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YOUTH EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY IN GUYANA

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YOUTH EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY IN GUYANA

By

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ABSTRACT

YOUTH EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY IN GUYANA

By

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Nonformal educational programs can promote youth development and encourage youth to create positive social change. This exploratory case study investigates one such program, Youth Can Move the World, in the South American nation of Guyana. This research looks at Youth Can Move the World's ability to promote the active participation of learners, their investigation of the deeper causes of social problems, and learners' engagement in action and reflection. Qualitative methods including participant and staff interviews and document analysis were used to investigate both the design and implementation of the program. The findings indicate that Youth Can Move the World can result in the active participation of youth, their investigation of social problems, and their engagement in group action. The research also suggests that a number of factors influence the program's implementation and outcomes, including parental support, differences in participation by gender, comfort with the program's theoretical and moral components, the teaching and organizational ability of youth facilitators, and barriers to participation after the official program year. The issues and outcomes identified in this study can be used to focus further research on Youth Can Move the World, and may suggest promising areas of research for the wider field of nonformal youth education.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Approximately 30 percent of the world's people are under the age of 15 and half are younger than 27 (UNPOP, 2002; US Census Bureau, 1999). These statistics illustrate the fact that the future of the world depends greatly on the effective development of its youth. Today's youth (people ranging in age from early teens to mid twenties) face not only the traditional challenges of coming of age, but also new threats like AIDS and global warming. These problems will not be overcome unless youth grow into healthy and productive adults, and become actively engaged in finding and implementing solutions. This cannot happen without practices and programs (governmental, community or otherwise) that meet the needs of the worlds' youth. It is thus vital that tremendous effort should be put into the design and implementation of effective programs for youth.

Nonformal educational programs can promote youth development and encourage youth to create positive social change needed to solve the world's problems. Adult education theory and practice holds that social change can be promoted by educational programs that emphasize the active participation of learners, their investigation of the deeper causes of social problems, and learners' engagement in action and reflection (Freire, 2003). Research has also found that a number of factors influence the successful implementation of such programs. However, much remains to be learned about international nonformal youth education programs. Youth development programs

designed to encourage social change do exist around the world, but little research has focused on the lessons that can be learned from their implementation.

This case study investigates one such program, Youth Can Move the World, in the South American nation of Guyana. Youth Can Move the World (YCMTW) was created in the mid-1990s to help youth educate themselves about important issues, and to take action in their communities. Since its creation, this voluntary program has spread throughout the nation and has involved thousands of youth. YCMTW can thus serve as an excellent case study of the real life implementation of youth education for social change.

1.2. Research Goals and Questions

The goals of this research are to describe the design of YCMTW, its implementation, and the factors that affected its implementation. The following research questions guided the research process.

Research Questions

1) How was YCMTW designed to encourage youth to genuinely participate, investigate the deeper causes of social problems, and engage in action and reflection?

2) How was YCMTW implemented in terms of encouraging youth to genuinely participate, investigate the deeper causes of social problems, and engage in action and reflection, and what factors affected its implementation?

The first research question is an important first step because it explains what the designers were trying to achieve and provides a reference point to which the implementation of the program can be compared. The second research question is intended to elicit valuable information about how the YCMTW program is actually implemented from the national to the village level based on the experience of program participants, volunteers and staff. The second research question is important because it demonstrates the potential opportunities and problems that face organizers and participants in this type of educational program.

1.3. Research Setting

1.3.1. Guyana

Guyana is a small South American country roughly the size of Great Britain located on the Atlantic Coast between Venezuela and Suriname. Though South American in geography, the former British colony is culturally Caribbean with a population descended from native people (Amerindians), African slaves, indentured servants from Portugal, China and India, and European colonialists. The population was estimated at 698,209 in July 2002. Currently the population is approximately forty-nine percent Indo-Guyanese, thirty-two percent Afro-Guyanese, six percent Amerindian, twelve percent mixed-race and one percent Chinese and "white" (CIA, 2001 #52). The population is fifty percent Christian, thirty-five percent Hindu, ten percent Muslim, and five percent 'other' religions including the Bahá'í Faith (CIA, 2001). English is the official language of Guyana, and standard British English and/or a dialect called Creolese

is spoken by most Guyanese. Amerindian dialects, Hindi and Urdu are also spoken, but are less common (CIA, 2001).

This research setting was chosen for a number of reasons. First, Guyana is a country in need of sustainable development. Though rich in culture and natural resources, Guyana is one of the least-developed nations in the Western Hemisphere, with the second lowest Human Development Index (HDI) in South America and the seventh lowest in the hemisphere (UNDP, 2002). The HDI is a standard of living index based on access to resources, functional literacy, life expectancy and school enrollment. Despite some economic growth in the 1990s, Guyana's economy has again slowed, and many of its less than 1 million residents continue to emigrate (CIA, 2001). Add to this a growing AIDS epidemic, racial and political tensions, increased violent crime, the presence of international logging and mining companies, and it is easy to understand why Guyana has been called a "microcosm of sustainable development challenges" (Munslow, 1998).

Second, while Guyana has immense socio-economic problems, it also has hope for a brighter future. The current government and citizens have committed themselves on paper and in action to work towards sustainable development. The country is currently implementing a National Development Strategy (NDS) that was created in the late 1990s through the collaborative efforts of civil society, the Guyanese Ministry of Finance, and the Carter Foundation (NDS). One of the NDS' most visible outcomes was the creation of Guyana's first Environmental Protection Agency (NDS, 1997). Guyana has also demonstrated its commitment to sustainable rainforest management through the creation of the Iwokrama rainforest reserve in 1996 with the assistance of the Commonwealth. This 3,700 square kilometer reserve of pristine forest is dedicated to research on

sustainable forest use, including biodiversity, ethno-botanical, and human ecology studies in cooperation with local Amerindian communities (NDS, 1997 #56) (Iwokrama, 2002). On a more local level, numerous Guyanese and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have developed active programs in areas such as health education, domestic violence prevention and literacy (SNDP, 2001).

Third, as described above, Guyana is a small country with great ethnic diversity. This is a benefit because it makes an investigation of the program's impacts in diverse contexts possible with limited time and resources. While Guyanese culture is unique and the results of this study are not directly applicable to other diverse societies, valuable lessons may be learned about promoting social change through education across ethnic and cultural lines.

1.3.2. Youth Can Move the World

As mentioned above, Youth Can Move the World was developed in the late 1990s by the Varqa Foundation, a Guyanese NGO, in collaboration with the University of Guyana Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) and with assistance from a number of national and international NGOs. The cooperating NGOs include Help and Shelter (a Guyanese domestic violence prevention organization), the Ministry of Health: Health and Family Life Task Force, Conservation International, Nancy Campbell Collegiate Institute (Canada), Iwokrama, National Commission of the Rights of the Child, On the Wings of Words Literacy Project, and the Canadian International Development Agency Gender Equity Program. The Varqa Foundation is a Guyanese

NGO that promotes the nation's social and economic development. The Varqa Foundation utilizes the principles of the Bahá'í Faith in its work, but it is not an official body of the Bahá'í Faith. The Foundation has worked in the areas of community health promotion and literacy training in addition to YCMTW. Currently, the Foundation's efforts focus mainly on its nation-wide literacy program, On the Wings of Words, and on YCMTW. The Varqa Foundation's development beliefs and goals are summarized in the following paragraphs from the Foundation's web-site (Varqa Foundation, 2002b).

> *The purpose of development is the well being of people. Well being is understood to refer to material, intellectual, social and spiritual fulfillment. The belief of the Foundation is that man's true wealth lies in the development of the spiritual qualities which represent the foundation of social and cultural progress.*
>
> *All aspects of human well-being are interrelated. Material well-being will be of limited value to people as long as man's baser qualities, such as self centeredness, are allowed to dominate his actions. However it is very difficult for people to develop their finer qualities unless due consideration is also given to the material welfare of society.*
>
> *Man's individual development cannot be fostered in isolation from the institutions and structures of the society. Indeed, it is through commitment to the progress of society that an individual can achieve personal development. Effective social and individual progress requires a unified vision of the individual and the society. Such a vision can begin to set in motion social processes that address the material and spiritual aspects of life in a unified way. Together such processes impel development.*
>
> *Development, therefore can never be a product that is created outside of a region or a people and then delivered to them. To be effective development can only be envisioned in the context of the participation of people and their institutions, who must consciously tread their own path of individual and social progress.*
>
> *The Foundation believes that every individual possesses infinite potentialities. The challenge is to see how to translate this potential into reality and provide opportunities for people to meaningfully participate in the process of development. Only an appropriate educational process, which integrates the intellectual, spiritual and social aspects of human culture, can develop and promote man's potentialities for service to the society. As these potentialities are*

liberated, institutions and instruments must be perfected or created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.

In light of these considerations, it becomes clear that development cannot be a process of imitating the so-called 'developed countries'. The very emphasis on the material aspects of those cultures has contributed towards the disintegration of the moral fabric of those societies. Such 'development' is unworthy of emulation.

YCMTW is designed as a 'training of trainers' program in which volunteer youth are trained to become youth education facilitators. The program focuses on a number of topics related to important social issues in Guyana. Topics include domestic violence, reproductive health and AIDS, protection of the environment, drugs and alcohol, promotion of the arts (developing the arts as a means for positive social change), global prosperity (issues of economic justice and wellbeing), literacy, human rights, gender equity, prejudice and discrimination, and suicide (Varqa Foundation, 2001). According to the facilitator manual, YCMTW's program goals include, (1) to provide relevant facts about important issues facing youth today, (2) to help young persons understand these issues, (3) to help young persons understand that people have different views on these issues and to explain what these views are, and (4) to enable young persons to begin to understand, develop and express their own views on these issues" (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 3).

The entire YCMTW program can be described in four stages (Figure 1). In the first stage, potential youth facilitators are invited to participate in a 70-hour training program through nationwide advertisement via radio, TV and newspapers. During the second stage, training, the youth listen to presentations on the different topics, become familiar with the course materials, are given a set of books and supplies, practice

facilitating discussions, and practice the artistic skills they may use with their groups at home. The training sessions take place on weekends or school holidays. Training usually begins in late summer or autumn and is usually finished by early December. The training is free of charge, and low cost meals and accommodation are available at the training site. Participants who cannot afford transportation, meals and accommodation may receive scholarships when funding is available.

An optional training on "personal and community transformation" is also available for facilitators. This training looks specifically at the spiritual aspects of personal and community transformation, using the sacred texts of different religions. The exact percentage of facilitators who go through this training is not known, but is estimated by Varqa staff at about 50 percent in 2001-2002. In previous years this section was incorporated with the other training.

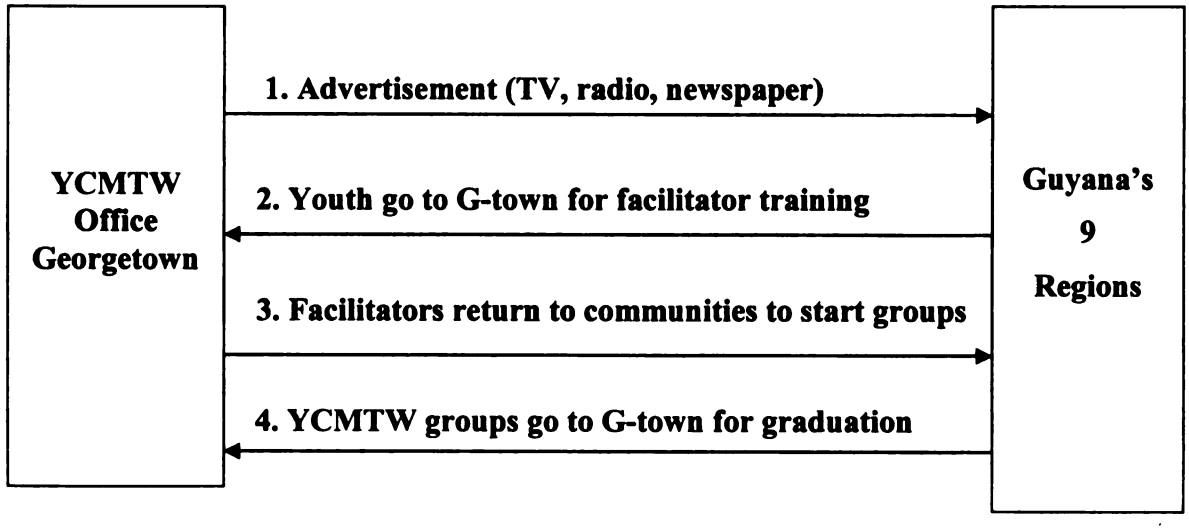

Figure 1. Four Stages of the YCMTW Program

In the third stage the facilitators are expected to implement a similar course in schools, churches, existing youth clubs, or newly formed youth clubs in their home communities. Groups are expected to meet for at least 70 hours over the year, to learn about the majority of topics in the manual, and to create a variety of artistic presentations (e.g., skits, banners, puppet shows) related to the themes of the program. The groups are encouraged to share some of these presentations with their communities, and to perform other types of community service such as a community clean up or literacy classes. If they successfully meet all of the requirements, facilitators receive a certificate of completion from the University of Guyana Institute of Distance and Continuing Education. Participants receive a participation certificate from the Varqa Foundation.

Graduation ceremonies, the fourth stage, take place in Georgetown and are preceded by an arts festival and competition in which groups present their artistic creations. In 2000-2001 there were about 30 active groups throughout the country, including 4 groups in the country's interior (YCMTW, 2000).

The program was inaugurated in the summer 1999, and graduated its first class of facilitators in July, 2000. According to a 2002 Varqa Foundation report, 286 youth were trained in the 1999 training session, and then shared the YCMTW materials with 28 youth groups. In 2000, 195 youth were trained and 48 groups held YCMTW sessions. In 2001, 110 facilitators were trained, and 34 youth groups held YCMTW sessions. It should be noted that multiple youth from a community are often trained as facilitators, and they may co-facilitate a single group. In total, 591 youth facilitators have been trained and 110 groups have used the YCMTW materials. The same report estimates that

about 4000 youth attended training sessions given by the facilitators over the last three years (Varqa Foundation, 2002a). The number of participants is especially striking when one considers that the total population of youth in Guyana is less than 200,000 according to UN statistics (United Nations, 2001). Approximately 40% of the youth who took part in the program as facilitators or youth group members were 13-15 years old and 60% were 16-20 years old (Varqa Foundation, 2002a). According to Varqa staff, the size of the youth groups varied dramatically, from 5 or 6 individuals in some areas to 75 in others.

