter of Time (Carnegie)	• Cognitive Development (knowledge, critical thinking, academic achievement) • Social Development (communication skills, relationships with peers & adults) • Physical Development (health, less risk) • Emotional Development (identity, control) • Moral Development (values, responsibilities)	
Great Transitions (Carnegie)	• Master Social Skills • Cultivate Problem-solving Skills • Acquire Technical Capabilities • Become Ethical • Learn Requirements of Citizenship • Respect Diversity	

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Peter Scales	
Search Areas	Internal Assets • Social Competence (planning & decision-making, interpersonal, cultural, conflict resolution) • Positive Identity (self-esteem, sense of purpose, belief in future) • Positive Values (caring, equality & justice, responsibility) • Commitment to Learn (achievement, engagement, homework, bonding)

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Youth Outcomes, cont.

Connell, Aber, Walker	- Productive - Connected - Able to navigate	**B**
CCYD	- Self-efficacy - School performance - Low risk taking	
Youth Development Mobilization (Center for Youth Development & Policy Research)	- Identity (safety & structure, membership & belonging, self worth, mastery, future, responsibility, autonomy, spirituality, self awareness) - Social, civic & cultural competencies - Physical & emotional health competencies - Intellectual & employable competencies	
Communities That Care	- Attachment (Positive Relationships) - Commitment (Investment in Future) - Beliefs (Positive moral behavior & action)	
Oakland Blue Print for Youth (Urban Strategies Council)		

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Developmental Supports & Opportunities

HHS	• Family (parent-child relationships, parental practices, family structures family dysfunction) • Peers (groups, friends) • Community (culture, support, youth organizations) • Social (economic & employment, discrimination/prejudice, educational institutions) **C**
Pittman & Wright	• Safety/Structure • Belonging/Group Membership • Self-worth/Contributing • Independence/Control • Closeness/Relationships • Competence/Mastery • Diverse Opportunities/Exploration
Matter of Time (Carnegie)	• Opportunities to Socialize with Peers & Adults • Develop Skills • Contribute to Community • Belong To a Valued Group • Feel Competent
Great Transitions (Carnegie)	• Value Placed in Constructive Groups • Form Close Durable Relationships • Sense of Worth • Reliable Basis for Decisions • Use Support System • Constructive Curiosity and Exploring Behavior • Be Useful to Others • Believe in Future
Peter Scales	• Positive Interaction with Adults & Peers • Structure & Clear Limits • Physical Activity • Creative Expression • Competence & Achievement • Meaningful Participation in Schools & Communities • Opportunities for Self-definition

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Developmental Supports & Opportunities, cont.

Search Areas	• Support (family, neighborhood, school) • Boundaries & Expectations (adult role models, positive peer relationships, high hopes • Empowerment (community values youth, service, safety) • Constructive time use (programs, religious community, home supervision)
Connell, Aber, Walker	• Relationships with Family • Relationships with Peers • Relationships with Others
CCYD	• Adult Support & Guidance • Gap Activities • Work as Developmental Tool • Youth Involvement • Support Through Transitions
Youth Development Mobilization (Center for Youth Development & Policy Research)	• People (emotional, motivational, & strategic XXX) • Opportunities (to learn & explore new skills for group membership, for contribution & service, for employment) • Places (for safe activities during non-school hours)
Communities That Care	• Opportunities To Be Positive Contributor • Skills • Recognition
Oakland, Blue Print for Youth (Urban Strategies Council)	• Caring Adult • Safety • Goods, Services, & Developmental Appropriate Activities • Knowledge & Respect for Other Cultures • High Quality Education • Work, Entrepreneurship, & Community Service • Central, Active Roles in Planning and Decision Making

Note: A diamond shape containing "C" appears at the top right of the table.

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Implement Community Strategies

HHS	• Productive Activities with Recognition • Adult Monitoring/ Supervision • Caring Adults • Supportive Adults and Peers • Acceptance of Age, Temperament, Gender, Culture, etc.	**D**
Pittman & Wright	One example given: • Strengthen Non-School Voluntary Sector	
Matter of Time (Carnegie)	• Expand Out-Of-School Opportunities (Roles for schools, parents, families, health agencies, higher education, research and evaluations, funders, media, government) • Adolescents (Program & Policy Mix)	
Great Transitions (Carnegie)	• Re-engage Families • Create Developmentally-appropriate Schools • Develop Health Promotion Strategies • Strengthen Community Settings • Promote Positive Use of Media	
Scales	• Reduce Poverty • Support Families of Adolescents • Improve Middle Grades Schooling • Increase Promotion of Physical & Mental Health • Increase Opportunities for Closeness & Impact on Community	
Search Areas		
Connell, Aber, Walker	One example given: • Building Networks of Competent Adults: – Building Knowledge Base (programs, professionals, volunteers, neighbors, employers) – Promoting Connectedness Between Adults & Youth – Connecting Adults in Youth Support Networks – Facilitating Community Connectedness	

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CCYD	• Resident-driven governance and planning of activities to provide developmental supports & opportunities

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Implement Community Strategies, cont.

Youth Development Mobilization (Center for Youth Development & Policy Research)	• Strategic Planning • Redirect Financial Commitments • Strengthen Capacity Building Organizations • Training Youth Workers • Increase Space • Build Constituency • Disseminate Information • Research, Documentation, Evaluation	**D**

Communities That Care	• Program Planning & Implementation:
	   – Pre-School
	   – Family
	   – School
	   – Community
	• Financial Resources	

Oakland, Blue Print for Youth (Urban Strategies Council)	• Expand Neighborhood Support Systems • Ensure Multiple Opportunities for Youth Participation, Policy-Making, Leadership • Use Neighborhood Assets to Strengthen Youth-Serving Systems • Develop Work Opportunities & Community Service	

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Creating Community Capacity
& Conditions for Change

HHS		**E**
Pittman & Wright		
Matter of Time (Carnegie)		
Great Transitions (Carnegie)	• Organizing • Symbolic Plan • Informing Community	
Scales		
Search Areas		
Connell, Aber, Walker		
CCYD	• Community Specific Technical Assistance • Community-driven Strategies	
Youth Development Mobilization (Center for Youth Development & Policy Research)	Mobilize stakeholders through improved: • Information • Attitudes • Involvement	
Communities That Care	• Orientation of Key Leaders • Community Board Training • Community Risk Assessment	
Oakland, Blue Print for Youth (Urban Strategies Council)	• Round Table on Funding, Outcomes, Quality, Equality	

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FIGURE 1

COMMUNITY ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

E

Build Community Capacity & Conditions For Change

Building Stakeholders' Awareness, Knowledge, Engagement & Commitment

Conveying Urgency, Possibility, Equity & Inevitability of Change

C

Increase Supports and Opportunities For Youth

Adequate Nutrition, Health & Shelter

Multiple supportive relationships with adults & peers

Meaningful opportunities for involvement & membership

Challenging & engaging activities & learning experiences

Safety

B

Improve Youth Development Outcomes

Learning to be productive
Learning to connect
Learning to navigate

D

Implement Community Strategies to Enhance Supports & Opportunities For Youth

Strengthen community adults' capacity to support youth

Reform and coordinate public institutions and services to support youth development

Increase number and quality of developmental activities for youth

Create policies and realign resources in public and private sectors to support community strategies

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A

Improve Long-Term Outcomes in Adulthood

Economic self-sufficiency

Healthy family and social relationships

Community involvement

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