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**EXPLORING CAPACITIES AND SKILLS TO GENERATE YOUTH ADULT
PARTNERSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE: THREE COMMUNITY CASE
STUDIES**

By

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A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING CAPACITIES AND SKILLS TO GENERATE YOUTH AND ADULT PARTNERSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE: THREE COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES

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The primary objective of this qualitative study was to understand and describe the skills and capacities used by the leadership teams of three community-based organizations (CBO) to develop youth adult partnerships that focused on community change issues. Three (CBO) engaged in youth adult partnerships served as the unit of analysis. The leadership teams of each (CBO) played intricate roles in executing the mission and vision of each organization. Therefore, the leadership teams were also closely linked to the organizations ability to develop the skills and capacities to generate youth adult partnerships for community change. To explicate the relationship between the organization and the leadership team I describe the organizational context, the leadership team context, and the leadership team context within the structure of the organization. I used focus group, one-on-one structured interviews, document analysis, and cross case study analysis to understand the research question. The implications of this study are based on five findings that emerged during this research: (a) context and place matter, (b) building mutual trust is paramount, (c) co-constructing purpose is important to move the work forward, (d) acting and working together move the work forward, and (e) sustainability is linked to making the work a way of life. Although generating youth adult partnerships were often a complex process that was also time consuming, it has specific utility for: (a) educators, (b) educational leadership administrators and faculty, (c)

community based organizations, and (d) current and perspective youth development professionals and volunteers.

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DEDICATION

This Ph.D. dissertation is dedicated to my lovely wife Michele, who encouraged me when I was unable to encourage myself. Your support held me up when I was down. You selflessly celebrated every milestone along the way with me.

And

To my parents John and Theresa Oliver, who taught me to value education and made many untold sacrifices to ensure I could pursue my dreams.

And

To my siblings Jennifer, Timothy, and Terry, all of whom I love and value. I continue to stand on your shoulders.

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In all thy ways acknowledge him [God] and he will direct thy paths. I know that without
God nothing is possible, but with him I can do all things.

To my wife Michele:

Thank you for your love, support, understanding, and patience as I pursued my dream of
completing my Ph.D.

To my Ph.D Committee chairs: Dr. Christopher Dunbar and Dr. James Minor, committee
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evaluator, mentor and friend. Individually and collectively you pushed me along.

To Dr. Maenette Benham I am forever grateful for your friendship, guidance,
encouragement, and for helping find my voice.

Thank you

PREFACE

Change is Gonna Come

During the winter of 1963, Sam Cooke recorded the song “A Change is Gonna Come.” Over the years, the song has been recognized as an anthem of the Civil Rights Movement and a powerful reminder to maintain hope in sight of turbulent times and adverse circumstances. Some believe the song to be a response to Bob Dylan’s “Blowing in the Wind,” in which questions about the human, political, and social conditions of the times were posed. During the early sixties, the United States was experiencing racial inequality, gender inequities, educational challenges, and young people were active protestors against an unpopular war. While both songs were written well over four decades ago, both songs speak to the present conditions of today.

Although significant steps have been made to address the problems that plagued the country during the sixties, many challenges still exist. Today, our country faces similar challenges to those of the sixties, all of which threaten our nation, challenges such as racial inequalities, immigration issues, high levels of poverty, increasing incarceration rates for minorities, limited access to health care, and steadily increasing unemployment rates. Additionally, women still face challenges of equal pay for equal work, U.S. students lag behind their international peers, and lastly, the U.S. is engaged in yet another unpopular war.

Fortunately, in the face of challenges and adversity, there have been individuals working to effect change, and improve conditions for themselves and

others. The sixties benefited from individuals in the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the anti-war movement. Today, philanthropic organizations and non-profit community-based organizations work with and within communities to bring about change. The individuals that work for change have a story to tell. Their story includes the critical moments that propelled them into the work that they do. Their story includes the skills and capacities they find essential to their work. Their story has the capacity to encourage, mobilize and encourage others to engage in community change issues and develop their own story.

What is your story?

I have been fortunate to have excellent mentors and advisors throughout my academic and professional careers. My fortune was extended when a few of those mentor and advisor relationships evolved into friendships. I am especially thankful for the question that one mentor asked during a community development workshop held in Ed Couch Elsa, TX. He asked, "What is your story?" Initially, I did not understand. Was he asking for some deep intellectual narrative, some clarifying statement about my journey as an educator or the origins of my involvement as a youth and community development leader? The answer to the above questions, yes.

After looking puzzled for a few moments, I asked, "What do you mean?" He then explained that everyone has a story to tell. Although aspects of the story may change over time, there is always some story that illuminates our journey, a purpose for our work, or a specific motivation that supplies our drive. Over the

remainder of the conference, I thought about his question and contemplated my response. Although my story has evolved since that inquiry, what follows is a short excerpt of what brought me to this work. This is my story.

During the 1996 Summer Olympics, I served as host to a nonprofit youth serving community-based organization from Paris, France. The name of the organization was Droit de Cite, translated, “the right to the city.” Droit de Cite’s mission was to facilitate collaborations between youths and adults for the purpose of addressing policies that negatively affected youth throughout France, particularly youth in urban areas. Specifically, Droit de Cite aimed to increase community access to technology, facilitated job training programs, conducted workshops on fashion design, sponsored youth sports teams, and held hip-hop concerts followed up with forums to educate the public about the culture of hip-hop. They composed development teams, which consisted of both youths and adults that worked on the planning and facilitation of each activity. One underlining goal of Droit de Cite was to build partnerships with community stakeholders. Additionally, they worked to provide opportunities for youth to develop leadership capacities and skills for civic engagement. Members shared their experiences and expressed their gratitude to the organization. They attributed credit to the organization for the effective development and providing consistent opportunities for disenfranchised citizens to voice their thoughts, views and vision for their communities.

Members of the Droit de Cite shared stories of adults and youth working together as colleagues. Youth shared that their work with Droit de Cite sparked

their interest to be actively engaged in their communities. It sparked their desire to remain in their home communities or to return after they obtained advanced degrees or vocational training. As a result, they were moving into leadership roles in their communities and assisting others in doing the same. They spoke of community projects that increased access to community resources and bridged the gap between youth and adults. Droit de Cite involved youth and adults in the work and process of changing their communities by providing members with the capacity and skills to change the cities in which they lived.

Prior to my partnership with Droit de Cite, I worked with the Morehouse College Brisbane Institute for Community Based Outreach (BICBO). BICBO worked to bring forward timely and influential grass-roots perspectives, essential components, and comprehensive actions that informed the analysis of key issues affecting African Americans and underserved communities. My work with BICBO complemented my work with Droit de Cite. The idea of community change was important to me. I felt that BICBO and Droit de Cite could work as partners and develop a learning exchange. The learning exchange involved and encompassed several community improvement, youth development and mentoring programs for youth in Atlanta, GA. Our work spread to communities in Washington, DC; New York, NY; and eventually, we partnered on projects in Paris, France. As a result of our partnership, I later carried the spirit of positive youth development and community based outreach into my work as a school administrator and educator.

As an educator I sought ways to engage youth as co-facilitators in their learning process. One result of implementing positive youth development and community based outreach practices was a shift in the interactions between students and teachers. Rather than teachers being “in charge” of students and their learning, students and teachers would work as co-facilitators or partners in the learning process. A colleague once shared a story of his interactions with his students on the first day of class. He shared that he entered the room and sat down. He did not address the class, nor did he assign any work. Eventually, students began to question each other, and finally, they asked, “Are you the teacher?” Abruptly, he answered, “No, I’m not the teacher. I’m not here to teach you anything. I’m here to show you how to teach yourself.” Many educators would disagree with his style of developing student accountability or student involvement in the learning process. However, his purpose and the expected outcomes were to encourage or prompt students to embrace their role in the learning process and establish a culture of achievement based on student self-motivation and self-regulated learning (Ames, 1992; Dolan & McCaslin, 2008; Major, 2009; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). He explained that students began embracing the process of self-instruction, self-motivation, and self-empowerment rather quickly as a result of their early exchange. Although this is an extreme case of implementing or facilitating ownership in the learning process, he expressed that student’s understood that they were responsible for what they learned. They began to embrace the idea that they could take ownership of the

learning process. They began to embrace responsibility and accountability.

Ultimately, the students viewed the classroom as their own.

Early in my education career, I embraced the idea that individuals should be at the center of their own learning, self-motivated, and self-empowered. As an assistant principal of a middle school in an urban area, I shared this idea with students, teachers, and parents. I also emphasized the importance of youth and adults working collectively and collaboratively on school issues. As a result, over a period of two years, our school had fewer documented student discipline issues, increased participation from parents in school activities, and greater cooperation or “buy-in” from teachers on implementation of various teaching best practices. In a short time, youth and adult collaborations began to improve the school culture and ultimately improved student academic performance, as reflected by school progress in the standards of adequate yearly progress (AYP). Youth and adult collaborations created an environment that acknowledged the skills and capacities of each individual and placed value on the knowledge and experiences of both youth and adults. Youth and adult collaborations changed the environment of the school and improved conditions within the school. The youth and adults that participated in the collaborative partnerships at the school began to implement the practice in other organizations in which they participated. Additionally, the school and the surrounding community began to interact in new ways. This was evident in increased community participation in programs sponsored by the school. Community members also began to utilize school facilities more frequently. The increased community activity was result of the

school working to establish an environment and school culture that was welcoming.

It appeared that the collaborative relationships reconnected students with teachers, youths with adults, and the school with the community. I understood our school success and reconnection with the surrounding community was an exception and not the rule. While things improved within my own school, I was well aware that the success we enjoyed was not the case in all schools in the area. Fortunately, our school became somewhat of a model for other schools.

Adjoining districts began to duplicate many of the programs that were initiated by our school. Community organizations began to invite our teachers and students to participate in programs and other functions. We were beginning to see our community change as a result of things that we initiated within our school. We were able to extend a path and “a right to the city” for our students.

Understanding my story and hearing others stories has helped to shape me as person, educator, student and researcher. My story intricately interweaves my role as an adult working with youth, as an educator working with students, and a member of a community that works together. As such, it has sparked a quest to understand specific skills and capacities necessary for youth and adults to work as partners.

This inquiry will explore and describe specific skills and capacities present and identified as particularly necessary for leadership teams at three nonprofit community-based organizations to make and effective positive change in the communities that they served. The organizations discussed in this inquiry did not

settle for questions of when change would come, nor did they settle for change blowing in the wind. These organizations developed the capacities and skills necessary to effect positive change. That change was a long time coming, but that change did come. This inquiry is an attempt to share their story.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There are clusters of individuals working in local communities across the country to bridge multiple gaps of race, culture, class, faith, sexual orientation, and disability. These individuals work to improve the conditions and the quality of life for members of their community. One factor identified as an essential element in their effort is the presence of good local leadership and the participation of community members. However, enlisting community participation is often a challenge; developing good local leadership is a greater challenge. As such, these individuals and communities must grapple with the following questions, “what does good leadership look like, how does it work, and can it be taught to, and learned by a diverse group of individuals often viewed as non-traditional leaders? Lastly, these community workers must ask, how do these non-traditional leaders, such as, youth, business owners, teachers and school administrators and others who do not hold formal community leadership roles, move from working as individuals to working as a collective community?

Historically, schools and institutions of higher education have been structures of authority and places of influence within the community. The historical position of power and influence once held by schools and institutions of higher education were strongly linked to community advocacy (Checkoway, 2001). Around 1945, institutions of higher education began to shift or drift from the once intricately interwoven community and public education interactions and were forced to retreat from the role of community advocacy to being advocates

for student academic performance and university research (Checkoway, 2001). This shift was a result of increased pressures on the economy, federal policy, global competition, and special interest. As such, educational institutions of higher education steadily and incrementally shifted the interpretation of its mission of civic service and development of knowledge to help communities to solve their own problems and issues, to a focus on basic research and replicable outcomes as the dominant force on institutions of higher education (Checkoway, 2001). As a result, “academic faculty turned inward toward their disciplines and focused of developing knowledge, and away from the immediate and practical needs of communities” (Checkoway, 2001, p.129). As a result, community members, community based organizations, youth service providers now ask, “How have communities adjusted as a result of the shift in priorities of institutions of higher education?”

Benson (1997) suggests that you can determine the well being of a nation by how it treats its children. If we were to use Benson’s statement as the barometer of our nation’s progress, we could conclude that our nation is not doing so well. Youth across the U.S. currently struggle with marginal academic achievement, high levels of poverty, alarming incarceration rates, high unemployment rates, and increasing levels of violence (Delpit, 2006; Dunbar & Villarruel, 2002, 2004; Fine & Smith, 2001; Garbarino, 1995; Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2006; Pittman, Diversi, & Ferber, 2002). The above issues did not go unnoticed by legislators. Instead, policies were developed to address many of the above stated issues (see war on drugs, war on poverty, school

policies for zero tolerance on drugs and violence, and mandatory minimum sentencing). Unfortunately, while such policies may have contained noble intentions, their foundations were set in deficit model approaches, which led to outcomes that were often punitive and isolating in nature, thus causing deleterious affects to the individuals they were designed to assist (Delpit, 2006; Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004; Fine & Smith, 2001; Ginwright, Cammarota & Noguera, 2006; Pittman, Diversi, & Ferber, 2002).

Statement of Problem

Many of the community development and youth development policies were anchored in deficit model approaches. Deficit model approaches, first identify the problem, then begin the process of preventing exposure to such problems. The emphasis on prevention is often achieved by isolating the individual from the problem. In affect, this approach required that individuals were isolated and shielded from the negative or harmful aspects present in their communities or at times, the entire community (Lightfoot, 1980). While this approach succeeded in separating individuals from negative aspects it also isolated individuals from the positive and resilient aspects present in those communities. The result, created an insular structure of authority and control over individuals, which often worked in opposition to the individuals and communities being served (Fine & Smith, 2001). Rather than subjecting individuals to approaches that are punitive in nature, researchers suggest the use of approaches that identify, connect and utilize the positive aspects and influences within

communities (Delpit, 2006; Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004; Fine & Smith, 2001; Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Deficit model approaches are problematic in other ways as well. They often depict youth and adolescent development as a dark and stormy period where youth lack motivation, lack concern for the well-being and development of their communities, and are unwilling to work collaboratively with adults (Lerner, Almergi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). Research has also failed to adequately acknowledge or balance the above views of youth with literature that highlights the resilient and determined nature of youth, the skills and talents of youth, and the meaningful contributions youth make to their families and communities (Ginwright, Noguera, & Camarotta, 2006; Lerner, Almergi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005; Mohammad & Wheeler, 2002). There is need to broaden the discussion and depictions of youth development to include suggestions of how to develop supports from a wide range of sources from within the community (e.g., families, schools, peers, neighbors, religious organizations, as well as other segments of the community). Granger (2002) suggests it would be useful to broaden academic scholarship from the position of understanding youth development to understanding how to create the ecological conditions or the “place” that promotes positive youth development and thus outline a transformational process of positive youth development. As such, a broadened scholarship could then advance from youth development to the progressive and emerging literature of youth adult partnerships.

Youth adult partnership literature identifies intersections of educational administration and community development, and educational administration and community leadership development. These intersections are important because they provide an avenue to discuss the role of educational leaders in the process of positive youth development, youth adult partnerships, community development and community leadership development.

Why youth Adult Partnerships

Positive youth development literature places emphasis on the positive assets and approaches for youth, rather than settling on deficit model approaches. Mohammad and Wheeler (2001) suggest that researchers and youth workers focus on optimistic approach of positive youth development, which identifies youth as individuals with skills and talents that are valuable to their families and communities (Benson, 1997; Lerner, Almergi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005; Mohammad & Wheeler, 2001). The positive youth development approach has gained traction because it helps to prepare youth to effectively meet their daily challenges and the various interactions in their schools and within their communities. It also provides a bridge for youth to develop leadership skills in a holistic fashion and then move them into leadership roles in their schools and communities (Lerner, Almergi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). Such leadership roles also provide youth with access to community leaders in positions that could aid addressing many of the social issues that affect their communities. Additionally, researchers have found that youth leadership roles are further enhanced when paired with adults who hold fiduciary capacities, participate in leadership with

community-based organizations (CBO) and are civically engaged (Mohammad & Wheeler, 2001). Additionally they found, this type of partnership between youth and adults potentially benefits the adult in proportional ways as well (2001).

Community organizations report that many of its adult participants increased communication skills, developed leadership capacities, and greater relevancy and effectiveness in their youth serving programming as a result of engaged and collective action with youth (Camino, 2000, 2005; Kirby & Coyle, 1997; Klindera, Menderweld, & Norman, 2001). Engaged youth also provided fresh ideas, new perspectives, and open and honest responses about existing programs (Camino, O'Connor, Mook, & Zeldin, 2005; Klindera, 2001; Mohammad & Wheeler, 2001). Furthermore, adults reported a change in their perceptions about youth. Many adults reported that they viewed as apathetic about their communities and unwilling to work with adults. These views changed to viewing youth as concerned, connected and capable individuals that were willing to work to make change in their communities (Benson, 1997; Ginwright, Noguera, & Cammarotta, 2006; Pittman & Cahill, 1991). In essence, youth and adult partnerships were linked to adults renewed commitment, accessing of new skills sets, and experiences of renewed sense of hope. To expand the knowledge base of youth and adults acting in partnerships, such outcomes are worthy of further exploration.

Purpose of Study

The primary objective of this qualitative study was to understand and describe the skills and capacities used by the leadership teams of three community-based organizations (CBO) to develop youth adult partnerships that focused on community change issues. Each (CBO) participated in the Kellogg Leadership for Community Change Series (KLCC). KLCC worked to support communities as they engaged diverse populations in the development of collective, boundary-crossing leadership in an effort to harness collective thinking and action in the pursuit of shared vision for the future of their communities.

I identified the leadership teams at three (CBO) engaged in youth adult partnerships as my unit of analysis. The leadership teams of each (CBO) played intricate roles in executing the mission and vision of each organization. Therefore, the leadership teams were also closely linked to the organizations ability to generate the skills and capacities to generate youth adult partnerships. To explicate the relationship between the organization and the leadership team I will describe the organizational context, the leadership team context, and describe the leadership team context within the structure of the organization. Considering Patton's (1980) assertion that, "when a person, group, organization, or country is the unit analysis, qualitative methods involve observation and description focused directly on the unit" (p.228), I used focus group, one-on-one structured interviews, document analysis, and cross case study analysis to understand the research question.

Research Questions

The central question for this study was: What skills and capacities were used by the leadership teams at three different community-based organizations to develop youth adult partnerships that focused on community change issues?

Creswell (1994) suggests that the central research question in a qualitative research study have a dual purpose. One purpose is to uncover and understand the lived experiences of study participants as it relates to the phenomena being researched. For example, what skills and capacities did the leadership team in each (CBO) consider necessary to establish partnerships within the organization and within the community? Next, Creswell explains that participant's responses to questions in qualitative research should help uncover underlying meanings and the consistent structures that support their individual and group experiences in connection to the phenomena being examined (1994). Creswell (1994) explains that the goal of qualitative research is to determine what an experience means for the persons who had the experience and that the researcher is able to provide comprehensive descriptions of it. It is from those individual descriptions that both general and universal meanings emerge.

The following three research questions were used to generate critical data and contextual information that will explain youth adult partnerships:

1. How does "place" define the nature of youth adult partnerships focused community change issues?
2. What are the necessary skills and capacities required for youth and adult partnerships focused on community change issues?

3. How have youth and adult partnerships been used to address community change issues?

Significance of Study

Understanding youth adult partnership will illuminate the potentials for actively engaging nontraditional leaders in the work of community change and could also positively affect issues within schools by developing collaborative partnerships between adults and students. Bogotch (2005) argues that public education is a public good often interlinked with the community that it serves. As such, the quality of education has long been linked to the quality of a community. Unfortunately, over the past century, schools and communities have been systematically separated and fragmented. The fragmenting of communities and educational institutions has resulted in poorly performing schools and communities that suffer from increasing social ills. Some would argue that social ills have affected the performance of schools. Regardless of the order of events, it is clear that there are links between the two. This research seeks to highlight how a renewed partnership between communities and schools could improve both the quality of education and improve communities.

As previously stated, institutions of higher education have experienced a drift from the once intricately interwoven interactions with public schools (Checkoway, 2001; Zeldin & Camino, 1999). This research could serve as a bridge that links institution's scholarship of discovery with the scholarship of integration and thus provide greater opportunities for its application within communities. Furthermore, redirecting the research focus of scholars could

prompt institutions of higher education to reconsider the mission and purpose of land grants as stated in the Morrill Act of 1862 and later the Wisconsin Idea of 1904. The Morrill Act of 1862 established land grant institutions with the purpose and mission to orient research, teaching, and service activities to solve practical problems, and to increase the knowledge and skills of citizens (Zeldin & Camino, 1999). Additionally, the Wisconsin Idea proposed that education should influence people's lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom. The Wisconsin Idea proposed that universities commit resources specifically to address societal issues.

This study could aid in the following ways; first, it could illuminate pragmatic approaches for institutions of higher education to develop research for citizen and community consumption. It could accomplish this goal by transforming knowledge, integrating themes across disciplines and placing knowledge in larger contexts. Second, it could provide insight for teaching that goes beyond lecturing by moving to a variety of teaching modalities, particularly through cooperative education, service, and by fostering professional learning communities (Zeldin & Camino, 1999; Mullen, 2009). Finally, this research could inform practices aimed to decrease the isolation between youth and adults by promoting the theory and research that suggest caring and supportive relationships with non-familial adults contribute to the well-being and healthy development of young people (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Zeldin & Camino, 1999).

Institutions of higher education are capable of producing ground- breaking research and theories. However, little this research appears to reach the communities that need it most. Community based organizations provide the services that change individuals and communities, but their stories are not adequately documented and disseminated to assure that their successes are duplicated. This research could serve as a bridge between the two; institutions of higher education could share their research with communities, and community based organizations could publish with institutions of higher education. If both work together the work and the research will be published, disseminated, and duplicated.

There are potentially long lasting and far reaching impacts as a result of this study. The implications suggest and provide salient points of interest for future research. However, the immediate implications of this research are to understand how schools and community based organizations can improve their work together to influence a positive difference in the lives of all community members.

Definitions and Terms

There were several terms and concepts paramount to this study. The terms were operational definitions and descriptions intended to provide insight as to how they were utilized:

1. “Youth adult partnerships” (YAP) are characterized by shared teaching, learning, and decision-making between youths and adults and therefore, should not be confused with youth mentoring or youth development. Youth mentoring and youth development places emphasis on adult expertise and

the adult's ability to provide leadership and insight to and for youth (Camino, 2000). YAP approach youth/adult interactions from the perspective that both youths and adults possess skills and assets essential to achieving specific and predetermined outcomes (Camino, 2000; Muhammad & Wheeler, 2001).

2. "Skills and capacities" address the particular qualities, attributes, and dispositions of individuals that participated in youth adult partnerships. More specifically, skills and capacities enhance factors and levels of the social ecology. Such factors are essential to the successful completion of positive developmental aspects. Social ecology and positive development aspects include, but are not limited to, critical thinking, decision-making, vocational awareness, cultural competence, self-regulation, contending with difficulties, conflict resolution, self-efficacy, goal setting, pro-social values, relationship skills, teamwork, connectedness to organizations and community, and civic engagement (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Eccles & Grootman, 2002; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992).

3. "Place" is viewed as the physical and geographical location of the participating community-based organizations. That is "place," is viewed as a bounded system with functioning and integrative parts that work toward a specific purpose (Stake, 1995). This study pays special attention to understanding the delicate nature and necessary time it takes to realize the impact of community change efforts. "Place" accounts for the bounded social system that operates within spaces, territories, and distinguishable

boundaries (Stake, 1995). As such, “place” incorporates the nature of historical background, physical settings, social and economic contexts, and social and political environments, as it connects with the case (Stake, 1995). The concept of place is important to this study, because it points to specific expectations associated and aligned with the race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, socioeconomic, multi-lingual, and other needs of the physical and geographic location in which these partnerships are developed.

4. “Youth and young adults” are individuals between the ages 12 to 24.

Adults are considered as anyone 25 and older. Positive youth development literature explains that an appropriate range for youth serving programs is between the ages of 12 to 24 (Benson, 1997; Hart, Daiute, & Iltus, 1997).

The distinction of youth and young adult was determined based on the levels of social independence as described in positive youth development literature. Youth at the beginning of the age range are old enough to operate at increasing levels of independence and maturity. Youth proclivity to “grow up” aids in their quest for independence and coincides with increasing levels of developmental maturity that allow them to benefit from youth leadership training programs. The decision to extend the latter age range to twenty-four is based on those individuals eligibility to be claimed as dependents on parental tax returns and employer insurance plans (Benson, 1997; Muhammad & Wheeler, 2001).

5. “Leadership team” consisted of a program director, adult coach, youth coach, adult evaluator, and youth evaluator. The leadership team was

responsible for the overall running of the program, its implementation, and assessment of progress on meeting the program targets. The leadership team also attended workshops and professional development activities that they later would instruct and implement at their organization.

Delimitations and Limitations

There is no single pathway for how community change is achieved, nor a preset list or order of events that indicates when community change has been achieved. As such, measuring community change has a particularly expected and implicit limit. Additionally, understanding and describing the concept of partnerships also requires a rather fluid and flexible lens. Therefore, the research questions and research instruments are designed to identify the perceived skills and capacities of participants as a result of their participation in leadership training exercises for the purpose of establishing youth adult partnerships. This inquiry is designed to identify and describe a specific set of skills and capacities utilized by leadership teams at the three community based organizations included in this study. The identified skills and capacities were described by leadership team as being paramount in the development of YAP and the address of specific community change issues.

While preset limits on the scope of this research were set, there were other factors that fell outside of the scope and purview of the researcher. The work and success of community-based organizations is often determined by the commitment and participation of the local-level citizenry. Due to the nature of nonprofit work itself, high turnover of members and participants is common. Individuals are in flux for a variety of reasons;

they find that they have accomplished the task for which they joined the organization, move on to accept other positions, or simply experience a decrease in the amount of time they have to volunteer. Such challenges are multiplied when participants are youth and young adults. Youth and young adults must negotiate additional sets of competing values; they attend school, participate in social activities, have family commitments, work jobs with inflexible work schedules, and have challenges with transportation. As such, clearly youth who participated in this study did not represent all youth that participate in community-based organizations. However, based on the literature they did represent a significant and broad swath of youth that traditionally participate in community-based organizations, religious programs, visual and performing arts, sports programs, and other out-of-school programs (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Granger, 2002; Independent Sector, 2002; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The introduction of this study presented a few of the possibilities that youth adult partnerships could provide to communities seeking to address community change issues. Here I present a literature review that supports those possibilities. This review highlights a progression from positive youth development to the concept of youth adult partnerships. The literature outlines a transformational process of positive youth development, and advances to the progressive and emerging literature of youth adult partnerships. The literature identifies intersections of educational administration and community development, and educational administration and community leadership development. These intersections provide an avenue to discuss the role of educational leaders in the process of community change through youth adult partnerships composed of positive youth development, community development and community leadership development.

This literature review is interdisciplinary. It is informed by educational administration literature, but also strengthened by, community and developmental psychology, urban planning, and the field of social work. This literature also serves as a framework, and begins to lay the foundation of youth and adult partnerships as a form of collective leadership development. Lastly, this literature review will help illuminate the concept of youth as leaders within communities today, rather than, youth in training to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Youth Development Moments in Time

For three decades, from 1960 to 1990, youth development literature was primarily focused on solutions to eliminate problem behaviors, such as; teen pregnancy, substance abuse, delinquency and school drop out rates (Klau, 2006). Unfortunately, many of the approaches to accomplish that goal were grounded in the deficit model. Deficit model approaches place emphasis on prevention, by isolating individuals from harmful aspects in their communities (Delpit, 2006; Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004; Fine & Smith, 2001; Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2006; Ladson-Billings 1995; Lightfoot, 1980). That is, individuals were to be shielded or protected from the harmful aspects of their environment. While such separation appeared necessary and beneficial, individuals were not only separated from the deleterious aspects, but also, separated from the positive and resilient aspects of their community as well. In effect, the deficit model sought to parse communities and individuals in a manner that would identify what and whom were salvageable. For at least three decades, youth development literature identified threatening factors and the individuals most “at risk” of suffering from negative factors present in their communities (Klau, 2006). As a result, urban youth were consistently and disproportionately identified as both perpetrators and victims of social injustices. Much research focused on identifying social issues and prescribed strategies aimed at preventing the effects and symptoms rather than treating the cause or equipping those individuals to effectively address those issues on their own. Prevailing views from public policy and media often portrayed youth and adolescence as difficult individuals experiencing a rather

stormy and stressful time in their development and in great need of protection and control from communities (Camino, O'Connor, Mook, & Zeldin, 2005).

Additionally, they portrayed youth as individuals that lacked motivation, and concern for their communities, and therefore, unwilling to work collaboratively with adults. Ginwright, Noguera, and Camarotta (2006) express that the literature lacked sufficient insight of the resources available within communities (e.g., families, schools, peers, neighbors, religious organizations, and other segments of the community). They explain that the literature appeared to neglect an asset approach, but instead, settled on a deficit model approach.

Deficit model approaches were successful in generating substantial knowledge of the risk factors that potentially lead to psycho-pathology and delinquency, but it failed to adequately present the resiliency and drive often present to excel in spite of degenerative situations and circumstances (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright, Noguera, & Camarotta, 2006; Klau, 2006). Although many urban communities experienced exceptionally turbulent times from the 1960s through the 1990s, those communities were still able to produce productive and positive leaders that made and continue to make meaningful contributions to society. Urban communities were plagued politically, economically, and socially. Additionally, there were recurring themes of racism, mass unemployment, pervasive violence, and police brutality. Garbarino (1995) used the term social toxins, to describe the declining social conditions that acted as social poisons. In effect, these social toxins spilled into many communities and ultimately hindered and, in some instances, even stopped efforts of youth development. Brooks-

Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, and Sealand (1997) suggest that other factors, such as, gun violence, police abuse, lack of health care, discriminatory school practices, lack of jobs paying livable wages, and limited access to effective after-school and out-of-school programs also threatened healthy youth development. The presence of such issues, and the limited success of existing policies, made it clear that a new paradigm was necessary to effectively serve youth and change communities.

Positive youth Development

Youth development is an inevitable and ongoing process in which all young people are engaged and invested, even without family supports and formal programs (Muhammad & Wheeler, 2001; Pittman & Cahill, 1991). However, the level, quality, or outcomes of youth development is contingent upon the influences, systems of support, and resources available to youth during their development. Wheeler (2006) explains that youth development as an inevitable process. That notion corresponds with the approach that human beings ultimately seek measures that meet their basic physical and social needs. Therefore, it is understandable that young people seek to build the individual assets, competencies or skill sets they deem necessary to participate successfully in their everyday interactions. The likelihood of positive youth development outcomes increases when youth are also provided with opportunities to develop support structures, relationships and networks that provide nurturing standards and guidance, opportunities to master new roles and challenges (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McAdoo, 1997; Wheeler, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, young people require stable places, services, and instruction that provide opportunities to

contribute to their family and community (Mohammed & Wheeler, 2001). Youth desire such opportunities, regardless of family income levels or academic ability. Positive youth development research asserts that youth benefit when adequate academic, cognitive, civic, emotional, physical, vocational, social and cultural competencies are part of their development (Benson, 2001; Carnegie Corporation, 1989). Ultimately, the goal of positive youth development is to include pathways for all youth to become motivated, socially competent, compassionate, and psychologically vigorous (Klau, 2006). Ferber, Pittman, and Marshall (2002) present the National Research Council's definition of youth development as, "The acquisition of attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills that will carry youth forward into successful adulthood." This definition focuses on youth as assets, transforming from children into confident, competent, connected and contributing adults prepared to engage their communities.