1.4. Research Strategy

In conducting the research for this thesis, I primarily utilized qualitative methods to gather data about the experiences of program staff, volunteers and participants. The program's design was ascertained through interviews with program staff, and through the review of documents such as the YCMTW facilitator's manual. I investigated YCMTW's implementation through interviews with YCMTW facilitators, youth group participants and program staff and volunteers. Qualitative techniques were chosen for this study because the experiences of the youth participants during program implementation were expected to be highly variable and thus difficult to capture in a pre-set survey or questionnaire. The flexible nature of qualitative data gathering also allowed me to look for unanticipated difficulties and successes in YCMTW's implementation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

Educational programs have long been used as tools to bring about social change among children, youth and adults. While no single theory found in the literature fully explains how education can lead to individual and social change (Kollmuss, 2002), many sources agree that change is more likely to occur when people become active participants in the educational process. The literature review and theoretical framework presented in this paper describe active participation in education as a process of learning, action and reflection. In this process youth must 1) genuinely participate in the learning process, 2) engage in conscientization, and 3) engage in praxis. Briefly defined, conscientization is the process of developing a deeper understanding of the forces that shape society and one's place in it. Praxis is action informed by reflection. The literature review and conceptual framework are organized around participation, conscientization and praxis, and these terms will be used throughout this thesis. These three components are influenced by a number of other factors ranging from societal norms to the design of the educational program.

This chapter begins with a literature review that describes each of the three components and discusses factors that influence their successful implementation. The literature review is followed by the conceptual framework used for this research. This framework is also organized around participation, conscientization and praxis, and the factors identified in the literature that influence them.

Commentary on participation, conscientization and praxis can be can be found in different sources, including adult education, spiritual, and the development literatures. This literature review draws primarily on literature from three sources: literature on young people's participation, the writings of the Bahá'í Faith and the writings of Paulo Freire. Literature on child and youth participation is included because young people's participation has special qualities and requirements that set it apart from adult participation. The Bahá'í perspective is included for two reasons. First, the case study program (Youth Can Move the World) is based largely on Bahá'í principles. Second, the Bahá'í perspective presents possible roles that spirituality can play in development. The role of spirituality has largely been unaddressed in past development literature, even though spirituality plays an important role in the lives of many of the earth's people and has inspired numerous development movements. Finally, Freire's perspective is important because he remains one of the most influential thinkers in adult education, and his theories of education for empowerment form the basis for many non-formal educational programs around the world.

2.2. Problem-Focused Literature Review

2.2.1. Youth Participation

Perhaps the most fundamental component of bringing about social change through youth education is involving youth as participants in the educational process. Genuine youth participation means more than the mere presence of young people, and developing it can be a challenge. This raises some important questions. Why is genuine youth participation important? What is it? How can it be promoted? The following sections

draw upon literature related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 and subsequently ratified by most nations by the mid 1990s (OHCHR, 2003). The CRC recognizes children's (people under 18) right to participation in articles that guarantee freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion, and assembly; access to information; special support for disabled children; and education for personal fulfillment and responsible citizenship (Hart, 1997: 12-13). A number of cases also come from the peer education literature since YCMTW uses peer education and because peer education has been one of the most common forms of youth participation.

2.2.1.1. Why is genuine youth participation important?

Progress in the promotion of youth's participation in the development of themselves and their communities has lagged behind efforts to increase adult participation (Johnson, 1996). One reason for this is that the importance of youth participation is often not well understood. Edwards (1996), states that much of this misunderstanding is based on society's view of children and childhood. These views may include the belief that all children are "immature and irrational", "non-productive", "passive and dependent" (Edwards, 1996: 47-8). Also, western economic measurements of productivity often miss the productive role of children, so their real contributions to their families and communities are not appreciated by development planners (Edwards, 1996). Another important factor is the difficulty associated with promoting children's participation. While children cannot be thought of as incompetent and unproductive, their abilities do vary with age and they have special needs. Children's participation

therefore needs to be developmentally appropriate, and extra care must be taken to ensure that they are not exploited or mistreated in any way (Edwards, 1996).

Programs involving youth should consider the cognitive development of their child and young adult participants. Cognitive development can be simply defined as, "the change in thinking patterns as one grows older" (Merriam, 1999: 166). While there is no single definitive theory of cognitive development, researchers and theorists agree that thinking and learning take different forms throughout one's life and that more complex forms of thinking and learning take time to develop (Merriam, 1999; Wavering, 1995). Considering the cognitive development of youth is important part of program design because young people's thinking patterns may influence their ability to successfully undertake tasks that require higher-level, complex thinking (Wavering, 1995). According to some theories, educational programs may also help youth to develop higher levels of cognitive development (Crain, 2000b).

One of the most influential, though by no means universally accepted, theories of cognitive development is Piaget's cognitive-developmental theory (Crain, 2000a). According to this theory, cognitive development occurs in sequential stages beginning in infancy and potentially culminating in adulthood with "formal operational" thought, which allows one to move beyond concrete thinking to hypothetical and abstract thought (Crain, 2000a). Piaget believed the highest levels of formal operations could be reached by normal individuals between the ages of 15 and 20 (Merriam, 1999). According to Piaget, cognitive development is a spontaneous process, and while education can stimulate young people's thinking, they cannot move to the stage until they are developmentally ready.

Other theorists such as Vygotsky disagreed with Piaget on the importance of education in cognitive development. Vygotsky believed that education could in fact help students reach higher levels of cognitive development by introducing new and challenging problems and then helping students to solve those problems (Crain, 2000b). However, Vygotsky believed that developmental progress would not be made if the gap between the student's current level of development and the level required by the new problem was too large (Crain, 2000b). Thus, educators (and program designers) still need to have a basic understanding of the current level of cognitive development of the youth with whom they intend to work. Determining this level, however, is not straightforward since it is argued that culture (including race, class and gender) can influence development, and that cognitive development includes more than just logical thinking (as was commonly assumed in Western academia) (Merriam, 1999; Wavering, 1995).

In addition to cognitive development, the emotional and social development of youth should be considered when designing a participatory youth development program. Erik Erikson and other child development theorists have described adolescence as a time when individuals are striving to form their own identity (Hughes, 2001; Shaffer, 1985). How adolescence is defined and how youth experience it seems to be influenced significantly by culture (including differences such as gender within a culture) because of the differing attitudes and expectations societies have for those transitioning between childhood and adulthood (Hughes, 2001). According to Erikson's stages of development, the participants in YCMTW can be classified into two approximate age categories. Youth aged 12 to 20 can be considered adolescents (between childhood and adulthood)

and are focused on the establishment of their identity (Shaffer, 1985). Youth aged twenty-one to twenty-five are classified as young adults (a category that includes 20-40 year olds). The young adults are focused primarily on the building of strong friendships and love relationships (Shaffer, 1985).

The emotional and social needs of adolescents differ from those of earlier childhood as young people attempt to become more independent of parents and face the challenges of entering adult life. As individuals move further into the wider world beyond their family, the importance of peer relationships increases (Hughes, 2001). Positive peer relationships are very important because they can help support adolescents through the challenges they face in their lives and can help prepare them for healthy adult relationships (Hughes, 2001). While parental involvement and guidance remains extremely important in adolescence, peer influence greatly increases during early adolescence and fades somewhat as a youth develops a stronger individual identity (Hughes, 2001). The building of healthy peer relationships and the positive influence of peers on one another can be an important outcome of youth development programs that are able to attract youth and provide a space for the development of positive friendships. Special consideration should be given to making the program appealing to the youth, since a program that is perceived to be 'un-cool' may be avoided by youth who do not wish to be thought of us 'un-cool' by their peers.

The development of morals and values is an important aspect of identity-building. Adolescents are well-positioned to investigate issues of values and morality because most are developing the higher-level cognitive ability to think about abstract concepts like values and ideals, and have not yet been frustrated by real-life challenges to their ideals

(Hughes, 2001). Lawrence Kohlberg, one of the most well-known moral development theorists, believes that moral reasoning ability develops in six progressive stages (Thomas, 1985). Thomas summarizes these stages, saying that they "represent a movement from lower levels of moral decision, where moral decisions are entangled with other value judgments and the rules are changed as the facts in the case change, to higher levels that separate moral values (justice and reciprocity) from other sorts and that utilize universal principles that apply to anyone in any situation" (Thomas, 1985: 357) . Development in moral reasoning begins in childhood and continues through adolescence, but individuals do not advance through the stages at the same rate. It should be noted that although moral reasoning develops with age, individuals do not always make moral judgments at the highest level of which they are capable (Thomas, 1985).

Kohlberg theorizes that moral development is encouraged by children's opportunities to interact and empathize with others. He believes that the most beneficial interaction takes place in social settings characterized by the principles of equality and reciprocity (Thomas, 1985). A young person's moral standards are also influenced by a number of factors including the youth's family relationships (especially with parents), education, and culture (Hughes, 2001). According to Hughes, "As adolescents develop, sort through and evaluate their experience of morality, they build sets of beliefs. What constitutes right and wrong, appropriate or inappropriate behavior?" (Hughes, 2001: 515). Defining one's own value system can be difficult, however, when the values presented by family, schooling and society conflict.

Youth development programs can potentially play an important role in meeting the emotional and social needs of adolescents, including opportunities to advance their

moral development. According to the youth development theories presented in the previous paragraphs, these programs will be most successful if they appeal to youth who may be very concerned about the opinions of their peers; if they promote positive, supportive peer relationships; and if they provide an atmosphere of equity and reciprocity in which youths can learn to consider the needs of others and practice the application of moral principles (Hughes, 2001; Thomas, 1985).

Although involving children and youth meaningfully in the development of themselves and their societies may require attitude changes and extra effort, it is important for a number of reasons. First, the CRC states the children have rights to participate in their own development and the development of their communities, including freedom of assembly, expression and thought, conscience and religion (Hart, 1997: 12-13). Second, children make up a significant percent of the world's population and represent the future of the human race, but their needs may not be met if their concerns are not heard. This could lead to serious long-term societal consequences (Edwards, 1996). Third, participation gives children important experience with decision-making and community involvement. This experience can prepare them for adulthood as actively involved community members. Finally, young people often posses the qualities of flexibility and energy, which makes them ideal agents of change. In some societies, youth may also have more time than adults to devote to community activities if they are not yet responsible for families or full-time jobs.

2.2.1.2. What is genuine youth participation?

As mentioned above, the mere presence of youth in a program does not necessarily mean they are genuine participants. In a 1992 essay Hart introduced "the ladder of participation" for children (Figure 2) (Hart, 1992). Using a ladder as a metaphor for rising levels of participation (a concept borrowed from a 1969 Sherry Arnstein essay), Hart describes 8 levels of participation from lowest to highest: (1) manipulation, (2) decoration, (3) tokenism, (4) assigned but informed, (5) consulted and informed, (6) adult-initiated, shared decisions with children, (7) child-initiated and directed, and (8) child-initiated, shared decisions with adults (Hart, 1992: 9).

The first three levels are considered non-participation because children have no real decision-making power. This includes projects or programs where youth are physically present and may take part by marching with placards, giving speeches or some similar activity, but they have no real say in how or why they are participating. The next five levels are considered to be degrees of participation because children do have some decision-making power in these activities. Activities at these levels include situations where children freely volunteer to participate in pre-planned activities that they understand, where children create and execute their own activities and where children and adults work together to plan and carry out activities (Hart, 1992). Hart's diagram makes clear that participation runs along a continuum, and that decision-making power and responsibility are key components of genuine participation.

2.2.1.3. How can genuine youth participation be promoted?

Youth participation can be promoted to a certain extent by well-designed programs that create space for youth to actively participate. According to Hart's ladder of children's participation, decision-making power is the key factor that separates participatory from non-participatory programs. Ideally, youth should be involved from the point of program creation, either as the initiators or early partners in the process. Youth participation in the identification of program themes not only gets those youth involved, it can make the program more appealing to youth because they can relate to the program's themes.

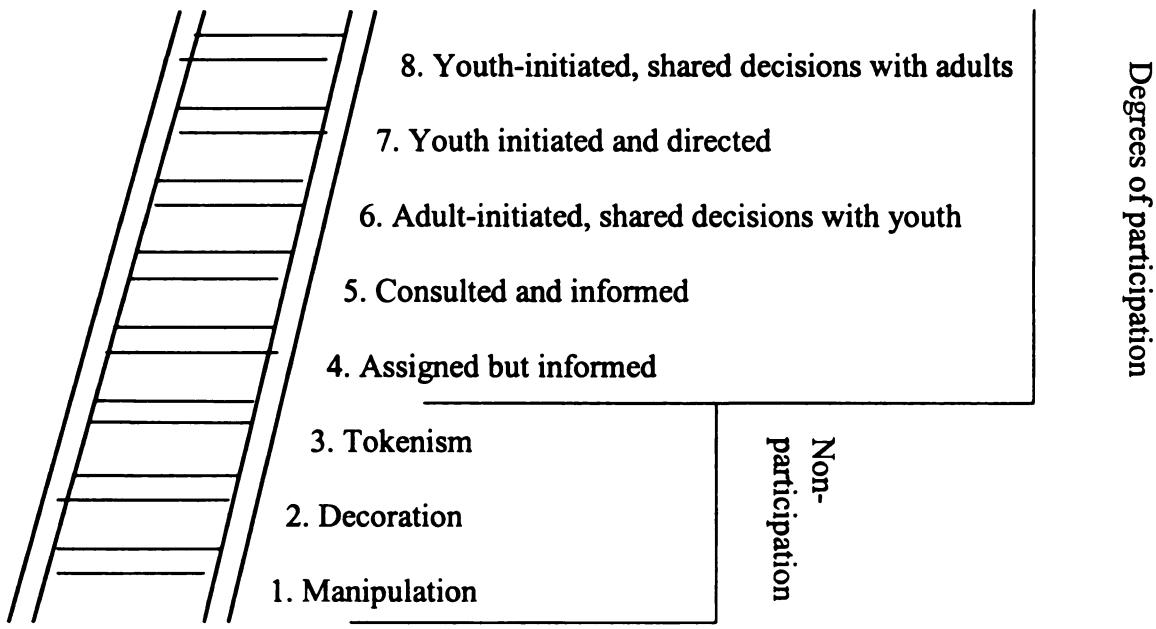

Figure 2. Hart's Ladder of Participation adapted from Hart, 1997

Freire (2003), though not specifically referring to youth, stresses the importance of involving educational participants in the identification of themes. People (including youth) are experts about their own experience and interests, and will know much more

about the relevancy of themes than outsiders (Freire, 2003). Youth participation at the inception of a program can also give youth some control over other program aspects, such as the program's design and culture (Hart, 1997). Even if youth are not involved in the creation of the program, it should be designed in a way that gives youth decision-making power in its implementation and day to day operations.

Although participation is paramount, successful youth participation often requires some level of support. Chawla and Kjørholt (1996: 45) point out that the challenge to adult collaborators is to "find the right balance between giving too much and too little assistance". This assistance may come in the form of encouragement, advice, money, transportation, credibility when dealing with government agencies, or numerous other forms (Wallerstein, 1997). The level of assistance needed by older youth (late teens and early twenties) may different from help and support needed by younger youth. So, while youth should not be made to feel inadequate by smothering assistance, they should also not be left to fail if expectations are too high (Chawla, 1996).

Youth peer education programs can also encourage genuine youth participation by incorporating creative ways for youth to express themselves. The arts, including song, dance, poetry, puppetry and visual arts, can be used by youth to express ideas and emotions that may be difficult to share within the group (van der Wijk, 1997), and often build group camaraderie (Hart, 1997). Use of traditional arts can help youth feel connected to their communities. Incorporating the arts into an educational program gives youth a chance to demonstrate their abilities in areas other than traditional reading, writing and speaking, and allows them to learn and practice new skills. These artistic skills can then become effective means of communicating messages to the community

(Hart, 1997). Hart and others give a number of examples of effective use of the arts around the world (Gordon, 1997; Hart, 1997; Mbowa, 1997).

When designing a program, planners (including youth) must consider the factors that might discourage or prohibit youth from taking part. While no program will reach every youth, special consideration should be given to those youth who may be excluded from such activities. A youth's ability to participate can be influenced by their gender, social class, religion, literacy, and other factors (Hart, 1997). Planners should identify potential barriers and work with youth to design the program to minimize these barriers. However, some barriers may not become apparent until after the program has begun, so evaluation and program modification can be used to address them if possible.

Clearly, factors outside of the program can have a large impact on children's participation. Parents' demands for youth to spend free time working in the house or for wages, a culture's perspective on appropriate activities for young men and women, or the clergy's fear of interfaith youth activities could all diminish youth participation in an educational program. It is clear that a program's success depends in part on the support and example of the surrounding community. If a community supports and encourages the activities of the youth and models positive social change, then youth will be more likely to participate and the youths' efforts for social change will be taken more seriously. Campbell and MacPhail (2002) give an example of the opposite kind of community. In this case, a peer HIV/AIDS program was carried out in a community which consistently modeled dangerous sexual behavior and a disinterested attitude towards HIV/AIDS. The community's attitude made it difficult for youth to act on the knowledge they'd gained in their class about how to protect themselves and others from HIV infection. While some

community factors may be difficult or impossible to change, education programs may be able to soften resistance and gain support by talking with parents and other community members about the program and addressing their concerns.

Finally, it is clear that promoting youth participation is not a simple or straightforward task. It requires serious time and effort, and therefore youth participation must have the strong support of program headquarters or funding agencies. If strong backing is not present at the center, decision-makers may not choose to put the required funding and human resources into the development of participatory youth programs (Edwards, 1996).

2.2.2. Conscientization: Understanding the Deeper Causes of Societal Problems

Paulo Freire coined the term conscientization, and made it famous. Conscientization has since come to mean different things to different people, but essentially it means becoming conscious of the forces in society that shape one's life. Becoming conscious of negative forces such as oppression is believed to be an important early step in the process of social change. It is analogous to the concept in medicine of identifying (and eventually treating) the root cause of an illness instead of merely addressing the symptoms. Thus, a crucial step in bringing about lasting social change is to accurately identify the causes of social ills. While Freire's concept of conscientization is perhaps the most well-known in the world, YCMTW has been shaped in part by similar (and older) Bahá'í concepts. Conscientization is discussed in a variety of literatures, but the analysis in this section will refer primarily to the Bahá'í and Freirean perspectives.

First, some background information on the Bahá'í Faith and Paulo Freire will be introduced. Then their perspectives on conscientization will be presented.

2.2.2.1. The Bahá'í Faith

The YCMTW program is based on vision of and approach to education and development inspired by the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion that was founded in Iran in the mid 1800s and can now be found in nearly every country in the world(BIC, 2001). The Faith emerged from Shiite Islam, but many of its teaching differed significantly from Shiite Islam as it was practiced at that time. The Faith's Prophet-Founder, Bahá'u'lláh, taught that all people are members of one human family and are equal regardless of race, gender or religion. Bahá'u'lláh also taught that there is only one God and that all of the world's major religions have come from God and share the same fundamental spiritual teachings(BIC, 2001). A Bahá'í community has been present in Guyana since the 1950s. Bahá'ís in Guyana come from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, and can be found in villages and towns throughout the country (NSA Guyana, 2002).

Since the Faith's beginnings, Bahá'ís have actively promoted the development of their communities through educational, health and agricultural programs, and endeavor to promote unity and equality across racial, gender, religious and political lines. The teachings of the Bahá'í Faith describe development as spiritual as well as material progress (for a more in-depth look at the Bahá'í concept of development, see (Whitmore, 1998). The need for both kinds of progress is described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the Faith's founder, Bahá'u'lláh.

No matter how far the material world advances, it cannot establish the happiness of mankind. Only when material and spiritual civilization are linked and co-ordinated will happiness be assured... Although material advancement furthers good purposes in life, at the same time it serves evil ends. The divine civilization is good because it cultivates morals. If the moral precepts and foundations of divine civilization become united with the material advancement of man, there is no doubt that the happiness of the human world will be attained and that from every direction the glad tidings of peace upon earth will be announced. Then humankind will achieve extraordinary progress..."

In the Bahá'í Faith, education is seen as the primary means for development. Education is not seen as merely filling an empty vessel with knowledge, but as a means of unlocking a person's potential. Bahá'u'lláh explains, "Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom" (Research Department, 1998: 1). The desired outcomes for education include personal and community transformation. This means that through education people should develop the knowledge, skills and volition needed for positive personal and social change (Anello, 1993). Education thus needs to be both material and spiritual, and it needs to promote the interaction of individuals and their communities. Education should lead to action that builds unity among all people while embracing their diversity. Unity is of utmost importance to Bahá'ís, because as Bahá'u'lláh teaches, "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established" (Bahá'u'lláh, 1993: 286). No specific methods are prescribed for Bahá'í educational programs, but methods must be based upon Bahá'í principles (only some of which were presented in this introduction).

While the Bahá'í teachings are socially revolutionary (e.g., declaring the equality of women and men and calling for an end to extreme wealth and poverty in the nineteenth

century), the teachings prohibit political revolution. In fact, Bahá'ís are forbidden from participating in partisan politics and from breaking the law of the land (Effendi, 1938).

2.2.2.2. Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire was perhaps the most influential thinker in recent nonformal education today. He was born in Northeast Brazil in 1921 and died in 1997. After a short stint as a lawyer he became an educator, and developed his distinctive educational methods while working with a team of educators, anthropologists and other social scientists on literacy programs in early 1960s Brazil. In 1964, the government considered his methods too threatening to their power, and he was exiled. He then worked with groups around the world to develop further and promote his educational methods (Freire, 1995).

In his most famous book (at least in the US), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire presents the major themes of his educational approach. His primary social concern is the widespread oppression of the people in the lower classes, and he believes that oppression must be overthrown by the oppressed themselves (Freire, 2003). The oppressed, however, often lack the insight into the source of their oppression and the skills to fight against it because they have been denied critical education. In order to address this, educators must work with the oppressed to help them develop "critical consciousness" of the forces of oppression and develop strategies to fight against them. The educators must recognize that they are co-learners with the oppressed; they have skills and insights to offer, but the students also have a wealth of knowledge from their lived experience.

Freire proposes an educational method of 'problem posing' in which the themes used in literacy education come from the daily life of students. These themes (usually social problems), presented in skits, stories or pictures, serve as starting points for dialogue through which students and educators practice literacy skills and develop action plans to begin to solve social problems. The students are thus able to use their critical thinking, organizational, and literacy skills to improve the conditions of their lives.

Freire's methods are openly political and at least in his early works he did not oppose armed revolution. In fact, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire states that a violent revolution could be considered an act of love because "as the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressor's power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression" (Freire, 2003: 56). He warns, though, that the revolutionaries must carefully guard against themselves becoming oppressors. Freire's methods do not necessarily imply the necessity of political revolution, however, and have been used in less politically radical ways to "promote individual and community change" and to help people "mov[e] beyond feelings of powerlessness and assum[e] control in their lives" (Wallerstein, : 197).

2.2.2.3. Bahá'í and Freirean perspectives on Conscientization

Both the Bahá'í and Freirean perspectives on education see the need for conscientization. They agree that human beings are capable of bringing about positive social change, and that this requires a clear analysis of the cause of social problems. Although these two perspectives share many similarities, they also differ in some important ways. This section will look at the Bahá'í and Freirean perspectives on the

focus of conscientization, the methods used to achieve conscientization, and specifically the role of dialogue in conscientization.

Freire's major objective in conscientization is to discover the sources of oppression and domination. Although oppression and domination are also themes in the Bahá'í writings, they are Freire's primary focus. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire writes, "I consider the fundamental theme of our epoch to be that of *domination*- which implies its opposite, the theme of liberation, as the objective to be achieved" (2003:103) and "in order to achieve humanization, which presupposes the elimination of dehumanizing oppression, it is absolutely necessary to surmount the limit-situations in which people are reduced to things" (2003: 103).

Understanding the root of social ills thus requires oppressed individuals to look critically at their own situation to determine who (or what) is oppressing them and why. Individuals can be oppressed not only by individual oppressors, but also the oppressive systems they create. This investigation can only be carried out by the oppressed and their genuine allies, because Freire believes that oppressors cannot or choose not to see the truth of their oppressive actions because they simply have too much to lose. "It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. The latter, as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves" (Freire, 2003: 56).

The term conscientization is not used in the Bahá'í scripture, but a similar concept exists. The Bahá'í writings teach that the problems facing the world cannot be solved until their underlying causes are understood and addressed (Lample, 1996). The Bahá'í teachings hold that social problems are primarily caused by a violation of one or more spiritual principles, even though the problem may also have concrete causes. For

example, famine may appear at first glance to be the result of drought or crop disease, and these factors may explain why crops failed. Yet crop failure does not explain why people starve in one location while excess food is available in another. Moral failings such as greed, corruption and self-interest are in fact usually at the center of the problem. Thus, in order to bring about positive social change, people must not only understand the material aspects of social problems, they must also be able to accurately diagnose the underlying spiritual causes.

The source of spiritual truth, according to the Bahá'í writings, is God, the Omniscient and Unknowable Creator. This truth is given to man through the world's great religions. The most fundamental principles remain the same across religions (e.g., the importance of truthfulness, justice and love), but social laws (e.g., dietary and marriage laws) change from age to age as society's needs change. Bahá'ís believe that these principles should serve as the guideposts for human behavior, and can be recognized by anyone who sincerely seeks the truth. Although the Bahá'í perspective is clearly religious, Bahá'ís believe that these spiritual truths (also sometimes called moral values or human virtues) will have a positive effect wherever and by whomever they are sincerely applied (Ayman, 1993).

Freire, along with his colleagues developed a pedagogy or educational method to help oppressed peoples develop a critical consciousness of the forces that oppress them and create strategies to work against those forces (Freire, 2003: 54). This pedagogy involves a number of steps that can be summarized as (1) gaining the trust and eliciting the support of the community, (2) learning about the culture and daily life of a community and identifying the themes that are most important to the people, (3)

presenting these themes (as images, skits or stories) back to the people to start dialogue, and link the dialogue to wider themes if necessary (i.e. make connections between themes that people had not previously thought of), (4) work with people to develop plans of action to address the problems of their choosing, and (5) reflect on the action and continue with dialogue and the creation of new action plans (Freire, 2003: 110-124).

The Bahá'í teachings do not promote any specific method of investigating the deeper causes of social problems, but they do suggest a number of principles to follow. Three of these important ideas are, 1) the on-going process of understanding and application of spiritual principles, 2) teaching others, and 3) the importance of consultation in group investigation and decision-making (Anello, 1993). Since spiritual principles are the foundation for the investigation of social problems, individuals must continually learn about these principles. Learning about the principles is not simply a matter of memorizing a list of virtues. Instead, one must try to understand the true meaning of the principle and its application in daily life, and to put that understanding into practice. This process is not easy, and requires active learning rather than a passive acceptance of information.

The role of dialogue in conscientization

Both the Bahá'í and Freirean concepts of investigating the deeper causes of social problems have a place for dialogue and consultative decision-making. Ideally, dialogue helps people to analyze issues at a deeper level than simple conversation. Through questioning and open sharing, those engaged in dialogue can get a clearer picture of the causes and potential solutions to problems. Both viewpoints accept that no one has full

insight, so bringing together many perspectives yields a clearer and more complete picture of reality than any single viewpoint. However, this will only occur if those participating have the right attitudes (especially humility) and are willing to honestly listen to others and give consideration to their points of view. Both frameworks value contribution of all, not just the learned or powerful, and recognize that people's lived experiences are a valuable contribution. While everyone can make a contribution, both frameworks also agree that the dialogue process can be assisted by a skilled, knowledgeable and humble facilitator. This individual can help to keep the process flowing smoothly, and may be able to offer some important insights from their experience and training. For instance, a facilitator who is aware of some connections between gender equality and domestic violence may be able to encourage the group to explore those connections-- something they might not have thought of on their own.