Youth who demonstrate the ability to persevere and overcome their circumstances stand as tangible markers of what is possible. Ginwright and James (2002) attribute the successful transitions of youth into productive adults to the positive and supportive families and adults, encouraging social supports, the presence of identifiable goals, a developed sense of self, feelings of competence, and the motivation to do well. Additionally, they suggest that youth development professionals move beyond merely identifying the obstacles that youth face and the factors that assist them in overcoming such obstacles, and conduct a more explicit examination of the causes of the serious obstacles, problems and conditions facing young people. They contend that the youth development move

beyond simply viewing youth as individuals that possess assets and move toward viewing youth as individuals capable of using their assets in a manner that would transform their “toxic environments,” rather than enduring and surviving in such environments. This idea of “transformation” is further illuminated in community leadership development work and community based organizations (Finn & Checkoway, 1998). Ginwright and James (2002) identify the existence of a critical consciousness in youth that work to transform their environments. They describe critical consciousness as the awareness of how institutional, historical, and systemic forces limit and promote opportunities for particular groups, which then leads to collective action to change unjust conditions. Ginwright and James (2002) explain that critical consciousness is achieved through activism, and civic engagement. As such, they express that it is not enough for youth that to do well in school, receive parental support, mentoring, exhibit positive self-esteem, and participate in community service. Instead, they express that it is also necessary that those youth also develop an understanding of the sociopolitical realities and the understanding of how those realities affect them and their communities (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright, Commarota, & Noguera, 2006). Students that have a grasp on the academic and social aspects of their development would do well to challenge the social issues present in their communities. Ginwright and James (2002) describe the process of incorporating positive youth development with a concern for social justice outcomes, by preparing youth to be, pro-social and civically engaged. This concept is described as Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD).

Social Justice Youth Development

The SJYD framework uses Watts, Williams, and Jagers (2003) social-psychological approach combined with a social ecological model to address the sociopolitical development of youth and incorporate the role of social oppression to explain the necessity of youth community engagement (Ginwright & James, 2002). SJYD connects with the social ecological model as an aid to explain the political, economic, and cultural context in which youth development and civic engagement occur (Ginwright & James, 2002). The social ecological approach helps to examine how young people respond within oppressive social systems and identify the process of sociopolitical development. Combining the two approaches resulted in a social ecological approach that aids in extricating the complex bundle of circumstances that continue to challenge many marginalized youth. More specifically, it deepens understanding of the challenges faced by individuals, families, and communities, by moving beyond the behaviors and choices made, particularly by urban and marginalized youth (Ginwright & James, 2002). Consequently, this approach enables greater movement toward understanding how social, political, and economic forces influence youth development. SJYD focuses on principles, practices and outcomes. It examines how urban youth contest, challenge, respond to, and negotiate the use and misuse of power in their lives. SJYD covers five main domains: 1) analysis of power in social relationships, 2) makes identity central, 3) promotes systemic social change, 4) encourages collective action, and, 5) embraces youth culture. The five domains point to the strength of youth working as adult allies with a common

vision of social justice. Additionally, SJYD incorporates very specific principles, practices and outcomes such as: a) political education and strategizing, b) identifying power holders, c) joining support groups and other organizations which value identity development, d) working to end social inequality, e) participating in collective action strategies at the local and national levels, and, f) celebrating youth culture. The above components of SJYD are closely related to the KLCC framework for community leadership development and collective leadership development which are covered later in this review. The SJYD has the potential of preparing youth to critically analyze social and sociopolitical situations by developing solidarity with others. Youth that are capable of developing solidarity with others undoubtedly, generate empathy for the suffering of others. As a result, they are authentically engaged in civic activities that potentially lead to leadership roles within their communities (Ginwright & James, 2002).

Forming Youth Voice and Civic Engagement

There are at least three major questions central to forming youth voice and civic engagement: 1) what role can youth play in forging a democratic society and creating more equitable institutions? 2) How can adults support sociopolitical development among youth? 3) What can be learned from youth organizing and its affect on the development of young people? Or simply put, what does youth civic engagement look like and how does it happen? (Ginwright & James, 2002; O'Donoghue, Kirshner, & McLaughlin, 2002).

Youth civic engagement is often viewed as a constellation of activities that empower adolescents to take part in issues they care about and influence decision-making that affects their lives (O'Donoghue et al., 2002). As youth become engaged partners within organizational and public decision-making they begin sharing power (O'Donoghue et al., 2002). At that level of involvement, a shift from focusing on the individual outcomes to more of organizational and community outcomes becomes more salient. Understanding the impact and importance of developing and fostering youth voice and youth civic engagement is beginning to surface within several arenas of research, policy-makers, and program evaluators. These individuals are beginning to involve young people in their work (Finn & Checkoway, 2001). While youth involvement in community change is not a new phenomenon there is still limited understanding of how to generate a consistent and even flow of youth involvement within communities. There have been many successful outcomes with youth involvement and the development of youth voice and civic engagement. However, it is important to understand that these outcomes are often specific to particular locales or place-based (Irby, Ferber, & Pittman, 2001). One option is to consider the level of participation needed to generate broad and meaningful change. This is especially effective when addressing large policy issues. Youth development practitioners and school administrators have stated that youth participation in the decision making process of their organizations have led to increased levels of youth motivation and sustainable efforts in youth participation. Increased participation has also been an especially effective strategy for engaging older high school

students that typically avoid youth organizations, especially, organizations that do not give them a voice in the decision-making process or the planning of activities that concern them. Additionally, this type of engagement has also had an impact on organizational structure and climate and has led to a deeper commitment to youth development principles from adults associated with these community-based organizations (Eccles & Gootman, 2001; Finn & Checkoway, 1998; James & McGuillicuddy, 2001; O'Donoghue et al., 2002; Sullivan, 2002).

Challenges of Youth Development Approach

While benefits of encouraging and facilitating youth civic engagement are numerous, the gap in the amount of collaboration between civically engaged youth and youth development practitioners still exist. Mohammad and Wheeler (2001) explain that adults and youth often choose to serve in differing manners, adults as youth development practitioners, and youth and young adults as civic activist. These differences were more evident in communities that experienced sustained social challenges. Youth in these areas often reported that they preferred to be about the “action of changing their communities” rather than engaged in “conversations about how to change the community.” Conversely, many youth development practitioners found it difficult to deal effectively with issues of youth identity and meaningful engagement of young people in authentic leadership and decision-making processes within their communities and community based organizations. In fact, many youth serving organizations and youth centered programs did not address the critical issues of youth identity at all.

As such, they failed to support youth interest to examine issues around sexuality, race, class, or gender (Ginwright, Noguera, & Cammarotta, 2006).

These social issues represent many of the core socialization and discriminatory practices that youth experience and in effect have had profound negative effects on their development. Therefore, any failure from youth serving organizations to address the very issues that serve as barriers in the lives of youth only further alienates youth from participating in structured youth development programs and organizations (Ginwright, et. al, 2006). However, by presenting youth with opportunities to express their disdain of how society has excluded them and stifled their development often helps youth to move forward in positive ways. Youth organizations, their staff, and their organizational structure must be properly equipped to deal with social issues in a manner that creates and fosters a safe environment that will encourage all youth to act and participate and ultimately help to increase their voice and development toward the role of authentic leadership.

Unfortunately, many youth development programs and organizations have failed at developing authentic leaders and fostering authentic youth voice. Instead, many of these organizations perpetuate a culture of “adultism” (Mohammad & Wheeler, 2001). Adultism describes the behaviors and attitudes that flow from the assumptions that adults are superior to young people and entitled to act upon young people without the agreement or consent of these youth. Youth often report that traditional youth development agencies do not really listen to young people, nor do they support their ideas. O’Donoghue et al.

(2002) present a captivating encounter a group of youth experienced during a conference on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. A young woman that attended the conference explained that the conference was “the most non-youth-friendly place.” She explained that they woke up early and spent long hours listening to adults “lecture” about the experiences of youth. Youth were not afforded any time to talk to anyone, nor was there time to move around (O’Donoghue et. al, 2002). Furthermore, they were not asked for their input or their feelings on the matters discussed. When they did try to share or interject their thoughts, the adults did not really listen. She stated that nothing truly changed until the last day of the convention when the young people gave a presentation. The youth presenters had to remind the adults that they were prepared, competent and capable of conducting the presentation without their assistance. One of the adults attempted to facilitate the question-and-answer period, but was stiffly rebuffed when the presenter sternly asserted, “No, thank you. We’re prepared to do this for ourselves. Sit down please.” The youth presenter shared that they didn’t think the adults really “got it” until then.

The above example illuminates the often, unintended actions of adults. Such conferences and programs actually proscribe youth engagement. The failure of youth development practitioners occurs when they neglect to provide adolescents with the appropriate developmental opportunities to explore identity, independence, and decision-making. Additionally, the continued alienation of adolescents, particularly those who are disengaged from society’s mainstream, has tremendous implications for the future outcomes of community youth

development. For these reasons, civic activism has increasingly become a strategy for achieving youth leadership development and the civic participation of marginalized young people (O'Donoghue et. al, 2002). Instead, youth development should be linked with and addressed with issues of identity, adultism, power, and control in open and frank manners (Mohammad & Wheeler, 2001).

Challenges to Youth Voice and Civic Engagement

While there are clear benefits, demonstrated outcomes, and documented benefits for communities with civically engaged youth, it is not without challenges and opposition. O'Donoghue et al. (2002) point out that many adults feel that youth lack the necessary capacity to participate in decision making. They also explain that some adults embrace youth participation but lack understanding of how to authentically include youth voice. The latter group of adults feel that youth civic engagement only requires that a young person be at the table when decisions are made, or that youth be placed on governance or advisory boards. At first glance, the perception of youth on a governance or advisory board may appear to be a positive step, however, upon closer evaluation, it is often discovered that this practice serves as a facade myth because it generates the idea of exclusivity in which youth often serve as a token. Although this could serve as a step toward progress and the first phase of youth participation, it potentially creates an environment where youth feel outnumbered and therefore silenced (O'Donoghue et. al, 2002).

Youth were not alone in their discomfort in working with adults. Adults also expressed feelings of frustration. O'Donoghue et al. (2002) explained that adults have expressed that generating youth participation and youth civic engagement is often interpreted as surrendering their roles as guides and educators. Adults explained that many youth participation discussions often focus on youth only and neglect to include discussions of the roles of adults and the importance of them serving as both supporters and educators. Supporters of youth participation must be open to youth contributions and provide space for youth voice, as well as, guide youth in recognizing the norms of the public arena in which they seek to participate. Additionally, adults must undergo preparation for their role and interaction with youth. Challenges often surface when well-intentioned adults attempt to create youth participation without understanding what youth participation really means. Adults need time to adapt to the concept of youth participation. It would also be helpful for adults to participate in ongoing training and professional development centered on youth participation. Such training provides adults the opportunity to develop strategies in how to best support youth and serve as their allies (Hart, 1992; Hart, Daiute & Iltus, 1997; Pittman et al., 2000).

Effective and authentic youth engagement requires that adults change their frame of references of how to work with youth. This requires that deeply held beliefs of youth be acknowledged and challenged. It is beneficial to also challenge the assumption that youth are ready to participate and are simply awaiting their opportunity. Authentic youth engagement requires that young

people be given the time and space to develop the skills they need to participate effectively. As they actively participate they should also receive ongoing training and support in the specific skill sets required for the successful completion of particular projects. It is important to understand that both youth and adults require training in how to work together through professional development workshops and training in collaborative process. These techniques are valuable components often employed to teach the model of leadership (Mohammad & Wheeler, 2001). This type of youth and adult interaction would require major changes in both the attitudes and opinions of adult professionals and organizational leadership. It would also require the preparation of a new generation of youth workers engaged in positive youth development through leadership and civic activism. It should be understood that these new youth workers require technical assistance and support, the ability to integrate the theory, information and skills of civic activism.

Youth Leadership Development

It is not my intent to repave the familiar road that leads to a definition of leadership. There are more worthy works available that serve as both the foundations and the critiques of leadership. However, it is important to take some space to identify what leadership means in the context of developing youth adult partnerships for community change issues. Identifying particular leadership skills sets and youth leadership capacities will assist in understanding the components of youth and adult partnerships.

The word “leadership” has come to mean all things to all people (Klau 2006). Peter Senge (1990) has defined leadership as “the collective capacity to

create something useful.” Others have maintained that collaborations and teamwork are more necessary than any other time in history. As communities and organizational cultures become increasingly more democratically based and equality and diversity focused, more attention is directed the success of the group, rather than the individual. Van Linden and Fertman (1998) explain that youth lead in various subtle manners, such as, through working, volunteering, socializing with peers, or through their involvement in school or community activities. Van Linden and Fertman’s description of youth leadership seems to suggest that youth can demonstrate leadership in any activity in which they are involved. According to findings from a ten-year study conducted by the Carnegie Foundation, of 120 youth based organizations across the United States, adults undertake various efforts to teach youth leadership in which there are also varying outcomes. The researchers found that there is often a disconnect between adult efforts and the experiences of youth. Many of the adult approaches focused on narrow interpretations and understandings of how young people develop leadership traits rather than acting as leaders. They also found that practitioners interjected their personal beliefs about what youth “need” to “become” leaders (Klau, 2006; Roach, Wyman, Leisy, Brookes & Chavez, 1999). Currently, the general understanding of leadership development includes a focus on the leader as a person possessing, leadership tools, interpersonal attributes, and moral character capacities. More specifically, focus is placed on the knowledge, competency, and character of the leader; reflexive learning, communication, decision making, self-discipline, and the ability to make effective actions possible; the ability to engage,

motivate, manage conflict; and finally, the character capacity or the ability to understand the difference between right and wrong, and have the capacity to do what is right (Klau, 2006). MacNeil (2006) adds that leadership is a relational process that combines ability, and decision-making power to positively influence and affect diverse individuals, organizations, and communities. These definitions acknowledge both the contextual and applied nature of leadership and identify that leadership is more than having authority or the ability to lead. Instead, the definitions assert that leadership is actually evidenced in the act of leading.

Although definitions and identified components of leadership capacity exist, many of them pose a somewhat of a problem. Many existing definitions are subjective, i.e., contain words or phrases that project value judgments, or positional words that connote prominence, authority, and influence. Additionally, there is often a lack of distinction between authority and leadership (Heifetz, 1994). Although the terms may overlap in their definitions and applications, Heifetz makes it clear that one can lead without authority, and having authority does not make one a leader. Additionally, Heifetz makes a distinction between technical and adaptive challenges associated with leadership. He explains that technical challenges are relatively straightforward problems that we already know how to solve. While adaptive challenges are far more complex, have no clear solution, and therefore, require changes in the values and behaviors of the group. The latter is often associated with changing systems, organizations, and communities. Understanding leadership and leadership capacity is further complicated when you are considered. MacNeil (2006) suggests the importance

of asking “how do youth appear in the discussion of leadership, where are youth leadership examples in youth literature, and what are the differences between youth and adult leadership?”

When youth are mentioned in leadership literature, it is with the understanding that they will be leaders in the future. The focus is on working with young people now so that they will be able to become leaders when they are adults (Gardner, 1990; O’Connell, 1994). Although positive youth development literature acknowledges and even encourages opportunities for leadership experiences for all youth, it fails to capitalize on the potential such leadership opportunities immediately provide for individuals and communities (Hechinger, 1992; Independent Sector, 2002; Lakes, 1996; McLaughlin, Irby, & Langman, 1994; Takanishi, 1993). According to MacNeil (2006) leadership is learned and refined in the context of practicing leadership. The focus is on learning, and applying new skills and knowledge in real life contexts. MacNeil (2006) explains the importance of youth leadership programs that frame leadership development as a component in the teaching and learning cycle. Leadership centered on teaching and learning provides opportunities not only to develop skills and knowledge but also, provide opportunities to apply them in meaningful and authentic ways (MacNeil, 2006). Zeldin, Camino, and Calvert (2003) suggest that youth leadership development serve the purposes of simultaneously promoting healthy youth development while providing opportunities for youth to make contributions through their participation. This type of leadership development has also been described as authentic leadership development. Authentic leadership

development also requires that adults share power with youth on decisions that have true cause and effect outcomes for the organization or community (Benson, 1997; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; MacNeil & Krensky, 1996; Olson, Goddard, Solheim, & Sandt, 2004). This type of authentic leadership also taps into the insights, talents, and energies of young people and can help groups and communities develop and implement more effective solutions to issues that affect youth. This is achieved due the fact that young people have perspectives and experience that adults do not. Therefore, their participation brings useful contributions, as well as, energy, knowledge, talents, and skills that are critical in solving the challenges faced by youth.

Creating conditions that support new knowledge and practices are paramount in leadership development. MacNeil and McClean (2006) present the concept of youth governance as an approach that moves beyond developing leadership skills, toward contexts that offer youth opportunities to practice leadership. MacNeil and McClean propose six strategies for engaging youth in opportunities to practice leadership: 1) adults involved with youth must assess and adjust their attitudes and assumptions about youth, 2) clear understanding of expectations must be provided for those working with youth, 3) the roles and responsibilities of youth board members, committee members or staff should be clearly defined, 4) resources must be allocated to support the ongoing integration of youth, 5) training to support the work of both adults and youth should be made available, and 6) an evaluation plan should be in place to monitor the youth integration process. Researchers suggest that the above-mentioned youth

leadership development strategies become part of an ongoing process that is consistent, persistent and purposeful to assure that the practices become part of youth and adult lives. As such, youth spend the majority of their time in schools. Therefore, there is need to connect schools with the above components of leadership development. Newmann, Secada, and Wehlage (1995) provide insight of the importance of linking academic achievement of youth and community development.

Intersection of Schools and Communities

Newmann, Secada, and Wehlage (1995) explain that community leadership development as essential to building community capacity to improve the quality of schools and increase student academic achievement. First, Newmann et al. describe curriculum and instruction and school climate as being strongly connected to school improvement. That is, high-quality curriculum and instruction are linked to rich academically rigorous instructional practices and engaged students. Additionally, they both are strong indicators of a positive school climate (1995). A positive school climate was often exemplified by good teacher and student rapport with equal respect, low incidence of discipline problems, safe orderly and organized social environments, and well-maintained facilities (Corcoran, Walker, & White, 1988; Newmann, Secada, & Wehlage, 1995).

Secondly, Newmann et al. (1995) describe the importance of community leadership development as components to improve schools and student academic achievement. Community members learn the importance of public accountability

through participation in workshops on leadership capacity development, participation in social networking activities that build social capital and provide access to community stakeholders at various levels that share similar educational concerns. Community members also learn the importance of building strategic alliances by creating relationships with public officials and holding them accountable. Community members learn that the ability to change schools and student academic achievement is largely dependent upon the strength of public accountability and the community's ability to sustain relationships. Relationships are better sustained when there is a commitment made in public settings that obligate a wide range of community stakeholders, such as, parents, educators, public officials, and others that are committed to improving the community (Corcoran, Walker, & White, 1988; Gold, Simon & Brown, 2002; Shirley, 1997; Warren, 2001; Wood, 2002). By expanding the view of public accountability to include public education, community members are able to address issues of equity and school/community relations, particularly those of curriculum, instruction, and school climate. As such, respectful relationships among parents, educators, and students are enhanced and extend ownership for the educational experiences of children to the entire community. As a result of the extended ownership and concern for the educational experiences of children, expectation levels are increased, academic achievement rises, and community concerns are realized and addressed (Comer, 1984; Shirley, 1997; Hatch, 1998).

Historical Perspective of Education and Communities

Public education has long been an important part of and intricately woven into the American fabric. Dewey (1933) went as far as to suggest that the survival of democracy depended on a well-educated citizenry. For as early as the mid nineteenth century, communities across the frontiers of America campaigned to start local schools. Communities that were successful at establishing local schools were viewed as good places to live. As a result, public education was identified as the most important resource fueling community growth (Kochan, Jackson, & Duke, 1999). As such, schools played an integral role in society and the communities in which they were located. Bogotch (2005) explains that the general responsibility of towns and municipalities during the early mid nineteenth century was to secure funds, to build and support schools and to oversee the hiring and firing of teachers and administrators. During the early mid nineteenth century, it was also common for communities to experience a constant rotation of teachers every 10 months or less. Additionally, even with a constant rotation of teachers and the pressure to secure funds, communities still stressed the importance of the success of establishing and sustaining a school (Butts & Cremins, 1962). The presence of schools represented a certain level of progress, pride, and possibilities within that community. As such, much effort was also devoted to preparing students to be productive citizens to their communities and to society. That is, schools often functioned in a transactional sense, where students were taught to be good, do work, and then to get a good job. This cycle became more entrenched in communities and schools as educational leaders

began adopting the managerial practices and business trends, particularly those of scientific management (Bogotch, 2005). Districts began focusing on efficiency and data-driven decision making. Although many educational leaders questioned such practices, and expressed that it would turn teachers and administrators into record keepers and accountants, the prescriptive pedagogical methods, standardized testing, and data-driven decision-making were too much to resist (Bogotch, 2005). The above practices increased in popularity with educational leaders as a possible solution to combat the inconsistent instructional practices, nonexistent curricula, ill-prepared educators, and substandard facilities that continued to sprout up as communities grew and desired to have their own community school. The following passage from Wray (1904) novel, *Jean Mitchell's School*, describes the physical condition of many community schools, as dimly lit places that were dingy in appearance. Harris (1963) described the condition of early schools as “deplorable, cheap and crude” (p. 158). Harris also indicates that many teachers were ignorant and used “barbarous methods of teaching” (1963, p. 158). Gilbert (1904) further illuminates the challenges faced by early schools in his commentary of Wray’s novel with the following passage:

The low ideals of the villagers and their failure to comprehend the teaching of children finds striking expression in the school premises. Barren and uninteresting without, dingy and forbidding within, the schoolhouse spoke of ignorance, of lack of thought, of abandonment to untoward conditions that found reflection in the pupil’s attitude. Rude, hostile indifferent, disorganized, these children are altogether too sophisticated in the art of

guile and deceit, in evasion and resistance, in disobedience and successful rebellion. Anarchy names correctly the condition native to these boys and girls; they are not innately bad. They are the inevitable product of the education to which they have been given over. (p. 8)

The overall conditions and the general instructional practices present during the early years made scientific management a pragmatic choice to educational leaders. Scientific management offered prescriptive pedagogical methods, standardized testing, and data-driven decision-making. This direct and forward approach seemed reasonable and responsible. However, the gains achieved through scientific instruction, were somewhat eroded by a disconnect between educational leaders and community members. Patri (1917) explained “the school alone could do nothing... the home alone could do nothing” (p. 83-84). Patri’s statement underscores the importance of partnerships between community members and educational leaders. Rather than acting independently, communities that acted together essentially formed a “moral force” within the neighborhoods that assisted parents in being more directly involved in the educational process, rather than the school acting alone (Patri, 1917, p. 100). Instituting a moral force in the educational process infers group interaction (Bogotch, 2005). One major outcome of a moral force was to connect communities and schools and for them to be directly interconnected in community affairs as active participants in community life.

Bogotch (2002) explains that the interconnectedness of schools was once a natural occurrence. In the early years of schools, teachers and administrators

were involved with social issues such as housing, jobs, clothing, and hygiene, all of which affected their students directly. The mission of many urban public schools specifically focused on eradicating poverty for students and the community. This was especially evident in the tenement housing projects of New York City. According to Bogotch (2005) teachers were encouraged to walk the streets of their communities, interact with parents, students, and families. This practice was evidently deeply engrained into the early concepts of public school leadership, as even one of the most vocal proponents of scientific management and business management encouraged educators to be deeply involved in community activities. Franklin Bobbitt called for teachers to be engaged in community work as an essential aspect of professional development (1913).

Bobbitt stated,

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the teacher of today, who is able to bear social responsibilities that the world is laying increasingly upon our profession, must be a man or woman of the world...This is accomplished only by participation in the full, active life of the world of affairs. (1913, p. 80).

Bobbitt encouraged teachers to leave their classroom, to visit other classes in their schools, in other cities, and states, and to attend concerts, theater and productions, and lectures, declaring all to be “absolutely necessary” for sustaining the vitality of the profession.

The community focus supported by early educators appeared to shift to a focused approach on replicable results of student achievement directed by

educational leaders. Dantley and Tillman (2006) explain that educational leaders erroneously accepted the ideas interwoven into scientific management that educational leadership operated in a frictionless environment, that can be reduced to replication of behaviors that have proved to be effective and efficient. Scientific management in essence identified children as the product that schools produced. Therefore, the goal was to produce students that were productive and high achievers. This view posed at least two problems for the educational process: 1) human development does not occur in a linear fashion, and, 2) the view does not acknowledge or address that schools are often spaces that perpetuate a level of social reproduction. That is, historically, schools were used to solidify the status quo, as well as, cause societal change. In many instances schools were the medium used to perpetuate a particular outlook that resembled those that wielded political and economic power. As a result of immigration, urbanization, and labor trends demographics of communities have changed. As demographics change the cultural landscape of schools also change. Therefore, it is important that educational leaders adjust their leadership approaches to include more inclusive, egalitarian, collaborative approaches, to accommodate a more diverse population (Cooper, Allen, & Bettez, 2009). Educational leaders would also do well to promote social justice and culturally relevant education among educators to assure they are prepared to equitably respond to demographic changes. Educators that have the capacity to provide culturally relevant and culturally responsive educational experiences for students also help to decrease biases, fears, and lack of cultural awareness, all of which threaten the cultural

responsiveness in the educational process (Cooper et al., 2009). Culturally responsive education emphasizes the importance that educators use culturally relevant pedagogy that also affirms the cultural background of students (Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2000; Gonzalez, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Failing to recognize and affirm the knowledge, experiences, and assets of culturally diverse student populations, reinforces the behavior that has traditionally marginalized ethnic and linguistic minorities. As a result of such practices, marginalized students often internalize educators' negative perceptions of them, and in turn struggle academically and socially (Delpit, 2006; Heath, 1996; Howard, 2000; Nieto, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). This outlook poses a moral dilemma. As such, educational leadership that is also connected to moral or purpose driven leadership, places educational leadership within the broader cultural and social context of issues of race, class, and gender, but also perceives the work of schools as sites committed to social justice and issues that more genuinely demonstrate the development of a democratic society. Moral and purpose-driven leaders have the capacity and responsibility to infuse cultural relevant and culturally responsive pedagogies within practices of the school (Dantley & Tillman, 2006). The moral and purpose driven leader is more likely to acknowledge and confront their biases about those who are culturally different from them, to develop and foster new learning and leadership around cultural matters (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1999; Howard, 2000).

The above methods, actions and described attempts to provide culturally responsive pedagogy are aligned with cultural difference theory. Cultural

cultural difference theory describes culture as an influential factor in learning and development and a major part of how groups collectively adapt socially, economically, and historically to society (Eisenhart, 2001; Heath, 1996). Cultural difference theory also places emphasis on the connections individuals have with home and school. This analysis of home and school connections places emphasis on students' backgrounds as strengths, rather than as deficits. Cultural difference theory illuminates how deeply structured school settings can clash with the home setting, especially for students that are not part of the White middle-class social structure (Pena, 1997). Use of the cultural difference theory and connected types of self-assessment force individuals to broaden their idea of what makes schools equitable. It aids in rejecting deficit based thinking about culturally different groups. Researchers have explained that cultural difference theory can serve as bridge between the home and school, thus improving the educational outcomes for children. Use of the cultural difference theory increases the likelihood that schools and homes become cultural learning zones that support and affirm each other (Delpit, 2006; Eisenhart, 2001; Epstein & Sanders, 2000; Heath, 1996; Mehan, 2000; Pena, 1997).

Since the early years of education, schools have maintained an important place in communities and continue to play a major role in society (Kochan, Jackson, & Duke, 1999). As such, schools and school leaders have been forced to meet the growing demands and higher expectations as society changes. Additionally, school leaders have been required to negotiate the purposes of schooling and the demands placed on schools. Schools are expected to keep pace

with the constantly shifting demands from state and national accountability standards. As the responsibilities of school leaders continue to increase and therefore become more complex, school leaders are expected to adjust their leadership style to include a more democratic approach. This approach involves others in the process of problem solving and analysis (Barth, 1990). Barth explains that democratic leadership is a valuable approach for school leaders seeking to build a sense of community with internal and external community stakeholders. Democratic leadership applies a collaborative approach, builds a sense of community, and shares power with others by involving multiple groups of stakeholders in the decision making process. This form of leadership allows educational leaders to become catalysts capable of connecting with their communities to help rebuild relationships and reestablish trust between schools and the community. Rebuilding community and school relationships and reestablishing trust between schools and communities requires concerted efforts from educational leaders, from pre-K to faculty of higher education; particularly faculty responsible for educational leadership preparation programs, outreach, and research. Additionally, to restore a sense of trust in public education requires that educational leaders reframe their role as educators to include the role of community builders. As community builders, educational leaders must transcend “what is” and create “what might be” (Mullen, 2009). Focusing on transcending the current focus of preparing students to enter the workforce would be a positive step toward rebuilding trust in public education. Public education currently resembles a transactional relationship which espouses that students, be good, do

their work, and then get a good job (Mullen, 2009). Educational leaders are expected to engage in conversations with communities that address the current purposes of education and question the direction the educational process must move in order to better serve all communities of learners (Mullen, 2009). Such conversations will no doubt help educational leaders in the deliberation of how they influence the preparation of future leaders to pursue the interest of the common good for both individuals and communities. Mullen explains that faculty members that are responsible for the development of educational leaders must work to ensure that these leaders possess the pedagogical and epistemological prowess but also the strong communication skills and necessary social skills and capacities necessary to create a welcoming environment for each community stakeholder involved in the schooling process. Creating welcoming environments for community stakeholders does involve a particular level of finesse. However, schools have embraced the challenges involved in building such bridges between schools and communities, if it results in greater parental involvement in schools (Gold, Simon, & Brown, 2005).

Henderson and Mapp (2002) detail that parental involvement in schools greatly improves the school climate and student achievement. Traditional indicators of educational outcomes such as family income and educational levels can be compensated or counterbalanced by increased levels of parental involvement in schools. The counterbalance is possible, despite the challenges of poverty and lack of parents' formal education (Gold, et al. 2005; Marcon, 1999; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999). Families of all backgrounds have the potential to

encourage high achievement for their children. More parents would become more involved if schools increased their outreach to them (Clark, 1993; Epstein & Sanders, 2000; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In order for parents to feel welcomed in the school environment, schools must become more culturally responsive to families and the communities that they serve (Au, 1980; Delgado-Gaitan, 1987; Erickson & Mohatt, 1988; Heath, 1983; McConnell, 1989; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Valdes, 1996).

This concept of raising student achievement through parental and community participation in curriculum and instruction was demonstrated in Chicago public schools (Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, & Easton, 1998; Moore, 1998). Bryk et al. describe that establishing a level of trust was required prior to the work of parental and community involvement. Schools often need to adjust school culture, climate and interpersonal relationships to be more accommodating to families and communities (Bryk & Schneider, 1996; Useem, Christman, Gold, & Simon, 1997). There is often a need to change the deeply ingrained behaviors that exist among the educational leaders of schools. These behaviors often interpret the behavior of parents and community members in the most negative way possible. Such behaviors and perspectives undermine the social trust and professional culture necessary of schools for parents and communities to truly welcome into the schools (Gold, Simon, & Brown, 2005). Social trust requires accountable relationships through mutual agreement be established by understanding the obligations of parents, communities, and schools have of one another. Such mutual agreements and obligations are important to remove the

perception of a single individual or institution holding unilateral power (Gold, Simon, & Brown, 2005). There is a shift from interactions that yield power over individuals, to establishing relationships that create power to change particular situations within schools and communities. At times, such power shifts result in confrontation or conflict. However, the confrontation or conflict is not intentionally provoked, nor are they intentionally avoided. Instead a space is created that is capable and prepared to engage in conversations around such conflicts.

Understanding the Theoretical Framework

The process of youth adult partnership will be filtered through the lens of the Kellogg Leadership for Community Change Framework (KLCCF). KLCCF is an evolutionary approach to leadership development that emphasizes community change through the collective leadership and collective actions of individual leaders (Hughes, 2005). The KLCCF depicts stages of community change and leadership development that could enhance the efforts of any group (Hughes, 2005). The KLCCF translates the theory of change into strategies and practices, guides communities to develop learning plans, and helps them negotiate entrenched community issues toward a sustainable plan for change and improvement (Hughes, 2005). The main construct of the framework is composed of a four-stage change implementation process and four elements or forces involved in the community change process. The four-stage change implementation process are as follows, 1) build trust, 2) co-construct purpose and strategic plan, 3) act together, and 4) deepen, sustain, and make the work a way of

life. The four elements in the community change process include the following,

1) community context: the power of place, culture and history, also known as “community,” 2) crossing boundaries: the power of collective leadership, also called “group,” 3) giving ones best: the power of developing one’s own gifts, referred to as “individual” and, 4) making it happen: the power of change: also called the “community initiative.”