Both frameworks value solidarity among those involved in dialogue, but the Bahá'í framework puts extra emphasis on the value of unity of vision and action. While it is inevitable that people have differing points of view, this does not necessarily lead to division within a group if members' aims are not to prove they are right or to force their ideas on others. This requires that participants possess "the virtues of humility, courtesy, compassion and truthfulness," which are "essential to this process and for the achievement of a broader and deeper understanding of reality" (Anello, 1993: 31).

2.2.3. Praxis: Action and Reflection

As the previous paragraphs imply, action is a necessary outcome of the investigation of reality. The Bahá'í teachings say that "the betterment of the world can

be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct" (Lample, 1996: 54). Both frameworks also believe that action must always be informed- it cannot simply be action for the sake of action. Freire calls this informed action "praxis", and says that "human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world" (Freire, 2003: 125).

Group action is very important in both frameworks and is determined through the process of consultation or dialogue. Thus, dialogue and consultation (and learning in general) should always have action in mind, and should not just be talk for the sake of talk; "whatever a man's tongue speaketh, that let him prove by his deeds" ('Abdu'l-Bahá, 1997). Reflection on the purpose and methods of action does not end once action begins. Action should be continually reflected upon to determine how it is succeeding and how it can be improved. According to Freire, there is "no dichotomy by which praxis could be divided into a prior stage of reflection and a subsequent stage of action. Action and reflection occur simultaneously" (Freire, 2003: 128).

Action can take on any number of forms, depending on the requirements of the situation. The Freirean and Bahá'í frameworks do differ, however, in the appropriateness of political and/or violent action. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Freire believes that ending oppression requires the direct political action of the oppressed, including political revolution. While the Bahá'í teachings do allow Bahá'ís to seek justice through existing political structures ('Abdu'l-Bahá, 1975), this is conditional on their non-involvement in partisan politics and the strict obedience to law (Khan, 1984). The Freirean approach focuses on readying people to fight the forces of oppression and other forms of evil, while the focus of Bahá'í action is on building forces of good. The

Universal House of Justice writes that, "their [the Bahá'ís'] whole energy is directed towards the building of the good, a good which has such a positive strength that in the face of it the multitude of evils - which are in essence negative - will fade away"(Khan, 1984). The difference in approaches (i.e. focus on political struggle versus focus on building spiritual good) is based on differences in assumptions about the cause of society's problems. According to the Bahá'í teachings, political struggles will not bring about the necessary spiritual changes in the world and will lead to disunity since individuals will not agree on exactly which political party or ideas should be in power (Khan, 1984).

Regardless of the type of action chosen, the effectiveness of action depends in part on the skills of those carrying out the action. Youth education programs may be able to tap into the existing skills of youth, but they may also want to include a component of skill development. The types of skills taught can range widely, depending on the chosen action and ability and time of participants. Some examples include artistic performance skills, communication skills (oral and written), action research skills, small business management skills and craft skills (Hart, 1997). Certain skills are also needed for youth to be able to decide on and carry out actions, including facilitating, critical thinking and group decision-making skills (Anello, 1993; Spano, 2001; Wallerstein).

Continued action and participation in an on-going learning process are also effected by day-to-day realities of life, such as frustration, fatigue, other responsibilities and burnout. These factors need to be recognized in the design and operation of youth education programs. Researchers investigating programs on the ground have found that although participatory programs may be launched with much excitement, over time

enthusiasm can fade as people become exhausted, frustrated by low turn-out, or when the newness of the program wears off (Hawes, 1988; Magendzo, 1990). If programs are to be successful in the long run, program organizers must consider ways to listen to participants' concerns and problems, appreciate their efforts, avoid over-burdening them (e.g., lowering demands or increasing support), rejuvenate tired participants, and/or bring in new participants to replace those who leave (Hawes, 1988; Magendzo, 1990; Pridmore, 2000).

2.3. Conceptual Framework

The research for this thesis is based upon the conceptual framework shown in Figure 3.

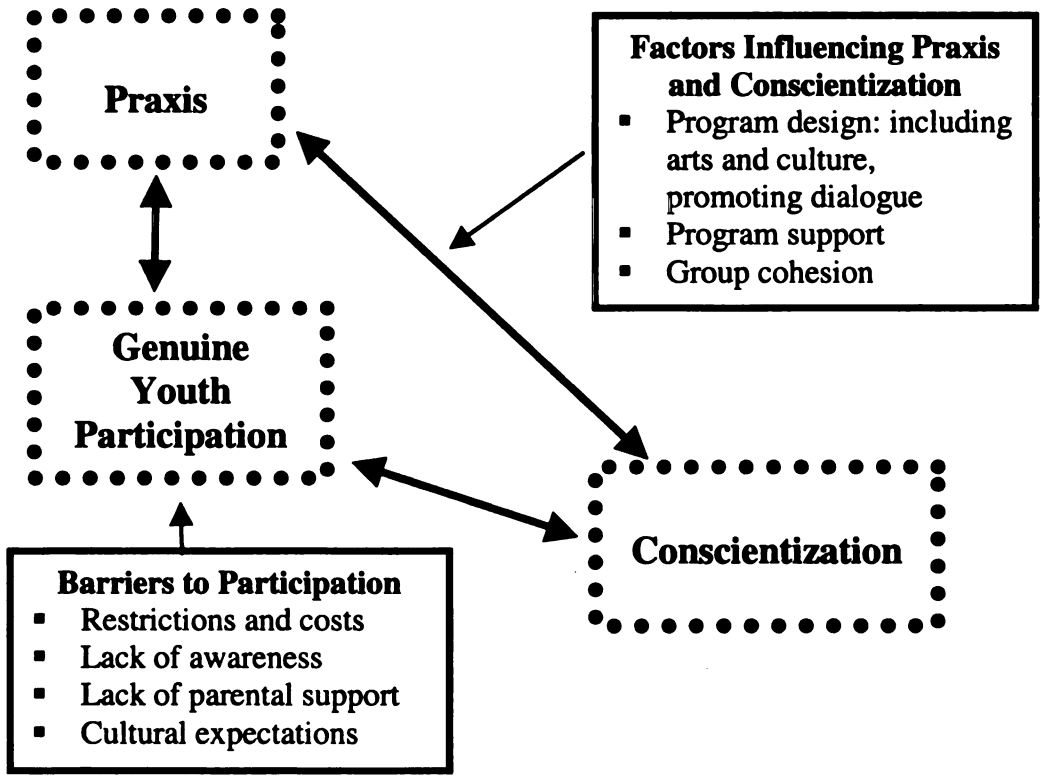

Figure 3. Conceptual framework for this study illustrating the design of educational programs that promote social change and the factors that influence their implementation.

2.3.1. Conceptual Framework for this Study

I used empirical research in this thesis to examine not only *if* YCMTW was able to encourage participation, conscientization, and praxis, but also *how* these elements were implemented and what factors influenced their implementation. To guide the empirical research for this thesis, I created a conceptual framework. This conceptual framework is based upon the theories and research summarized in the literature review. It illustrates the connections between the three main components of education for social change, participation, conscientization, and praxis, and factors that have been found to influence these components.

The conceptual framework is based on the assumption that genuine participation, conscientization and praxis can lead to social change, and are influenced by one another. Youth must be active participants in the learning process if conscientization and praxis are to occur. Praxis and conscientization are also closely linked because youth can take more appropriate action once they have gained a better understanding of the deeper causes of social problems. Conscientization and praxis can also lead to deeper levels of youth participation because they give youth an opportunity to make decisions and take an active role in the group. For this research, genuine participation in a program is defined as the active and willing involvement of individuals who have some decision-making power and responsibility. Conscientization is loosely defined in this research as the raising of one's consciousness about the deeper causes of societal problems and how

one's particular condition is influenced by societal forces. Although coined by Freire, conscientization is a term that has been used many different ways by different thinkers and may have markedly different meanings for readers. Conscientization, as it is used in this research, does not imply the use of one particular consciousness-raising method, or a particular set of assumptions about the true causes of social problems. Praxis is defined as action informed by reflection.

As mentioned above, an important aspect of this thesis research is to describe *how* YCMTW did or did not encourage participation, conscientization and praxis. The empirical research literature provides many examples of the factors that can influence a program's ability to achieve these goals, and these factors have been included in the conceptual framework. In order to simplify the framework, these factors were grouped into two categories: 1) barriers to participation and 2) factors that influence conscientization and praxis. Although these factors have been divided into these categories, complex relationships exist among them and a single factor may influence participation, conscientization and praxis.

2.3.1.1. Barriers to Participation

Numerous barriers to participation have been identified in research on participatory education programs. Some of these barriers can be at least partially mitigated by program designers and organizers. The most fundamental barrier to participation is lack of awareness of a program. If organizers want youth to participate in a program, youth must be aware that the program is open to them and is something they could benefit from. Some other obvious barriers are those put in place by the program

itself. While it may be necessary to limit participation to youth of a certain age or who come from a particular background, excessive barriers could make the program seem exclusive and cause resentment. More subtle barriers may also exist such as program cost, education level requirements, and the ability to participate in the program's format (e.g., the ability to make the time commitment or to meet in mixed-gender groups). Again, some of these barriers will be unavoidable, but they must be considered and addressed if participation from a broad range of youth is desired. Finally a lack of program support for youth can hinder active participation by youth if program participation is overly burdensome and youth cannot obtain needed resources.

The wider society also has an influence on young people's participation in youth education. Parental support is an especially important influence on youth participation, since younger youth usually live at home and must abide by their parents' wishes. If parents think that a youth education program is a waste of time or will have a negative influence on their children, they will discourage or forbid them to attend. Parents' attitudes may be shaped by their society's perception of the role of youth (e.g., as workers or learners), and by other social norms such as restricting the movement of girls outside the home. On the other hand, if parents believe the program is worthwhile, they may encourage their children to attend and may be receptive to the ideas and experiences their children bring home from the group. Youths' own willingness to join an educational program, discuss certain topics and take part in certain activities is also largely influenced by the wider society. If a program or its topics are considered 'un-cool' or irrelevant, then many youth will not join or will require extra convincing before they join. To make matters more complicated, what is appealing to one part of the youth population (women,

or a particular ethnic group) may be unappealing to other youth. For instance, groups that emphasize sports, women's empowerment, or rap music may appeal to some youth, but not to others.

2.3.1.2. Factors that Influence Conscientization and Praxis

How a youth education program is designed and carried out on the ground can have a major influence on youths' conscientization and praxis. At least five influential factors have been identified in the literature: 1) program support for youth, 2) good design and materials, 3) use of the arts and arts skill development, 4) dialogue, and 5) group cohesion. Some of these factors can be most influenced by the program itself, while others are more strongly influenced by the youth groups or by the wider society. Program support in the form of training and feedback can improve the conscientization process, and financial resources and inter-personal connections can make actions more effective. Program support is important for participants at any age, but it can be especially important for youth, who generally have less experience and resources than adults. Chawla and Kjorholt (1996) stress the importance of striking a balance between smothering youth and leaving them to fend for themselves. The second factor, good design and materials, can give youth real decision-making power, help youth to ask questions and make connections between their lives and greater social forces, and make actions more successful. Design determines the structure of the program, including who has authority, and how the program operates. Materials could include program manuals with useful information and/or thought-provoking exercises and activities. Materials

could also be physical resources like art supplies, sporting goods, or other useful items that youth may not have access to otherwise.

Program organizers can also incorporate the arts and art skill development into programs. The type of art used will necessarily vary depending on the culture and ability of participants, but the use of the arts has been found to have many benefits. First, having an artistic component can attract youth to a program if it is culturally appropriate. Having an arts component can also help youth build bonds of friendship and camaraderie and can improve the dialogue process since it helps people to express and feel emotions. Finally the arts can be used in various forms of action such as dramas that express youths' thoughts and needs to the rest of the community, or skits and posters that raise community awareness about health or environmental issues that affect the development of their communities.

Program design is important, but much of a youth education program's success depends on the efforts of the youth themselves. Group cohesion is an important prerequisite for conscientization and action, since both are cooperative and require a willingness to communicate openly. As mentioned above, group cohesion can be promoted by incorporating the arts. Groups can also improve cohesion by encouraging an atmosphere of trust and caring, making sure that members are not excluded, and supporting one another. A cohesive group is more likely to have meaningful dialogue because its members will feel comfortable opening up to one another and trusting each other. Honest dialogue that goes deeper than the surface of issues is an essential component of conscientization. Achieving this is something that only the youth themselves can do, though good facilitator training can be an important form of support.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA

3.1. Research Approach

The research approach for this study was primarily qualitative. I used qualitative research methods in this research because they allowed me to take an open-ended and less structured approach to data gathering. Unlike pre-set survey or other more rigid research instruments, open-ended methods allow the researcher to change questions if she discovers her assumptions are inaccurate and/or if she finds unexpected factors that have some bearing on the research question. An open-ended qualitative approach was especially appropriate for this study because it is exploratory. The researcher seeks to know how YCMTW was designed and implemented, and to discover the factors that influenced its implementation. Before this research was conducted, little was known about the design and implementation this program, and research about the lives of Guyanese youth was nearly non-existent. Therefore, it was logical to assume that rigid methods based on my assumptions would likely miss important aspects of the program.

In order to answer the research questions, a large amount of information on the experiences and thoughts of YCMTW facilitators and participants who completed the program was needed. The research began at the end of the 2001-2002 program year, so information came primarily from youth (both facilitators and participants) who completed the program in July 2002, along with facilitators who graduated in previous years, and program staff and volunteers. The research methods used in this study were approved by the Michigan State University internal review board, the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS).

3.2. Research Design

Data gathering occurred in two main stages (Figure 4). While they did not always occur sequentially, the work of stage one generally preceded that of stage two. The purpose of stage one was to clarify assumptions about the program, gather participation statistics, and pilot interview guides (see Appendix A for interview guides). Stage one was designed to clarify my initial assumptions about the program, such as YCMTW's goals, how the program was organized, how long the program had been in existence, and how many youth participated in the program. In addition, it assessed the applicability of the research questions to the situation on the ground, and determined the cultural appropriateness of the interview questions and timeline activity. Key informant interviews took place at the beginning of the research process, but document analysis continued throughout the process as documents became available

The second stage focused on gathering perspectives of youth participants on YCMTW's implementation. This was accomplished through interviews with participants (facilitators and other youth group members) from the 2001-2002 program and interviews with past facilitators. Participants were asked about how the program was implemented in their communities, and how they felt about different aspects of the program. A timeline exercise was also conducted with the three 2001-2002 groups in an effort to help group members remember the activities of the previous year.

Research Design	Research Method	Purpose	Respondents/Sources
Stage 1: Clarifying assumptions and gathering background data	Key informant interviews	To determine appropriateness of research questions and interview language	2 Guyanese Youth
		Determine program goals and check assumptions about the program design and implementation	4 YCMTW staff members
	Document analysis	Check assumptions and provide context for the study, including participation statistics	▪ YCMTW evaluation ▪ YCMTW report ▪ 2002-2003 facilitator training list ▪ YCMTW press releases and advertisements ▪ Newspaper articles about YCMTW
Stage 2: Gathering participant perspectives	Individual interviews	To gain diverse perspectives on the implementation of YCMTW from recently graduated facilitators' points of view.	4 facilitators and one assistant facilitator from 4 2001-02 groups
		To gain diverse perspectives on the implementation of YCMTW from recent participants' points of view	11 group members from 3 2001-2 groups
		To gain longer-term perspective on the implementation of YCMTW from former facilitators' points of view.	5 former facilitators
	Timeline creation and group interviews	To obtain factual data and opinions about program implementation	members of three 2001-2 groups

Figure 4. Two stages of data collection

3.2.2. Sampling

I had two major goals for the selection of interview subjects. First, I wanted to interview youth from groups that had met the minimum graduation requirements (i.e. had completed a 70-hour course in their home communities and had completed a majority of the topics in the manual). While important lessons could be learned from groups who did not complete the course, I chose to focus on the experiences of those youth who completed the entire program since only they would understand the time, energy, and cooperation needed to implement YCMTW. Second, I wanted to interview youth with diverse perspectives in order to get a broader view of the program. Diversity comes in many forms however, including geography, age, ethnicity, religion, group size and group functioning. Thus, choosing cases that reflected the full variability of the groups was not possible within the scope of this study. Therefore, the goal of sampling in this case was to maximize the diversity of the groups within the sample, while also ensuring that groups in the chosen communities had met the basic graduation criteria.

Once I arrived in Guyana, I determined the final sampling protocol based on the above goals and my time and travel constraints. I had 90 days to complete data collection, and my travel was limited to a portion of the coastal zone due to travel cost, time and safety. Data collection could take place only during daylight hours (before 6:00 pm) due to transportation and safety issues, and only on weekends once school was in session. After consulting with YCMTW staff, I decided that three groups would be the primary focus of the study. These groups would be selected at the graduation, which took place shortly after my arrival in Guyana. At the graduation, I announced the upcoming research project, and asked the youths to discuss their willingness to

participate as a group. The graduation was not well-attended due to travel costs and violence in the eastern region of the coastal plain, and only three groups were well-represented (i.e. had more than just the facilitator and one or two members in attendance). All three groups had successfully completed the program and were somewhat diverse in terms of geography, group size and participant age. These three groups were chosen, and all agreed to participate.

Group interviews and timeline activities were restricted to members of the groups who were 18 years old or older, and those under 18 whose parents had signed consent forms (Appendix B). Individual interviews were carried out with each group's facilitator(s) and with three other participants from each group. The goal in sampling was once again to ensure some diversity in the experiences of those interviewed. Individual interviewees were selected from those who took part in the group interview since they already had consent to participate or were over 18, and because arrangements for the individual interviews could be made on the spot, thus saving valuable time.

In one case, the number of youth participating in the group interview was so small that all youth who attended and were willing to be interviewed were chosen. In the case of the smallest group, only two members were able to attend the group interview. Both seemed comfortable talking with me, so this interview was lengthened to include the individual interview questions. A third individual from that group was later interviewed on her own. Finally, in the largest group, I attempted to maximize the diversity of individual interviewees. Before interviewees were chosen, I asked the facilitator to describe the different members of her group in terms of activity level and religion, two invisible characteristics. After the group interview, I selected one young man (young

men were the minority in this group), one Indo-Guyanese, one very active member of the group, and one moderately active member of the group. When the young man did not show up for his individual interview, he was replaced by another young man.

Interviews were also carried out with five former facilitators and one 2001-02 facilitator from an interior region of the country. Once again, I attempted to maximize the diversity of interviewees. The facilitator from the interior was on the coast for the graduation, and I chose to interview her because she could give perspective on running YCMTW in a remote location. Logistics played a large role in determining which former facilitators were interviewed. Using information from past participation lists, I attempted to contact a number of facilitators who differed by gender, ethnicity, and region. However, many former facilitators had relocated and were difficult or impossible to locate. The five interviewed lived in various regions of the coastal plain, though their communities ranged from urban to remote rural locations. Three were female and two were male; all were either Afro-Guyanese or mixed race.

By interviewing multiple members of the same 2001-02 YCMTW groups and using group interviews I hoped to improve the validity of the study since the content of these interviews could be cross-checked to get a more accurate and complete picture of the group's experience. By interviewing past facilitators and the facilitator from the interior region in addition to the three 2001-02 YCMTW groups I hoped to increase the generalizability of the study. The findings of the study cannot be generalized to the entire YCMTW program because quantitative statistical methods such as random sampling and identical questioning procedures were not used. However, by widening my investigation beyond the three 2001-02 groups, my findings can shed some light on which experiences

and viewpoints are specific to a group or individual and which may be more commonly found throughout the program.

3.3. Research Methods

3.3.1. Key Informant Interviews

Throughout the process, the research was aided by key informant interviews. Near the beginning of the research, I conducted informal interviews with YCMTW organizers in order to determine the most efficient way to carry out the interview process. YCMTW staff members were also able to provide contact information for past and present facilitators.

I also conducted preliminary informal interviews with two Guyanese youth in order to determine the cultural appropriateness of the research questions and methods in general. Both youth were native Guyanese and I knew both well. They were chosen because they understood Guyanese youth culture and speech, but could also understand my American English. As the research proceeded, I also asked these key informant youth about the more subtle meanings of the responses from the YCMTW participants (e.g., the meaning of local phrases or slang, or tones of voice). Finally, the facilitator(s) of the groups that were interviewed also served as key informants about their groups. I asked to help me contact other group members in order to initiate the research process, and to supply information about the characteristics of their group members that helped me to select members for individual interviews.

3.3.2. Group Timeline

This method is based on the methods described by Rachel Slocum and Dieuwke Klaver in "Time Line Variations", a chapter in *Power, Process and Participation- Tools For Change* (Slocum, 1995). The group timeline exercise was used primarily to get a clearer picture of the ways YCMTW has been implemented, but it may also provide some conversation starters about the participants' experiences in the group.

In order to find out what different groups do in a year, members of three recently graduated YCMTW groups were individually assembled to create group timelines and to participate in group interviews. All the groups were asked to include a uniform baseline of information, such as when their group formed, what kind of projects they did and when they were carried out, and when their group covered the topics in the manual. During and after timeline construction, I asked questions and took notes clarifying what the timeline meant.

After the timelines were constructed, I asked group members were to reflect on their year in YMCTW in a focus group style discussion. I asked participants to share their answers to a number of program implementation questions such as "How did your group form" or "How did you make decisions as a group?" The content and wording of interview questions (Appendix A) was determined after consulting with key informants about the cultural appropriateness of the questions. I facilitated the discussion, and used additional probes to stimulate conversation. This activity was audio taped and transcribed. Participants' names were changed to protect their confidentiality, and tapes were stored in a locked box.

Timeline construction and discussion was a good way to learn about the different ways YCMTW has been implemented. Because it involved multiple group members, it was able to capture the group's activities more fully and quickly than individual interviews would. Participants were able to share multiple perspectives on the experience and will also be able to correct each other's factual mistakes, adding to the validity of the group's account. The method's success varied, however, depending on the number of youth who participated and their willingness to share their thoughts with me in front of the group.

3.3.3. In-Depth Interviews of Individual 2001-02 Facilitators, Participants and Former Facilitators

This method was intended primarily to find out what youth experienced in YCMTW and what it meant to them. These interviews were semi-formal and open-ended, and were audio-taped and transcribed with the interviewee's permission. Most interviews lasted about one hour. I asked similar questions of all interviewees (Appendix A) to allow for comparisons among individuals and groups, but interview questions were not identical. Questions were also flexible enough to pursue themes that arose from earlier interviews. The exact content and wording of interview questions was determined after consulting with key informants about the cultural appropriateness of the questions. Most interviews were audio-taped and transcribed with the interviewee's permission. Two interviews were not audio-taped, but I took extensive notes during the interviews and expanded those notes after the interviews had finished. I then shared the expanded

notes with the interviewees who made corrections and verified that the notes accurately described the interviews.

This method was effective way of finding out the more personal meaning of YCMTW participation because it was more private than the group interview, and gave participants a chance to speak in-depth about their experiences, thoughts and feelings. Since these interviews usually followed the group activity, the interviewee and I had usually already met and felt reasonably comfortable talking together.

Interviews with former facilitators were conducted very much like the interviews of 2001-2002 facilitators, except that the interviewees were asked more questions about the long-term meaning of YCMTW in their lives. Because they had at least one more year of hindsight, the past graduates had a longer-term perspective on which aspects of the program were important to them.

3.3.4. Analysis of Youth Can Move the World Manuals and Other Historic Documents

In order to provide a brief historical description of the program, I analyzed program manuals, evaluation documents and newspaper articles. This analysis resulted in a brief summary of how the program has developed over time. These materials, along with key informant interviews, also serve as the main source of information about the program's goals.

3.3.5. Analysis of Youth Can Move the World Participation Statistics

Existing YCMTW participation statistics were analyzed in order to provide a quantitative context for the study's qualitative findings. Although exact participation

statistics were not available for each year, estimates of the total number of youth who have been trained as facilitators, facilitator who graduated from the program, and participants in the youth groups were available. I also analyzed statistics from the 2002-2003 program year training to estimate the demographics of the program in terms of gender and religion. Statistics from 2002-2003 were used because 2001-2002 statistics were not available.

3.4. Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis began in the early stages of data collection, and continued to the end of the study. Once I began collecting data, I read over her expanded notes and transcripts and looked for concepts that had some bearing on the research questions. Some general concepts, such as "program implementation" and "program goals", came directly from the research questions. I broadly classified the interview or document data I had gathered under these general concepts. Within those general concepts, more specific themes such as gender differences in participation and the influence of parental support emerged early on in the interview process and were pursued in later interviews. The information that came from the early interviews shaped the direction the study took as it became clearer which of my assumptions were incorrect and which new questions need to be asked. The themes, questions and my evolving thoughts about how they may fit together to answer the research questions were recorded as memos. Throughout this process I consulted with key informants about my thoughts, and was open to feedback or suggestions they may provide.

After data collection was complete, I developed a uniform coding system with clearly defined definitions and examples based on a sample of interviews (see Appendix C for a code definition table). I then applied that coding system to all of the interview data using Atlas.ti software. Once the data were coded, text was sorted according to the codes. Codes that appeared in interviews from the majority of the eight groups (including the 2001-02 groups and all past groups) were included in the findings. For example, interviewees from the majority of groups talked about their experiences with parental support for their YCMTW groups, so the role of parental support was included in the research findings. By including only those themes that appeared in the interviews from a majority of groups I hoped to ensure that the results were a valid representation of the groups' experiences. However, just because text from various interviews is classified under the same code does not necessarily mean that all interviewees shared the same viewpoint or had the same experience. Using the parental support code as an example, although a majority of groups commented on its importance, some had experienced high levels of parental support while others experienced low levels of support or even opposition. These differences in viewpoint and experience are described in the findings. The findings were organized to answer the research questions. The findings are inter-related and could be presented in many ways, so I chose to present them in a way that seemed most logical to me and that paralleled the structure of the literature review.

The final analysis was summarized in various forms for the research's different audiences. A short evaluative report was written for the Varqa Foundation. The analysis of the data that addresses the research questions was written up as a master's degree thesis for the Resource Development department. A copy of this will be shared with the

YCMTW organizers and participants who requested copies. Finally information that may be of interest to the participants of YCMTW will be presented in short articles that may be published in the YCMTW newsletter.

3.5. Limitations

Before describing the specific limitations of this study, I think it is important to reiterate that the purpose of this study is not to draw statistically significant conclusions about the entire YCMTW program, but to identify experiences, issues and viewpoints that may play an important role in the program's implementation and outcomes. I specifically chose to work with groups who had successfully completed the program because I believed that at this early stage in YCMTW research it would be valuable to investigate the experiences of youth who had experienced the program in its entirety.