Table 1. Kellogg Leadership for Community Change Framework

ELEMENTS	STAGES OF COMMUNITY PROCESS			
	Stage 1: Build Trust	Stage 2: Co-construct Purpose and Strategic Plan	Stage 3: Act Together	Stage 4: Deepen, Sustain and Make the Work a Way of Life
Community as Context: the power of place, culture and history (<i>Community</i>)	<i>Be grounded in place</i>	<i>Learn from community</i>	<i>Make allies</i>	<i>Work becomes part of community fabric</i>
Crossing Boundaries: the power of collective leadership (<i>Fellowship</i>)	<i>Know the others</i>	<i>Create shared purpose</i>	<i>Collective action</i>	<i>Include new partners</i>
Giving One’s Best: the power of developing	<i>Claim</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Contribute</i>	<i>Help develop</i>

Table 1 (*continued*)

Giving One's Best: the power of developing one's own gifts (<i>Individual</i>)	<i>Claim your own story and values</i>	<i>Name your passions</i>	<i>Contribute your gifts</i>	<i>Help develop others</i>
Making it Happen: The power of change (<i>the community Initiative</i>)	<i>Define the work</i>	<i>Make a plan</i>	<i>Implement the plan</i>	<i>Sustain the work</i>

The power and complexity of the framework are illuminated at the intersection of the four stages and the four elements. The framework is laid out as a grid: four stages across the top, intersecting with four elements down the left side. Each intersection contains a series of questions designed to help coach participants to fully explore that part of the change process. Although written as a two-dimensional, linear document, the framework represents a spiraling, evolutionary process. Repetition is built into the framework questions to reflect this evolutionary temperament of the change process.

The KLCCF highlights and emphasizes the participation of nontraditional leaders and focuses on their ability to bridge gaps and eliminate boundaries. For this project, nontraditional leaders are viewed as youth attending middle school through college and adults that hold leadership roles in community based organizations, but do not hold elected civic positions. These leaders were

a group of leaders who effectively collaborate to create change in their communities.

The first stage of the Framework asks members to get to know each other at deeper levels than usual, focusing on the culture, history, strengths, challenges and wisdom of group members. They are encouraged to learn about the gifts, resources and capacities of all members, and how to work and learn together while honoring differences. They are also asked to have the courage to tell their own story, how their passions align with the group's work and their goals for developing leadership capacity. Members are asked to go into the community to learn about concerns and values related to the community initiative, in the case of KLCC, youth adult partnerships for community change.

Studies support that trust is a critical ingredient to community change. In *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*, the University of Chicago researchers examined the role of social relationships in schools and their impact on student achievement. They found that “a broad base of trust across a school community lubricates much of a school's day-to-day functioning and is a critical resource as local leaders embark on ambitious improvement plans.” Bryk and Schneider (2002) contend that schools with a high degree of “relational trust” are far more likely to make changes that help raise student achievement than those where relations are poor. Bryk and Schneider took the bold step of seeking empirical evidence that links trust and academic achievement. In doing so, they drew on ten years of work in Chicago schools during a period of sweeping reform, using quantitative and qualitative research, longitudinal case studies of elementary schools, and in-school observation and interviews. For the purpose

of their study, they suggested four vital signs for identifying and assessing trust in schools: respect, competence, personal regard and integrity. They concluded that trust is the “connective tissue” that holds improving schools together.

The second stage of the Framework helps participants understand the diverse ways members define community and co-construct a new, shared understanding about community. It encourages members to develop a shared purpose for their work together that can hold their individual visions, current knowledge, and data from other sources. This shared purpose can keep the members connected during the tough times. This stage also asks members to claim personal visions for the issue at hand, and asks how their gifts and capacities will be developed and contributed throughout the project. The members are asked to analyze data, consider best practices and select a community initiative and action plan that would address their chosen issue. Creating shared purpose and held the organizations avoid wasting energy due to misalignment of purposes and visions. Additionally, it helped to assure that the hard work of individuals translated into team effort. By contrast, when the team becomes more aligned, a commonality of direction emerges, and individuals’ energies harmonize. In essence, individuals do not sacrifice their personal interests to the larger team vision; rather, the shared vision becomes an extension of their personal visions.

Stage Three of the Framework helps participants build allies in the community who will become an ongoing part of the learning community, and act in concert with the members’ shared purpose and vision. Members are called to notice how their capacity to work together is strengthened, how they practice “collective leadership,” and how they hold each other accountable. Members are asked to make a deep commitment to stay

engaged in the initiative and to continue learning. Members are asked to help implement the initiative, cooperate with partners, assess whether the objectives are being met, and adapt the action plan as needed. The fellowship's experience of deep relationship is extended to others in the community.

Stage Four helps participants to reflect on the lessons learned from the group experience and to develop resources to embed the work into the fabric of the community. The group is asked to be intentional about creating a process or structure that will support its continuing work, while inviting and nurturing new members into the initiative. Members are asked to identify how they will personally be involved in sustaining the work, while continuing to develop leadership capacity and share lessons with new leaders. Finally, members are asked to work with community partners, funders and others to sustain the work toward the shared vision. Following the Framework moves the initiative from being one more project to being a sustained initiative embraced by the larger community; it leads to a level of stewardship that becomes a way of life for those involved.

Literature Summary

This interdisciplinary literature review is informed by literature in educational administration, and strengthened by literature in community and developmental psychology, urban planning, and the field of social work. It serves as a framework for this study, and as the foundation for understanding youth adult partnerships focused on community change issues. The literature identified and highlighted the progressions from youth development to youth adult partnerships. The progressions outline the importance of better understanding youth adult

partnerships by illuminating its transformational potential. The transformational potential of youth adult partnerships is illuminated through the intersections of positive youth development and educational administration and educational administration and community leadership development. Both intersections provide an avenue to discuss the role of educational leaders as proponents in processes of positive youth development, youth adult partnerships, and community leadership development.

The above goals were accomplished by examining the historical moments in youth development, youth leadership development, and youth civic engagement. Academicians, community workers, educational practitioners, positive youth development and youth leadership development professionals identified the three above mentioned areas as key components for community change.

Lastly, this literature review helped illuminate the concept of youth as leaders within communities today, rather than, youth in training to be the leaders of tomorrow. This concept is an important component in the ongoing process to inform communities and stakeholders of the power of intergenerational differences, as well as, similarities in the community change process. Ultimately this research could serve as a roadmap for organizations and individuals interested in establishing youth adult partnerships to address community change.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Approach

Marshall and Rossman (1999) explain that the selection of a particular research approach can assist the researcher in selecting an appropriate method for data collection and analysis. The foundation of subsequent assumptions and objectives of the research are therefore based on the research approach (p. 105). My objective was to understand and describe the skills and capacities used by the leadership teams of three community based organizations to develop youth adult partnerships that focused on community change issues. More specifically, a case-based approach anchored with a simultaneous triangulated mixed method design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009) was used to explore the following research questions:

1. What are the necessary skills and capacities required to generate youth and adult partnerships focused on community change issues?
2. How have youth and adult partnerships been used to address community change issues?
3. How does “place” define the nature of youth adult partnerships that focused on community change issues?

The following four philosophical assumptions posited by Creswell (1998) helped frame and guide the structure and implementation of this research project. First, I focused on listening and learning from the “lived experiences” of the participants. Second, I was careful to suspend and avoid passing judgment on

participants' statements regarding how they perceived or experienced particular aspects of youth adult partnerships. Third, I was aware that my participant's perceptions of youth adult partnerships were based on their individual experiences. Fourth, I understood that each participant's experiences and preparation was perceived based on the meaning that they attributed to their set of youth adult partnership experiences. I used the above precepts as a methodological guide. This guide was particularly helpful in the narration about the meaning that the leadership teams of the three community-based organizations ascribed to their understanding and development of youth adult partnerships.

The qualitative research approach allowed me to observe, record, and collect data as situations unfolded in an unobtrusive manner. I understood that I had very little control over events at each community-based organization. Therefore, my ability to adapt to and contend with the real-life context and difficulties of technically distinct situations was crucial (Yin, 1984). Additionally, the qualitative approach provided participants with an opportunity to share their experiences and provide in depth descriptions. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups and field notes provided opportunities for thick descriptions and the development of complex and interrelated themes that uncovered meaning, understanding, through interpretive explanations (Geertz, 1973). This inquiry was largely based on group interactions and group dynamics; therefore, it was important to use an approach that was both fluid and flexible.

Collective Case Based Inquiry

The decision to use a collective case-based approach is directly linked to the nature of the research questions for this study. The research questions were purposefully designed to explore and provide in depth descriptions about the “how” and “why” as they relate to the phenomenon of youth adult partnerships. A collective case-based inquiry provided the necessary space to explore community-based organizations as bounded systems with functioning and integrative parts, working toward a specific purpose (Stake, 1995). A case-based inquiry also provided opportunities to understand the nature of the case, its historical background, the physical setting, social contexts, economic conditions, political environments, and the connection with other cases (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1980; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1984).

The above aspects of a case-based approach were important to understand because they contributed to the concept of place. Place is defined as the physical and geographical location of the participating community-based organizations. More specifically, “place” accounts for the bounded social system that operates within spaces, territories, and distinguishable boundaries (Stake, 1995). Place also incorporates the nature of historical background, physical settings, social and economic contexts, and social and political environments, as it connects with the case (Stake, 1995). The concept of place was important to this study, because it pointed to specific expectations associated and aligned with the race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, socioeconomic, multi-lingual, and other needs of the physical and geographic location in which these partnerships were developed. Ultimately,

“place” accounted for the degree of intentional inclusion or acknowledgement of social, cultural, and political capital needed to sustain youth adult partnerships.

Data Collection

Data collection activities at each community-based organization included two focus groups composed of members of the leadership team, and a one-on-one interview with the executive director. There were a total of six focus group interviews and three one-on-one interviews. Each interview was transcribed. Data collection was extended to include archival data from the community-based organizations. The archival data contributed in the development of the background and specific contexts of the participating community-based organizations and their work within their communities.

This inquiry was not intended to be predictive in nature nor was the intent to provide results that lead to generalizations. Instead, this inquiry was designed to be descriptive and exploratory in nature. Therefore, the research question were clearly developed and framed to explore the meaning of the lived experiences of participants. Additionally, the research questions were crafted to guide and direct data collection and analysis. Finally, the research questions also helped to reduce the personal views of the researcher as well as increased the process of reflexivity.

In preparation for data collection, I used the three research questions as the framework to develop the interview questions. The interview questions were shared with the evaluation team for feedback. The comments were incorporated, and changes were made to assure that the questions were aligned with the study.

Focus group interview. Focus groups, or group interviews were used in this study. A focus group is essentially a group discussion focused on a single theme (Krueger, 1988). The goal of focus group interviews was to create candid conversations that addressed the research questions.

This study used a version of the traditional double layer focus group design. The traditional double layer focus group design develops two separate themes or focal points and provides for a cross comparison of the two. Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest that focus groups provide participants the opportunity to, “listen to others opinions and understanding to form their own” (p.114). This notion fully supported the phenomenological intent and the objective of this study-to understand the individual and collective perceptions, essential structure and meaning of the lived experiences of the leadership team and executive director at each organization. Focus group interviews also provided space to explore emerging themes uncovered from archival data from KLCC longitudinal study. Emerging themes were explored in greater depth during the focus group interviews. Participants were asked to elaborate on specific aspects to better develop and illuminate the emergent themes. Each focus group lasted approximately 90-minutes.

During the focus groups, I worked to establish a permissive environment that encouraged participants to share perceptions, and point of views. Special care was given to avoid the feeling of pressure for participants to reach a consensus. In creating such an environment, I also increased the likelihood that participants would share their feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about their

experiences in their responses to the research questions. Madriz (2000) explains focus groups in the follow way:

Focus group interviews provide the potential for a safe environment where participants have opportunities to exchange ideas, share experiences, and express opinions in the company of people from the same socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender backgrounds (p.835).

Additionally, this environment fostered the type of group interaction that often generated valuable insights, ideas, comments, and increased the frequency in which participants responded (Creswell, 1994). Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) explain that focus groups provide for an intersection of teaching and learning, interpretive inquiry, and assorted political views that create opportunities for synergistic exchanges of ideas. Furthermore, when focus groups achieved the above-mentioned level of interaction, they also provided in depth descriptions of events, and a combined interpretive process of memories shared by individuals. Lastly, the focus groups linked the historical recollections and collective memory of the group (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). This was particularly important in explaining the skills and capacities that the participants found important to develop youth adult partnerships for community change.

Each focus group interview contained questions that helped identify trends, themes and patterns that helped to understand and illuminate the research questions. During the focus group interviews participants were presented with three separate scenarios (Appendix B) that may or may not have represented their experience within their community or experiences with their community-based

organization. The scenarios depicted social conditions that affect communities across the United States and closely resemble social conditions present in the participant's communities. The scenarios served as a point of reference for participants to frame their understanding of the research topic and questions. The scenarios also provided an opportunity to discuss difficult community issues without directly implicating their own community. Additionally, the scenarios provided examples or connecting situations for youth participants to frame their answers to the research questions. This strategy was especially helpful for younger participants. It allowed them to frame their experiences as it related to community change work. After each scenario, participants were asked a set of framing questions followed by several probing questions. Each focus group interview was audio recorded for transcription purposes and video recorded to provide the researcher an opportunity to revisit the discussion.

One-on-one interviews. Interviews were selected as the primary method for data collection in this research. The interview was selected for its ability to generate rich, thick descriptions of the participant's experiences and perceptions. Additionally, it provided space to clarify and probe for greater understanding and additional information. Interviews allowed opportunities to capture the individual's perspectives about particular events (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Although interviews provided certain benefits and strengths, there were also limitations. One limitation included the level of openness, clarity, and perspective about events. Additionally, participants vary in their level of articulation of

events. This was especially present when speaking with youth. Additionally, it was clear that the quality of data gathered during interviews were also a result of researcher skill levels in the interview process. Lastly, interviews did not always occur in the most optimum environment. Therefore, it was necessary for the researcher to remain both fluid and flexible to maintain free interaction and openness from participants. The executive director of each organization participated in one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The interviews helped to understand how each community-based organization went about the work of community change and implementing youth adult partnerships as a collective leadership strategy.

Data Analysis

I used verbatim transcriptions from audiotapes of the focus groups and one-on-one interviews to develop individual case studies for the leadership teams of each of the three community based organizations. This approach proved to be an effective way to segment and make sense of the data. The structured protocol helped to frame the focus group and interviews in a manner conducive for conducting a cross case analysis of the three case studies. It also aided in uncovering multiple, “patterns and themes that cut across individual experiences” (Patton, 2002, p.57).

This inquiry relied heavily on the qualitative data approaches used in this study. The transcripts were divided into groups of text segments, which were generated from focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews. Each text segment was examined to determine its meaning or connection with particular

research questions. This process was used to uncover themes or broad categories that described the skills and capacities to generate youth adult partnerships. As themes and categories surfaced, I interpreted the meaning of the data by reflecting on how the findings coincided with, 1) the theoretical framework, 2) existing research, 3) by stating personal reflections about the significance of the lessons learned during the study, and 4) by drawing out larger, more abstract meanings (Creswell, 1998).

To identify significant statements and ideas around themes, the data was funneled through the following process; 1) data acquisition, 2) relevant extraction, 3) data transformation, 4) relevant content, 5) expert analysis, and 6) insights. The funneling process aided in identifying significant statements or ideas. Additionally, the funneling process linked clusters of statements and ideas around themes. I was then able to synthesize the clusters into textual and structured descriptions of the leadership team's perceptions and experiences part of a case.

Content Analysis

This study utilized the process of early data analysis as described by Miles and Huberman (1994). Early data analysis was an ongoing and recurring process of analysis as data was collected. This process was effective because it provided opportunities to collect new data to fill gaps, or test new understandings that emerged during analysis. It also encouraged a constant cross-check of researcher assumptions and biases. Early analysis helped to cycle back and forth between new and existing data. This process often helped to generate strategies for collecting new data. That is, it helped to reframe how the research questions were

posed during the focus groups and interviews. It helped to understand how to segue into probing questions and fine tuned the process of creating and allowing pregnant pauses which allowed participants the freedom to think more deeply about their responses without feeling pressure to answer quickly. Finally, early analysis reduced the amount of data to be analyzed at the end of the study.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) a unit should reveal information relevant to the study and stimulate the reader to think beyond the particular bit of information. It should also be the “smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself—it must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out” (p. 345).

Category construction was part of the analysis that began with the first reading of transcripts, field notes, and other documents. As I read through portions of the transcripts, I made notations that were particularly interesting, potentially relevant, or important to the study. After working through the data in this manner I went back to the data and observed the comments and began to group them together. As I moved through each transcript I repeated the process of making comments of bits of data that stood out and returned to group the comments. I compared each set of grouped comments from the data sets, compared them to the previous list of comments, and merged the list into a master list of concepts. The master list of concepts reflected the recurring themes or patterns in the study. The categories that appear in the study met the following criteria; reflected the purpose of the study, were exhaustive, mutually exclusive,

sensitizing, and conceptually congruent. I utilized cross-analysis of the data to assure that the analysis went beyond mere categorical or taxonomic integration of the data in an effort to develop a theory.

Developing a Theory

The data analysis moved through four levels 1) basic levels that were organized chronologically, 2) descriptive interpretation, 3) a concrete description of observable data to 4) more abstract level that involved the use of concepts to describe the phenomenon of youth and adult partnerships. This process consisted of systematically classifying data into some sort of schema made of categories and themes. The categories described data as well as interpreted the data. The analysis also involved making inferences, developing models, and generating a theory.

The process of thinking about the data or theorizing was a step toward drawing inferences about future activity. This cognitive process of developing and manipulating abstract categories and relationships among the categories segued into the development of abstractions across cases (Le Compte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993). These abstractions provided a general explanation that fit each of the individual cases (Yin, 1994). Finally, I looked carefully at the complex configuration of processes within each case, to understand the local dynamics.

Participant Selection

Patton (2002) advised that “when a person, group, organization, or country is the unit of analysis qualitative methods involve observation and description focused directly on the unit” (p.228). The leadership teams of three community-

based organizations focused on establishing youth adult partnerships for the purpose of community change were the unit of analysis. I wished to be able to “say something at the end of the study” about the skills and capacities of the each leadership team to generate youth and adult partnerships (Patton, 2002, p.229).

In the fall of 2002, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation launched the Kellogg Leadership for Community Change (KLCC) initiative. KLCC is a leadership initiative that marked a shift from the development of individual fellows within communities, to the development of groups of fellows within communities. KLCC was an evolutionary and innovative component of leadership development because it emphasized leadership development as a process for creating community change through the collective action among individual leaders. This form of collective action also placed emphasis on the participation of the nontraditional leaders and focused on their ability to work across cultural and ethnic boundaries (Hughes, 2005).

Each community-based organization formed a leadership team responsible for recruiting youth and adults committed to embracing youth adult partnerships and working toward a particular community change issue. The leadership team also identified potential local and regional funders who could support and sustain the community change efforts of the community-based organization. Additionally, the leadership team created plans to develop their own leadership capacity and created an action plan to work collectively with community members. Finally, the leadership teams worked to identify the lessons learned from their group experiences and worked to transfer those lessons and experiences in ways that citizens could learn from them, by creating a process and

structure that supported the work of community change. These communities shared the goal of improving or generating youth adult partnerships, but differed vastly in terms of their specific educational challenges and individual membership. For example, Roca faced high dropout rates of minority youth from the public schools, as well as, immigrant right issues; the Benton Harbor community was recently recovering from the social unrest and racial tension of previous years; youth and adults in MICasa, worked to improve community and middle school relations by infusing student interactions with meaningful cultural traditions.

Purposeful Sample. Based on the above descriptions of the leadership teams' duties and responsibilities, I identified the leadership teams as the most appropriate sample population to understand the research questions. This purposeful sample consisted of two groups, youth/young adults and adults. The youth ages ranged from 12 to 17, and young adults age ranged from 18 to 24. Adults included anyone 25 and older. Positive youth development literature explains that an appropriate range for youth serving programs is between the ages of 12 to 24 (Benson, 1997; Wheeler, 2006). The distinction between youth and young adult was determined based on the levels of social independence as described in positive youth development literature. Youth at the beginning of the age range were old enough to operate at increasing levels of independence and maturity. Additionally, youth proclivity to "grow up" aided in their quest for independence and coincided with an increasing level of developmental maturity that allow them to benefit from youth leadership training programs. The decision to extend the latter age range to twenty-four is based on those individuals

eligibility to be claimed as dependents by parents and guardians (Benson, 1997; Mohammad & Wheeler, 2001).

The sample consisted of 18 participants, 6 from each of the three community-based organizations. The leadership team at each site represented the sample. The leadership teams consisted of 1) a youth coach and an adult coach 2) a youth evaluator and an adult evaluator; 3) a program director (adult); and 4) a community-based organization executive director. Each member of the leadership team was active with the KLCC project at their organization for three years or more, participated in youth adult partnership activities at the community-based organization, and was available to participate in focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews during the site visit.

Selection of community-based organization. The three community-based organizations in this study were selected from a pool of eleven community-based organizations that participated in the W. K. Kellogg Foundation funded longitudinal project entitled Kellogg Leadership for Community Change (KLCC). The KLCC initiative was a project conducted over a six-year period that focused on collective leadership development among nontraditional community leaders interested in social issues in their communities. The three community-based organizations were chosen based on their diverse geographic locations, their strong commitment to youth adult partnerships, and a higher number of members that were consistently involved and engaged in the longitudinal project. Additionally, each community-based organization had a historical tradition and record of youth and adults working together with special focus on positive youth

development as one approach used to address social issues in their community. The determining factors for the selection of the three organizations were 1) their participation in the KLCC session committed to developing youth adult partnerships, 2) a sustained and documented historical tradition of addressing community issues, and 3) vision and mission dedicated to developing youth and adult interactions in families, communities, and the organization.

The three community based organizations selected for this study were located in urban areas from three distinct regions of the United States, 1) Boys and Girls Club of America Teen Center located in Benton Harbor, Michigan; 2) MiCasa Center for Women and Families located in Denver, Colorado; and 3) Roca Chelsea, Massachusetts. Each site had an extended history, mission, proven record of youth and adults working together to affect change within their communities.

Ethical Considerations

I understand that in any research study, ethical issues relating to protection of the participants are of vital concern (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). As such, the researcher is responsible for informing and protecting participants. Therefore, each participant was enlisted on a voluntary basis. They were informed of the purpose of the study, the central issue under exploration, and the possibility of their responses being published under a pseudonym. Although it was anticipated that no serious ethical threats were posed to any of the participants or their well being, the study employed safety measures to further secure and protect them.

Each participant signed a consent form which indicated that they participated voluntarily. Each participant was informed of their rights and interest prior to their participation. Names and other identifying characteristics have been changed to maintain confidentiality of participants. All data was stored in a locked and secure location to which only the researcher had access.

Trustworthiness and Validity

I was a member of the national evaluation team for a longitudinal project being funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, MI entitled Kellogg Leadership for Community Change initiative (KLCC) from the fall of 2006 until the spring of 2009. During that time, I developed interview protocols for the one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews, and assisted in the design and implementation of data collection instruments. I have also participated in and contributed to numerous site visits, conference calls, and meetings and data analysis.

In the spirit of qualitative research, my goal was to tell an objective story. However, considering that this objective story was grounded in my own lived experiences and realities, it inevitably contains a minor degree of subjectivity. In an effort to compensate for such subjectivity, I used verbatim transcripts and descriptions of participant's accounts, direct quotes and quotations from video and audio recordings and triangulation that included cross-checking of gathered information and conclusions. Multiple data sources were utilized as a form of triangulation of the data to better understand the studied phenomenon.

Investigator triangulation was also applied throughout this study. Multiple

investigators reviewed all collected data. Finally, participant response and discussion of the researcher's interpretations were used for verification. Each community-based organization received copies of the audio and video recordings of focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

I used reflexivity, self-awareness, and critical self-reflection to address my potential biases and predispositions. Additionally, I addressed the interpretive validity by extending the data collection process to include original text or participant stories to illuminate the research questions. I used several types of member checks to improve the accuracy, credibility and validity or trustworthiness of data analysis and interpretation. During this study participants had an opportunity to assess or respond to the adequacy of data and preliminary results. Although, clearly fixed truths are elusive, a level of inter-rater reliability was sought to confirm the interpretation of the data. To accomplish the above goal, this project used the expertise of an advisory board composed of individuals that are part of the KLCC initiative. The advisory board functioned as a member check for interpretive and descriptive validity. The advisory board consisted of an individual from the evaluation team, the coordinating organization, and one from each of the selected sites. This project also relied heavily of the expertise of the individuals on the dissertation committee. Special attention was given to the design of this study to reduce participant fatigue, stress, and any misunderstanding of questions on the research instruments.

I am clear that the nature or intent of qualitative research is not to generalize the findings, but to "form a unique interpretation of events" (Creswell, 1994,

p.159). Additionally, the ability to generalize field research in qualitative studies is challenging for at least three specific reasons, 1) due to the personal nature and influence of the researcher, 2) the comprehensive and in-depth understanding gained by the researcher is often less understood by others, and 3) generalizations are difficult to attain within specific observed subject matter (Babbie, 1992).

The use of focus group interviews was also carefully considered. Focus group interviews involve creating a non-threatening environment for participants. Participants in this study included individuals from youth serving community-based organizations that were committed to developing youth and adult partnerships. However, a commitment to a particular leadership development approach does not erase the existence of varying levels of power or expertise. Giroux (1981) and Polite (1992) suggest that rapport be developed between the researcher and participants to compensate or lower the resistance to power and the mistrust of authority figures or individuals associated with any authority structure. Additionally, in an effort to create an environment where participants felt comfortable to speak freely, adults that held obvious positions of power such as supervisors or program directors within the organization did not participate in the focus groups. Adults that had daily interactions with youth and served as youth coaches or youth evaluators were the only adults that participated in the focus groups with youth. Adults in the above capacities were often described by youth as “cool.” The idea of a “cool” adult translates to an adult that youth view as advocates that are accessible and approachable. Potential adult participants were

selected from a pool of youth coaches and youth evaluators that worked with youth as adult partners.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Three Community Based Organization Case Studies

The objective of this research was to understand the central research question, “What skills and capacities were utilized by leadership teams of three community-based organizations to develop youth and adult partnerships that focused on addressing community change issues?” To better understand the skills and capacities to generate the complex phenomenon of youth adult partnerships, I focused on the leadership team of each community-based organizations. The leadership team at each organization purposefully worked to generate youth adult partnerships. The findings presented in this chapter illuminate what was expressed as the necessary skills and capacities to generate youth adult partnerships. Furthermore, this chapter identifies key components necessary for youth adult partnerships to address particular community issues.

The first section of this chapter presents a case study of each community based organization. Each community based case study is to provide insight to addresses the research question: How does “place” define the nature of the youth adult partnerships focused on community change? The case study addresses the research question by providing insight into the following areas: understanding the complexities of community context, organizational context and youth adult partnerships within the organization. A table containing demographics information of the three community based organizations is provided to frame and focus the research question. Table 1, Demographics is included to help understand the composition of participants at each organization that participated in the youth adult partnership work. Of special note is the balance of gender across the

organizations. Additionally, while not surprising, the demographics of the participants in the youth adult partnership work was dependent upon the composition of the community. Therefore, race/ethnicity within each organization may not be diverse. However, across the three (3) organizations there is broad race/ethnicity representation.

Table 2: Demographics

	BENTON HARBOR	MICASA	ROCA
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	50.0%	47.8%	42.9%
Female	50.0%	52.2%	57.1%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>			
African-American	80%	0%	9.5%
Latino	0%	60.9%	57.1%
Native American	0%	4.3%	0%
Multiracial/ethnic	10.0%	4.3%	4.8%
White	10.0%	26.1%	23.8%
<i>Current Work Situation</i>			
Full Time Employment	10.0%	26.1%	42.9%
Not Employed	0%	0%	9.5%
Volunteer	0%	0%	4.8%
Post-Secondary	20.0%	30.4%	0%

Table 2 (continued)

Post-Secondary Student	20.0%	30.4%	0%
K-12 Student	70%	43.5%	33.3%
Adults	10.0%	26.0%	67.0%
Youth	90.0%	74.0%	33.3%

Findings were generated from data collected during focus group interviews with the leadership team, one-on-one interviews with the executive directors of each organization, and archival data for each organization. This chapter is meant to provide an understanding of and familiarize the reader with the history of organization, an understanding of the community each organization serves, and the core programs provided to the community by each organization.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked: How does “place” define the nature of the youth adult partnerships focused on community change?

Findings 1

Place matters. Place and the understanding of community identity, values, and practices help individuals become more aware of how to affect positive change in their communities. Identification with “place” and its ecology helps to develop a concept of “learning how to be.” Learning how to be helped the leadership team to navigate and negotiate their position in “places” within the community. Additionally, it helped

It is within the concept of “place” that individuals learn how to navigate politics, economic systems, and negotiate resources. Additionally, it is in “place” that individuals learn values, politics, relationships, and concepts of how to improve upon circumstances and situations. Improving circumstances and situations was explained as learning how to nurture ideas, make decisions, and build strong communities based on collective dialogue with community members and community based organizations. The following case studies for each community based organization provides the insight of how each organization approaches, develops, teaches and provides training and resources for community members to impact community change.

Boys and Girls Club of America Teen Center, Benton Harbor, MI

Understanding Complexities of Community Context

Benton Harbor is located on the Southwest corner of the state of Michigan. During the early 1900s, the city of Benton Harbor was home of one of largest fresh fruit markets in the United States. The area once enjoyed the prosperity generated by the farming industry, as well as, serving as the headquarters for Whirlpool, at the time the largest US manufacturer of appliances. The city was established as a result of the innovation and vision of Eleazar Morton. In the 1830s, Morton bought 160 acres of land in a portion of present day Benton Charter Township. Morton and his son Henry planted orchards and prospered in the sale of fruit. A market was established for the convenience of farmers on the East Side of the Saint Joseph River. Henry, Charles Hull and prominent resident Sterne Brunson, built a mile-long Canal through the wetland between the river and the future Benton Harbor. The town that developed from this venture was named Brunson Harbor. In 1865, Brunson Harbor was renamed Benton

Harbor in honor of Thomas Hart Benton, a Missouri Senator who is credited with helping Michigan in its plea to become a state.

Benton Harbor flourished for nearly a century. The town's population grew largely as a result to meet the employment demands of the appliance and other industries.

Many of the new residents were African-Americans from the South in search of better employment and equal opportunity. The area also became a popular destination for many tourist and attracted many new businesses and industries. Unfortunately, in the 1960s, Benton Harbor began to decline. Industries and residents moved out of the city. Many blame the decline on poor race relations and other inner-city issues that plagued Benton Harbor and the rest of nation. Benton Harbor is separated by the St. Joseph River which winds its way from northern Indiana through the hilly croplands of southwestern Michigan, and eventually empties into Lake Michigan. Although at its widest point, the St. Joseph River spans 450 feet across, the gap is dwarfed by the distance between the two communities that it cuts between. South of the river on a hill is St. Joseph, a town of nine thousand that resembles the quaint tourist town of the New England coast. Its downtown has several boutiques, antique shops, galleries, and small clothing stores. It's a short walk from the downtown business district to Lake Michigan's coast. The town is made up of both blue-collar families and professionals, many of whom work at the international corporate headquarters or Whirlpool. However, the most defining characteristic of the town is its racial makeup of over 95 percent white.

Benton Harbor lies just across the river. It has a population of nearly twelve thousand. It is often referred to as the "Twin City" of St. Joseph. Technically speaking, the term should be altered from "twin cities" to "fraternal twin cities." Although they

were developed or conceived at the same time, from the same swath of land, and then split or separated, by the St. Joseph River, the two cities similarities end there. Residents of Benton Harbor are over 92 percent Black and poor. The typical family income of Benton Harbor residents is one fourth that of a family in St. Joseph.