It can therefore not be assumed that the data gathered in this study accurately represents the experiences of most youth in YCMTW. There are at least two possible reasons for this, sampling bias and the validity of interview data. First, because only a small number of intentionally selected youth were interviewed for this study, their experiences and opinions can not possibly represent the full range of experiences youth have had in YCMTW. To mitigate this potential problem somewhat, youth were selected from multiple locations and multiple years. One specific limitation of this research is that the experiences and opinions of youth interviewed in this study may also be more positive than the 'average' participant's because groups and interviewees were selected from a pool of youth who 1) had successfully completed the program, and 2) were willing to take part in an interview. It is reasonable to assume that program drop-outs and those

who were not willing to be interviewed may have had a less positive experience in YCMTW. Another specific limitation is that only one of the facilitators interviewed for this research used the YCMTW in a school setting, and in that case it was an optional extra-curricular activity. All other interviewees had experienced the YCMTW as a non-formal educational program that was not affiliated with any school. In the wider YCMTW program, a number (exact numbers are not known) of YCMTW groups have been held in schools as extra-curricular activities and in some cases the YCMTW materials have been incorporated into the school curriculum. There was no specific intention to avoid school-based groups. They were simply not well-represented at the graduation when 2001-02 groups were selected, and none of the former facilitators had worked with a school-affiliated group. It could reasonably be expected that the experience of youth participating in YCMTW in a school setting could vary significantly from those participating in independent youth groups. For instance, there may be differences in the relationships between facilitators and participants if the facilitators are also teachers in the school and school-affiliated groups may also receive better support than independent groups. A third specific limitation is that time and financial considerations prevented me from interviewing youth from the interior of Guyana. Interior communities vary in significant ways from communities on the coast, including greater isolation and stronger influence from Amerindian cultures. The experience of youth in these groups could therefore differ significantly from the experience of youth in groups on the coastal plain.

Second, some interviewees may not have represented their experiences or opinions accurately. Interviewees may have given answers that they believed I 'wanted'

to hear, or that reflected well on their own performance in the program. My identity as a white American woman may have affected participants' willingness to share their thoughts honestly and openly with her. It is impossible to know exactly what the impact (either positive or negative) has been. In group interviews, participants' answers may have been influenced by the presence of their fellow group members. In order to mitigate these potential problems and increase the study's validity, one-on-one interviews were conducted as well as group interviews and interviewees were assured of the confidentiality of one-on-one interviews. Interviewees were also informed that the purpose of the research was to improve the program, so honesty in answering was very important and interviewees would not be judged on their responses. Finally, the interviewer was not a member of the YCMTW staff, so interviewees may have felt more comfortable openly criticizing the program or admitting their own shortcomings. In general, interviewees were willing to talk about the negative as well as positive aspects of YCMTW, but youth were more comfortable speaking openly in one-on-one interviews than in group interviews.

The final threat to the study's validity comes from misunderstandings between the research participants and me. Despite my experience living in Guyana, I do not have a complete knowledge of "Creolese" (The Guyanese dialect of English) nor of Guyanese mannerisms. Interviewees may have misunderstood some of my language (due to language differences or poorly worded questions) and given answers without truly understanding the questions. I may also have misinterpreted interviewees' responses to questions, or drawn conclusions that were not accurate. In order to mitigate these potential problems, I consulted with key informants on the cultural appropriateness of

interview questions and on the meaning of unclear interview text. Since audio tapes were made of most interviews, I was able to listen to the exact words of the interviewees instead of having to rely on memory. Finally, if interviewee responses were too unclear, they were not included in the data for analysis.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings in this chapter are organized in the order of the research questions they answer. The chapter begins with findings related to the first research question, "Was YCMTW designed to encourage youth to genuinely participate, and to engage in conscientization and praxis?" The findings for this question have been divided into three parts: was YCMTW designed to promote 1) participation 2) conscientization and 3) praxis? The findings related to the second research question, "How was YCMTW implemented in terms of participation, conscientization and praxis?" follow. These findings have also been divided into three sections: 1) Was there genuine youth participation? 2) Did youth engage in conscientization? and 3) Did youth engage in praxis?

4.1. How was YCMTW designed to encourage youth to genuinely participate and to engage in conscientization and praxis?

4.1.1. Was YCMTW designed to encourage high levels of youth participation?

The findings in this section draw heavily upon YCMTW documents, including the facilitator's manual(Varqa Foundation, 2001), a program evaluation (Guy, 2000) and a program report (Varqa Foundation, 2002a), and on key informant interviews with program staff. In general it was found that YCMTW was designed to have a high level of youth participation, and had involved youth from the first planning stages of the program. The findings have been broken down into two sections, "levels of youth participation" and "overcoming barriers to participation".

4.1.1.1. Levels of Youth Participation

YCMTW has been designed to encourage the active participation of youth in all aspects and stages of the program. To begin this section, the participation of youth in program creation is described. Then the program's design to involve youth in the running the program at the national level, is described. Finally the designs of the facilitator and youth group participant roles are discussed. In each of these sections, the designs of the youth roles are compared to Hart's ladder of children's participation, which was introduced in the literature review (chapter 2).

Youth have been actively involved in YCMTW from the earliest stages of the program. Although the idea of YCMTW was conceived of by the Varqa Foundation in the late 1990s, the issues included in the program were largely determined by youth in communities throughout Guyana. John, a Varqa board member, describes this participatory process of needs identification,

> *About three to four years ago Guyana was thrown into a lot of difficulties, a lot of racial polarization. And within Varqa we were looking to see what we could do to try to respond to some of those challenges. We [Varqa board members] had a series of meetings with youth throughout the country, in part coming out of two other development projects we're involved in. One was the Bahá'í Community Health Partnership in the Rupununi, and we had a series of meetings with youth in the community. And then we also had a series of meetings with youth coming out of On the Wings of Words, a literacy program, to try to see what were the kind of issues that they were concerned about. And I think probably the kind of issues they came up with were probably very similar to concerns of youth all over the world: drugs, alcohol, suicide, domestic violence..."*

The program is probably best characterized as adult initiated, shared decisions with youth, according to Hart's ladder of participation (Hart, 1997). Hart describes this level of youth participation as an adult initiated activity that "pay particular attention to involving the young", and "foster a sense of competence and the confidence to

participate" in the young (Hart, 1997: 44). Hart warns that participation in the planning stage alone is not sufficient; "To achieve real shared-decision projects, children need to be involved in some degree in the entire process" (Hart, 1997).

The Varqa foundation planned for older youth (i.e. late teens and early twenties) to oversee the day to day operations of YCMTW, including coordination of training, advertising, newsletter and webpage design and general office management. In this role, youth would have some responsibility and decision-making power, but would still be overseen by the Varqa Foundation. The program was also designed to have youth play a major role in facilitator training. Youth serve as trainers, activities coordinators and chaperones. The program was also designed to create a network of volunteer youth who would visit groups around the country to encourage groups, give suggestions and answer questions. Again, this level of participation could be considered *adult initiated, shared decisions with youth* (Hart, 1997).

Youth facilitators were designed to be the backbone of YCMTW. These facilitators were expected to lead groups of youth in their own communities through a similar training course to the facilitator training course they went through. Youth groups are required to cover the majority of topics in the YCMTW manuals and must create corresponding artistic creations that convey important messages about the topics. The groups are not required to share these creations with the wider community, but they are encouraged to do so. While YCMTW provides this general framework to facilitators, the youth groups are given a large amount of flexibility in how the groups are run and how they meet the requirements. The youth facilitators are supposed to be supported in their

work by visits from YCMTW youth volunteers (and sometimes adults), newsletters and follow-up trainings.

The level of participation of the YCMTW facilitator lies somewhere between *adult initiated, shared decisions with children* and *child-initiated, shared decisions with adults* (Hart, 1997). Although the YCMTW program was initiated by adults and the role of the facilitator is somewhat predetermined, the youth facilitators have a high level of autonomy. The facilitators take the initiative to join the program and organize YCMTW activities with youth groups in their communities.

The final role for youth in YCMTW is the role of youth group participant. These are the youth that belong to the groups that are lead by the facilitators. These youth have less individual responsibility than the facilitators; they do not have to initiate the program or make sure that program requirements are met. Although youth group participants aren't assigned responsibility in the program, facilitators are encouraged to share decision-making power with other group members. However, the extent of training and emphasis on this area is unclear. However, even if facilitators limit the decision-making power of group members, the program manual is designed to encourage participation of all youth in dialogue and the arts. The participation of youth group members could thus range from *assigned but informed* to *child-initiated, shared decisions with adults* (Hart, 1997).

4.1.1.2. Overcoming Barriers to Participation

In order for youth to be involved in YCMTW, they must be aware of the program and believe that it's something accessible to them and worth joining. Who feels welcome,

interested, and able to join program is influenced by a number of factors, including participation restrictions (age, time requirements, gender, educational level), program advertisement, and cultural appropriateness (Hart, 1997). While it is not realistic to expect every youth to be interested in and able to participate in an education program, it is important to make a program as available and appealing as possible to the target population. YCMTW has attempted to reduce participation barriers by setting few participation restrictions, making the program affordable, and advertising the program widely to attract diverse youth. While the program's explicit participation barriers are low, some wider cultural factors may restrict the participation of some youth.

The only explicit restriction on participation is an age limit; only 16-25 year olds can be trained as facilitators. In reality the age limits were more flexible, and people from about 15 to 30 were trained as facilitators. Other youth group participants were supposed to be at least 12 or 13 years old, but in some cases younger children joined groups. No specific group of youth was targeted for participation in YCMTW. The program was made available for youth of all backgrounds: racial, religious, geographic, political, class, and education level. Since the program was created in part as a response to racial disunity and instability, an emphasis was put on unity among youth. This is very much in keeping with Bahá'í principle of the paramount importance of unity for development. The program was not specifically aimed at "oppressed" youth, whom the Freirean pedagogy suggests should be the primary participants of an educational program for social change. Even if the program wanted to target oppressed youth, it would be difficult to determine which youth would qualify as "oppressed" and which would not.

For instance, a youth who is financially well to do may be strongly oppressed in an abusive home while a very poor youth may have a loving and supportive family.

Participation at the facilitator level was implicitly limited by literacy. While there were no restrictions based on educational levels, those who could not read or write would have trouble applying for the program and using the written manual. While Guyana's literacy rate has traditionally been very high, (it is still reported at 98% (CIA, 2001)), functional literacy is much lower among the young (CIA, 2001; Jennings, 2000). Time was another potential restriction on participation. The time necessary to facilitate a YCMTW group could prohibit some youth who are working or going to school full time from becoming facilitators. Completing a 70-hour training course in about seven months (assuming that groups start in December and end in July) requires working at least two to three hours per week with their groups and more time outside the group to prepare. Secondary school in Guyana usually ends between 2:00 and 3:00 in the afternoon and for many youth is followed by private tutorial 'lessons'. Some students may attend private lessons on Saturday mornings as well. Most youth groups are not able to meet after dark in the evening (after 6:00 pm) because traveling after dark can be difficult due to lack of transportation and is not considered to be safe. Students may finish secondary school at a relatively young age (around 16), but others continue past the official end of secondary school to study for the British A-Level or O-Level exams. People working full time face similar time restrictions to full-time students. Therefore, for full-time students and workers, finding the time to run a YCMTW group can be very difficult if not impossible.

The YCMTW program was designed to be low-cost to participants. There was no charge for the training sessions, food was inexpensive, and housing was available at low

cost to participants who could not travel home at night during the training. Basic art supplies were given to all facilitators to create banners, puppets and other artistic works. In years when funding was sufficient, scholarships were available for those who had financial need and applied for them. In the 2001-2002 program year, YCMTW received funding from UNICEF to provide scholarships for youth (mainly Amerindians) from the more remote communities of Guyana. One hinterland participant reported that she was unaware of the program until she was sent to the YCMTW training by the school where she taught.

Program advertising and publicity were designed to reach and appeal to as broad a range of applicants as possible. The program was advertised through paid newspaper and television advertisements, press releases carried on television and radio, and distribution of fliers to schools, churches, and health clinics. The advertisements described YCMTW as a youth development program and listed some of the topics included. It mentioned the use of the arts, used an appealing logo, stated that there were no fees for the course, and explicitly encouraged youths of all backgrounds to apply to the program (see Appendix D for copies of advertisements). The advertisement also stated that youth could earn a certificate from the University of Guyana Institute of Distance and Continuing Education. Press releases about upcoming trainings were carried by several national television stations and newspapers and were mentioned in national radio broadcasts. Word of mouth was also used through existing Varqa programs, especially the literacy program, On the Wings of Words.

4.1.2. Was YCMTW designed to encourage youth to engage in conscientization?

Conscientization is the process through which people become critically aware of their place in the world and the way the forces of the world affect their lives. It is thought to be an important component of social change because it gives people a clearer understanding of the causes of social problems, and thus makes them better able to develop viable solutions. This section describes the design of YCMTW in terms of its ability to help youth engage in conscientization. This section begins by looking at YCMTW's general approach to conscientization. Then the manual's ability to encourage conscientization is discussed, with a focus on the inclusion of reflection thoughts and questions, theoretical topics and moral/spiritual content.

4.1.2.1. Conscientization and Factual Education

When considering the role of dialogue and reflection in YCMTW, it is important to recognize that the program focuses on both consciousness raising and factual education about social issues. The program included factual information because the Varqa board members believed that youth did not have sufficient information about issues like HIV/AIDS to make informed decisions. According to one Varqa board member, after talking with youth involved in other Varqa projects to find out which issues were most important to them, Varqa "tried to see if we could develop a program that would at least provide information to youth on those issues, which they could then take back to their own communities to try to at least begin to explore what some of those challenges were." On the other hand, Varqa did not believe that merely conveying factual information would bring about needed social change. So, while the program includes factual

information, it also encourages dialogue and reflection on the deeper causes of social problems.

4.1.2.2. Manual Emphasis on Reflection and Dialogue

The YCMTW manual is designed to encourage thinking and dialogue that goes deeper than the surface of topics by including reflection thoughts and questions, 'theoretical' social topics, and quotes on the topics from different religions. The preface to the manual states that YCMTW's goals include helping young people to understand issues, understand that there are different views on the issues, and be able to "develop and express their own views on these issues" (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 5). The preface encourages youth to reflect on their views and the reasons behind those views. A strong emphasis is placed on the role of moral values in decision-making and the societal factors that influence one's personal values. The preface also promotes the idea that people are essentially spiritual beings, and that spiritual growth can result in a changed person and eventually in a changed world (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 5-8).

The inclusion of moral/spiritual content reflects the Bahá'í belief in the importance of morality and spirituality for development. The importance of reflection fits in well with Freire's pedagogy, which also emphasized reflection. The direct inclusion of spiritual material, however, is probably not consistent with Freire's pedagogy, since he may have feared it would be forced on youth.

Reflection Thoughts and Questions in the Manual

Most chapters include questions or statements for reflection. These are intended to start group dialogue about a social problem and how it is linked to the wider society. For example, in the section on drug and alcohol abuse, youth are asked to reflect on the quote "without alcohol our society would go to pieces" (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 59). This question is especially complicated in Guyana because it is a rum exporter and alcohol consumption is a major social activity for some groups. In the chapter on gender equity, young women and men are asked to discuss the improvements they would like to see in the lives of men and women (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 77). These types of discussions may help youth to see that problems like alcohol abuse and gender inequality are not just isolated personal problems, but are influenced greatly by the wider society. However, the number and quality of reflections varies from chapter to chapter. Some reflections ask participants to think more broadly or deeply about an issue in society, while other reflection questions simply ask students to recall what they learned in the chapter. It should also be remembered that youth facilitators do not have to stick directly to the manual. They may skip questions they don't find useful, use questions of their own, or ignore the reflection questions all together.

Inclusion of Theoretical Topics

The YCMTW manual included a number of more 'theoretical' topics in addition to very concrete problems like drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. The more theoretical topics include prejudice and discrimination, gender equity, human rights, and global prosperity. These topics look more closely at the larger societal issues that may be less obvious, or

seem less relevant to youth, but have an important influence on the concrete, day to day problems they face. Ideally, an introduction to these concepts would help participants think more critically about society (local to global) and how it might be changed to solve social problems.

The theoretical topic chapters give a basic overview of these topics, some of which may be new to many participants. Currently, however, most of these topics are not clearly linked to the more concrete problems that most youth can easily relate to, and are conveyed in language and examples that youth may find difficult to understand. For example, terms like globalization, labor and capital, and debt relief are all used without definition in the chapter on global prosperity (Varqa Foundation, 2001). Based on her experience as a secondary school teacher in Guyana, I do not believe that most participants will have a clear understanding of what these terms mean. Research in cognitive development also indicates that many adolescents are still developing the ability to use abstract reasoning (Hughes, 2001). It is therefore reasonable to assume that some youth, especially younger youth (ages 12-15) may have trouble thinking about the connections between abstract concepts and concrete social problems.

Moral/Spiritual Content in the Manual

As mentioned earlier, YCMTW has a strong emphasis on the spiritual and moral dimensions of social problems. Each chapter includes a list of quotations from various world religions that relate to the chapter's topic. For example, the chapter on prejudice and discrimination includes the quote, "Hold fast, all together unto God's rope, and be not divided amongst yourselves" (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 82) from the Qur'an, and the

chapter on literacy includes the quote, "Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit there from" (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 69) from the Bahá'í writings. These quotes are intended to offer the perspective that social problems fundamentally as spiritual problems that have spiritual solutions. For example, the writings on gender equality state that the unequal treatment of women and men is not only harmful to society; it is morally wrong and must be rectified through spiritual as well as social change. Changes in laws and practices (especially education) must be changed to bring about gender equality, and the impetus for these changes comes from the belief that "divine justice demands that the rights of both the sexes should be equally respected since neither is superior to the other in the eyes of heaven" (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 78).

Religion is practiced widely in Guyana, and despite its religious diversity religious fanaticism and hatred are not major problems in Guyana. For these reasons, the designers of YCMTW believed that quotations from a variety of religions would be acceptable and relevant to most YCMTW participants. The quotes are consistently placed in each chapter and do include quotes from all of Guyana's major religions (Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and the Bahá'í Faith). The quotes are not evenly divided by religion, however. Of eighty-seven total quotes, fifty-five (about sixty-three percent) come from the Bahá'í writings. One former YCMTW staff member and manual co-writer reported that they tried to make the quotes as balanced as possible and used resources such as the internet to find quotes. She did not explain why the imbalance remained, but it may be due to her lack of familiarity with the writings of other religions (she is a Bahá'í) and the ease of finding Bahá'í quotations on the different topics.

4.1.3. Was YCMTW designed to help youth engage in Praxis?

Praxis is defined as a process of action and reflection that can lead to social change. It implies that social change requires action, since obviously little change will occur if no action takes place. It also implies that actions may not have the desired effects if they are not based on some thinking about the nature of the problem and the appropriateness of solutions. Educational research and experience has found that praxis can be stimulated and supported by a number of program elements, including action opportunities, skills training, and the creation of a supportive environment. This section of the paper looks at the design of YCMTW in terms of its ability to help youth engage in praxis. It describes YCMTW's opportunities for action and reflection, action skills development, creation of a supportive peer environment and provision of useful information.

4.1.3.1. Action/Reflection Opportunities

The YCMTW program requires youth action by design. The model of training trainers means that in order to complete the program, youth facilitators must conduct the YCMTW program in their communities for about one year. This in itself is a tremendous action on the part of the facilitators, but it can also lead to further group action. Youth groups that take part in YCMTW are encouraged to take action in their communities. The major form of action encouraged by YCMTW is sharing messages about the issues covered in the YCMTW manual with their communities through the arts. The exact messages and artistic media are determined by the youth groups, and are not dictated by

YCMTW. However, artistic activities are suggested in each chapter and groups are required to create a range of artistic creations, but groups are not required to share these with their communities. Another form of action encouraged by the program is community service, which again is determined by the group. Finally, youth are encouraged to take action in their own personal lives based on what they've learned and what they believe about the different issues.

In some manual chapters, youth are encouraged to take action related to the topic they've been learning about and reflecting on. For example, the chapter on environmental protection (Varqa Foundation, 2001) encourages youth to assess environmental practices (e.g. waste management and canal maintenance) in their neighborhood and create plans to educate their neighbors about improved practices. The manual does not specifically suggest reflecting on actions. Some obvious opportunities for reflection do exist at follow-up trainings where facilitators can discuss what has and has not worked in their groups, during visits to the groups by YCMTW youth volunteers, and in the YCMTW newsletter to which groups can contribute. The frequency and quality of these reflection opportunities depends on YCMTW's funding and human resource levels, which have varied from year to year.

The Freirean concept of action stresses the importance of engaging in long-term learning, action and reflection in a community. In the Freirean method, people in a community identify important problems or opportunities in their communities and then create strategies to address these problems an opportunities. These strategies may involve action over a multiple years.

YCMTW does not focus on preparing youth to investigate and act upon issues in their community in a long-term manner. While it is hoped that youth will remain involved in YCMTW after the first year, there is no "year two" plan for groups after they've completed the materials in the manual. Facilitators may begin working with a new batch of youth, and former participants can become trained as facilitators to do the same thing. Youth groups can also continue on and choose their own activities, but there is no outline for groups to follow.

4.1.3.2. Development of Action Skills

The section focuses on the opportunity for youth to develop skills in two areas, group organization and artistic communication. While these are not the only skills youth can develop in YCMTW, they receive the greatest emphasis in the program's design.

Since YCMTW groups are run entirely by youth, young people can gain experience working together in a group, making decisions, and carrying out plans. Facilitators practice leadership skills, including getting a group organized, presenting factual information, and facilitating dialogue and group decision-making. Other youth involved in the program can gain skills as organizers, listeners, and participants in dialogue and group decision-making. The group as a whole can experience the difficulties and rewards of organizing and sustaining a group to achieve their goals. Since the program lasts about a year, the youth have a chance to try different approaches and learn from their successes and mistakes. The length of the program also means that

youth experience the ongoing effort and commitment needed to make a long-term project a success.

One of the goals of YCMTW is to empower youth to share their knowledge and ideas with others through the arts. The Varqa foundation recognizes that communication through the arts gives youth a valuable way to express themselves, and can serve as a powerful form of education for the wider community (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 12). In order to achieve this, the program's design includes a heavy emphasis on artistic skill development and practice communicating messages through the arts. In addition to these goals research also indicates that arts training and practice can promote group learning, build confidence, and can build group cohesion (Cornwall, 1997; Hart, 1997; van der Wijk, 1997).

While Guyana has a long tradition of calypso singing, poetry, drama, painting and other arts, arts education has very low priority in the nation's schools and many youth get very little chance to develop creativity and performance skills in or out of school. YCMTW begins arts training during facilitator training. At this time volunteer youth teach facilitators the basics about making banners, foam puppets, pamphlets, and board games. They also lead facilitators in basic song and poetry writing, drama, dance and singing. The quality of this training depends on the skill of the volunteer trainers and the amount of time available for learning and practicing.

Creation of artistic works is a requirement for facilitator graduation, so facilitators must work with their groups to create the different types of artistic communication. Facilitators are expected to draw upon the skills they learned at the training and to tap into the existing talents of their groups. While performance and display of these works

is not required outside of the youth group, it is encouraged. It is hoped that in this way the youth would actively share their knowledge and views with the community, which could lead to wider social change. Public displays and performances of the arts are fairly rare in many Guyanese communities, and in my experience they can easily draw an audience.

The arts are also used within the youth groups to aid in dialogue and learning. Role playing, either by traditional acting or using puppets, song writing, poetry and drawing are suggested in some of the chapters as a way to explore different viewpoints and experiences. Research indicates that using the arts within a group can have very positive benefits including the ability to build trust and share personal experience (van der Wijk, 1997), and the building of group cooperation and camaraderie (Hart, 1997). Drama and other art forms that actively involve the audience (i.e. participatory drama) can also be very effective in engaging community members in a discussion about social issues. Some sources suggest that participatory drama can be more effective than traditional drama that simply delivers a message (Harding, 1997; Ogolla, 1997). So far, participatory drama techniques have not been emphasized in YCMTW, but could be introduced in the future.

The YCMTW graduation includes a festival of the arts, in which groups display and perform their creations in front of their peers from around the country. The creations are judged and trophies are awarded to the first place winners, some of which are selected to perform during the graduation ceremony in front of national dignitaries. Government ministers, the First Lady and UN officials have attended in the past.

4.1.3.3. Creation of a Supportive Peer Environment

Research in health education has shown that individual behavioral change is not simply a rational individual choice; it is greatly influenced by the norms and behaviors of the social groups individuals belong to (Campbell, 2002). By creating YCTMW as a peer education program, Varqa hoped to create space for an informed dialogue among young people in which they would feel free to share their views, decide on actions to pursue, and provide support for one another. Peer education is also supposed to create a learning environment where all members have equal standing, as opposed to traditional education where the teacher has total authority and students participate along expected social lines (Campbell, 2002). YCMTW explicitly promotes the equality of all human beings, and gender, racial and religious equality, and it hopes that youth will strive to achieve these ideals in their own groups. YCMTW's concept of the role of the facilitator fits well with the idea of group equality. Facilitators are supposed to act as co-learners, who share their knowledge and guide the group, but are also ready to learn from others and allow the group as a whole to make many decisions.

Ideally the supportive peer environment could spread beyond the individual group to include other YCMTW groups around the country. In this way, members in a single group could feel less isolated in their activities because they are supported by their peers around the country. The YCMTW program itself is designed to support groups by providing materials, visits, follow-up trainings and newsletters that can help connect groups around the country. This reflects Chawla and Kjørholt's (1996) assertion that while young people are capable of high levels of participation, they do need support. The

same has also been found to be true of adults; volunteers without enough support can become overwhelmed and burned out (Magendzo, 1990).

4.1.3.4. Provision of Useful Information

Many of the actions youth could take though YCMTW require accurate and useful information. For example, since YCMTW is primarily an educational program, youth might undertake public education programs on issues like HIV/AIDS or protection of the environment. Without good information, these actions could be ineffective, or worse, they could spread misinformation with potentially devastating consequences. In recognition of youths' need for good information, One of YCMTW's major objectives is to "provide some relevant facts about some of the important issues facing human beings today" (Varqa Foundation, 2001: 5). Each chapter provides factual information about the topic. The quality of presentation and relevancy of this information varies from chapter to chapter, however. This is probably due to a number of factors, including the availability of relevant information (statistics and information on Guyana are hard to find), the skill of the author, and the nature of the topic. Different chapters of the manual were written by individuals from cooperating agencies, or by YCMTW staff using information provided by cooperating agencies and additional research.

The chapters about the most immediate and obvious problems facing Guyanese youth (especially reproductive health, drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence) present detailed information in relatively simple language. These chapters provide factual information about the different issues, present different points of view and give ideas about how youth can work for positive change. Youth learn critical information

like how HIV/AIDS is spread, what is considered domestic violence and why people stay in violent situations, and how different drugs damage the body. As mentioned above, the chapters on the more theoretical topics (especially global prosperity, gender equity, and prejudice and discrimination) are written with more complex language, and the main points are less clearly organized.

4.2. How was YCMTW implemented in terms of participation, conscientization and praxis, and what factors affected implementation?

4.2.1 Was there genuine youth participation?

The findings in this section describe the level of youth participation in YCMTW and the factors that affect participation. In general youth participated in all aspects of YCMTW and this participation was at a high level, meaning that youth had real responsibility and decision-making power. However, participation was influenced by a number of factors and was not even across different demographic groups.

4.2.1.1. Levels of Participation

Youth participate in YCMTW at many different levels, from youth group member to nation-wide program organization. Although the program is not completely youth directed, youth have been involved in decision-making since the program's creation and they provide nearly all program support. The program's design is built upon youths' leadership of groups in their own communities, and these groups are intended to be participatory. The quality of participation at the youth group level varies from group to group and is influenced by a number of factors. While the high level of participation

gives youth real control in YCMTW, it has also lead to burnout. This burnout, combined with a lack of clarity in how to proceed after the first year has lead in a number of cases to a slow-down or ceasing of youth group activity after graduation.

Participation of youth in support positions

The YCMTW program has been run as designed, with youth participation at all levels. There are a few paid positions as of 2001-2002, so most youth have worked as volunteers. Volunteers include former YCMTW facilitators and youth from the Bahá'í Community, including some international volunteers. In 2001-2002, the number of youth providing support for YCMTW was very low, due to a shortage of available volunteers and funding.