The decline continued until the late 1980s. In 1986 Benton Harbor became the focus of state government attention and was designated as an enterprise zone. The enterprise zone provides substantial incentives for business location and has become the basis for the renewal of Benton Harbor. While Benton Harbor is experiencing somewhat of an economic awakening, the city is still sluggish in reducing many of the ills created during previous decades. Unemployment is high and many of the 11,000 residents, over ninety percent African American, still struggle. Nearly 70 percent of the children in Benton Harbor live in poverty and adult educational attainment is low, with slightly more than 60 percent holding high school diplomas. Many residents lack access to either a home telephone or a vehicle and there is no public transportation.

Understanding complexities of Organization context

Although Benton Harbor still faces many obstacles, the Benton Harbor Boys and Girls Club of America began harnessing the energy of youth to power the movement of social change. The Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor first opened its doors at Berrien Homes Public Housing in Benton Harbor in 1999. In June 2001 they obtained a lease on the former Bard Elementary School from Benton Harbor Area Schools and relocated to its current site at 1200 East Main St., Benton Harbor, MI 49022. In 2002 the Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor obtained the use of Benton Harbor Area School's Charles Gray Teen Center, located at 801 9th Street, Benton Harbor. The teen center or

“The Club” as it is affectionately called, was established with the focus to provide local youth, particularly teens, a safe haven from the streets and a constructive place in which to begin preparing themselves for the future by providing development opportunities for young people ages 12 to 18 years old, the Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor Michigan (BGCBH) offers local youth a diversion from the grim realities of their community.

Considering the physical, emotional, cultural, social needs and interests of girls and boys, and recognizing developmental principles, the BGCBH offers program activities in five program areas: Character and leadership development, Academic and career development, Health and life Skills, Performing and visual arts, and Sports, Fitness and Recreation.

Core programs

Character & leadership development. Programs in character and leadership Development empower youth to support and influence their Club and community, sustain meaningful relationships with others, develop a positive self-image, participate in the democratic process and respect their own and others’ cultural identities.

Education and career development. Programs in education and career development enable youth to become proficient in basic educational disciplines, apply learning to everyday situations and embrace technology to achieve success in a career.

Health and life skills. Programs in health and life skills develop young people’s capacity to engage in positive behaviors that nurture their own well-being, set personal goals and live successfully as self-sufficient adults.

The arts: Programs in the arts enable youth to develop their creativity and cultural awareness through knowledge and appreciation of the visual arts, crafts, performing arts and creative writing.

Sports, fitness and recreation. Programs in sports, fitness and recreation develop fitness, positive use of leisure time, skills for stress management, appreciation for the environment and social skills.

Computer lab and technology center. The state of the art computer lab at Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor has 22 computers that are networked together with internet connectivity. Members learn a wide range of subjects in computers and technology. They learn Microsoft office applications such as PowerPoint, Word, Excel and Access. They also learn about the different parts required to assemble a computer.

Understanding Complexities of KLCC Youth Adult Partnerships

Along with the national mission of the Boys and Girls Club to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens; the Boys and Girls Club Teen Center of Benton Harbor has embraced KLCC as a tool that will increase the capacity of local individuals and organizations that are already engaged in social change work. It also aims to widen the pool of youth and adults partnering in these efforts, and encourage their pursuit of formal leadership positions within various sectors of the community.

The Boys and Girls Club Teen Center of Benton Harbor has seen their mission come to fruition in yet another way when it began its participation in the Kellogg Foundation's leadership for community change project (KLCC). The Benton Harbor Leadership for Community Change Project began in the fall of 2004. The fellowship

chose education as the forum to affect the change needed in Benton Harbor. All programming at the Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor Teen center became models of “youth adult partnerships” it included the forming of the after-school programs and the daily schedule to accommodate the character of the leadership programs. There were also several education initiatives underway (parenting program, after-school tutoring, after-school loft program, and youth in government). The BHLCCP has helped to remodel the Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor Teen Center. Youth have long been the catalyst for change throughout the history of Benton Harbor. They realize that they must partner with adults that embrace similar spirits of activism and change to succeed. The mission of KLCC at Benton Harbor is to “build youth and adult partnerships that give Benton Harbor youth hope for tomorrow by empowering them today.” The Club has served as a catalyst to cause change in Benton Harbor. It has aligned youth and adults in a collective fashion that allows both groups to learn from each other. The youth realize that adults can serve as more than people in charge, but as resources and allies that can aid them in making changes in their community. The adults have come to see youth as individuals that care about their community and are willing to do something to improve it, rather than as young people with problems that cause problems.

The Benton Harbor KLCC project has addressed some of the social conditions that currently plague their community by mobilizing their members to inform the community of the issues and providing them with viable solutions. Alarming low school achievement and graduation rates have increased the incidence of real poverty, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and other social ills for many youth in Benton Harbor, MI. To address these dilemmas, community members have partnered with city

government, local schools, and local/national businesses to offer supplemental leadership development programming. They have managed to engage city officials in discussions about concerns and provide suggestions for solutions. As a result of their engagement they are now considered in decisions that affect their community. Additionally, they are often contacted by members of the city council, school boards, and businesses for insight on issues that affect the community.

Youth are training other youth to do service work. They are beginning to develop partnerships that allow collective leadership development between neighboring communities. Many of the youth that participated in this program have graduated from high school and have gone on to college and remain connected to the work in Benton Harbor. They visit regularly and serve as mentors to those that are still in school.

All programming at the Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor Teen center became models of “youth adult partnerships” it included the forming of the after-school programs and the daily schedule to accommodate character development and the leadership development programs. There were also several education initiatives underway (parenting program, after-school tutoring, after-school loft program, and youth in government). The Benton Harbor Leadership for Community Change Project (BHLCCP) has helped to remodel the Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor Teen Center. Youth have long been the catalyst for change throughout the history of Benton Harbor. They realize that they must partner with adults that embrace similar spirits of activism and change to succeed (Ligi Benton Harbor leadership team).

MiCasa Resource Center for Women and Families, Denver, CO

Understanding Complexities of Community Context

“One of the most profound things is that youth are often already leaders and have skills related to leadership and simply need opportunities and/or support and encouragement to display those traits. As one Fellow put it, “...the youth are very good. It’s amazing when you are real and get to the point, when you are not judging, and really listening and asking the right questions that it brings out the best. For those youth who are less outgoing and not currently at a place to step up as leaders, merely presenting leadership opportunities is not enough. Often they

need tools and resources in order to fully implement their gifts and use them to create community change.” (Member of Leadership Team)

Located high in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, Denver is well known as the mile high city. Denver is a vibrant city with 300 days of annual sunshine, year-round adventure and breathtaking views of the Rocky Mountains. The City has long been a beacon of hope and a place of opportunity for many since its origin in 1858. Today, Denver continues to be a magnet for individuals in search of hope and opportunity. The City has grown to over half-million residents, over a third are Latino. The strong Latino presence has made Denver the most diverse city in the state. Latino culture is intertwined throughout the city; it is present in the lively music, delectable dining, eclectic arts collections, and a growing educational system. Unfortunately, while Denver provides opportunities for some, others search for their chance for success. The median income for residents in the city is \$40,900. But, 20 percent of people still live in poverty. At 23 percent, Latinos have the highest poverty rate in the city. Families struggle to attain jobs that pay livable wages and work to overcome low levels of educational attainment. Many Latino residents face high dropout rates, increased levels of teen pregnancy, and decreased options for affordable housing. The schools served by Mi Casa have between 93 to 96 percent of students meeting federal poverty standards and qualify for federal free or reduced lunch. A quarter to over half of those students are learning English as a second language. The effort of the fellowship is focused on working to empower youth and adult allies to improve education.

Understanding complexities of Organizational context

MiCasa Resource Center for Women and Families was founded in 1976. The mission of the organization is to “provide quality employment and education programs that promote self-sufficiency for primarily low-income, Latina women and youth.” The organization was started by eight Head Start mothers that lived in West Denver. From the outset the organization sought to advocate for the needs of Latina women and their families by providing educational and employment services. Meeting in a donated space they called Mi Casa (My House), the women enlisted the support of the community to start classes, focusing on life skills training for primarily low-income Latina clientele. Gradually, Mi Casa added programs to meet the evolving needs of its constituency. While still offering basic life skills training, the organization began offering advice on starting a new business, dropout intervention for teenage youth, and health education. With these new programs, Mi Casa expanded their target population beyond Latinas to include youth and males. Today, the organization’s clientele includes males and females ranging in age from teenager to senior citizen. Its programming is diverse, with career counseling, sex education, teen pregnancy and dropout prevention, employment referral, GED preparation and computer training just a sampling of the services offered (Extending the reach of youth development through civic activism: Research results from the youth leadership development initiative. Volume 2, December, 2003). MiCasa’s efforts to make connections between personal identity, culture and community, paired with empowering youth to take a leadership role in

finding solutions to local problems, is one way they seek to transform dreams and hopes of opportunities for success into realities. With KLCC, MiCasa plans to expand its current work, connecting to other decision-making institutions and creating new opportunities for youth and adults to work together as peers in social change.

MiCasa's mission has been to advance self-sufficiency for primarily low-income Latinas and youth. Over the years the mission of MiCasa has grown and now serves young people and women and men of all backgrounds. The center offers entrepreneurial training and small business planning; job training, placement and career counseling; GED and English as a Second Language classes; education, wellness and youth leadership activities; and community development.

MiCasa's efforts to make connections between personal identity, culture and community, paired with empowering youth to take a leadership role in finding solutions to local problems, is one way they seek to transform dreams and hopes of opportunities for success into realities. With KLCC, MiCasa expanded its current work, connected to other decision-making institutions and created new opportunities for youth and adults to work together as peers in social change.

MiCasa Resource Center for Women and Families is located in Denver's predominately Latino West-side community. The area has experienced a steady stream of Spanish-speaking immigrants for most of the twentieth century. The community suffers from high rates of poverty, economic underdevelopment, crime, and unemployment. Located near the economically revitalized downtown Denver, the area has become a prime choice of residence for newly affluent professional Anglos, and as an

unfortunate result of this gentrification, community residents face a housing crisis. The community has a long history of grassroots organizing, neighborhood activism and community development which continues today through the work of several prominent grassroots organizations that offer opportunities for Latino youth and promote awareness of public policy issues affecting the Latino community.

Core programs. Mi Casa operates three major program components-career, business, and youth development. Within youth development, Mi Casa operates the following programs:

The FENIX project. The FENIX project is designed to teach language pregnancy prevention and educate youth regarding the dangers of STD/HIV infection. The core of the FENIX strategy is the use of peer educators. These educators undergo intensive training in anatomy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and birth control. They make educational presentations and theater performances in area schools, recreation centers, churches, detention facilities, and community agencies.

Mi Carrera. Mi Carrera (My Career) is a dropout prevention and career development program for middle and high school age young women. Its dual goals are to reduce the dropout rate and increase the number of youth Latinas who go on to college or vocational school. The sessions focus on issues such as self-esteem, goal setting, career awareness, leadership development, and vocational and post-secondary educational research.

Mi Camino. Mi Camino (My Road) project increases the awareness of the importance of education and the knowledge of post-secondary educational opportunities for young pregnant and /or parenting mothers (ages 16-21). The project consists of

intensive GED preparation, workshops and trips to familiarize participants with post-secondary and vocational opportunities.

Understanding Complexities of KLCC Youth Adult Partnerships

The KLCC program was departure from other Mi Casa projects, which primarily focus on business, career, and educational development. Many of the Mi Casa staff were less experienced with working with youth development and were challenged by the parameter of avoiding conflict with agency policy regarding civic engagement by staff members. Mi Casa policy does not allow the agency to be involved in partisan political issues. Therefore, the KLCC project required staff to involve youth in social change in ways that required a renewed discussion and articulation of those policies. After working with the board of directors and executive director, the decision was made that these Mi Casa boundaries could be respected by engaging youth in local causes that did not require a partisan orientation, but focused on issue education and individual skill building of youth participants. After these discussions, staff realized that they had strayed from the organizational strengths in traditional youth development tenets-safety, relationship building, and youth participation-and moved into a narrowly defined civic activism. Mi Casa leaders decided to shift approaches. The result was a focus on civic activism that included leadership training, public speaking, and participation in local mobilization efforts around several issues (education reform, voter education and the building of the prison in the neighborhood). The Mi Casa KLCC has organized informational roundtables for community youth that offered a variety of perspectives on local, national and international concerns (U.S./Middle East relations, under-representation of people of

color in elected office, and police brutality). Mi Casa is now looking for ways to infuse the principles of youth adult partnerships into all youth programming.

Roca Chelsea, MA

Understanding Complexities of Community Context

Chelsea is one of the oldest cities in America. For close to 400 years immigrants have found their way to Chelsea and called it home. Chelsea defines itself as a landing point for immigrants but also understands the transitory nature of many new residents. As such, Chelsea has been at the forefront of recent immigration issues, both at the state and national levels. Much of their involvement centers around the growing population of undocumented residents and the city's recent decision to declare itself a "sanctuary city." Like those before them, the current trends in immigrants have unique needs that the city seems willing to embrace, but also share many common hopes of the waves of immigrants that preceded them.

Chelsea borders Boston and is situated in the heart of a major metropolitan area. Although Chelsea measures only 1.8 miles in land area, there are over 35,000 residents of varying ethnicities, incomes and religions occupy the space. The median income is approximately 60% of state median. The city is a popular destination for young professionals seeking refuge from the ever increasing rent and mortgage cost found in neighboring Boston. While Chelsea serves as home for young professionals and blue collar families, it is also home to individuals facing incredible obstacles to healthy lifestyles. A few of the obstacles to healthy living include prostitution, gang activity, involvement with drugs, elevated high school drop out rates, and teenage parents. As a result of the above mentioned obstacles, many of these individuals also have problems

with traditional education and therefore, place a lower premium on education. As such, nearly 30% of ninth grade students drop out.

A majority of Chelsea's residents are Latino, 33% are Caucasian and 12% are Southeast Asians. Chelsea is the fastest growing city in Suffolk County, and 28% of residents are under the age of 18. Chelsea has the lowest per capita income of any city in the Commonwealth (\$13,633), and in 2002 the teen birth rate was more than three times the state average. Although Roca is located in Chelsea, it serves individuals from at least two neighboring communities.

The City of Revere lies north of Chelsea, and is home to a large immigrant population. The 3,000 plus Cambodian refugees live near a growing number of African-American and Latin American immigrants, as well as recent newcomers from Bosnia, Somalia and Nigeria. The youth and families of Revere live in a community where the per capita income is nearly 20% lower than the Commonwealth's median per capita income 12% of the population lives in poverty and/or receives some form of public assistance the AIDS case rate is in the highest 90th percentile in the Commonwealth reported STD rates are among the highest in the Commonwealth and the nation teen pregnancy rates are 200% higher than the Commonwealth average 61% of 10th graders failed at least one portion of the MCAS exam in 2002.

The East Boston neighborhood of the City of Boston, which borders Chelsea to the southeast and Revere to the northeast, has always been home to immigrants, and in recent years, has experienced the most dramatic change in terms of a newcomer population. East Boston is home to many recent immigrants or refugees from throughout

South and Central America, as well as South East Asia, Haiti and Eastern Europe. Like Chelsea, these neighborhoods also face challenges.

East Boston's socioeconomic indicators reveal that 40% of its residents have not achieved a high school diploma or GED equivalent approximately 30% of East Boston's children live below the poverty level East Boston High School is one of Boston's inner city high schools selected for reform due to performance challenges cited by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Understanding Complexities of Organizational Context

Roca is a youth development organization in Chelsea, MA. It provides services and development opportunities to many marginalized youth in the Boston, MA area. The organization has a vision to aid young people in thriving and leading change by promoting justice and fostering opportunities to lead happy and healthy lives (Wheeler, 2006). The organization serves individuals that come across difficulty participating in traditional programs for school age youth, adult educational programs, job training, planned parenting, just to name a few. Roca means "rock" in Spanish. Roca's hopefulness and belief that we can "be the change" is the foundation of our commitment to young people and the communities in which we live. Launched from a single grant from the Teen Challenge Fund of Massachusetts, a passionate group of young people and adults started Roca in 1988 to address teen pregnancy prevention and violence in Chelsea.

Roca's theory of change focus is that young people thrive and lead change when they understand, practice, and live the values of belonging, generosity, competence, and independence. In order to help youth and young adults understand, practice and live these

values, we use five strategic methods: (a) relentless street work and outreach; (b) transformational relationships; (c) peacemaking circles; (d) opportunities for life skills, education, and employment; and (e) engaging the institutions that are a part of young people's lives.

These methods are used to engage young people and others in a process of change that enables them to increase positive knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors over time and in stages, which allow youth and young adults to be self-sufficient and live out of harm's way. The use of "circles" and "fishbone diagrams" has helped Roca to build trust and critical communication among teenagers and young adults often considered disenfranchised. Rather than focusing on others as sources of problems, participants commit to making personal transformations. They learn to respect, listen with compassion, and tolerate differing points of view. The process provides opportunity for individuals to speak and be heard. One member of the Roca staff explains that circles create social change by shifting from a power-based center to one focused on relationship building. The relationship building is grounded in the desire to create an environment that fosters respectful relationships and views youth and young adults as part of the solution rather than as problems in need of solving.

Roca works with young people who are without the relationships, resources, or support to keep them alive and help them imagine and embrace possibility, learning, and change. Through relentless outreach and support, Roca builds life-altering, transformational relationships between disconnected young people and caring adults. Relentless not only means engaging with these young people when they are most

resistant, it means meeting them where they are – in the streets, in their homes, at school. For many of these young people, voluntarily coming into Roca is not a realistic expectation. Youth workers continue to meet them in the places where they are until they are ready to engage within Roca.

At the core of Roca's work with young people lies the Transformational Relationship Model. We fundamentally understand that in order to engage very disconnected and disengaged young people in opportunities to move toward self-sufficiency and living out of harm's way, it is essential to first spend the time to reconnect and re-engage them in positive relationships. It means showing up in a young person's life, over and over, both when things are going well and especially when it gets very hard. Transformational Relationships create a connection that can hold the balance and the tension of growth and change. They engage young people and adults that care in a process of change that enables them to increase positive knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors over time and through the stages of change.

Roca uses this alternative communication technique to enable discussions around challenging issues and facilitate personal learning, healing, accountability, and community building. We learned peacemaking circles from the Tagish Tlingit people of the Yukon Territory and share them to the best of our ability as we learned them.

The circle process is "simple but not easy," and must be experienced to be fully grasped and replicated. There is an intangible quality to circles that must be experienced, in order to be understood. However, there are some key structures that help to define the circle. The meeting space is the most visible structure. Participants are seated in a circle

focusing on the center where symbolic objects may be placed to remind participants of values shared among those in the circle.

A talking piece is used as a way to ensure respect between speakers and listeners. The talking piece is passed from person to person within the circle and only the person holding the piece may speak. Two “keepers” of the circle have been identified. The keepers guide the participants and keep the circle as a safe space. While it is possible to have only one keeper, generally a team of two is preferable. Ceremony and ritual are used to create safety and form. Consensus decision making honors the values and principles of peacemaking circles and helps participants to stay grounded in them.

Roca has worked very hard to create places where our young people can learn and practice the necessary skills that will allow them to successfully reconnect and to advance their educational and employment opportunities. We design and develop stage appropriate programming to responsibly serve our specific target populations. Roca is committed to on-going evaluation of program effectiveness, progress, and impact. Given that most young people at Roca will go to work before they complete their education, Roca has developed a unique transitional employment model to help young people with virtually no job skills learn and practice the skills they need to get a job and stay employed. This includes a combination of earned income and transitional employment programming, job placement and readiness support and partnerships with area workforce and educational institutions.

Helping high-risk young people to re-engage with education is particularly challenging as many of them have experienced low to minimal educational success, less than basic literacy, and have had negative experiences with education systems. To

address this, Roca works with area school systems to help young people stay in school and graduate, operates out-of-school and adult education programs, and has implemented an innovative “alternative” adult education model specifically designed to re-engage young people. Life skills and engagement activities, run regularly by youth workers, are used to create entry points for young adults who are not quite ready to dive into educational classes, pre-employment activities or life skills curriculum based groups. Life skills also includes addressing court issues, housing and living skills, parenting education, child development, substance abuse, mental health, and physical health.

Roca is fortunate to work with many wonderful individual, organizational and institutional partners. Given these partners’ involvement in the lives of young people, Roca’s engaged institution strategy is designed to promote informal and formal practice, procedure, policy and systemic change. The institutions that are in a young person’s life – schools, local government, agencies, and organizations – are just as influential to the needs and growth of a young person as Roca is. In recognizing this, Roca sought to create partnerships with these institutions, and open the lines of communication in order to best serve young people. In order to share the values Roca developed, and be truly committed to every one belonging, it was important to establish and maintain these connections.

Core programs. At the core of Roca’s work with young people lies the Transformational Relationship Model. Roca works to engage disconnected and disengaged young people in opportunities that provide them with the skills to become self-sufficient. These skills also aid youth in reconnecting and being more engaged in positive transformational relationships with others. Transformational Relationships create

a connection that can hold the balance and the tension of growth and change.

Transformational relationships engage young people and adults that care in a process of change that enables them to increase positive knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors over time and through the stages of change.

Strengthening our lives. Strengthening Our Lives (SOL) is an intensive intervention program for 150 in-school youth ages 14-18 in Chelsea. Project SOL's goals are for young people to graduate from high school and have options for their future. Project SOL is a free program that runs five days a week from 3:00-8:00 p.m. Programming includes academic assistance, college preparation, computer classes, art, dance, sports, field trips, and life skills groups. We provide consistent, long-term supportive relationships with nurturing adults; these relationships become a foundation for success.

The via project. The via project serves 240 youth and young adults ages 16-24 every year with education, life skills, and employment opportunities. Designed for youth and young adults who are street, gang, court or system involved, and for newcomer groups, the Via Project offers positive alternatives through transitional employment opportunities, job readiness and pre-vocational training, and alternative adult educational classes. Youth workers reach participants through relentless street outreach and referrals from community partners and the justice system. Youth workers provide case management and run groups focused on parenting support; HIV/AIDS, STI and substance abuse prevention; and re-entry groups in DYS and adult facilities. VIA accepts youth and young adults from Chelsea, East Boston, Revere, and Charlestown.

Healthy families program. Healthy families program serves more than 170 first-time young parents with children ages 0-3 years old in Chelsea, Revere, Winthrop, Charlestown, and East Boston through a unique home visiting program that focuses on both parent and child. Roca's program integrates Healthy Families of America and Healthy Families of Massachusetts with Roca's youth development model of transformational relationships. Roca's program is unique in that it is housed in a community-based youth center and provides academic and vocational support to parents. Roca's Healthy Families Home Visitors reach young parents through outreach, home visits, and referrals from community partners, health centers, and Roca's other programs. Home visitors run gender-specific school-based parenting groups at local high schools, an on-site Family Center every Monday afternoon, and life skills/parenting groups in collaboration with school-based health centers and Massachusetts General Hospital Adolescent Health Centers.

Youth star. Youth star is an AmeriCorps-funded program that provides transitional employment and youth leadership development to 17 young adults from Chelsea, East Boston, Revere, and the surrounding communities. Members of this civic action corps commit to 11 months of community service and organizing work and receive a weekly stipend and an educational scholarship for college tuition. Youth Star members are working on an anti-violence and health awareness campaign and are conducting 20 educational workshops for youth and adults throughout the community. Members collaborate with community partners, volunteer at two area food pantries serving several thousand people per year, and reach many more community members through weekly

outreach. The corps hosts five major community events per year to engage their peers to take action on critical issues, promote generosity, and work toward community change.

Roca's MGH clinic. Roca's MGH clinic was established in response to Youth Star identifying an important need that wasn't being filled – young people accessing vital health care services. The initiative for the clinic began during Youth Star team discussions, when members saw young people at Roca and in the community who had nowhere to go for free confidential medical care including pregnancy testing, HIV/AIDS testing, physicals, birth control, and general health care and advice. In partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital, the full-service, fully-equipped clinic operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 to 9 p.m. and provides free anonymous care to anyone who desires it, including referrals for substance abuse counseling on-site.

Understanding Complexities of KLCC Youth Adult Partnerships

Now locally, nationally, and internationally recognized, Roca is fortunate to bring together young people, adults, community members and partners to help young people become self-sufficient and live out of harm's way. It is our privilege and desire to share something of value so that all of us can live Gandhi's dream that we must "be the change we hope see in the world."

The core values that inspire Roca's programs are belonging, generosity, competence and independence. These core values help to relay to young people that they have a place in the world, and that they have something of value to offer. Roca has offered assistance to the community in various ways. Roca has created authentic opportunities for youth and young adults to thrive by helping them understand and practice the core values by two strategies, circles and fishbone diagrams.

The use of “circles” and “fishbone diagrams” has helped Roca to build trust and critical communication among teenagers and young adults often considered disenfranchised. Rather than focusing on others as sources of problems, participants commit to making personal transformations. They learn to respect, listen with compassion, and tolerate differing points of view. The process provides opportunity for individuals to speak and be heard. One member of the Roca staff explains that circles create social change by shifting from a power-based center to one focused on relationship building. The relationship building is grounded in the desire to create an environment that fosters respectful relationships and views youth and young adults as part of the solution rather than as problems in need of solving.

Several members of Roca attribute many successful outcomes of their organization to the use of fishbone diagrams. Fishbone diagrams were used to address issues of anti-violence, pro-immigration, and dropouts. Fishbone diagrams helped members of Roca to respond and act very quickly on various issues. For example, a member of Roca shared that after undocumented immigrants were taken from their workplace on March 23, 2007, the immigrant and refugee committee responded by collecting money, clothes, and food. They also participated in a march on the state lawn of Massachusetts and Washington, DC. Another member of Roca explains how quick responses to community needs have helped her to trust members of Roca. She shared the story of the KLCC Pro-Immigrant group working to assist her and other families after an Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid. The leader of the KLCC Pro-Immigrant group provided support and contacted lawyers. She stated that she was able to turn other members of the group for support and has developed a greater sense of trust in the group.

Cross Case Analysis

The purpose of this cross-case analysis was to explore and understand youth adult partnerships with a purposeful sample of leadership teams from community-based organizations engaged in community change issues. This section presents the findings of the remaining two research questions for this study which were (a) what are the necessary skills and capacities required to generate youth and adult partnerships focused on community change issues, and (b) how have youth and adult partnerships been used to address community change issues? Rigorous analysis of the case data revealed four major findings:

1. Importance of Building trust
2. Importance of Co-constructing purpose
3. Importance of Working together was important
4. Importance of Deepening and sustaining the work to make it a way of life

Below is a narrative with details that support and explain each finding. I set out to document a broad range of experiences, which would provide the reader with an opportunity to understand the reality of the research participants. Direct quotes from participants were used throughout this section in an effort to let participants speak for themselves. Extensive illustrative quotes were taken directly from interviews in an attempt to portray participant perspectives as well as capture the complexity of situations as they unfolded during the interview.

The findings are organized and framed in a narrative cross case analysis. There were two significant benefits of framing a narrative cross case analysis: (1) collectively, the categories functioned as an effective and efficient rubric for performing a cross-case

analysis to identify common interview and focus group themes and (2) provided a narrative framework that could explain the findings and provide recommendations. What follows are responses to the three research questions for this study. Each research question is followed by narrative that is supported by interview and focus group data.

Research Question 2

This research question asked: What are the necessary skills and capacities required to generate youth and adult partnerships focused on community change issues?

Findings 2. Members of each leadership team indicated that Building Trust was an essential skill and capacity to generate youth adult partnerships.

LARRY: I think for me the biggest learning tool was simply getting to know the other people in the group and getting to understand where they were coming from, what brought them to the fellowship. What was their motivation for being there? Was it because they wanted to? Was it because they were asked to? Was it because they were involved with someone who was a part of it? Once I understood why Rudy was there or Sharon was there, it was the understanding that we were all here to make a change that was a big thing. Once we were able to find common ground, I think to move forward from that shared space, just to keep on moving and working and touching base on why we were here. (Adult MiCasa Leadership team)

The leadership team alluded to several necessary components to build trust, but the most salient point was made when they reflected on the process of “gracious space.” Gracious space is a concept that was implemented by the coordinating organizations as a process that opens up dialogue and provides an opportunity to collectively create a space that welcomes the opinions of others. More importantly, it creates a space that welcomes differing opinions. It provides an environment that is capable of holding conflict. The following quotes were taken from a segment of a focus group with the leadership team in response to the question about the building blocks for generating youth adult partnerships for community change.

MODERATOR: As a leadership team, what would you say the building blocks are for youth and adult partnerships, or the DNA that's required for youth and adult partnerships to develop?

CODY: I think realistically as long as everyone comes in with an open mind and a willingness to learn in public and really value the ideas of the other partner, and not have adults looking to nurture the leadership abilities of these children... (Young Adult MiCasa Leadership Team)

JACKIE: But before that happens, I think that gracious space really plays a huge role in the first fundamental steps. You need to have trust to have any of these things in that gracious space. I think that definitely is what tied us all in together and put us on the same page, made us accountable, made us learn in public, made us learn to trust each other, made us want to work together on something. And I think gracious space definitely played a huge role, and it's still playing a huge role in our fellowship. It's kind of like, you know, underlying, we don't think about it as much. But it's one of the biggest things that has helped our fellowship and helped KLCC in general for this session anyways. (Young Adult MiCasa Leadership Team)

CODY: Yeah, I agree. Building trust is probably essential to any relationship, [especially] youth and adult partnerships... [to] make sure that everyone feels comfortable enough to express their ideas and feel like their ideas are being received, whether it's adults to youth or youth to adults, either way, in our normal everyday society... So, again, it is gracious space that allows people to feel like they are talking with friends and not talking with adults or talking with youth. As we all come together and when we are in our meetings or when we're in our youth and adult partnerships, just the rapport is so important just for everyone to feel comfortable, and I think that's what really sustains youth and adult partnerships. (Young Adult MiCasa Leadership Team)

During a separate focus group interview, Larry Left Hand Bull explained the importance of building trust and working collectively. He attributed much of the success of the fellowship to their early and frequent use of gracious space as well.

LARRY: I think... for our group, the biggest thing for me was learning to work collectively. That means working with Rudy, Adam and Sharon and some others in our group who are a lot younger than me but in some ways are a lot older than me. And I think building that gracious space is paramount and key that the group itself feels comfortable addressing a multitude of issues at any given time and to step back when necessary and say we're maybe not ready to take this on yet, but we'll come back to it and table this issue and we'll work on what we can do right now. And I would recommend that to other community groups out there that they

spend the time and energy in building the gracious space between youth and adults or adults and adults and what have you. (Adult MiCasa Leadership Team)
Gracious space was a concept introduced during training sessions developed for

the leadership teams. The concept was described as a way to facilitate opportunities for individuals to generate a collective vision through which everyone can participate. The leadership team also described a process called peace-making circles, also referred to as peace circles or trust circles, as part of creating gracious space and building trust. Peace making circles is a process attributed to the aboriginal and native traditions that brings together individuals willing to work on conflict resolution, decision making, or other outcome based practices, with honest communication centered around relationship development and community building.

SHARON: The trust circle is when we just did a circle but we asked various questions of one another...we asked basic stuff and we got to know each other. We grew to trust one another and it's not like trust can never happen. It will happen eventually whether it takes two years or two hours. It will happen. (Youth MiCasa Leadership Team)

ADAM: We spent the first year building trust and everything we did at that point, I remember our fellowship, if you were to talk to anyone of us for the entire first year, like you mention the fellowship and everyone just grinds up that's my family.... But a lot of it was because of the trust circles. We were so honest with each other, that we would shed tears together. We would love on each other. Larry would notice that I was feeling down, we'd spend that time together. There's no replacement for time. No goodhearted community ideas can ever replace time with each other. That's what a fellowship is, its spending fellowship and being with each other. So the trust thing just hits me because for the first full year our entire fellowship was defined, to me, as building trust just by getting to know each other. (Adult MiCasa Leadership Team)

The Leadership team explained that after they were able to develop the necessary skills and capacities with their fellowship, they were then able to effectively work with each other, and eventually they were able to work with individuals outside of their fellowships. The fellowship at MiCasa identified Lake Middle School as the first

community organization that they would work with as part of their goal of creating community change.

LARRY: For me it really helped to move the group process forward in that we were able to in the Middle School (Lake Middle School). We started off with an agenda with what we wanted to do at the school and then we back stepped and said, wait a minute, shouldn't we have people from the community as a part of this group before we go deciding what our agenda is. That's something we came up with internally. So the next process was moved from going forward to going to a lateral side and saying the next process is to get youth members and adults and faculty and teachers and parents, from the community, so that people from the Lake community can be a part of our group so we can move forward as a unit. Based on that, we've done quite a few events, community garden, wall painting, parent/teacher night. We've done a lot of community outreach events that link the fellowships faces with positive events. (Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

PERLA: MICASA has a program going on over at Lake (Middle School) already, and the program seems to be helping most of the kids that are in that community. They help them by not getting them involved in gangs and all that stuff. They provide a variety of active different programs. Like, I looked at the roster and they have music, they have art, computers. Pretty much a variety of everything. (Youth- MiCasa Leadership Team)

KATHRYN: The fellowship has been really great. It's a program that we feel safe. I like that I feel safe talking and having ideas heard and people around me. And we're doing a bunch of projects that are helping our community at Lake Middle School and it's been fun. (Youth MiCasa Leadership Team)

Molly Baldwin, the executive director for Roca, expressed the importance of being clear in the vision and mission of an organization. She stressed the importance of telling truth about what is going on in organizations, communities, and around the country. Next, she framed her understanding of trust being the foundation of relationships. Finally, she explained that the combination of truth and trust make way for transformation or change to occur. Members of Roca's leadership team also expressed the importance of adults to rethink how they engage and interact with youth. The comments above and those that follow identify key points that frame the importance of establishing open, honest, and truthful communication as a component of building trust.

The passages indicate that once trust is established, it establishes relationships that allow youth and adults to be open to learning together in public and prepared for transformation and change.

MOLLY BALDWIN: We revisited our vision and mission and got clearer in our tag line, which is truth, trust, and transformation, and I think it provides a good solid base for youth and adult partnership work for community change. You have to tell the truth about what's going on... And then trust is kind of how you build relationships over enough time that you can talk about work and then the transformation is about change. (Executive Director Roca)

VICTOR: It's also very hard to once again the truth piece, like, to sit there and tell a young person the truth in a very respectful way so that they get it, and they're not defensive. There's a lot of conversations that I don't want to have, but I know that I have to because it's my responsibility. Nobody is doing anybody any favors when we don't address the truth, and we let things slide by, which happens a lot in organizations and families, schools and society. People don't hold each other accountable and they don't tell each other the truth, and they want to avoid the tension and the problem ends up getting bigger. So once that trust is built, I'm able to have an honest conversation with young people, and them back at me too. I get checked, too. It's not a one-way deal. (Adult- Roca Leadership Team)

EMILY: I would say it's about communication. They have to be able to talk to children. Like here, building relationships between adults and young so they can work together as partners in the same level. Not like I'm bigger or I'm smaller, you know. (Youth Roca Leadership Team)

VICTOR: I want to say that the adult is the difficult end making sure you're doing right by the young people and that you're not putting your stuff on them, [and] that they're growing. Yes, you're helping, but you're not taking ownership of their success or, like, trying to tell them what to do. And then just making sure that the bond is there and that the trust is there. When I came on board, Roxanne told me straight up, she said, "I've been working alone and I feel like I have no direction," and she laid it straight out. So I wanted to make sure that I did right by her and I honored what she needed. That, to me, can be a little challenging, not because we can't do it as adults but we want to do right by them. (Adult- Roca Leadership Team).

ROXANNIE: I can say these workers are real. They don't lie to you or sell you dreams. I don't know, they're encouraging, but they don't tell you what to do. They're just there for you. That's part of the influence they have. They're awesome. (Youth- Roca Leadership Team)

VASARAS: I would say when you ask how does that work, I would say try talking to someone who's young. You just might have some things in common, that's when you get to know people. (Youth- Roca Leadership Team)

VICTOR: I think that it's a lot of things. The young people here identify with their youth workers. Like, many of us are from this community or there's diversity among the staff so there's always someone that a young person can go to, whether they're Latino, African-American, gay, straight, there's people that they can go to. So I often see young people going to more than one person, which I think is great. Because of youth workers, you also need the help of older adults. And that whole piece about being relentless and helping and being truthful and honest, this is what I can help you with and this is what I can't. (Adult- Roca Leadership Team)

Victor adds an additional layer to the importance of truth, trust, and transformation, as he expressed the point of view of an adult working with youth. He explained the pressure of “doing right” by young people. Doing right by youth was explained as a form of self-check conducted by the adult. The adult self-check occurred in other places throughout the data. Adults expressed that they wanted to be sure that they provided the necessary space for youth to grow, be held accountable and responsible, while still providing support. The balance was identified as being very delicate.

Members of the Micasa and Benton Harbor leadership teams provide insight of outcomes when there is lack of balance in youth adult partnerships. MiCasa describes a situation when there was too much interaction and support from adults, and Benton Harbor provides a contrasting view when there was too little adult interaction and support. The passages indicate that even though the intent to “do right” by youth may be present, there are incidents when the leadership team and the organization needed to recalibrate their interactions. The leadership teams explained that building trust was important; however, they also shared the importance of co-constructing a shared purpose

for community change, both within the organization as well as within their communities.

Findings 3. Members of each leadership team indicated the importance of co-constructing purpose as an essential skill and capacity to generate youth adult partnerships.

In the following statement, Cody and Jackie explain an incident that took place around the design of an invitation for a community wide fund raising dinner hosted by the organization. Organization leadership asked the youth adult leadership team to coordinate the invitation design efforts. After numerous hours and several iterations, the leadership team completed a flyer that they felt accomplished the task and goals that they were given. However, upon completion, they were presented with a new set of expectations and a completed invitation that they should use as a template. The leadership team stated that they felt that the organization leadership did not truly believe that the leadership team composed of youth and adults would facilitate the process in an effective and professional manner. In an attempt to safe guard the outcome, organization leadership prepared a backup plan that consisted of additional criteria and a separate invitation that was already completed.

JACKIE: So we took 4 hours of our day to go and finish these invitations... I come and I show her our invitation and I'm all proud of it that we all worked on it together and she's like, you know, this is great, now let me show you how I want it to be. She pulled out this invitation that was a lot longer, and we need to change this and this here, and we need to add cosponsors and completely transformed the whole Invitation. We need to take these pictures out and put these in with that. I was like, wow, you completely just messed up 4 hours of our work that we just did. (Young adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

The team completed a new invitation with a new set of criteria. Instead of the organization including the names of all that worked on the invitation or just

acknowledging the leadership team for their design efforts, the invitation only included the name of an adult that worked on the invitation.

CODY: The invitation was produced and designed by Jacqueline Granados and not recognizing the organization. (Young Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

GINGER: It actually created some internal tension within the fellowship because people who had worked hard on it felt like they were not getting credit, which they weren't. (Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

JACKIE: Yeah, yeah, there were scathing emails that went around. (Young-Adult MiCasa Leadership Team)

CODY: There were several instances in the planning of this dinner that were very similar [incidents] in which we were asked to produce or design a program or something that we did and then, you know and a lot of it was leading up, and a few days before we're [told, we're] just going to change this, and this and we want you to say this and we're going to shorten this and we want you to say this and a lot of it was coming down on us and not necessarily giving us an opportunity to sit down and discuss it. And I think a lot of the problem was it's hard to get the fellowship all together other than at fellowship meetings, which happen once a week, and it was hard to get a lot done on the day-to-day planning. But oftentimes we felt like input wasn't even sought. (Young Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

JACKIE: I think at the end of the night the things that we put on by ourselves, and our performances and the speeches that we did without them... They were really, like, blown away by what we did accomplish and what we did do together and how we did put it together with all of us. (Young Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

CODY: I feel like if we were to do another event, say, next month, it would go much, much smoother and a lot of these problems would be avoided because of, like Jackie just said, the end result. (Young Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

CODY: Again, I think a lot of it is because they were able to really see how capable our youth are and ... (Young Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

JACKIE: How capable our adults are. (Young Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

CODY: Exactly. So I think they would be much quicker to think of giving us an assignment and letting us run with it now that we've been able to prove ourselves, if you will, and establish the fact that we're able to do this competently. (Young Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

GINGER: Once again, it's still part of the whole KLCC framework of building trust. This was our first opportunity to actually build trust, but when you add expectations, deadlines, people trying to prove themselves in a new environment, all of those factors... (Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

JACKIE: You can't skip one because it's going to end up biting you. You're going to be like, crap, when you totally skip that one stage. (Young Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

MODERATOR: Can you give me an example?

JACKIE: Kind of like the whole trust thing, we're kind of jumping forward. We're like, okay, yeah, I trust you without kind of like really trusting. It's one thing to say Cody, I trust you, but it's also another thing to be like I don't think I want you to go with me because I don't think you could do that. And that takes a while, and you can't really skip that. And you can't assume that people know the things too. (Young Adult- MiCasa Leadership Team)

A member from the Benton Harbor leadership team gave similar insight about building trust between youth and adult partners. By providing opportunities for members to make meaningful contributions, it builds confidence and supports authentic interactions between youth and adults. Authenticity was a recurring theme that was interwoven with building trust throughout the data. Participants also framed authenticity and building trust as being “real” or authentic in the interactions with each other

EDDIE: I think another part is to be authentic. A part of authenticity is giving the young people an opportunity to be held accountable for their actions. Because a lot of times we continue to move forward without an opportunity to get [them] involved. So again, just giving them an opportunity to become engaged in the process and be responsible for some outcomes, I think helps with the authenticity. Because the young people may feel that we are not being sincere, or we are just playing around or going through the motions. But when we give them a project that they have to be responsible for the outcomes of the project I think that helps to add to the authenticity. (Adult-Leadership Team)

The above passages addressed the importance of acknowledging the accomplishments and efforts of both youth and adult members rather than focusing on the contributions of the adults only. The leadership teams expressed a need for open support

of partnerships between youth and adult. Additionally, the passages from the MiCasa leadership team identified moments that they felt undermined.

MiCasa expressed that there was lack of confidence in the abilities of youth on the part of adults at the organizational level. They also shared that once they had “proven” that they could handle things on their own, they were given more freedom to move forward independently. Benton Harbor shared a contrasting view.

The Benton Harbor leadership team expressed that they did not have enough support. They shared that they were in essence abandoned, or left on an island. Although they stated that they grew to embrace the situation and thus reframed their situation as having autonomy and creative rights to proceed in the work as they saw best, they ultimately longed for the organization to be cognizant and supportive of their efforts. Both leadership teams mentioned separate occasions when the organization inadvertently undermined the youth adult partnership efforts by the organizations lack of participation and lack of visibility in the community. These unintentional actions were often subtle and unnoticed by the organization. However, it was clear and expressed to the leadership team. The leadership team attributed the organizations behavior to their lack of participation in workshops, trainings, and gatherings focused on developing individual and collective leadership skills. The leadership team expressed that it is not enough to have youth adult partnerships present in isolated groups. Instead, the organization and its members are better served when the partnerships permeate the organization.

LIGI: Basically what they've done, what Doug spoke about earlier, is unintentionally and intentionally gotten out of the way and allowed us to have autonomy, and with that we've had the ability to do what we needed to do. But with that, we didn't have the support of the organization, i.e., all of the mechanisms of the organization to help us along the way.

GENTRY: Like, for me, there's not been enough support from the host organization, the Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor, and I'm hearing great things about Doug Schafer and his support of moving forward. I have become kind of jaded, because there has been a lot of turnover at the top spot, and every new ED that has come along has always stated their vocal support for what they're going to do. And I think we could have had a name brand for youth and adult partnerships where we had headquarters where people knew that Boys and Girls Club is the place for youth and adult partnerships at both sites. I think we could have done that if we had board members and an executive director that from the beginning said we are going to give 110 percent support in this. You're going to see our faces at the meetings, and we are going to be on the streets when you have your community projects. I think if that had happened, it would be more than just the raised expectations and the good things that we talked about, there would be a hub that's the adult partnership place, and that would have given us a branding that we could have taken throughout the community. So that's been, to me, the biggest disappointment.

LIGI: I can't disagree with anything that Gentry just said... We never had much of you can't do this, you shouldn't do that, we didn't have that. Which in some ways was good. But we didn't have that foundation to lean on which made it difficult when we were trying to make changes in the community. When you're trying to make community change, you need that thing behind you that says they have your back. And whenever we walked into a particular situation it was a Benton Harbor for Community Leadership for Community Change project, not the Boys and Girls Club. And that, at times, slowed down the process. Folks eventually warmed up to us, but it took a longer period of time because it didn't have the gravity of the Boys and Girls Club organization behind it.

GENTRY: We walked into a group we had never talked to before and we knew by the time we came out of that room that we would have had to make that sale; if we didn't, there's not going to be a follow up from president so and so that's going to help seal the deal. We have to seal it. We come in with our youth and adult partnership pitch, and if we don't get it sold right here that might be it, because they don't have that executive Web and such, we had to be quick to follow up and make sure we get the deal. So that's been a negative. But to me it's easily solved. It's easily solved as we get that backing.

The leadership team spoke of support from the organization leadership. They were able to accomplish a lot on their own, but they felt isolated and somewhat unsupported. They embraced not having oversight and micromanagement but longed for some type of boundaries and expertise of how to handle certain situations. They wanted the historical tradition available for them to fall back on. They wanted the name and the brand of their

host organization to validate them in the work that they were doing, especially in regards to reaching out to community members and community partners.

MODERATOR: Did any of your board members go to any of the national gatherings to participate in any of the training, to your knowledge?

LIGI: Every time they bought the tickets there was reasons given that they didn't go. (Adult-Benton Harbor Leadership Team)

GENTRY: Sure, the short answer is no... I hate to harp on it, I do, but I've just been disappointed with the level of participation of the host organization. I just feel like it would have been an easily solved issue to have a board member or a staff member that was here that would have pledged to be a partner with what we were doing, and I think that would have made a world of difference. So that was an obstacle. (Adult-Benton Harbor Leadership Team)

Other members of the leadership team members shared similar sentiments about their need for support from organizational leadership. This point is further supported below with comments from interviews during a Q-sort. Q-sort is a method used to help understand the perceptions of participants in response to specified queries. Participants placed preselected statements about youth adult partnerships and components of community change into rank order of maximums and minimums, thus forming a forced distribution of the set of statements. The maximums represent statements that the participants are most aligned to, while the minimums represent statements participants are least aligned to. During the Q-sort participants share a range of factors and viewpoints from their perspective. The Q-sort emphasized the qualitative how and why people think the way that they do. The following comments were made during the Q-sort and further illuminate perceptions about organizational support for youth adult partnerships.

MODERATOR: James, I notice that Card Number 6, which reads, "I believe that our KLCC host organization is an integral partner and the work of the fellowship generates and sustains community to change efforts," was one of the first cards that you placed in the negative column. Why was that?

JAMES: Yeah. I believe they could have did way more because they could have been way more helpful. And with us going through so many EDs, I feel they were so standoffish, and it just mostly fell on us. We had to worry about a lot more administrative stuff than the other sites did. (Young Adult-Benton Harbor Leadership Team)

MODERATOR: Ligi would you explain why you placed this particular card in the negative column?

LIGI: Well, when I saw negative 4, when I saw that one, number 6, all the difficulties that we've had lead back to that one issue of having our leadership at the executive director position to help guide us and be able to empower us and to whether it's sealing the deal on a community partnership or helping to keep us focused on how this particular project coincides with the direction of the overall organization, that kind of thing, I think, was probably the easiest card. The rest of them, I had to think it through. (Adult-Benton Harbor Leadership Team)

Group leadership has been the catalyst for many great groups and teams of creative persons that have banded together to achieve remarkable success that would not have been possible through a hierarchical approach (Heifetz, 1994). The community based organizations in this study implemented many of the same principles. The leadership teams expressed that community based collective leadership begins with a shared dream, vision, or mission that rest at the heart of a group of skilled and passionate individuals. The process of defining a shared dream, vision, and mission assist in setting the direction or the organization. They also expressed that the process can aid in exercising influence over other people and organizations. This is possible because, the leadership function is shared by the group and individuals within the group. The leadership teams explained that by co-constructing a purpose they were able to explain and view community change as a commitment to social advocacy and social justice.

MOLLY: You can do a lot of capacity building of people, and that's okay, but when it's connected to something and grounded in something and has meaning and has a life to it and grows and is challenged on its own, I think it makes it easier to do. Training leadership development, when young people are clear, their

organizing agenda is really powerful. (Executive Director- Roca)

Co-constructing purpose for a shared understanding of community change was explained as a process during many of the interviews. The process included both individual and collective efforts to create a climate for change through youth adult partnerships. The opportunity to co-construct a purpose together encouraged members to develop a shared purpose for their work. The shared purpose allowed for individual visions, and assisted individuals in staying connected and focused on the community change.

The process of co-constructing purpose happened on at least four levels: personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural community. On the personal level, there were shifts in attitudes, values, and skills. The interpersonal level was expressed as an involved process that also required changes in language, actions, and included relationship building. Each community-based organization also experienced some type of institutional change characterized by shifts in policies and practices. Finally, shifts in the cultural community, which included a shift in social norms and focus on what is “right.” That is co- learning was conducted and framed in a culturally responsible manner that intentionally, created opportunities to embrace the epistemology of place. The epistemology of place explained the content of both implicit and explicit knowledge of the community’s history, geography, lineage and the struggles that have defined how the community addresses issues of politics, economics and demographics. The leadership teams often referred back to the importance of building trust and developing a shared vision. The passages below illuminate how diverse community leadership worked across boundaries of age, gender, geography, race, culture, class, and faith to mobilize collective

action to improve local conditions and the quality of life in their communities.

GENTRY: We were fortunate to start our work after what was called the unrest of 2003, because then a lot of focus was put on young people and their needs and what can be done to help them better themselves and their communities. So we're fortunate to kind of come into that atmosphere where the governor and mayor and all the city officials were already looking at what we can do with youth. But they were more looking like what can we do [emphasis added] TO the youth or FOR the youth instead of working With them. So we were fortunate to have that atmosphere, and we said adults need help too, so why don't we work together. So it's timing. (Adult-Benton Harbor leadership team)

MOLLY: They went with some people to talk to some people about challenging issues on immigrant youth, and the person wasn't so open and they weren't listening, and that was really hard. But they were able to handle it because of their own capacity and their own growth. But it's easier to do, what you call, capacity building or leadership development when it's around something real, grounded, as opposed to in the air, vague, we're going to do this thing. (Executive Director-Roca)

LIGI: I think the one thing that I noticed was that our young people that go from the Boys and Girls Club mainstream cycle [Main Street] and come over here, they don't ever want to go back. There's a reason for that, because they walk in here and they say to us, I don't like how this is going. We say, why. We don't say, this is how it is. We say, Why? And we actually ask them to explain themselves and then flip it back onto them and say how are you going to help us change? They walk through the door, they listen and get an opportunity to make the change that they want. So it's just a different atmosphere. We don't say the word empowerment, we actually do it. So it's they get excited about that. Like I said earlier today, it slows the process down sometimes. It's much easier to tell somebody go do this and this than, it is to elicit their opinion on how to do it, or come up with a plan on how to do it and then actually implement it. It takes time to get things done sometimes, but, nonetheless, the ultimate reward is the youth and adult benefit and the organization benefits and that should be the ultimate goal, in my opinion. (Adult-Benton Harbor leadership team)

MOLLY: Well, I'm excited that there are clearer things that young people want to work on and organize and mobilize around and work with partners on. The immigrant and refugee issues are really, challenging in this world right now. So with ROCA and it's a hard thing, painful thing. It pushes me to how could we change things and what are the strategies and leverage for that. It's really exciting and powerful to see the young people and their partners organize around issues or find a way to do it right. But it's hard. Violence issues are continual and anything that we can do to make the world a little less violent and keep young people alive longer so they can choose is a good thing, I think. (Executive Director-Roca)

LIGI: When we impact that young person, that young person is going to go out in the community and be positive. We do that inherently as a Boys and Girls Club. But when we get to the point where we're purposely going after that kid and that kid has something to teach us and together we have something to teach the community, then everybody benefits instead of that narrow focus of just trying to teach this kid some skills so they make better decisions. Okay, they make better decisions, they're better people, but how are they impacting the community as a whole? Have we really showed them to go out in the community and impact the community positively? Have we given them the opportunity to do so? When I started thinking about it from that perspective it made the flow easier. (Adult-Benton Harbor leadership team)

In the following passage, members from the Benton Harbor leadership team were asked to describe a community event they called "The Big Bash." The Big Bash was a day-long event that included a basketball game, a type of talent show, and culminated with a mayoral debate. Ardale explains that they were very strategic in how they planned the event. Their focus was drawing both youth and adults to participate in the mayoral debate. He explained that they planned the event so that attendance would increase as the day progressed. Additionally, he explained that they were strategic in the type of activities that took place as well as the sequence of those activities. Ardale shared that their careful planning and attention to the cultural identity of the community paid off by sustaining the large numbers of both youth and adults throughout the entire day.

ARDALE: Yeah, the event took place, when we publicized it to the community so that the youth knew that it would not just be the adults, but would be a youth and adult collaboration where we were coming together, we wanted the youth as well as the adult to be heard. We were not just looking for the adults to come out and take the lead, but we were looking for youth to come and take the lead also. The event was a large event, probably at the end of the day, the event had at least 500 people that came in and out. The event was packed. We planned it so that events of the day led up to the big debate was at the end of the day. So, when we started the day, we started it with a big three on three basketball tournament. We knew that we would get a lot of male and females interested in sports to play in the tournament. Then right after that we hit them with the Harbor idol, which was the Benton Harbor KLCCP rendition of the American Idol. Of course basketball players were not gonna go home after they finished playing ball, but they went over to the next activity. So we fed everybody after that, so while they were

eating we were setting up the debate so that we could catch their attention, so as soon as they finished eating the table and chairs and whole gym were set up for the big debate. Everybody, the youth fellows took place in the big debate, they asked questions and they brought friends along. I brought three of four friends that I am close to, to come along and ask questions and be heard, something that you want to know. One of the fellows had a saying “that if you doubt, then get out.” The saying was about people sitting up and talking about how they want change, and how they want this and that to happen, but if they don’t come out and voice it and get their side heard, basically you are just a voice that is unheard of. (Young adult-Benton Harbor leadership team)

EDDIE: I think that one of the things that we did differently with the big bash, was we strategically had questions that the young people could ask the candidate. Because often times what can happen is that the adults can take over asking the question to the candidate but we wanted to be intentional about giving the youth a voice in this debate, relative to asking questions of the candidates. Frankly, I think that some of the young people asked some of the better questions and probably caught some of the candidates off guard. So again, I thought it was important for them to have a voice because often times they are just overlooked, or people assume that they don’t have anything to say, or they are just not paying attention to what’s going on with this whole mayor’s election, but it was just the opposite. They had very good questions to ask the candidates. And I think that at times that the candidates were kinda stumped by the questions that the young people asked.

The Big Bash culminated with the mayoral debate. The Benton harbor mayoral race was highly contentious due to several factors that were unfolding, the city was still working through the unrest of 2003, and two unresolved police cases, both viewed as wrongful deaths. The school board was also recovering from shifts at the superintendent level, and there were development projects that were viewed by some, as opportunities for growth for the community, and as the beginning of gentrification by others. The fellowship identified those issues as some of the salient points that they wanted to express as concerns throughout their youth adult partnership experience and in particular during the mayoral debate.

Each leadership team worked to identify issues that were important to them and the community. After identifying those issues they began to work on effecting positive

change in those areas. The passages below highlight a few of the issues that were addressed by the Roca leadership team.

ROXANNE: I believe I have the skills and capacity to identify community based problems, determine its level of urgency and work with KLCC fellows to implement solutions or strategies. Me and the girl I was translating for her, we spent 5 minutes talking about that, because in our groups we have found out in our community, big problems, nobody knows their rights, nobody has safety plans, everybody is getting picked up by immigration. Kids are being left at DSS without their parents and everything is hysterical. So we sat down and we just talked and we come up with ideas of what to do, so now we have backup plans, safety plans. We help one another. We talk about what's happening in our community and what can we do about it. That's what I meant. (Young adult-Roca leadership team)

ANISHA: With the dropout prevention work we have actually someone on staff now who has sort of got this front line role and additional responsibility or working with this group of young people, they call themselves TOP now, and it's strictly around dropout prevention. Actually, those people have been working in a coordinating fashion with the school, training some of the teachers and staff on the use of circles, and talking to them about using circles as an alternative for detention. They've also developed an informational workshop for young people who are transitioning into high school. We have a huge dropout problem in Chelsea where students dropout in 9th grade. So it's critical for them to get into the middle school for 7th and 8th graders and talk about some of the transitions they'll be facing when they go into high school. Structurally what that's done in the organization is they function almost like working groups. They come in and kind of oversee the tasks of the work that has to be done and they keep moving their agenda with the school. The vice principal of the school comes to a weekly circle with them now. They've helped lead to new teacher orientations, a workshop in the new teacher orientations, and took them on a tour of the community. All of those things have impacted the organization, because it sort of drives the agenda of what is happening in some programming and what we're doing with young people and making sure that we allocate appropriate staff resources to make sure that that work can be supported through staff. (Adult-Roca leadership team)

The leadership team also described how individuals that themselves as leaders for the first time as well as established those viewed as established leaders, were able to embrace the knowledge, gifts, and wisdom of others as they addressed community issues. Members worked to understand the importance of bringing together a full representation

of the community that was able to work together to move past barriers that traditionally separated people. They explained that they were able to do this by emphasizing inclusion of individuals that were not typically seen as leaders and involving them in decision-making processes. This process was described as a challenging task. One that often was accompanied with tension, however, members of the leadership team expressed that they were able to embrace the tension as representation of potential progress it could bring.

VICTOR: This is something we talk about, because in meetings often times we want to be so politically correct, and so really nice all the time, and I'm a true believer that out of tension, creativity is born. So allowing for that and just holding the values allows us to kind of go there, get a little tense and come up with some possible solutions. So it's something that I encourage us to do and I definitely encourage as a team. We get out of some of our team meetings and I'm, like, my head hurts. It's really intense work. And then I feel very fortunate that I get to work with and a staff team that takes a lot of the stuff so much to heart, so folks are very passionate about the issues. Each single person on the team brings something different. I appreciate that. (Adult-Roca leadership team)

ANISHA: I would agree. If you really want to get anything done, if the kind of stuff you want to do is real change in the community, you can't be afraid of the hard stuff. You're going to keep encountering, whether it's tensions within your own team or your own organization or community or it's tensions with others or barriers that come in the way of everyone saying you can't do that and you can't do that, you have to stay at it because that's where you can actually start getting the momentum going. I think a lot of times it gets so hard that people just stop or get angry, and that doesn't really necessarily translate into energy that moves things. So it's a delicate balance, but you can't be afraid of it and it's where a lot of things happen.

MODERATOR: So how did you create that environment to hold that energy and create that necessary tension?

ANISHA: I think the circles. Yeah, we practice what we preach here. We go through sometimes when we use circles with staff, we all go through that. It's about being able to sit with ourselves and others in a good way and about values and how you practice values. The key of it is when it's hard and not when it's easy, so it starts that process, I think, it creates a space, I think, in the organization where it's like a container for really hard things then you just know that we have to go there for any of us to grow, to heal, to change, you have to go there. So how do you do it in the best and safest way? I think that's part of an environment that we've tried to create here and that we also try to create with our partners and other

people. We've trained hundreds of people in this community in circle, and so they're used to having that as a space to do the same with us and we help lead some of that. And those circles are led by young people and adults together and we've been able to create that, not just at ROCA, but in our different spaces with partners and fellows.

The following statements further clarify the importance of co-constructing purpose at the beginning of stages of youth adult partnership work, but it was also mentioned that the process be ongoing. As new members join in, they would benefit from the process as well. The leadership team expressed that the process be ongoing. There were moments that they went back to the stage of building trust. They specifically identified moments when they used the peace making circles to reestablish a baseline, or to get everyone on the same page.

ADAM: I could share that a lot of times when you have youth and adult discussions adults try to tend to over power your voice. One of the strongest tools that's always helped our fellowship that we adopted at the KLCC sites was using circles as a way to make sure that every voice is equally heard. (Adult-MiCasa leadership team)

GINGER: There are two things that I can think of right off the bat. We did a youth/adult partnership training but it was a long time ago, and there's been a hundred percent turnover in staff. So that's probably one of the things that we should revisit with the staff, and have our own workshop and having them experience that and see that. The other thing I'd love to see change is a change in the staff meeting time so that all the staff can show up. That would be huge. (Adult-MiCasa leadership team)

ADAM: I believe that change won't happen if you don't have everyone on the same page, a critical mass of people who believe and have faith and are dedicated to establishing that. So a fellowship from the quietest person to the most vocal person, when we agree on an issue and we're all brought in and sold out for that issue we move forward constructively. That's been what's moved the fellowship from the beginning. And at times when we haven't had that, even if there was two that weren't on board on the same page we moved slower and sometimes we had to back up and refine that critical mass. (Adult-MiCasa leadership team)

The next sets of passages continue to build on the theme of co-constructing purpose as a valuable component for community change. The theme also intersects with the theme of building trust through open communication. However, the concept of building trust appears to move from the confines of the fellowship and the community base organizations to a more community wide focus that incorporates members from the community in learning the process as well.

ADAM: We have youth and adults in our fellowship, some that barely speak, and we have some that are very vocal and you can't stop them from speaking. In a situation like that, a regular conversation will be led by the same 3 or 4 people, each conversation. So as we began to do circles and pass our talking piece and go through the process, gracious space, and making sure and we'll even open up meetings with circles. Our last meeting at Lake, remember, we did nothing but questions in the circles, that was our entire meeting to debrief and to get feedback on an event that we just had. Here the input and advice from those who don't speak up very much and for those of us to learn how to listen is huge. It's helped me, even just my own work, to learn better how to listen. If I can use my friend Rudy here as an example, as someone who just completely came out of his shell this past couple of years, who has actually facilitated workshops with us and was the major voice in certain workshops that I was thinking of, and I believe that him having the chance to speak with voice in circles I don't want to speak for you, but I just know that I've seen growth. (Adult-MiCasa leadership team)

PERLA: I fully expected the adults to take over our conversations and making it an adult thing. I don't know why, but I'm so used to adults taking over what we do. It was completely different. They wanted our input but they wanted us to mature, I guess, and take charge and help with the meetings, not only the meetings, but with the projects. (Youth-MiCasa leadership team)

KATHRYN: When I first got here I seriously expected adults to take over our projects. Just to elaborate on that, I never expected to have any adults listen to me; respecting, listening and understanding me. But with this fellowship it was wonderful because they were pushing us and they were listening at the same time and they just understand that that we wanted to commit and we didn't know how. But they pushed us little by little and pushed us out of our little comfort zones and having us grow. Our little victory was that we talked in front of this many people or we did a whole page of minutes and stuff like that. Just little things that made it worthwhile. And the love and understanding and the compassion that we had towards each other really helped.

MODERATOR: What's required for youth and adults to work in a real way? How can you get them to really have a partnership that works in a real way?

KATHRYN: I think that what really helped was we took so long to get to know each other. We took time. We trust each other now. We can honestly feel safe talking about what's on all our minds about what we think and we're not going to get put down. I think it's just taking the time to get to know each other and I think that really, really helps. (Youth- MiCasa leadership team)

LOIS: I think that a youth and adult partnership is taking the adult's wisdom of life and melding it with the youth's excitement and exuberance and enthusiasm for life and bringing it together so that you can listen to one another and then come up with solutions that work for everyone with an understanding. (Adult-MiCasa leadership team)

KATHRYN: I would say it takes a lot between both parties, just being patient with each other, being understanding and kind of like a friendship. You have to have that friendship for it to work, just making a bond with each other personally to make the youth and adult partnership work. (Youth-MiCasa leadership team)

GINGER: When we went to the retreat we got to know each other more personally and more on a one to one level. It really helps us connect with each other. We had some problems there learning to agree or disagree and we decided we would talk about it. We would actually sit down and take our time and talk about how we were feeling at the moment and how we could find a different solution that we would all agree to. So I think that helped us a lot. (Adult-MiCasa leadership team)

The leadership teams spoke clearly on the importance of building trust and co-constructing purpose as valuable components of youth adult partnerships for community change. They also expressed the importance of acting together. The leadership teams explained that as a result of working together various assumptions about leadership skills and capacities were challenged and reconsidered. They learned that all members of the fellowship benefited from the same leadership skill training regardless of leadership experience and indiscriminate of age. For example, initially, it was assumed that youth would need leadership training and capacity building at all levels, however, adults were expected to possess particular leadership skills. They found that adults need safe places

where they could be open to learn as well. Such opportunities reduced the pressure, risk and expectations that adults already possessed leadership skills and capacities.

Findings 4. The importance of working together was expressed as the leadership teams' commitment and ability to strengthen their skill and capacity to practice collective leadership. The leadership team described collective leadership as holding each other accountable, regularly discussing progress of initiatives, engaging in decision making, keeping open communication and conflict resolution open. Collective leadership also included a commitment to build allies with and within in the community. The leadership team linked the ability to work together as paramount in the success of the partnerships. The ability to work together allowed and even encouraged individuals to mature into leadership roles. The maturation process provided space for individuals to understand their current abilities and the patience to nurture that ability through supportive group action.

Participants shared that in order to make change happen the group must learn how to work together to build new relationships, create alliances, and assemble a critical mass of diverse leaders. They also expressed that new people should be included as leaders. That is, individuals not typically identified as leaders, should also be included in the process.

ANISHA: Part of what has been clear to me was by watching how some things happen. To affect the level of change that you want, it really means that everyone has to belong. But there has to be a role for young people to participate whether it's people who don't normally get picked to participate or people who aren't generally given opportunity to have their voice heard, or police or school officials. The only way it can truly, I think, the level of community change where something is a different practice or way of being in community happens, is that everyone has at least some level of connection, belonging, or ability to participate in it. (Adult-Roca leadership team)

One member of a leadership team shared that part of learning to work together is to understand how to engage in a respectful and critical process while still holding one another accountable to the collective decisions of the group was also important. The Executive director for Roca mentioned that with time the level of clarity and strength of the youth adult partnership increases. As clarity and strength of the partnership increases it provides opportunities for the partnerships to address larger and more complex issues. She provides examples of initiatives that youth adult partners were involved in.

ROXANNE: Once we sit down together to pick out our main issues and what's going on, once we start talking about who is going to work on something, we always make sure we hold each other accountable for what we're doing. If we need any help, we also help one another, but you're in charge of it. (Young adult-Roca leadership team)

MOLLY: The thing that I think that's been so great with the KLCC youth adult partnership work is that we have young people working with adult partners on several major initiatives, and I think each year it gets clearer and stronger. I think the refugee and immigrant work has gotten very strong and very clear, its purpose and what needs to happen. So I'm very excited about it going forward. It's probably one of, at least in my life, it's one of the more significant human and civil rights issues in this country. The work with the young people around violence prevention and their adult partners is interesting and happens in a lot of ways from sort of broad based education activities to more specific alternatives to violence, not only through programming but partners with their organizations and also kind of evolving into some restorative justice and peacemaking circle work, both in the community and the courts, and that's sort of ready to go. And the capacity of young people and adult partnerships has increased a lot.

The third piece that we focus on is all around the school work. What's exciting is there's a really good commitment to work with the schools and the schools to work with young people and adult partners to look at the hard things and say it's more about we can help you keep more young people in school. Let's keep more young people in school. And there are alternatives. Yes, there are more young people dropping out. How do we help young people who are in and struggling, stay in? How do you collectively get young adults to push them back in and help them stay there until they can graduate? It's very important and increasingly so in this country. (Executive Director-Roca)

VICTOR: I think a couple of things, there was a gang ordinance that was going to pass in Chelsea eight years ago which said that if more than two people walk together here on the street they're considered a gang. So what did ROCA do? We

showed up a hundred deep at City Hall, and the ordinance ended up not passing. But that also took some preparation. So you can't just bring a hundred kids to a City Hall meeting and expect them to know how to behave in that type of situation. So there was preparation on the issue, preparation on how to present yourself, and then let them know about the strength of organizing. And I think nobody was talking to the kids about the issue. So an ordinance was going to pass, yet not one person had a conversation with a young person. So once ROCA started engaging young people in this process, young people then got passionate about the issues. Like, okay, you know, this is going to pass and I can show up with friends and make a difference. (Adult-Roca leadership team)

A youth member of the leadership team summarized the importance of community with clarity and simplicity. She stated “they, City Hall, can’t do anything without community anyways. If you can't deal with them and you can't talk to them and they're not willing to understand, you have to talk to the community.”

The next set of passages describe how the leadership team at MiCasa established partnerships with various members within the community in developing projects or initiatives that could address community change issues. The leadership team explains that although they were responsible for the initial steps of establishing projects, the community partners have assumed ownership and responsibility of the projects. Both projects described below address specific issues that were identified by the community members and community leaders.

GINGER: So both of those projects were started by the fellows and have taken on a life of their own. They now exist independent of the fellowship and they've have grown a lot. So basically the fellows from the community garden gave them a seed fund of \$700 and they did some trainings on how to budget, how to solicit for donations. They connected them with other resources, like with people who have done other community gardens, and doing the interview and research thing. So they started the garden and it went well. (Adult-MiCasa leadership team)

JACKIE: Wasn't it seasonal at the time and now it's year around? (Young adult-MiCasa leadership team)

GINGER: Right. It basically turned into an entrepreneurial program to become like selling the vegetables at a farmers market, and in the wintertime they make

jewelry to sell at the farmers market for the following year. (Adult-leadership team)

MODERATOR: Who participates, are they fellows or a group that is separate from the fellows?

GINGER: It's separate. It's an afterschool program. It's taken on a life of its own. (Adult-MiCasa leadership team)

MODERATOR: Who are the people that participate in now? Are they mostly Lake Middle school students?

GINGER: Lake students. There's some community members, some MICASA staff plays a supporting role and teachers...some parents. But I think that the biggest thing that we've done since last year, not the biggest, but a good example of youth/adult partnership, Tiatro, because that was an idea that started in September of last year and since that time it's grown exponentially. And you can probably talk about that, Jackie. (Adult-MiCasa leadership team)

JACKIE: We got together with the youth adult partnership leadership team to write the scripts on ideas of how we can use workshops to teach youth and adults collective leadership. So we're planning workshops to teach, I guess, whoever, it really doesn't matter because it's for youth and adults. And they're really flexible with how they're set up, and towards the end or beginning or however, we're going to do a theater or point presentation that would either involve the youth or the adult and possibly perform it. It would be about youth and adult partnerships and collective leadership. (Young adult- MiCasa leadership team)

MODERATOR: So you guys have written scripts that would be small plays?

JACKIE: Yeah. There's a monologue about 10 minutes long that could be intermixed that could go back and forth, and also just regular monologue. So if only one person can make it they can perform that instead of casting it. So it's a really flexible piece. It can be a 10minute skit with one monologue or it could be a full hour long play. (Young adult-MiCasa leadership team)

SAM: We're talking about the group right now? We're in the stage where our group is having potential. It's been in this cycle where they're getting frustrated and people are leaving and it seems as though the project is going to be stopped. But right now we're at this point where we just had a big event and all these people are coming and now we have, like, more fellows than we did in the summer that are actually wanting to do something. And with the youth, they're really passionate about making a comic book and that's one of the projects that we're starting right now. (Youth-MiCasa leadership team)

MODERATOR: What is the skit about? Is this about the adult book store?

SAM: Yeah. It's something that the youth actually thought of.

MODERATOR: Could you talk a little bit about that?

SAM: It's from the comic book we designed, where we used acronyms, we use Dash, or LEHA, [for example] where it stands for leave her alone. They're just characters and it helps to break [down] you know how they used to give out whistles at first we thought that wouldn't work because they would just whistle all the time and people wouldn't know like the boy who cried wolf or something. So we thought of a comic book, and the whole book is about this object. And since there's a porn shop across the street, we're trying to tell people to not touch toys and to tell people before and then try to remove it from the premises. And that's basically the whole point of the book. It's like all of the youth are helping to make this and the adults are too. So they just want to distribute it to basically students. (Youth-MiCasa leadership team)

MODERATOR: Who identified this store as a problem? Was it youth? Was it adults? Was it both of them?

SAM: It was actually both. (Youth-MiCasa leadership team)

JACKIE: And then, like, all the issues because the first one that we're doing is finding an inappropriate object, whatever the comic is, but there were 7 different things that were all identified from the issue of the adult book store. So we did this thing about identifying issues or policies and practices. So you had all these issues okay, strangers are taking pictures of little kids. Kids are finding inappropriate objects when they're walking home and all these different things. And then we assigned them either a policy or practice issue. All of them are practices. So we thought probably the best way to deal with it would be through education. So each comic has a theme and it's all the things that were identified by the community as being a problem. So the first one we're starting with is the inappropriate object. (Young adult-MiCasa leadership team)

SAM: We hope that that will set forth a train reaction for the club at the middle school so that they keep going on with these things and spreading the message. Basically we're trying to, like, make another train reaction like we did with various other projects that we've done, like the garden project, and just spread it around like a train effect. (Youth-MiCasa leadership team)

Research Question 3

This research question asked: How have youth adult partnerships generated by leadership teams at community based organizations been used to address community change issues?

Findings 5. The importance of deepening, sustaining, and making the work of youth adult partnerships a way of life was explained in several ways:

1. The community has learned about the youth adult partnership experience
2. Youth adult partnerships became imbedded in the practices of the community based organizations and partner organizations
3. The leadership teams identified methods for renewing youth adult partnerships
4. Leadership teams developed identified allies and resources that will support the ongoing work of youth adult partnerships.
5. Leadership team committed to the ongoing development of their leadership skills and capacities.

KAREN: Since I've been involved with the project, I've had a keen eye as far as involving youth and adults in certain situations. In my new role as assistant principal a lot of committees are focusing on being really mindful on making sure that youth are a part of the committee, even from the parent standpoint, all the way to school committees, the newsletter, things like that. (Adult- Benton Harbor leadership team)

MODERATOR: Do you think you would have thought of that if you were not a part of the youth adult partnership work?

KAREN: Never. I was an advocate for getting youth, but getting them involved, no, I wouldn't, and to make sure their voice is heard. And also, too, I think the school board had not started, but until we talked about it they started having two youth on the school board and that is something they have continued and are at the point of doing that. Making sure that the youth voice is heard. They elect two school board members each year. (Adult- Benton Harbor leadership team)

LIGI: A year and a half ago, two years ago, every time a youth and adult partnership happened we stopped the presses, and said "youth and adult part partnership." Now it's become such a part of how we do things, we tend to not

even acknowledge it, because it's just how we do things. (Adult- Benton Harbor leadership team)

GENTRY: ETS, Educational Talent Search, which is a trio program, which is connected with Upward Bound, federally funded programs that have been going on for 30, 40 years, but ETS has been here for 6 or 7 years. At the end of the 2006/2007 school-year there was an end of the year banquet where we recognized seniors who accomplished great things during the academic year and were headed to college, and that year was the first time that we did it based on youth and adult partnerships. We had a committee on how we're going to do it and what's the best way to recognize the students and their families and what's going to be the look of the event itself. My director said, Wow, they had some great ideas, the younger people. I said, "yeah, they normally do." But that was only because I had done that already within KLCC, because before that I would have never mentioned that. I might have brought some youth on as we normally would do, kind of like tokens, but not let's share ideas and come up with such and such. (Adult- Benton Harbor leadership team)

LIGI: When I look at it, I look at it like a virus. You continue to notice the symptoms, and the community is really not going to notice the symptoms until it's too late, and youth and adult partnership is actually going to end up being the model. You have the virus spreading to City Hall, to the school board, into key positions in schools, into key positions at charter schools, into key positions at Lake Michigan College, and into key positions at the Boys and Girls Club. And one of the goals was to get this entrenched into the host organization, but I believe what has happened is that the folks that have worked directly with this project have gone and taken this youth and adult partnership model to be a part of who they are and what they are, so they're taking it into areas in which they're working and influencing their organization to be a part of a joint effort. I think the impact has been broader than we even understand at this particular point because it's a part of many different organizations and many different levels, and a lot of our young people who are involved with a bigger group of young people are enforcing those young people to say youth and adult partnerships work. So there's probably hundreds of individuals in the community now who are aware of youth and adult partnerships and want them to happen. So I see the impact being larger than what we can really see right now. (Adult- Benton Harbor leadership team)

GENTRY: For the first time the organization that I work with followed a youth and adult partnership model for a year, and a tribute to our young people who went through our program; that had never been done before. Youth had never been given a voice as to how that event was run. How it was held, where it was held, the look of the event, when the youth and adults would speak, who would be invited, the menu, everything was based on the youth and adult model, and that was at the end of the whole 2006/2007 academic year. (Adult- Benton Harbor leadership team)

MODERATOR: What made a difference in that event or activity?

GENTRY: What made the difference in how it happened. Basically, I presented the youth and adult partnership model to my supervisor and she was willing to take a chance on it. She was skeptical of it, but she was willing to take a chance on it and she was overwhelmingly impressed with how that model worked. So it's something she has pledged to use again. (Adult- Benton Harbor leadership team)

ANISHA: I think as a result of the fellowship and the youth and adult partnerships in the trainings, the Know Your Rights workshop, we have players even engaged at the level of conversation on the policy group that is a mandated order by the governor to kind of do these series of things and then be able to have a voice and the kind of recommendations that go towards policies for immigrants in commonwealth is huge. I don't think two or three years ago we would have been as prepared to show up and be a voice in that for underrepresented groups of immigrants and young people. We definitely wouldn't have been in a place where we would have had young people who are engaged with us and able to participate at that level.... When ROCA shows up, not ROCA the organization, but ROCA the community, because people attach themselves here in funny ways; young people always have a voice in some of those things and they're participating and talking and engaged in that little conversation, and I think people seek it out more and more now. And even at that level, in this community there are a lot of voices in the community around some issues, but there's not as many voices that are as united around what the needs are. So there's tensions in the community because people have different opinions. But I think the fellowship has really represented a united voice of what people really want in their lives in the immigrant community and has been able to through the youth and adult partnerships has been able to be that voice for those groups of immigrants in our community, too. I think it's tremendous.

I think it's tremendous that because of all that and the work that's happened over the past years and the training that's happened, you know, we have young people who are representing voices of these groups of immigrants in our community who get heard sitting at the table with the people who are making the recommendation and the governor about policy. I think it's awesome, awesome work that they've done. (Adult- Roca leadership team)

MIRRIAM: I'm working in a public school system now and every day I think about these things that we've learned that we could use in situations. It's a very difficult environment to introduce some of these collaborations, because in the school system it's pretty much top down. I started dialogues with people on campus who are interested in engaging some of these practices. So it's these subtle relationships that are beginning and just working towards the time when we can begin to collaborate and engage young people in more higher level responsibility skills that right now they are at the mercy of all of us who are in charge. So it's something I think about a lot. How can we implement. (Adult-

Roca leadership team)

MODERATOR: Okay. In the next segment, I guess, at the end of each initial KLCC session, two year time period, you have to ask how is the work that your organization is doing might be different in terms of capacity development? How do you deliver? How do you sustain the work of collective leadership and adult partnerships?

MOLLY: I think there are a couple of ways. One, as we get clear on what the agenda and the purpose of the youth and adult partnerships is, you can find funding that's sustainable and work on it. So we've been able to leverage funding for some of the violence prevention work and immigrant organizing and the school organizing things of KLCC. As it becomes important it can get integrated to how the host organization runs itself, because we're committed to it. It's going to become something that's about part of what we are as opposed to something we get to do that's over here. (Executive Director- Roca)

MODERATOR: So how does that happen?

MOLLY: We sort of embraced the organizing agendas. It didn't make sense because it's what matters to young people and our partners so we have to figure out how to keep going. It's not set up around the grant, the grant is an opportunity, but it's not the confines of the grant. I think that our peacemaking circle model really brings people to the table and helps them stay at it for a long time and it's a good way to blend relationships and trust within youth and adult partners. It's fundamentally about a way to be in the world and behavior and attitudes and approach, some of that approach question. So I think as we behave better we're better partners in community change efforts.

It depends on what you think is important. So we have some former youth members on the board. We've been through periods when we had young people on the board and they're like, this is boring. What I want to know how to do is the community organizing agenda for immigrant and refugee rights. What I want to do is figure out how we deal with violence issues, and that's not necessarily what governing boards do. They have to set policy and they raise money and look at the budget, right. So we have a set of ideas that we think are about youth leadership. That's great. I'm not saying they're not. I think we're inviting a broader discussion on what youth leadership is, right. When young people feel like they can talk with the city manager just because they matter and the city manager figured it out. They don't need to sit on some board to do that, they can just sit and talk to the city manager. That's a powerful thing because they all belong together, right. So it's a different framework. (Executive Director-Roca)

SAM: The peace circles, you guys brought them into Lake, and now the principal uses peace circles with the staff. Just techniques like that. We brought them into other sites in schools (inaudible) so the youth staff here was trained on peace circles and I think meetings are also conducted in peace circles. I don't know of

an agency, but the youth and the Lake staff does peace circles for meetings.
(Youth-MiCasa leadeship team)

GINGER: I think that we do a lot of work at the youth end of MICASA. We spend a lot of time thinking about how to incorporate some of the adult programs, like the entrepreneurial path and things like that. And because we work with youth, we have to have youth and adult partnerships all the time. An interesting thing Christine is starting to consider is how do the two adult programs start incorporating youth. And in the three years I have worked here it's never been spun around that way. So that's just a thought that is beginning to grow literally within the past couple of months. So we'll see. But it's an exciting idea that, for once now, the adult programs have to start considering youth and what that might look like. (Adult- MiCasa leadeship team)

SAM: Other than the fact that our new fellows since I've come on board in August have been students at Lake, where previously we didn't have many Lake students. So as part of our effort to really incorporate ourselves more into the school and into the community we've been trying to bring more Lake students on board and hopefully more people from the Lake community that really live there or have a student that goes there or has a stake in the community. (Youth-MiCasa leadership team)

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore and understand the skills and capacities required for leadership teams at three community based organizations to generate youth adult partnerships focused on community change. The utility and usefulness of this study specifically would assist community based organizations, educational institutions, and community members in understanding how to utilize youth adult partnerships to effectively address issues affecting their communities. This research used a case-based approach anchored with a simultaneous triangulated mixed method design to collect qualitative data. The qualitative data included three one-on-one interviews with executive directors of community based organizations, focus group interviews with leadership teams of three community based organizations and archival data from documents submitted by each community based organization. The data were coded, organized, and analyzed, first by research question and then by categories and sub categories which were guided by the conceptual framework, as depicted in chapter 3. The study was based on the following three research questions:

1. How does “place” define the nature of youth adult partnerships generated by leadership teams at community based organizations that focused on community change issues?
2. What were the necessary skills and capacities required for leadership teams at community based organizations to generate youth adult partnerships focused on community change issues?

3. How did youth and adult partnerships generated by leadership teams at community based organizations been used to address community change issues?

These three research questions were addressed by the findings in chapter 4. The overarching finding in this study revealed that building trust was paramount in multiple aspects of youth adult partnerships. Participants explained that building trust required that individuals seek to understand the individuals that they worked with on a more substantive and deeper level than usual. Additionally, building trust required that each participant engage in understanding their individual story and the story of others. Many of the participants explained that sharing stories and personal experiences often revealed the motivations, expectations, and a degree of willingness that community members shared to create a safe environment suitable for learning in public.

This chapter used the following categories to analyze, interpret, and synthesize meaning of the findings.

1. Importance of Context of place
2. Importance of Building trust
3. Importance of Co-constructing purpose
4. Importance of Acting together was important
5. Importance of Deepening and sustaining the work to make it a way of life

The above analytic categories are directly aligned with each of this study's research questions. These same analytic categories were used to code the data and present the findings in the previous chapters. During the analysis, I searched primarily for patterns that connected with the analytic categories. Next, I searched for clusters of themes or connections that emerged among various categories. At that point, I employed a level of

secondary analysis that linked the themes or clusters to the relevant theory and literature. Lastly, the findings were compared and contrasted with the existing literature.

The previous chapter presented the findings of this study by organizing data from various sources into categories to produce a readable narrative. The narrative included quotes and passages from participants. However, the purpose of this chapter is to provide interpretive insights into the findings. Whereas the previous chapter split apart and parsed out pieces and chunks of data to tell the story of the research, this chapter will attempt to reconstruct a more holistic understanding. The analysis is therefore intended to depict a more integrated picture of youth adult partnerships. The end result of this process should be a layered synthesis that explains youth adult partnerships at the three participating community based organizations. More importantly, this chapter should highlight the skills and capacities identified by the leadership teams as paramount in generating youth adult partnerships focused on community change issues.

The discussion in this chapter took into consideration links and intersections in the literature of community leadership development, youth adult partnerships, educational leadership and administration, and community based organizations. The implications of these findings are intended to augment the existing understanding and perceptions necessary to generate youth adult partnerships for community change. The chapter concludes with a reexamination of the research assumptions, which were identified in the first chapter, and a summary that incorporates a note regarding the effect of possible research bias in interpreting the findings.

Throughout this study I often asked the following, 1) Given what I have found, what does this mean? 2) What is really going on here? 3) What does this tell me about

youth adult partnerships? The answers to the above questions served as a calibrating self-check. This calibration process allowed me to work back and forth between the findings of the research and my own perspectives and understandings. This process has helped me to make sense and meaning. This understanding and meaning emerged from looking at differences and similarities, and from inquiring and interpreting causes, consequences, and relationships. Finally, by making use of description and interpretation, I was able to sort and synthesize the significant patterns among the findings.

Analytic Category 1: Importance of Context of Place

The first major finding of this research is that the organizational context and community context are directly linked to the epistemology of place. Epistemology of place includes both the implicit and explicit knowledge of the community's history, geography, lineage and the struggles that have defined how the community addresses issues of politics, economics and demographics. This knowledge is most completely defined by the diverse cultural epistemologies that make up any community and include race/ethnicity, migration history and socioeconomic status. Additionally, this knowledge is dynamic, because it has the capacity to evolve over time with the inclusion of new relationships and new understandings (Guajardo, 2002).

Therefore, given what we know about the importance of place, what is the significance in the formation of youth adult partnerships? The findings from this study explain that by understanding epistemology of place, the leadership teams were able to generate youth adult partnerships that were appropriate for their communities. The leadership teams were able to generate partnerships that were able to articulate community issues in a manner that was unique to the values and practices of the

community. In fact, the organizational and community context were inextricably interwoven and intertwined into the fabric of each of the leadership teams at each of the organizations. The leadership teams explained the importance of implicitly and explicitly utilizing the knowledge and resources present within their own communities to assist them in the process of coming to common ground, identifying common goals and defining a shared vision. The leadership teams were deliberate in their consideration and use of community resources. They expressed the importance of relying on the knowledge of the community in their quest to address particular community issues. As such, they found this to be especially helpful when dealing with large policy issues, such as immigrant rights, community policing, and parental involvement in schools. Additionally, by utilizing the epistemology of place in the generation of youth adult partnerships, each community was better able to address the multiple and often competing contexts present in communities.

The complexity of the community context required that individuals tap into the expertise and talents of community members to effectively address such issues. The leadership teams at each organization specifically and intentionally engaged youth in the process of community change. Youth and adults participated in leadership development activities. They both played integral roles on the leadership team and directly interacted with community members, community leaders, and K-12 educators and administrators. A direct result of their participation in leadership development activities and their interactions with various members of their communities, the leadership team members began to see themselves as leaders both within their organizations as well as within the community.

The leadership team at Roca discussed how they rely heavily on each other for guidance, direction, and expertise. Youth looked to adults and adults looked to youth. The executive director looked to the leadership team and vice versa. They expressed that each person held some reservoir of knowledge, skill, insight or expertise that would benefit the group and the community. As such, no individual person was stronger than group. They shared, that by working together, they were able to uncover blind spots in and fill gaps in their understanding. This point was illuminated during an interesting exchange during a focus group at Roca. The members of the leadership team were asked to introduce themselves and tell a little bit about their community. The probe was deliberately open and broad. It allowed space for each person to share what he or she wished to share about themselves and their community. Several members shared their occupations and explained community challenges and community issues. They expressed that they worked closely with community members to gain their perspectives. They held forums to exchange information with community members, conducted interviews to capture historical accounts and to preserve historical knowledge, and they welcomed community members to become a part of the organization.

Epistemology of place appeared especially important for communities that were marginalized culturally and economically. The findings indicate that communities are important. Communities are the places that individuals learn how to negotiate their position. Communities are places that help individuals prepare to interact and negotiate in places outside of their comfort zone. It is the place that individuals learn to utilize assets and negotiate shortcomings. Communities provide the arena to learn values, negotiate politics, establish relationships, and practice giving back. It is often through

these experiences that individuals learn the skills and develop the capacities to nurture ideas, make decisions, and build strong sustainable relationships. Communities also help to build the next generation of leaders, who in turn will impact their community and ultimately the world. Unfortunately, communities that are marginalized culturally and economically are often forced to compromise and acculturate their consciousness, identity, values and practices in an effort to demonstrate their willingness and commitment to change and improve their communities. More often, marginalized communities are expected to compromise and acculturate for the promise of economic and political capital. Unfortunately, when communities compromise and acculturate, they indelibly alter their ability to negotiate their position in places outside their comfort zone. That is, when individuals are forced to distance themselves from the communities responsible for their development, they sever the link to that community and thus reduce the community base. Therefore, it is important to understand communities through the eyes of the residents. Understanding how individuals perceive their community reveals their sense of well-being, being well, belonging and connectedness. Understanding the level to which individuals feel connected to their communities facilitates an understanding of the community change desired, and the amount of support required and more importantly, the amount of support they are willing to accept.

The discussion above helps to explain how the leadership team at Benton Harbor addressed particular issues in their community. The leadership team identified and explained that a large majority of Benton Harbor residents lived at or below poverty levels. Additionally, they expressed concerns about the high crime rate, low academic achievement of students, and low parental involvement with schools. However, even in

the midst of describing the challenging circumstances that their community faced, the leadership team was able to frame those challenges as opportunities. They explained that as a result of such community issues, various community leaders, policy makers, and school officials were turning to them for assistance. They explained that those individuals were aware of the success that the boys and girls club had with its members and had began learning of the new work taken place as a result of youth adult partnerships. Members of the leadership team brought their knowledge, skills and expertise as college administrators, K-12 educators and administrators, community activist and students, to the work that they did with and within the organization. They found that they were actually experts in many areas and therefore were capable of contributing to community change efforts. For example, the leadership team recognized a disconnection between elected community officials and community residents. Therefore, they worked to bring elected community officials and the community together for a question and answer forum. The leadership team framed the discussion by utilizing the local knowledge of the community and enlisting the help of both youth and adults from the community. They involved local community advocates, religious leaders, parents and students in the planning of the event to assure that the forum was productive for both the community and the elected officials. They were well aware of and resisted the temptation to simply host a nice event, but lacked substance, and therefore, failed to address the lack of communication between the community and the elected officials. Therefore, the leadership team was careful not to lose the identity of the community while they prepared to host prominent city officials and local businesses.

The leadership team incorporated the values and practices of the community into the structure of the forum. The community context of Benton Harbor indicated that residents of have high regard for its high school sports teams and high school band. Understanding that the high school played a major role in the identity of the community, the leadership team systematically involved both the band and local athletes in the events of the day. The leadership team organized a basketball tournament to jumpstart the day, followed by a talent show, in which several bands members participated, and culminated with the question and answer forum. During the question and answer forum members from the community were encouraged to ask questions and share their experiences within the community and express their vision for the community. The elected officials were encouraged to participate in a manner that was authentic. They were encouraged to listen and respond in a manner that transcended their office. By structuring the day around the local knowledge and expertise of the community it allowed individuals to connect with each other around common themes and common issues

The leadership team was able to connect and incorporate the epistemology of place within their leadership development activities, as well as, into the events that they hosted to address community issues. This provided greater opportunities for all that participated to feel connected, valued, and safe within both the organization and within the community. When individuals expressed a feeling of being connected, they also expressed greater feelings of belonging. Feelings of belonging linked to feeling “safe.” The feeling of safety was described as being present more so within the community organization facility. However, as individuals expanded their relationships with individuals within the organization they began to bond with those individuals and build

trust. As levels of trust increased, they were able to co-construct a purpose for the work they wished to engage in. As they co-constructed a purpose, they were able to develop and wield power within their communities. The interpersonal connections of youth and adults generated a source of power that directly contributed to significant capacity building in both organization members and community citizens. It was through those relationships that partnerships developed. In turn, those partnerships began to address community issues, and thus changed their communities from within.

Analytic Category 2: Importance of Building Trust

The research questions sought to identify specific skills and capacities necessary to generate youth adult partnerships within community based organizations focused on community change. Each community based organization had specific missions of positive youth development and community leadership development. Participants indicated that their leadership teams took specific steps to generate youth adult partnerships. One member of the leadership team at MiCasa, framed the steps in this way, “We spent the first year building trust... a lot of it was because of the trust circles. We were so honest with each other, that we would shed tears together.” He concluded his comments by expressing that the trust circles brought their fellowship together to a point that they viewed each other as family. He shared that they spent a lot of time together, and they learned to place a high premium on spending time together. He concluded his thoughts with this comment, “So the trust thing just hits me because the first full year our entire fellowship was defined by me, as building trust just by getting to know each other.”

Building trust required that individuals get to know each other at deeper levels than usually expected from casual everyday interactions. Building trust required that individuals focus on the culture, history, strengths, challenges and wisdom of the individuals they worked with. Participants shared that they took time to learn about the talents and gifts, as well as, the skills and capacities of others. The leadership team explained that they opened up to share their expectations, their passions, and were willing to learn and share in public spaces.

An important step in building trust began with individual transformation. Individual transformation shifted individuals thinking and actions. Individual transformation required time, involved trust, and required a commitment to learning new skill sets. Responses during focus groups and interviews revealed that the leadership team and executive directors, by in large, felt that individually they were moving forward to create change, and that collectively they had developed the capacity to begin acting in a manner that would positively affect the type of change they wanted to see in their communities.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) discuss the importance of building trust between schools and communities. They describe the importance of establishing positive social relationships as a component of creating sustained improvement in the academic performance of students. Additionally, they explored the importance of establishing relational trust as a central component for developing a broad base of trust across and between school leaders and community members (2002). This work helped to frame and linked how I explain building trust.

The findings from this study are aligned with Bryk and Schneider (2002) assertion that building trust involves risk taking and an understanding that the actions of one party inversely affect the other party. Additionally, this study revealed that trust is explained as a social or collective attribute that can be drawn upon to achieve a collective objective. Responses from the leadership teams suggest that building trust is often generated when agreements are understood and embedded within the cultural fabric and structure of the school, organization and community. That is, trust is grounded in the obligations and expectations or particular sanctions imposed or expressed by particular networks, organizations and communities.

The leadership team alluded to several necessary components to build trust, but the most salient point was made when they reflected on the process of “gracious space.” Gracious space is a concept that was implemented by the coordinating organizations as a process that opens up dialogue and provides an opportunity to collectively create a space that welcomes the opinions of others. More importantly, it creates a space that welcomes differing opinions. It provides an environment that is capable of holding conflict. The following quotes were taken from a segment of a focus group with the leadership team in response to the question about the building blocks for generating youth adult partnerships for community change. During a focus group interview, Larry Left Hand Bull explained the importance of building trust and working collectively. He attributed much of the success of the fellowship to their early and frequent use of gracious space as well.

LARRY: I think... for our group, the biggest thing for me was learning to work collectively. That means working with Rudy, Adam and Sharon and some others in our group who are a lot younger than me but in some ways are a lot older than me. And I think building that gracious space is paramount and key that the group itself feels comfortable addressing a multitude of issues at any given time and to step back when necessary and say we're maybe not ready to take this on yet, but

we'll come back to it and table this issue and we'll work on what we can do right now. And I would recommend that to other community groups out there that they spend the time and energy in building the gracious space between youth and adults or adults and adults and what have you. (Adult MiCasa Leadership Team)

Gracious space was a concept introduced during training sessions developed for the leadership teams. The concept helps to facilitate opportunities for individuals to generate a collective vision through which everyone can participate. In addition to the process of creating gracious space the leadership teams used a process called peace-making circles, also referred to as peace circles or trust circles. Peace making circles are a process attributed to the aboriginal and native traditions that brings together individuals willing to work on conflict resolution, decision making, or other outcome based practices, with honest communication centered around relationship development and community building. The Leadership teams explained that after they were able to develop the necessary skills and capacities with their fellowship, they were then able to effectively work with each other, and eventually they were able to work with individuals outside of their fellowships. The fellowship identified Lake Middle School as the first community organization that they would work with as part of their goal of creating community change.

Molly Baldwin, the executive director for Roca, expressed the importance of being clear in the vision and mission of an organization. She stressed the importance of telling the truth about what is going on in organizations, communities, and around the country. Next, she framed her understanding of trust as being the foundation of relationships. It is the combination of truth and trust that make way for transformation or change to occur. Members of the leadership teams also expressed the importance of

adults to rethink how they engage and interact with youth. The comments above and those that follow identify key points that frame the importance of establishing open, honest, and truthful communication as a component of building trust. Once trust is established, it establishes relationships that allow youth and adults to be open to learning together in public and prepared for transformation and change. They were also asked to explain what was important to generate youth adult partnerships.

Victor identified the importance of youth being able to identify with adults. Additionally, he explained the importance of youth having multiple adults to go to for various needs. This finding is important for educators and educational administrators. The idea of trust ties nicely with Bryk and Schneider work in Chicago schools. Bryk and Schneider (2002) assert that trust is linked to academic achievement. Their work identified four vital signs for identifying and assessing trust in schools. The four components were respect, competence, personal regard and integrity. They identified that improving schools was closely connected with school educators and administrators ability to build trust between parents and their children. They were able to explain that the personal dynamics of educators, administrators, parents and students influenced student behavior, attendance, and achievement. Schools that were characterized by high levels of what they call, relational trust, resulted in advanced improvements in school culture, marked gains in student learning, and greater parental involvement within schools.

Victor adds an additional layer to the importance of truth, trust, and transformation, as he expressed the point of view of an adult working with youth. He explained that there is certain amount of pressure on adults to “do right” by young people.

This self-check of adult interactions occurred in other places throughout the data. Adults expressed that they wanted to be sure that they provided the necessary space for youth to grow, be held accountable and responsible, while still providing support. The balance was identified as being very delicate. However, the fact that adults were cognizant of this spoke volumes to their commitment to creating youth adult partnerships. Even though the intent to “do right” by youth was present, there were incidents where the leadership team and the organization needed to recalibrate their interactions. In the following statement, Cody and Jackie explain an incident that took place around the design of an invitation for a community wide fund raising dinner hosted by the organization. An adult in a leadership role at the organization, but not directly involved with generating youth adult partnerships at the organization, asked the leadership team to coordinate the invitation design efforts. After numerous hours and several iterations, the leadership team completed a flyer that they felt accomplished the task and goals that they were given. However, upon completion, they were presented with a new set of expectations and a completed invitation that they should use as a template. The leadership team stated that they felt that the adult did not truly believe that the leadership team composed of youth and adults would facilitate the process in an effective and professional manner. In an attempt to safeguard the outcome, the adult prepared a backup plan that consisted of additional criteria and a separate invitation that was already completed. They expressed that there was lack of confidence in their abilities. They also shared that once they had “proven” that they could handle things on their own, they were given more freedom to move forward independently.

The above scenario addressed the importance of all members involved in the organization undergo youth adult partnership training activities. This was important because it assured that individuals learned how to effectively interact and engage each other in the work of the organization. Additionally, it highlighted the importance of acknowledging the accomplishments and efforts of both youth and adult members rather than focusing on the contributions of the adults only. The leadership teams expressed a need for open support of partnerships between youth and adult. Additionally, the leadership team identified moments that they felt undermined by individuals that had not undergone or participated in the youth adult partnership leadership training activities. It was clear that generating youth adult partnerships was a process that required carefully orchestrated interactions supported by activities designed to assist individuals in the transition.

Benton Harbor shared a contrasting view of the role played by the leadership of the organization. The Benton Harbor leadership team felt that they did not have enough support. They felt that they were in essence abandoned, or left on an island. Although they grew to embrace the situation and reframe it as having autonomy and creative rights to frame the work as they saw best, they ultimately expressed a need for the organization to be cognizant and supportive of the necessary work and processes connected to youth adult partnerships. The leadership teams mentioned separate occasions when the organization inadvertently undermined the youth adult partnership efforts by the organizations lack of participation and lack of visibility in the community. These unintentional actions were often subtle and unnoticed by the organization. However, it was clear and openly expressed to the leadership team. The leadership team attributed

the organizations behavior to their lack of participation in workshops, trainings, and gatherings focused on developing individual and collective leadership skills to generate youth adult partnerships. The leadership team expressed that it was not enough to have youth adult partnerships present in isolated groups. Instead, the organization and its members were better served when the partnerships permeated throughout the organization.

Additionally, the leadership teams expressed that they were able to better serve the needs of the community and better address community issues when the organization provided reasonable levels of oversight and extended the organizational expertise and historical tradition when interacting with community stakeholders.

Analytic Category 3: Importance of Co-constructing Purpose

The importance to co-constructing purpose was a recurring theme addressed by the leadership teams. The findings revealed that participants in this study revealed a need to (a) develop a shared understanding of the role of youth adult partnerships within the community based organizations, and (b) identify pressing community issues that the youth adult partnerships would work to address.

There is broad scholarship on group leadership, including the idea or concept of great groups as leaders in society. Great Groups or a collection of creative individuals have traditionally and historically worked collectively to achieve results without following a hierarchical approach. In these instances, the process of defining vision, setting direction, and exercising influence over other people and organizations, became a leadership function that was shared by the group and individuals within the group. Leadership for community change is based on the principle that a commitment to social

advocacy, civic engagement, and community change issues is grounded in collective actions and co-constructed purpose developed by groups of individuals working together.

Collaborative leadership development or co-constructing purpose for a shared understanding of community change was explained as a process during many of the interviews. The process included both individual and collective efforts to create a climate for change through youth adult partnerships. The opportunity to co-construct a purpose together encouraged members to develop a shared purpose for their work. The shared purpose allowed for individual visions to shift to a collective vision. It also assisted individuals in staying connected to and focused on the community change issues.

The process of co-constructing purpose happened on at least four levels, personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural community. On the personal level, there were shifts in attitudes, values, and skills. The interpersonal level involved changes in language, actions, and included relationship building. Each community-based organization also experienced some type of institutional change characterized by shifts in policies and practices. Finally, shifts in the cultural community, which included a shift in social norms and focus on what is “right.” That is co-learning was conducted and framed in a culturally responsible manner that intentionally, created opportunities to embrace the epistemology of place. The epistemology of place explained the content of both implicit and explicit knowledge of the community’s history, geography, lineage and the struggles that have defined how the community addresses issues of politics, economics and demographics. The leadership teams often referred back to the importance of building trust and developing a shared vision. The examples in this study illuminate how diverse community leadership worked across boundaries of age, gender, geography, race, culture,

class, and faith to mobilize collective action to improve local conditions and the quality of life in their communities.

In the earlier passage about the “Big Bash,” members from the Benton Harbor leadership team were described the event. The Big Bash was an event that included a basketball game, a talent show, and culminated with a question and answer period with city officials. The leadership team was very strategic in how they planned the event. Their focus was to draw from both youth and adult interest and to conclude the event with the question and answer period between community members and city officials. The careful planning and attention to the cultural identity of the community paid off for the leadership team. They were able to sustain large numbers of both youth and adults throughout the entire day. Members worked to understand the importance of bringing together a full representation of the community that was able to work together to move past barriers that have separated people. They were able to do this by emphasizing inclusion of individuals that were not typically seen as leaders and involving them in decision making processes and planning of the event.

Members of the MiCasa leadership team were asked to explain what needed to take place in order for the organization to better value the perspectives of youth adult partnerships. The following statements further clarify the importance of co-constructing purpose at the beginning stages of youth adult partnership work, but it was also mentioned that the process be ongoing. As new members join in, they would benefit from the process as well. The leadership team expressed that the process be ongoing. There were moments that they went back to the stage of building trust. They specifically

identified moments when they used the peace making circles to reestablish a baseline, or to get everyone on the same page.

The next sets of passages continue to build on the theme of co-constructing purpose as a valuable component for community change. The theme also intersects with building trust by establishing open communication. However, the concept of building trust appears to move from the confines of the fellowship and the community based organizations to a more community wide focus that incorporates members from the community in learning the process as well.

The leadership teams spoke clearly on the importance of building trust and co-constructing purpose as valuable components of youth adult partnerships for community change. They also expressed the importance of acting together. The leadership teams explained that as a result of working together various assumptions about leadership skills and capacities were challenged and reconsidered. They learned that all members of the fellowship benefited from the same leadership skill training regardless of leadership experience and indiscriminate of age. For example, initially, it was assumed that youth would need leadership training and capacity building at all levels, but, adults were expected to possess particular leadership skills. They found that both adults and youth benefited from safe places where they could to be open to learn as well. Such opportunities reduced the pressure, risk, and expectations that adults already possessed leadership skills and capacities.

Analytic Category 4: Importance of Working Together

Leadership team members spoke of the importance of building trust as a major component of youth adult partnerships for community change. They also linked the

ability to work together as paramount in the success of the partnerships. The ability to work together allowed and even encouraged individuals to mature into leadership roles. The maturation process provided space for individuals to understand their current abilities and the patience to nurture that ability through supportive group action.

Participants shared that in order to address community issues the group had to learn how to work together to build new relationships, share power, create alliances, and assemble a critical mass of diverse leaders. They also expressed that new people should be included as leaders. That is, individuals not typically viewed as leaders should also be included in the leadership and decision making process.

One member of a leadership team shared, “part of learning to work together is to understand how to engage in a respectful and critical process while still holding one another accountable to the collective decisions of the group was also important.” The Executive director for Roca mentioned that, “with time the level of clarity and strength of the youth adult partnership increased. As clarity and strength of the partnership increased it provided opportunities for the partnerships to address larger and more complex issues.” A youth member of the leadership team summarized the importance of community with clarity and simplicity by stating, “They, City Hall, can’t do anything without community anyways. If you can’t deal with them and you can’t talk to them and they’re not willing to understand, you have to talk to the community.” This quote came from a youth that understood the importance of community members and community leaders coming together and to working together. However, they also expressed an underlying understanding that there are times when working together is challenged or even hindered. In those instances, it is important that individuals seek alternate avenues to accomplish

the goal at hand. Additionally, training youth and creating the space for them to take calculated risk was at the core of community leadership development and youth adult partnerships. Providing a space grounded in strong relationships and in the understanding that young people have important and necessary ideas and knowledge that must be part of the local educational and development process was important. Additionally, it was important to understand that youth have power within communities and should be instructed on how to connect with others that hold power within communities to establish partnerships to create community change. This is critical to the development of communities as they develop the next generation of leaders. Youth should be accepted as young in chronological years but, nurtured and valued for their maturity in experiences.

Youth that are surrounded with positive roles models that are capable of developing the skills and resiliency to navigate difficult situations and important decisions are better prepared to work with others. Setting those favorable conditions requires negotiating and sharing power. Favorable conditions include mentoring youth on how to engage in new experiences. This process is therefore a reciprocal pedagogical process. As youth are mentored they are also providing insight and feedback to those mentoring. As youth ask questions and collaboratively create criteria for their learning experiences, they also create opportunities to share ideas, roles, and duties in the developing relationship. As the relationship develops into a partnership, decisions become shared. However, decisions are not accepted merely because they were suggested by youth, but rather, because the decisions have validity and stand on their own merit.

A key element of acting and working together to make the work a reality was to develop networks and partnerships across systems (schools, community organizations, local and regional government agencies, and so on). This process involved the leadership teams' ability to build allies in the community for youth adult partnerships that were willing to become part of the ongoing learning community. Additionally, the pathways that connected the work of the leadership team to a broader community system were built largely on the coat tails of the work and partnerships established by the host agency. That is, organizations with a track record of successful partnerships in the community had created and/or renewed pathways for youth adult partnerships in the community (e.g., ROCA and to a lesser degree Benton Harbor and MiCasa). In cases where the learning process engaged the host organization and strengthened community partnerships or alliances, desirable impacts were realized and further support continued as a result of the youth adult partnerships. In cases where there was little to no participation from the host organization in the learning and relationship building process, sustaining the work was explained as being more difficult. Developing and aligning a shared purpose between the host organization and the leadership team aided in generating partnerships and networks to both initiate and implement community change efforts, as well as, support the work of youth adult partnerships for future work.

Youth adult partnerships generated new links and established new connections with individuals within community based organizations as well as with community members. Members of youth adult partnerships learned to act as effective bridges between people and organizations. In addition, as bridges youth adult partners were able to isolate a person or organization that isn't connected and know how to work with them

to increase the potential of contribution and decrease alienation that may lead to detrimental behaviors. In this way youth adult partnerships can have enormous influence in both an informal and formal way.

Analytic Category #5: Importance of Deepening, Sustaining, and making work a way of life

The leadership team indicated that it learned the importance of developing allies and resources that make it possible to imbed the work of youth and adult partnerships into the fabric of the community. Additionally, they expressed that they were able to create a process that could support the ongoing work of youth adult partnerships. They achieved this goal by inviting and nurturing new members into similar leadership development opportunities. As a result they were able to identify how they would sustain the work of youth adult partnerships. They were able to commit to ongoing development of their leadership skills and capacities, continue to work with community partners, and embraced the lessons learned as an emerging leader.

The leadership team shared that through their interactions with other leadership teams, that they learned the importance of personal story. They expressed that it was critically important to the work that they did. It was understood that if the personal story was not adequately understood, first by the individual, second to the group, it would not be interwoven into the story of the organization and community. Acknowledging the personal story helped to focus community issues at a micro level, which later helped to address community issues at a macro level. That is, individuals learned that they first must understand their own story before they were able to work on the community story. The leadership team expressed that they needed to take time to go more in depth into the

work they were doing, to explore the activities that were based on their local work, and frame concepts and activities based on a local context. The teams wanted to “go inward” to understand how they could positively affect the larger community. Lastly, the leadership teams expressed that they wanted to add power and currency to their local stories by publishing them, using them to educate the community in an effort to address community issues.

The leadership team expressed that leadership development work must be grounded in a political and economic reality that youth and adults alike will see it as worthwhile and engaging. Additionally, such leadership development should be about the past, present, and future. However, it must also be grounded within a social and cultural reality that is relevant to community members and the community based organization.

Summary of Interpretation of Findings

This chapter described the experiences of three leadership teams from community-based organizations that generated youth adult partnerships focused on community change issues. The discussion highlighted the multifaceted and complex nature of the leadership teams’ experience. The discussion also revealed various skills and capacities identified as important for the generation of youth adult partnerships. However the most salient point or underlying and supportive theme was the importance of building trust. Lastly, this chapter offered an explanation as to the steps that the leadership teams took to develop partnerships and identified the skills and capacities required for youth adult partnerships to focus on community change issues.

The purpose of analyzing the findings was to produce a multi tiered, holistic, and integrated synthesis. The challenge throughout data collection and data analysis, which were not separate but rather interlocking phases of this research, was to make sense of large amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed given the purpose of the study. In addition, I performed extensive within-and across-case analyses and found considerable similarities between the leadership teams at the three community based organizations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATONS

The conclusions and implications presented in this chapter are based on the five findings that emerged from this research: (a) context and place matter, (b) building mutual trust is paramount, (c) co-constructing purpose is important to move the work forward, (d) acting and working together move the work forward, and (e) sustainability is linked to making the work a way of life. Following the conclusions is a discussion of the major implications from this research and recommendations for future research. Finally, this chapter concludes with final reflections on this study.

Conclusions

The following discussion will address the usefulness or utility of the findings of this research specifically for: (a) educators, (b) educational leadership administrators and faculty, (c) community based organizations, and (d) current and perspective youth development professionals and volunteers. What follows, are my interpretations of the lived experiences of members of the leadership teams at three community-based organizations that participated in the phenomena of youth adult partnerships. As such, the content should not be viewed as a generalization nor should it be viewed as a marker for replication of this study, but instead as an indication of possibilities and plausibility of generating authentic youth adult partnerships that are specific to the needs of individual communities, organizations, and systems. The intent of this research was to explore specific capacities and skills of leadership teams from three community based organizations that were engaged in youth adult partnerships with a focus on addressing particular issues within their communities. As such, the organizations were selected

based on their mission, vision and documented history and success of youth and adults working together in various capacities. The organizations demonstrated a willingness to shift from the historically successful models of positive youth development and youth mentoring, and embrace the model of youth adult partnerships.

The Process of Generating Youth Adult Partnerships

This research was successful in answering the research questions and generating findings that highlight and explain the skills and capacities necessary to generate youth adult partnerships formed to address community issues. However, there was also a serendipitous finding as well. Through serendipity, I learned that while capacities and skills were important in generating youth adult partnerships, the leadership teams utilized a process to generate these partnerships. The leadership teams were able to combine the tangible components with the process of generating youth adult partnerships.

Early in the study I defined specific terms to provide clarity for the remainder of the study. In doing so, I defined skills and capacities as the particular qualities, attributes and dispositions of individuals. Additionally, I described skills and capacities as including but not limited to critical thinking, decision-making, vocational awareness, cultural competence, self-regulation, contending with difficulties, conflict resolution, self-efficacy, goal setting, pro-social values, relationship skills, teamwork, connectedness to organizations and community, and civic engagement. While many of these particular qualities, attributes, and dispositions were important in generating youth adult partnerships, they also required that individuals participate in specific activities and leadership development workshops. The activities and workshops helped the leadership team better understand what youth adult partnerships were and were not, how to develop

them, how to use them to address community change issues, and how to sustain the partnerships beyond the conclusion of the projects they worked on. Additionally, each leadership team generated youth adult partnerships that were both specific and authentic to their community and organization. That is, each leadership team utilized the talents and gifts of the individuals that were in the community and identified community issues based on the expertise of the members of the youth adult partnerships.

The process of generating youth adult partnerships required that both youth and adults identify and acknowledge particular biases about youth adult partnerships. Next, it required that they identify what they expected to learn or accomplish from the youth adult partnerships. Finally, it required that they be willing to share experiences and learn in public. The process is both more difficult and more important than the outcomes or solutions. The process is one of learning to enhance the current skills and capacities of participants to create networks that are capable of supporting community change. This was accomplished by: (a) engaging non traditional leaders in activities and training that would assist them in playing integral roles that address community issues with a variety of stakeholders within the community; (b) understand that communities have established values of trust and reciprocity that include cultural nuances specific to their community. Understanding these components of community values and trust aid in building strong and lasting community partnerships; and (c) it is important that participants understand that systems are fragile, fluid, flexible and, at times fixed. That is, in order to compensate for this delicate balance, participants need to be prepared to share human resources, utilize information generated from diverse knowledge systems, and implement other

elements that aid in capacity building for community change. The passage below from a member of the Roca leadership team illuminates the above point:

If you really want to get anything done, if the kind of stuff you want to do is real change in the community, you can't be afraid of the hard stuff. You're going to keep encountering, whether it's tensions within your own team or your own organization or community or it's tensions with others or barriers that come in the way of everyone saying that you can't do that and you can't do that, you have to stay at it because that's where you can actually start getting the momentum going. I think a lot of times it gets so hard that people just stop or get angry, and that doesn't really necessarily translate into energy that moves things. So it's a delicate balance, but you can't be afraid of it and it's where a lot of things happen.

Generating youth adult partnerships required that the leadership teams operated on three levels that appeared to be sequential. The first level involved individual transformation. The leadership teams worked to provide space for individual transformation. They learned that individual transformation lead to a critical mass of people capable of moving communities toward community change. This particular level in the process was unique to the community and organizational context. However, these three step were involved: (a) developing a safe place for learning and dialogue, (b) developing the tangible components of skills and capacities, and (c) providing support for action. There are several places in this research that this process is illuminated. Additionally, at those points it is also clear when the leadership teams were successful at completing or adhering to the above steps. The second level involved employing youth adult partnerships within the organization and community. The findings indicate that trust, reciprocity, conflict resolution, and sharing learning experiences were key to the viability of the youth adult partnerships. For both youth and adults, perceptions of their partnerships capacity and application of skills were directly linked to the four previously mentioned concepts. A third and final level involved the strength of the partnerships to

build links in the community. The leadership teams explained that they perceived that their skills to include and engage diverse individuals and organizations, problem solving, and decision making was strengthened as a result of their participation in youth adult partnerships. This confidence reflects a level of both expressed and implied empowerment generated as a result of youth adult partnerships.

Youth Adult Partnerships are Complex and Messy

At this point it is important to express the difficult, complex, and messy nature of generating youth adult partnerships. Generating youth adult partnerships were more difficult than many of the outcomes that they produced. Moreover, there were moments when each leadership team struggled with enacting youth adult partnerships. Both youth and adults often interacted with each other in a mentor to mentee relationship. While such an interaction is appropriate in some instances, it could potentially hinder youth from developing particular leadership competencies and the ability to fully participate in community change activities. Additionally, adults need to examine their assumptions about youth and work toward creating a trusting and mutually respectful relationship with youth.

The learning process required to generate youth adult partnerships enhanced the leadership teams ability to create networks to support them in there work. Additionally, they knew that if they were successful at generating youth adult partnerships they could create system change and effectively address community issues. The stories or experience shared by members of the leadership team emphasized the importance and difficulty of generating and sustaining youth adult partnerships. Youth adult partnerships did not occur in a vacuum nor were they necessarily easy. Generating youth adult

partnerships required the commitment of individuals, organizations, and communities. The leadership teams alluded to the complex and messy process. It required individuals to complement his or her learning by building new relationships and strengthening old relationships. Creating new and strengthening old relationships was important because it provided pathways for youth and adults to engage in leadership activities, which resulted in actions that lead to ability to address community issues. Youth and adults learned to build mutually trusting relationships that lead to respect among both non-traditional and traditional community leaders, community officials and policy makers that held the authority to address community issues.

In summary, generating and sustaining youth adult partnerships is hard work, it is somewhat of a messy process that often encounters tensions, potholes, pitfalls and setbacks. Generating youth adult partnerships are time consuming and cumbersome for most organizations. There is constant need to reset and revisit the training framework. Additionally, it is important that all members that are involved in the work of youth adult partnerships participate in the training and commit to following the framework. This is important even for individuals that are engaged in tangency relationship with youth adult partnerships. Finally, it is important to understand that process requires time to develop. It happens over time and is often insulated and operates contrary to timelines.

Implication 1: The Epistemology of Place: Context, Place and Culture Matter

The epistemology of place explained the importance of acknowledging and understanding the complexity of community context, place and culture. It is through the elaborate mix of community context, place and culture that shape community values and practices. Community values and practices are therefore directly linked to the formation

of the epistemology of place. The epistemology of place is important because it frames and defines various aspects of communities. For example, it frames and defines how community members interact with each other, the level of involvement with and within organizations, with and within the community, and the levels of civic engagement to which community members participate.

Throughout this study the leadership teams highlighted various skills and capacities necessary to generate youth adult partnerships. They also explain the steps they implemented to address community issues. They were deliberate in highlighting the historical and cultural components connected to each issue. They also worked to include as many community stakeholders as possible. On the surface it appears that each leadership team embraced the same process. However, after closer consideration during the cross-case analysis, I discovered that each leadership team approached and addressed community issues differently. This finding did not come as a surprise.

The epistemology of place also helps to explain the complex, multiple, and often, competing values that make up the community context, place and culture. As such, it is important that individuals and organizations acknowledge and identify such competing values and work to meet on common ground, identify a set of common goals and define a shared vision. For example, Roca identified immigrant rights as the community issue they wished to address. MiCasa identified lack of participation of parents at a middle school within the community. Benton Harbor focused on improving the dialogue between youth and elected city officials. After each leadership team identified the community issue to address, they began developing the required capacities and skills necessary to effectively address each issue. Each organization utilized the knowledge

and expertise present within the community to address the community issue. Therefore, the epistemology of place of each community required a specific skill set and the development of particular capacities necessary for the leadership team to address the community issue.

The executive director of Roca provides a good example of pinpointing the epistemology of place within the Chelsea MA community. She acknowledged and understood the complexities of the political landscape, the needs of citizens within the community, and the capacities and skills associated with resources of the community and organization. She explained:

“You can do a lot of capacity building of people, and that's okay, but when it's connected to something and grounded in something and has meaning and has a life to it and grows and is challenged on its own, I think it makes it easier to do. Training leadership development, when young people are clear, their organizing agenda is really powerful.”

Members of Roca identified immigrant rights as an important community issue that they were willing to address. As such, the leadership team of the organization identified the political landscape and climate that was associated with the issue of immigrant rights. The leadership team then informed and educated the organization members on the issue, and then prepared the members to actively engage community members, community politicians, and other community stakeholders in a dialogue around the issue. Finally, the organization utilized its networks and resources to assist the citizens in the community. They provided seminars of immigrant rights, provided contact information for agencies designed to assist immigrants, and provided other services and assistance as needed. The political landscape involved government agencies such as the U.S. Immigrant and Custom Enforcement office, the governor's office, Mayor of

Chelsea, school district administrators, medical facilities, and religious organizations. Members of the leadership team met with representatives from each agency and worked to develop a working relationship that began with dialogue and exchange of information.

Roca's ability to acknowledge and understand the values and practices of the community allowed them to identify many of the trigger points that surrounded the issue of immigrant rights. Many of the community stakeholders that the leadership team spoke with shared similar values about immigrant rights. However, they also found that there were equal amounts of competing values, and thus would require interaction that was beyond their resources. Upon this realization, the organization began to expand their network to include organizations from across the country. This network increased the amount of resources and expertise. Additionally, it provided the required amount of exposure to continue the momentum the organization created within the community.

Roca was able to establish what Gold, Simon, and Brown (2005) refer to as social trust. Social trust develops accountability in relationships through establishing a mutual agreement. Developing accountability in relationships often requires that all parties understand the obligations that community members have of one another, thus reducing the perception that a single individual, institution, or organization wields unilateral power (Gold, Simon, & Brown, 2005). Roca functioned as an intermediary or conduit for the community and worked in shifting and redistributing the balance of power. Roca was able to establish relationships that created and shared power within the community.

It is important to point out that creating such power shifts is not always seamless and is certainly not without incident. On the contrary, at times, such power shifts result in confrontation or conflict. As such, an evaluation or assessment of acceptable levels of

confrontation and conflict should be considered prior to engaging in such interactions. Roca had a history of political advocacy, by some accounts, they were even considered as political agitators. Therefore they entered into their interactions with the community, community leaders, and government agencies with the understanding that the confrontation or conflict is not intentionally provoked, nor are they intentionally avoided. Instead the goal was to create an environment capable of holding the possible confrontation and conflict by engaging in conversations with involved parties prior to taking action.

Guajardo (2002) explains the importance of implicitly and explicitly utilizing the knowledge and resources present within the community as a key component to address community issues. This deliberate consideration of community resources is a vital component in understanding the epistemology of place. He explains that epistemology of place includes both the implicit and explicit knowledge of the community's history, geography, lineage and the struggles that have defined how the community addresses issues of politics, economics and demographics (2002). This knowledge is most completely defined by the diverse cultural epistemologies that make up any community, including race/ethnicity, migration history and socioeconomic status. Additionally, such knowledge is dynamic, because it has the capacity to be fluid, flexible and fixed and thus has the capacity to evolve over time, adjust to community needs, and provide structure for the inclusion of new relationships and new understandings (Guajardo, 2002).

Implication 2: Building Mutual Trust is Paramount

Building mutual trust was possibly the most frequently discussed component of youth adult partnerships throughout this research. It follows epistemology of place in

importance because individuals expressed and identified with their community as a determining component of how and why they were involved in the work of community change through their affiliation with the community based organization. After individuals understood who was present, why they were interested in participating with the organization and how they envisioned community change, they were then open to sharing and learning together. One key component of building mutual trust involved establishing respect for each other. Building mutual trust provided individuals with opportunities to work, honor, and accept the other person as a human being capable of connecting and learning with others.

The leadership team identified the importance of creating ground rules for their involvement and interactions with each other. They expressed the importance of trust and respect. They shared the importance of creating a safe space or environment that made it possible for them to share ideas, learn together and even disagree with each other. To accomplish the task, the leadership teams implement a concept described as gracious space. Creating gracious space provided a container, space or environment capable of holding tensions. It provided space to embrace tensions, with the objective, that tensions were a necessary part of growth, healing and change. Gracious space provided the necessary space for each individual to see the world through the eyes of others and ultimately learn from each other. Members of the leadership team worked to get to know each other. They worked to understand the culture, history, strengths, challenges and weakness of each group member. This process also helped participants to understand and acknowledge individual gifts, resources, skills and capacities present within the group, and learn together in the presence of their differences. The leadership teams expressed

the importance of providing time, space, and encouragement for individuals to share their stories. Individual stories helped to highlight the passions, hopes, and goals of the members of the organization and aligned the group for the work and the community issues that they wished to address.

Implication 3: Co-constructing Purpose is Important

It was important that leadership teams generated a youth adult partnership that was non-hierarchical and collective in nature. The partnerships needed to work in a way that both youth and adults could learn from each other. When this was accomplished, the partnerships worked with a commitment to corporate activities. Additionally, the partnerships consciously worked to create space for each person's perspective and the energy to move the work forward. Individuals inquired more often about what others thought or felt about particular ideas. They were also less competitive during their interactions and often worked towards clarification more often than working to persuasion.

The leadership teams explain that the goal of co-constructing purpose was to enable people to move forward or toward action that could make a substantial difference in the well being of their communities. Creating forward movement required that individuals translate their current understanding of community issues and began to view them from the perspective of others. The shift in perspectives began when participants expressed a willingness to share and express a sense of their own efficacy as community leaders. This complex and shared process of moving from an individual to a group focus was grounded on key building blocks of (a) trust and respect among group members, (b) skills that foster collective confidence and cross-cultural competence, and (c) a structure

that ensures both personal and group growth. Leadership teams expressed that they experienced changes in the way that they think about community issues, how they learn from members of the community, and how they engage adults and youth in a shared leadership capacity.

Co-constructing purpose helped participants to understand the diverse ways members defined community. It encouraged members to develop a shared purpose for their work. Ultimately, co-constructing purpose allowed members to create a bond that kept them connected during challenging times. Leadership teams learned the importance of moving from individual efforts to team efforts. When they worked as a team and aligned their efforts they were able to work more efficiently with a commonality of purpose and directed by a shared vision. The shared vision was actually a representation and extension of the individual vision of each member.

Implication 4: Acting and Working together Make the Work a Reality

A key element of acting and working together to make the work a reality was to develop networks and partnerships across systems (schools, community organizations, local and regional government agencies, and so on). This process involved the leadership teams' ability to build allies in the community for youth adult partnerships that were willing to become part of the ongoing learning community. The pathways that connected the work of the leadership team to a broader community system were built largely on the coat tails of the work and partnerships established by the host agency. That is, organizations with a track record of successful partnerships in the community had created and/or renewed pathways for youth adult partnerships in the community (e.g., ROCA and to a lesser degree Benton Harbor and MiCasa). In cases where the learning

process engaged the host organization and strengthened community partnerships or alliances, desirable impacts were realized and further support continued as a result of the youth adult partnerships. In cases where there was little to no participation from the host organization in the learning and relationship building process, sustaining the work was explained as being more difficult. Developing and aligning a shared purpose between the host organization and the leadership team aided in generating partnerships and networks to both initiate and implement community change efforts, as well as, support the work of youth adult partnerships for future work.

Youth adult partnerships generated new links and established new connections with individuals within community-based organizations as well as with community members. Members of youth adult partnerships learned to act as effective bridges between people and organizations. In addition, as bridges youth adult partners were able to isolate a person or organization that isn't connected and know how to work with them to increase the potential of contribution and decrease alienation that may lead to detrimental behaviors. In this way youth adult partnerships can have enormous influence in both an informal and formal way.

Implication 5: Importance of Deepening and Sustaining the Work

To create sustainable change, the leadership teams needed to recognize the importance of engaging individuals and organizations throughout their community to bring diverse skills and extended networks to their work. The leadership teams worked to create a balanced mix of individuals capable of both strategic and operational planning. Additionally, they worked to maintain an intergenerational balance within the organization. They expressed a need to continue in developing a well articulated and

shared vision within the community base organization as well. Each community-based organization that engaged in youth adult partnerships was receptive and ready to engage the community in the work of social transformation. As such, the organization administrators that had the technical skills, logistical skills and resources to provide on going coaching and direction to the members were more likely to continue the work of youth adult partnerships. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the youth adult partnerships increased as the leadership teams were able to create partnerships with external partners. This occurred when the leadership teams were able to bring together a broad representation of the community to work together to move past barriers that separated people. They were able to do this by emphasizing inclusion of individuals that were not typically seen as leaders and involved them in the decision making process. This allowed for space for individuals to see and understand how they were co-dependent upon one another. Finally, individuals learned how to work together to build new relationships, create alliances, and influence change by developing a critical mass of diverse leaders to address ongoing community change issues.

Recommendations

I offer recommendations based on the findings, analysis, and conclusions of this study. The recommendations that follow are for: (a) educators, (b) educational leadership administrators and faculty, (c) community based organizations, (d) current and perspective positive youth development workers, (e) recommendations for further research.

As I lay out my data, it becomes clear that effective teaching, learning, knowledge creation, and leadership development occurs when the following

processes and conditions are created by: (a) build strong relationships, this relationship building occurred between youth and adults, youth and youth, and adults and adults; (b) create safe spaces, this concept helped youth and adults alike take calculated risks that allowed them to try new ideas that helped them in their growth process and leadership development; (c) share power, adults were willing to practice sharing power that is relational and reciprocal; (d) go inward, this process was about helping youth and adults alike understand themselves better; and finally (e) have fun, this work must be fun. Teaching and learning must be framed in a pedagogical strategy that is congruent with the learner and that will be enjoyed and celebrated by all participants.

This work must be practiced and developed along the continuum of education. It is not enough for youth adult partnerships to be only implemented by community based organizations. Instead it should be embraced at public universities and colleges. It is critically important that institutions of higher education begin to examine the way we interact with youth. As such, youth adult partnerships could be implemented in preparation of teachers and school leaders. Our systems of higher education must be about preparing a new breed of teachers and school leaders. These new teachers and school leaders must be prepared to be community leaders and community developers. I propose that our schools of education challenge themselves to develop the new teacher and school leaders of the future as community leaders and community developers. Teachers and school leaders have the ability to affect multiple areas of society. As such, the education profession is the most important in our society. However, there is a need to expand the knowledge of our teachers and school leaders. This expanded knowledge

would better prepare them to become the cornerstones in their communities. Considering the adverse conditions and diverse issues affecting schools and communities, teachers and administrators must understand and be prepared for the social, economic, and demographic changes communities face. In order to effectively improve and sustain community change there is need for a shift in how we interact and engage communities and families.

Returning Home

An emerging theme expressed by a few of the participants, was the idea of returning home. They expressed that as a result of the fellowship/youth adult partnerships they are now considering and looking forward to working within the community. Where as, before they were looking forward to leaving their community. Participants expressed that even those that elect to attend college or pursue advancement in other parts of the country, they are still considering how they can return to make contributions to their community. For those that do not return on a permanent basis, many still return or plan to return during their breaks and holidays. This research could also provide insight for communities in search of methods to retain and attract talented individuals to their communities. Specifically, this research could be helpful to community leaders seeking methods to address growing trends of “youth exodus” or “hallowing out,” as described by Carr and Kefalas (2009). Carr and Kefalas explain that many young people leave their communities in search of better opportunities, and greater challenges and rewards in other cities (2009). The loss of an entire demographic is difficult enough to adjust to for cities, but the problem is multiplied when the exiting

demographic is also the most talented and ambitious of that city. Additionally, these individuals are also the individuals that cities have invested in for years, through youth development programs, extracurricular activities, and even scholarships. Subsequently, such an exodus causes a talent vacuum for the community. A talent vacuum can be disruptive to any community, but is particularly distressful for rural communities and economically disadvantaged communities.

Carr and Kefalas' concept of "youth exodus" or "hallowing out," is not a new concept. The concept has also been explained through human capital migration theory. Human capital migration theory, also referred to as human capital flight, or brain drain, is described as large migrations of individuals with specific technical, academic, or occupational skills or abilities, as the result of conflict, lack of opportunity, political instability, or health risk (Taylor & Martin, 2001). McGuire (2007) attributes the term "brain drain" to the British Royal Society's description of the outflow of scientist and technologist to the United States and Canada in the 1950s and early 1960s.

These ideas assert that youth are usually more mobile than the old, as they stand to reap higher returns as a result of their migration. Furthermore, youth appear more willing to incur the initial cost or risk of migrating in return for the potential of increased returns. While youth adult partnerships hold extreme potential for communities, their potential is threatened when youth with the most readily available assets and talents are not available to serve in partnerships with adults. Many communities across the U.S. currently struggle with sustaining their

populations. The 2000 United States Census Bureau examined domestic worker migration of individuals that were young, single, and college educated, and found these individuals were moving away from the “Rust Belt” and northern Great Plains region toward the West Coast and southeast (U.S. Census, 2000; McGuire, Johnston, & Saevig, 2006). The rural areas of the U.S. have also experienced widespread depopulation as residents move to urban and suburban areas.

Study Utility

This study has implications for community based organizations, community members, students, and educational institutions. As such, this study makes a plausible connection between leadership development programs facilitated at community-based organization, community centers and schools. Much of this study was based on the work conducted by community-based organizations in partnership with local school districts. Additionally, the leadership development activities and youth adult partnerships purposefully worked to strengthen connections with local school districts and local educational leaders. This study could be especially useful in attempts to reconnect schools and communities.

Students spend major portions of their days in schools. As such, schools are expected to provide, safe and structured environments designed to assist students in focusing on outcomes and objectives that have great potential for increasing their success as youth and adults. There is strong support from the literature and the findings of this study that community based organizations contribute and complement the instruction students receive during school hours and thus contribute to the positive development of youth that potentially lead to meaningful contributions to their communities. This link

provides a pathway to existing programs such as the 21st century community centers, particularly those that provided out of school time programming.

In 1994, President Clinton identified key areas critical for enhancing American communities. He moved that schools should serve as focal points within communities. President Clinton asserted that schools should be viewed as places where learning took place both during school hours and after hours; that schools should function as community centers, places for recreation and learning; places for young people and adults alike (Parson, 2000). As a result of his commitment to communities, Federal resources were made available as grants for local communities to establish central places where youth and adults could receive educational services and life long learning opportunities. In essence, President Clinton was proposing a partnership between the community and its schools through after-school programming or out of school time programs. These partnerships became known as 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC).

President Bush continued the emphasis on after school programming through No Child Left Behind (NCLB). However, while NCLB included provisions for after-school funding, the focus, structure and funding of the 21st CCLC changed. Under NCLB the 21st CCLC programs shifted focus from providing opportunities for communities and children, to providing educational services to after-school attendees. Rather than providing community centers, the programs placed attention on providing academic services to children. Children and their adult caregivers could enroll in the after-school programs and participate in the programming offered. Sacconaghi's (2006) assessment of student achievement in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics clearly supports additional instruction. However, Sacconaghi also explains the importance for youth to

learn skills such as communication, critical thinking and decision-making in an effort to make a difference in the communities in which they live (2006). Participation in after-school programs provide students with instruction in the skills that greatly contribute to positive youth development. After school programs reduce the effects and exposure of risk factors, such as, alcohol and drug use, vandalism, violent activities, and sexual behavior, which often lead to unhealthy outcomes later in life (Caldwell & Baldwin, 2003). Additionally, 21st CCLC provide academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low-performing schools, by providing tutorial services and academic enrichment activities which are designed to help students meet local and state standards in core academic subjects with a particular emphasis on reading and mathematics. In addition, 21st CCLC programs provide youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, technology education programs, art, music and recreation programs, counseling and character. Also, services such as family literacy may be provided to families of students enrolled in the 21st CCLC. Momentum is growing in support of academically and socially enriched out-of-school-time programs. Such programs provide powerful evidence that society can overcome gaps in opportunity and close gaps in academic achievement (Wilson, 2006). A major factor that reduced occurrence of delinquent behavior in youth centered around youth supervision.

Youth that were unsupervised for extended periods of time between the hours of 3pm and 6pm, the times when school lets out and when parents finish working, reported increases in risk taking behaviors, increased juvenile crime rates, and the lack of positive developmental experiences (Hahn, 2004). Out-of-school time plays an important part in a child's development. What children do in the time periods they are not in school can

contribute greatly to their healthy development, or can expose them to risk factors (such as alcohol and drug use, vandalism, violent activities, sexual behavior) which can lead to unhealthy outcomes later in life (Caldwell & Baldwin, 2003). The above challenges were expressed during focus group interviews with the leadership teams. Several members of the leadership teams spoke of violence, corruption and poverty in their neighborhoods. Many of them attributed such environments to the lack of academic achievement and the presence of community issues.

LAURA: I live in Chelsea, and the community is very corrupt. There's a lot of violence and lots of kids dropping out of school, having kids at young ages. There's a lot of drugs, and most of it comes from the streets. There's 14 year olds selling drugs and having kids, and it's because they see everybody else doing it, so that's why they do it. And I feel like if they come into ROCA most of them do come to ROCA, and if they stay here a little bit more and actually get help we can achieve something with change. (Youth-Roca leadership team)

James explained that a positive environment was key to improving outcomes for youth, by stating, "The main thing we can do is provide a positive place, for them to come, so they can get away from say anything that was an oppressive force to them." Reisner, Vandell, Pechman, Pierce, Brown, and Bolt (2007) explain that quality after-school programs play an important and effective role in giving all children access to experiences, mentors, and the skills they need to contribute in today's economy, to graduate from high school, and to go on to postsecondary education. In addition to helping students take advantage of networks and community-based learning resources like museums and libraries, after-school programs help to ensure that all children are exposed to enrichment activities and opportunities to practice essential communication, thinking, and teamwork skills. Wilson (2006) adds that, "when compared to students who spent five to nineteen hours per week in school-sponsored extracurricular activities,

students who had not were six times more likely to have dropped out by senior year, three times more likely to have been suspended in sophomore or senior year, and twice as likely to have been arrested by senior year.”

Students who participate in out of school activities and out of school time/after school programs have positive outcomes, such as, increased academic achievement, school attendance, completion of school work and homework, and participation in voluntary and extracurricular activities. These positive outcomes are achieved by helping young people build positive relationships with adults and caregivers, foster and model positive work habits, and increase self-esteem through building self-efficacy and higher educational aspirations. High-quality out-of-school time programs are supportive contexts for youth development and offer excellent opportunities for youth to develop skills in supervised, safe, and engaging environments. Furthermore, after school programs are most likely to positively impact young people’s interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and reduce problem behaviors (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003; American Youth Policy Forum, 2003; Lauver, Little, & Weis, 2004).

In essence the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program extended the school day for students (Hahn, 2004). Hahn (2004) explained that extending the school day helped to reduce the amount of time students were left unattended. OST has been attributed to increasing youth civic and community engagement increased civic and community engagement, increased school engagement and academic performance, decreased risk taking behaviors, increased pro social factors (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003; Baker & Witt, 1996; Posner & Vandell, 1994; Flanagan & Van Horn, 2003; Girls Report, 1998; Innovation Center for Community and Youth

Development, 2003; McLaughlin, 2000; National Institute on Out-of-school time, 2001; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996; Younis, McClellan & Yates, 1997).

Reflections of This Study

I have learned that generating youth adult partnerships is a shared responsibility that involves building trust and it creates a place where each participant feels safe and supported. The combination of building trust and a safe place provide space for work to be done to reach common ground around key themes and community issues important to group members. In the end the work is not easy because it requires simultaneous transformations at both the individual and organizational levels. Much of the work, therefore, challenges individual and organizational beliefs and values, processes, power structures, and life experiences. The findings of this research indicate that community change work begins with vision building and knowledge generation. To some participants this seemed like a slow start. They wanted to begin with action right away. However, in the end, each participant expressed that learning and understanding the shared vision, knowledge, and skill building became the powerful base used to sustain individual leadership growth and community change activities in and across their communities.

As I come to the close of this study, I want to pause for a moment and reflect on the journey that I have undertaken. I hope I have served as a guidepost that list and directs the reader to the possibilities of what could be in the areas of educational and community leadership development and youth adult partnerships

within community based organizations, and within schools. This study was a collaborative effort that included the leadership teams, the executive directors, and the members of the evaluation team. It was greatly enhanced by the insight and feedback of each research participant who gave their time and shared their experiences. While I feel that this study has added to the field of educational and community leadership development, I feel it has also added another chapter to what I have come to call as my story.

Recommendations for Future Study

I recommend further studies be conducted to develop a larger database of information to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the necessary skills and capacities and greater clarity into how to implement the process to generate youth adult partnerships. In light of this recommendation the following should be considered: (a) is there a need for a well articulated shared visioning process that provides the host organization and the leadership teams engaged in the work of youth adult partnership an opportunity to define and better understand the following two questions, (b) how similar and dissimilar are the approaches and expectations of host organization and the leadership team in reaching the overall mission and goal of the youth adult partnerships, and (c) what processes and assistance should be provided early on to the leadership teams to capitalize on the similarities and address the challenges that exist?

This study could aid in the following ways; first, it could illuminate pragmatic approaches for institutions of higher education to develop research for citizen and community consumption. It could accomplish this goal by

transforming knowledge, integrating themes across disciplines and placing knowledge in larger contexts. Second, it could provide insight for teaching that goes beyond lecturing by moving to a variety of teaching modalities, particularly through cooperative education, service, and by fostering professional learning communities (Zeldin & Camino, 1999; Mullen, 2009). Finally, this research could inform practices aimed to decrease the isolation between youth and adults by promoting the theory and research that suggest caring and supportive relationships with non-familial adults contribute to the well-being and healthy development of young people.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Kellogg Leadership For Community Change Series

The Kellogg Leadership for Community Change Leadership Series was launched in 2002 signifying the Kellogg Foundation's continued commitment to leadership development programming by integrating leadership development into all program areas, moving to a focus of building collective community leadership to address issues, and advancing new learning about place-based leadership and change through learning networks and dissemination of findings. The Kellogg Foundation has long been associated with leadership development and has become recognized for its attention to the cultivation of leaders who work on behalf of their communities. The Foundation has operated leadership programs largely in two ways: one approach was a discrete program dedicated to leadership development, programs such as the Kellogg National Leadership Program and the Kellogg International Leadership Program; the other approach is leadership programs operated in every program area that address specific needs in the sectors of health, youth and education, philanthropy and volunteerism, and food systems and rural development. Leadership and fellowship programs embedded in the various program areas are intended to prepare leaders to support the specific program goals of major initiatives. These initiative specific programs continue to be important components of each program area's strategy. The change has occurred in the single leadership program that is embraced by the entire Foundation. Because the Foundation wanted leadership outcomes to be at the community impact level, programs have been shifted to focus on the leadership

approach to move from a discrete program in the Foundation that focused on the individual to a program embraced by the entire organization and focused on the community. This move is also consistent with strategies within each program area that target change at the community level.

Instead of having individual leadership fellows attend classes and conferences held away from their communities, the real work of collective leadership development and subsequent action would happen in communities across the country. There, an initial group-intentionally embracing marginalized individuals and more traditional leaders—would tackle specific community based issue as an entrée to developing the skills of collective leadership. The issue would be a platform for learning and mobilizing a more effective form of collective community leadership—leaving the kind of energy and imprint that would equip the community to take on new issues and bring along new people—long after the Kellogg leadership program ends.

The Leadership Series is cognizant that As communities nationwide undergo dramatic shifts in demographics and require more diverse, leadership, existing and emerging leaders need new skills to act collectively and collaboratively across boundaries to address the difficult and complex issues facing communities.

Leadership in this view is not the purview of an individual leader. Rather, it is what leaders and followers do together for the collective good. Joseph Rost comments that “In today’s society, leaders operate in a shared-powered environment with followers. No longer does a single leader have all the answers

and the power to make substantial changes. Instead, today we live in a world where many people participate in leadership, some as leaders and others as followers. Only when we work together can we bring about successful changes for our mutual purposes.”

The Structure of the Kellogg Leadership for Community Change Series

The Kellogg Leadership for Community Change series represents an evolutionary and innovative next step in the Foundation’s work with leadership development because it emphasizes leadership development as a process for creating community change through collective action among individual leaders nurtured by the Leadership Series. The program also places emphasis on the participation of nontraditional leaders and focuses on their ability to work across cultural and ethnic boundaries—and engages various communities simultaneously in a common issue for which they create a vision, articulate designs for action, and begin implementation.

The overall vision of the Leadership Series was to develop diverse community leadership that could work across boundaries of age, gender, geography, race, culture, class, or faith, to mobilize collective action to improve local conditions and the quality of life in their communities. The Leadership Series will work to create environments in communities where people not normally included in leadership can participate in the work of improving their communities. Those who see themselves as leaders for the first time and established leaders learned to understand each other and fully use each other’s knowledge, gifts, and wisdom in addressing community issues.

The Core Concepts of the Leadership Series

Place-Based Leadership: Understanding the power of place, culture, and history along with commitment to making real advances on issues of local concern.

Crossing Boundaries: Bringing together a full representation of the community to work together to move past barriers that have separated people by emphasizing inclusion of individuals not typically seen as leaders or involved in decision making levels of the community.

Forming Collective Leadership: Helping the group understand how they need each other and seeing the power of continuing as a collective force for sustaining change in the community.

Developing Individual Leadership: Within the context of collective leadership, helping Fellows learn how to develop their individual leadership that leads to collective action and decision making for the good of the community.

Making Change Happen: Learning how to work together to build new relationships, create alliances, and influence change by developing a critical mass of diverse leaders to address ongoing community issues.

The long term goal was the creation of a critical mass of community-based leaders who are prepared and committed to not only making progress on one issue, but who become a core of community leadership group ready to and able to tackle new issues as they arise. The Kellogg Foundation is known for funding and creating leadership programs around the world. The

Kellogg Leadership for Community Change Leadership Series, with its focus on collective action at the local level, is the latest innovation on this path and keeps the Foundation true to its mission of helping people to help themselves. The Leadership Series continues the Foundation's focus on building local leadership that contributes to community-based program impact, success, and sustainability. With its emphasis on local communities, the Leadership Series reflects the Foundation's values and beliefs that all communities have assets; leaders can be developed and nurtured; diversity and inclusiveness are essential to successful community change; and partnerships, collaboration, and civic participation are key to successful communities. It also addresses the importance of sustainability and the role of Impact Services in support of programming to achieve sustainability.

The Foundation implemented a particular Leadership Series that focused on Valuing and Building Youth and Adult Partnerships to Advance Just Communities. The focus of this series was to generate new community leadership capacity in five selected communities by tapping into the power of youth and adults to work together to build community. More specifically, the session unleashed the potential of youth and adults to collectively shape the common good by building new pathways for youth to serve as social change agents. Each community identified a particular focus for what they mean by advancing "just communities."

Key Principles

- It is vital to honor and understand the traditions, culture, history, experiences, assets, and challenges of a particular community while honoring their commitment to making real advances on issues of local concern.
- Bringing together a full representation of the community to work together to move past barriers by crossing boundaries that have traditionally separated people improves the likelihood of an effective and sustainable solution.
- In order to form effective collective leadership, a group must understand and embrace the importance of diverse perspectives and see the power of including individuals not typically viewed as leaders
- With in the context of collective leadership, individual participants must learn skills that lead to collective action and decision-making for the good of the larger community.

By designing and implementing a community-based action plan, developing a diverse critical mass of leaders, building new relationships, and creating alliances, communities can change their culture and continue to effect change long after the Kellogg Leadership Series work in their community has ended.

The Goal of this Series Was to:

- Break down barriers to youth involvement in communities by demonstrating the value of authentically engaging youth as co-

creator with adults in articulating a community's vision for its future and in leading desired changes.

- Support youth and organizations in identifying, developing, and implementing practices that will raise the “youth voice” at the community table.
- Identify and institute system changes in communities that can endure in encouraging youth involvement in community decision making and growth. These changes might be organizational policies, practices, and standards such as the pervasive expectation that young people will be involved in nonprofit boards, city government, school boards, and in the initiation of laws that lower the minimum legal age for board members
- Mobilize collective action that makes and observable difference in the “youth friendliness” of a community and that leads to sustained work with meaningful and measurable impact.

Examples might include supporting models in which youth and adults partner on the creation of a new community center, a program to reduce street crime in a neighborhood, or a citywide effort focused on homeless youth.
- Provide a forum for communities across the United States that are authentically engaging youth to share experiences, support, and extend learning to others.

Demonstrate how communities can create new alliances and networks that can form a nurturing net to maintaining youth involvement in improving the quality of life in their community.

Appendix B

Focus Group Narrative and Interview Protocol

Purpose of the Focus Group Interview: The purpose of Focus Group Interviews is to provide an opportunity for participants to share their feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about the selected topic in a format that encourages interaction within the group (Morgan, 1990; Creswell, 1998).

Process: KLCC fellows will be invited to participate in this process at a fellows meeting arranged by the host organization/project lead. During the fellows meeting, at least two separate Focus Groups will be conducted, one focus groups with youth fellows, the other with adult fellows. If time permits and youth and adult fellows are available, a third Focus Group, with a combination of both youth and adult fellows will be facilitated. Each fellow will receive a consent form with their KLCC Participant code number and focus group overarching questions. Before the Focus Group each participant will be asked to provide their consent to participate in the Focus Group and the use of audio and video recording. The consent forms will be collected before the start of the Focus Group interview. Participants will be reminded of their right not to answer any questions that they may be uncomfortable with as well as their right to request that recording devices be turned off.

Each participant will also have the opportunity to ask any questions before and after the Focus Group interviews regarding the process.

Overarching Focus Group Exploratory Inquiry Question and Sub-questions:

How does “place” shape youth and adult partnerships that generate leadership capacity and skill to lead community change?

- a. What were the pivotal moments that propelled participants to engage in the work of community based organizations?
- b. Which cultural norms or values have an impact on the degree of youth and adults to work collaboratively? What are the necessary skills and capacities required for youth and adult partnerships to develop?
- c. How have youth and adult partnerships served as catalyst for creating community change?

During the interview, there will be several clarifying probes that will help to tease out the details of participant responses:

Q1: How does “place” shape youth and adult partnerships that generate leadership capacity and skill to lead community change?

- Q2: What were the pivotal moments that propelled participants to engage in the work of community based organizations?**
- Q3: Which cultural norms or values have an impact on the degree of youth and adults to work collaboratively?**
- Q5: What are the necessary skills and capacities required for youth and adult partnerships to develop?**
- Q6: How have youth and adult partnerships served as catalyst for creating community change?**

Appendix C

Youth and Adult Focus Group Interview Protocol

Interviewer's Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group interview. Let me first make sure that I have everyone's consent form before we begin. (Check forms: adult and youth/parent)

Before I get started, I want to begin by explaining the intent of Focus Group Interviews. "Focus Group" interviews were often used by marketing companies to understand consumer attitudes and perceptions about a particular product or company concept. However, researchers and community organizations also found them to be helpful in informing them of queries that related their areas of interest. They found that participants felt more comfortable in sharing information in the company of other participants that shared similar experiences. Therefore, throughout this process, please feel free to treat this space as a type of "discussion," where you have the opportunity to speak to the topic without being formally called upon.

The purpose of this interview is to learn more about your perceptions of Youth and Adult Partnerships "in-place" and its affect on your collective work to create community change. Specifically, we would like to learn: How does place shape youth and adult partnerships that generate leadership capacity and skill to lead community change?

As a reminder, this interview should take about 45-60 minutes. We will be audio and video recording our conversation and taking notes. Our conversation will be transcribed by our professional transcriptionist. The audio, video and notes will allow me to go back and reflect on our conversation. Please know that at any time you can request to have the recorder and video camera turned off. You also have the right not to answer any particular question. The recordings will be kept in a safe place-locked in a file cabinet. And, your identity (if you choose not to be identified by name) will not be disclosed (we will use "Youth-Adult Partner" or "Youth-Adult Fellow").

Do you have any questions so far? (Pause)

Our interview will begin with a scenario that describes a particular situation that may or may not represent your experience with youth-adult partnerships within your community or host organization. The scenario is intended to provide a framework for our conversations. I will ask several-follow up or clarifying questions. Please keep in mind that the format of this focus group encourages conversation and open dialogue between everyone participating. You are not required to necessarily wait until it is your "turn" to answer the question, or wait

for me to direct the question to you. At any point, if you would like to add to the conversation, make a point, provide examples, or provide clarification, please feel free to do so.

I want to start off this process by again thanking you for your participation in this focus group and your contributions to our work.

Do you have any questions for me before we get started? OK, shall we begin?

Interviewer:

This is a warm up question. It will help to relax us a bit and help our transcriptionist match your name with your voice. Would each of you begin by stating your name and when you began your participation in KLCC (beginning in 2006, midway, recently in 2008, and so forth).

Interviewer Warm-up Question:

(Youth Participants) Again, can you please state your first name, your grade level, and briefly describe the neighborhood/community you live in.

(Young Adult/Adult) Again, can you please state your first name, your occupation, and briefly describe the neighborhood/community you live in.

Follow-up probes:

1. What racial/ethnic mix of families live in your community? Socioeconomic levels? Many young families, older adults, single adults, and so on?
2. Are there any neighborhood/community events that you/your family participate? If yes, describe.
3. Are you familiar with any neighborhood/community issues (identify and describe) and how might you be involved in addressing these?
4. What businesses are active in your community (identify)? Are any working in partnership with the community to address important issues (describe)?

OK, thank you very much.

Focus Question One:

OK, this particular probe will help me to understand the dispositions and skills of both Youth and Adults to partner and to work collaboratively: What skills or capacities—gained through the KLCC learning process--did you find were necessary for youth and adult partners to work collaboratively?

Interviewer: Thank you! The following scenario and the questions that follow will help me to understand how particular skills and capacities affect how youth and adults address community concerns.

Scenario #1

Several communities throughout the country have experienced public policies that have affected adults and youth, both individually as well as collectively. However, the responses to those policies have varied according to the age demographics of the group that is under consideration. For example, many communities now have ordinances that restrict “baggy or saggy pants” that reveal the wearers undergarments. While both youth and adults have voiced their support and outrage over this ordinance, there is a clear distinction linked to age that represents each age groups perspectives on what they deem acceptable or unacceptable. Therefore, due to differences in perspectives, members of communities may find it difficult to effectively communicate and collaborate across generations in substantive ways.

Scenario #1 Question:

So this “baggy or saggy pants” example is just a case that illuminates differences in generational and cultural norms. Think about your own community and the issues that reflect difference across generations. How did your KLCC fellowship (host organization/cbo) use both youth and adult perspectives to effectively address community issues in a manner that was inclusive across generations?

Follow-up probes:

1. Were there specific activities that your host organization facilitated for youth and adults to develop those skills and capacities (i.e break the ice designed to establish trust and respect), if so could you describe them?
2. How did youth and adults work to develop or establish trust and foster a level of respect in their partnerships?
3. Could you describe any particular cultural norms or values that inform the interactions of youth and adults within your community? Are those interactions any different from the interactions that your youth and adult partnerships experience?
4. Can you identify any connections between cultural norms and values with the roles or duties that youth and adults often assume?
5. How are you working to get to the vision of your future place?

Interviewer: Thank you! Let’s go on to the second focus question and scenario.

Focus Question Two:

This next question will help me to learn about your community culture and history: Please think of the pivotal moment that propelled you to engage in the work of your community based organization?

Follow up probes:

1. What was the context of that pivotal moment? What were the conditions and or the history of the community?
2. Who motivated your involvement? Who were the people involved and/or had an impact on by your involvement?
3. What ideas functioned as motivation? What ideas were challenged?

4. What were the politics that surrounded that pivotal moment? (Consider the people, organizations, the city, etc.)
5. How did you come to learn about that particular segment of your community history?

Note: Explore culture, history, individuals, organizational systems within the community and the host organization/cbo (this will help define place).

Interviewer:

Thank you! Now I'd like you to consider this scenario and answer several questions that will help me to better understand how to engage (insert: youth, young adults, adults) in a community-based leadership program.

Scenario #2

As you know, debilitating economic conditions and increasing social issues have affected many areas in the U.S. Communities that were once economically viable and teeming with industry, are now experiencing high unemployment rates and increasing poverty levels. As a result, many members of these communities now experience personal and financial challenges, which have been compounded by numerous social conditions (e.g., lack of health care, lack of basic public services, poor schools, and so on) that often require intervention at varying governmental levels. While, some relief is offered by government agencies, clearly grassroots agencies (host organization/cbo) also engage in varying levels of assistance through training, dissemination of information, advocacy, and so on.

Scenario Question #2:

What recommendations might you share with a host organization who is interested in your KLCC work that would help them to learn and engage in collective leadership that would address economic development challenges in their communities?

Follow-up Probes:

1. How would they include youth and adult partnerships in an authentic way?
2. What should they do to ensure that their work is culturally sensitive/relevant?
3. Who should participate in this activity? When? How? Why?
4. What types of conversations should youth and adult partners engage in prior to their community change efforts?
4. How can the group maintain momentum, energy to do the work of community change?
5. What should they be cognizant of that could potentially hinder authentic youth and adult partnerships?
6. What type of resources would they find necessary to facilitate community change? What are the steps you would recommend they follow to acquire and sustain those resource?

7. How could youth and adult partners work to facilitate the required dialogue and actions necessary to generate and sustain the resources necessary to do the work of community change?

Interviewer:

Okay, Thank You! We are nearly finished. I appreciate the insight that you have shared thus far. The final set of questions and accompanying scenario will help me to learn about outcomes that are attributed to or associated with or is a result of youth and adult partnerships.

Focus Question #3:

This Final question will help me to understand to what extent does the work of youth and adult partnerships create community change. From your perspective, how have youth and adult partnerships served as catalyst for creating community change across your communities?

Follow up probes:

1. Can you name specific examples or outcomes of community change that you feel were a result of youth and adult partnerships?
2. Why do you attribute particular community change outcomes to youth and adult partnerships?
3. How are your communities different as a result of youth and adult partnerships? How are you different?
4. Given your KLCC experience, what is the value of YA partnerships to create community change?

Scenario #3

Some neighborhoods throughout the U.S., often occupied by lower-socio economic families, are located on land that contains toxins both environmental and social. Many of the areas were affected by the residuals of industries that once occupied the land, while other areas have declined due to deteriorated social conditions. While there are concerned community members they often feel ill-equipped to change the current conditions.

To address one community's situation, a KLCC Adult fellow who is a high school history and government teacher, developed lessons centered on local issues that the newly elected president of the United States should address. The students were required to write reports and prepare oral presentations that would outline the possible causes of community toxins and propose plausible solutions. The reports were very thoughtful and quite impressive. The teacher was so impressed with the quality of the reports that he worked with the students to locate venues for them to share their work. The youth worked with their teacher and other community leaders to share their work with city government officials. Currently, youth, young adults, and adults are working together to inform both community members and local government on other pressing issues.

Scenario #3 Question: Given your KLCC experiences, can you share a story of YA partnership that you believe has created a significant change in your community?

Follow-up probes:

1. What new pathways have been created for YA to partner on important issues?
2. What pathways are yet to be created?
3. Would you recommend that other community-based organizations adopt youth and adult partnerships to approach community change? Why? Why not?

Final questions (if not yet answered):

1. Looking back at your experiences with youth and adult partnerships, what would you change, and why? What would you keep, and why?
2. What was difficult about youth and adult partnerships? What was easy?
3. Is there anything that you would like to add, or is there anything additional that you would like to share about a question we covered earlier?
4. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you again for your time.

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