Youth Facilitators & Group Members

As mentioned above, hundreds of youth have been trained as youth facilitators. Although the program supplies a manual and sets certain graduation requirements, facilitators and their groups have a large amount of autonomy. Facilitators and their groups can determine who belongs, their group structure, how they operate, and what activities they engage in. Not surprisingly, groups vary in membership, organization, ability to cover course material and level of member participation. The following paragraphs describe three important aspects of participation in YCMTW as a facilitator or youth group member: 1) the process of group formation, 2) group organization and facilitator dominance, and 3) frustration and accomplishment.

After facilitator training, forming a YCMTW group is a new facilitator's first responsibility. Finding other youth who are willing to participate in the program can be one of the most challenging parts of YCMTW participation. Facilitators have complete freedom to choose who they will work with. Some facilitators used the YCMTW materials with existing religious youth groups, while others attracted members from existing religious and sporting groups, schools, friends, neighbors and family to new groups. Facilitators with strong school connections (mainly teachers) created YCMTW groups as school clubs, and some integrated the YCMTW program into the curriculum. The percent of youth who work with these different types of groups is not known. This research did not investigate the use of the program in school curricula and included only one interview with the facilitator of a school affiliated club. Thus this analysis will focus on out of school groups.

Facilitators differed in their ability to quickly recruit members and begin the program. Not surprisingly, facilitators with existing groups were able to begin functioning almost immediately, and were able to cover more topics before graduation. Those who used connections with existing groups to recruit members were also able to get moving fairly quickly. Facilitators who had to start groups from scratch had a more difficult time getting started and making it through the materials. One such facilitator, Michelle, expressed her frustration with creating a completely new group.

> *We were supposed to have a group for a year but I didn't have the members. I didn't have them for a couple of months, then they had to go to school and we didn't have much session then. Until we get serious was when they have to graduate and they have to do some things.*

Even the most well organized groups did not have enough time to complete all the topics in the manual, which suggests that perhaps the number of topics should be decreased or that an optional second year (or some other type of extension) should be added to the program.

The leadership style of the facilitator and the internal organization of youth groups varied greatly in YCMTW. Some groups shared decision-making power and responsibilities among the facilitator and other group members, while others were more facilitator-dominated. For instance, one small group of peers was led by the facilitator while other group members chose titles and duties for themselves such as "head designer" and "lyricist". Other larger groups were run more like traditional classrooms, where the facilitator assumed the teacher's role and was addressed as 'Miss' or 'Sir'. Surayyeh, a former volunteer who visited many groups, attributed differences in leadership style to the age difference between the facilitator and the other group members. She observed that a facilitator who is older than the other participants tends to

> *...run it sort of like a school, where he'd say something and have the group understand it his way or whatever. But, if the class and the facilitator were around the same age, it would be more of a discussion.*

Personality factors most likely play a role as well, with dominating personalities becoming dominating facilitators. In some cases the dominance of a facilitator may also reflect unwillingness by other group members to take on responsibilities. In one group, some very active members complained that they and the facilitator had shouldered much of the work in their group because others had been unwilling to help out. One of the members, Zena, expressed her frustration with the less-helpful members of her group.

> *When you're coming down to the end for graduation- boy the work was hard! ...coming down to graduation we had to go like every day. And then, we had to do*

banners, and then again not everybody you would get cooperation from, so it was like a workload on one person, which was kind of hard.

Group member participation in teaching and learning factual information also varied from group to group. Part of every facilitator's duty was the share the factual information in his or her manual with the other group members, who had less detailed manuals (printing costs prohibited printing detailed manuals for all participants). In all three 2001-2002 groups interviewed for this study, the facilitators did play a 'teacher' role in some situations, sharing the factual information from their manuals with the other youth and helping them to understand new concepts. However, they all reported changing their style from lecturer to facilitator when leading discussions about the topics. Even in the most classroom-like group, the facilitator reported making an effort to enter into dialogue with the other members of her group as a peer and to share her experiences frankly and openly with them.

Both the Bahá'í and Freirean concepts of education agree that a dominating facilitator is a hindrance to participatory learning, since the facilitator will likely prevent group members, especially the shyer ones, from expressing their ideas and opinions. While a dominating facilitator will not improve learning, he/she might have some related qualities and abilities that can be very positive for the group. Many youth in Guyana have experienced "chalk and talk" education based on the colonial British system of education. Most information is conveyed through lectures, and students are rarely asked to initiate activities in class. These youth may feel little self motivation to take an active role in the group. Facilitators who are more forceful in their leadership may be able to push these youth to work harder: to participate in activities, learn the factual information

more thoroughly and create artistic presentations of higher quality than thy ever thought possible. However, it is unclear if these youth will be inspired to push *themselves* to participate actively once the facilitator is no longer there. At this point, the relationship between dominating facilitators and participants' willingness to be active learners is speculative and should be investigated further in the future.

Older facilitators may be more likely to dominate their groups, but they also have some special abilities. Facilitators in their twenties have more life experience than their teenage counterparts, and thus are better able to provide younger youths with some perspective on life as an adult (e.g., having a job, being married, having children). In fact, Hughes cites the building of positive relationships between non-parents adults and youth as a major benefit of community youth programs (Hughes, 2001). Older facilitators also had the knowledge, connections and means to organize additional group activities like service projects, field trips to the zoo to learn about animals, and fun trips to lakes or creeks. Facilitators who were able to organize these activities and trips felt that it encouraged youth to join and stick with the group, but organizing trips or other activities was beyond the ability or comfort level of younger facilitators. In the groups interviewed, only the facilitators over 20 organized trips.

Frustration was another common theme facilitator interviews. While many participants were interested in being part of the YCMTW groups, facilitators felt like they often had to work very hard to get the participants' cooperation. Completing the YCMTW one-year program was not an easy task. The majority of facilitators reported having to work hard to maintain the interest of youth amidst the competing time demands of school, home and other activities. In at least four of the groups, facilitators and

members said that some participants did not come regularly so there was a different mix of kids each week. One former facilitator was very disappointed when the youth in her group began dropping out and eventually her group dissolved. Graduation time, which is the culmination of the program, is an especially hectic time for groups preparing to compete in the arts festival. Members and the facilitator of one group in particular complained about the amount of work carried by a few people while the other participants did not do their share.

Even when participants were eager to cooperate, facilitating the groups could be hard work. For some it was their first time teaching factual information and facilitating discussions. When asked what the hardest part of being a facilitator was, Kevin (a former facilitator in a rural village) replied that being the teacher was the most difficult because:

> *You have to read over something twice, triple, you know... tell them what you understand. And when you tell them this- they forget. You ask them what you just read and what you just explained to them- they can't remember. So that's why the children give us a headache- you must do it over and over. But after a time you get into it, you know how to teach them.*

Michelle (a facilitator in an urban area) had a similar response.

> *Trying to get them to understand you know? I mean like just trying for them to understand like what is this, and sometimes they'll have a spot that they don't understand and they don't want to try. Like that's the challenging part...what if you're... not making the point clear and they can't understand?*

Frustration is not unique to YCMTW. In his study of popular education programs in Chile, Magendzo found that educators "admitted to a high degree of physical burnout, which usually led to lower levels of efficiency", and that they "indicated their disappointment with the small number of people who were willing to commit themselves to community work" (1990: 58). Highly participatory programs like YCMTW require a

lot of time and energy, are likely to lead to some amount of frustration and burnout. However, encouraging facilitators to work in pairs and providing additional facilitator support and encouragement might help to alleviate burnout. Frustration with teaching and facilitating may be at least partially prevented if facilitators received more in-depth training in how to teach, facilitate, and generally lead in ways that are developmentally appropriate for the youth in their group.

While nearly all of the facilitators felt frustrated at times, they were also proud of their accomplishments and felt positively about the program. All of the facilitators had positive things to say about their experience with YCMTW. The majority specifically mentioned that they enjoyed the opportunity to work with you and to share the information in the program with them. Michelle was proud of her participation in YCMTW and satisfied with her experience.

> *You feel like you did something, you know? Maybe other people will think like, 'why are you doing something that's dumb or boring?', but then when you can sit down and realize that you meet other people, you meet a lot of youths, you did this study, you know what is what. It's kind of self-satisfaction I think. And there were always rewarding parts, everybody enjoyed it, plus they get a certificate that they can show their parents and everybody.*

4.2.1.2. Factors That Affected Participation

The Varqa Foundation values diversity and has tried to make YCMTW accessible to the broad spectrum of youth in Guyana by minimizing participation restrictions and advertising widely. YCMTW drew a diverse group of facilitators from many of Guyana's regions and various walks of life. Facilitators included teachers, students, employed and unemployed youth, and mothers. They came from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds, and from a range of economic circumstances. A 2002 Varqa

report estimates that since the program began in 1999, 591 youth facilitators have been trained and 110 youth groups (about 4000 youth) have gone through the YCMTW materials (Varqa Foundation, 2002 #86). The total estimate of 4000 youth appears high, but may be accurate if it includes large school-based groups. In 2002, over 300 youth were trained as facilitators, and as of December 2002, 51 groups had been formed (Varqa Foundation, 2003). It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions about the relative participation of different demographic groups since there are no recorded statistics on the demographics of facilitators beyond gender and region, and virtually no statistics on participants at the local level. However, certain trends in participation were identified by YCMTW participants and staff, and can be estimated from participation lists. The following section first presents demographic differences in participation, and the social factors that might explain these differences. Finally, the importance of parental support is highlighted.

Gender differences in Participation

One clear trend is that young women participated at higher rates than young men. Preliminary group membership information from 2002-2003 (Varqa Foundation, 2003) indicates that females outnumber males approximately two to one (133 to 67), and many facilitators commented on the difficulty of getting young men to join and stay in their groups.

Participants gave different explanations when asked why the participation of women was greater than the participation of men. While some youth said they did not know why there was a difference, two reasons were most commonly given. One

explanation was that a program like YCMTW appeals more to girls because it includes artistic activities and lots of discussion about issues. These activities are thought of as being more "female" activities, while males prefer sporting activities like cricket or football or hanging out with their friends.

> *I think girls are more willing to come out to things and like give their opinion. Unlike the boys- they prefer to go like play cricket or something with their friends. (Diane, former YCMTW facilitator)*

> *If you have games like cricket and basketball... the boys are going to be there, right? But if you only have a drama, then the girls are only going to want to do it. And the [only] guy who was there, he was into drama and singing and so on. (Jesette, former YCMTW facilitator)*

Adding a sports component to YCMTW could increase its appeal to boys. Of the three youth groups that were the focus of the study, only the semi-urban group had an organized and regular sports component. This group also had the highest percentage of male participation (over fifty percent), and its facilitators stated that sporting activities were clearly a draw for the young men. Other facilitators agreed that adding a sporting component would draw more boys, and one group even tried to get sporting equipment from the Ministry of Youth Culture and Sports but was not successful.

The second and possibly related reason given was that in many communities it is usually women who get involved in community or self-improvement activities.

> *Anywhere you go, any country, any village, you often see that the girls are more... want to study, you know, to develop theyself. The boys now, say they... don't want to study... and this is how each and every man think- myself and all. (Kevin, former YCMTW facilitator)*

> *Because anything or any function that you go to you'll always see the women out there- they're always there. 'Cause to me women are more strong-headed than men... they think when they put their mind to something- they're working towards it. You have some men who do work... to achieve things, yes, but to me like*

women- you always find them coming out and participating more in... the social aspect of the community. (Kim, YCMTW group member)

The observed predominance of women and girls in social and educational activities may be linked to a general trend of male underachievement that has been noted in Guyanese schools and in other parts of the Caribbean (Hunte, 2002; La Rose, 2002). The reasons for this underachievement are not well understood (La Rose, 2002), and it differs from the norm in many parts of the world where boys dominate in school and face fewer barriers to participation in programs outside of school (Hart, 1997).

The different levels of male and female participation are especially concerning since many of the most crucial topics have important gendered dimensions. Domestic violence and reproductive health (including HIV/AIDS) are two of the most pressing issues in Guyanese society, and are clearly linked to the roles of women and men in society. Youth in the program are very eager to learn more about these topics and to discuss how they affect their lives. However, if few young men are learning about these issues and taking part dialogue, unequal and unhealthy male/female relations are less likely to change.

Religious Differences in Participation

Although exact statistics are not available, Christians appear to be the majority of YCMTW facilitators. YCMTW does not keep statistics on the religion of participants, so I used participants' first and last names as indicators of religion. In Guyana, most Afro-Guyanese are Christian and have "European" or other "non-Indian" first and last names. Most Hindus and Muslims are of Indian ancestry and have "Indian" last names. Bahá'ís come from all ethnic backgrounds, but I am very familiar with the Bahá'í community in

Guyana and knows many of its members by name. Using first names as an indicator of religion, (Christian= first name not traditional Hindu or Muslim name and I do not known that they are a Bahá'í) Christians outnumber non-Christians about four to one (eighty percent to twenty percent) in the 2002-2003 program year facilitator training. Christians make up about fifty percent of the population nationally. Using last names as an indicator (Christian= last name not traditional Hindu or Muslim name and I do not know that they are a Bahá'í) Christians outnumber non-Christians seventy-seven percent to twenty-three percent in the 2002 facilitator training. Obviously these estimates are not exact and may not be entirely accurate. They do, however, strongly suggest that Christians take part in YCMTW more often than their Hindu and Muslim counterparts

The reasons for the prevalence of Christian participation are not known, and should be investigated further. The high level of Christian participation may have to do with the frequent use of YCMTW by existing church youth groups and the creation of new YCMTW groups using existing church group networks. However, Guyana also has active Hindu and Muslim youth groups, but they rarely participate in YCMTW as a group. Theories about why this is the case are only speculative without information from these groups. One possible reason is that the Christian groups may be more comfortable with the open information and discussions on topics like sexual health included in the program than Muslim or Hindu groups are. It may also be the case that similar programs already exist for other religious youth groups. Another possible cause may be linked to gender and participation. The program might appeal to young Hindu and Muslim women, but their access to the program might be restricted by more traditional "Indian" family norms that limit their activities outside the home (Seenarine, 1996). Finally, the

interfaith moral aspects of the program might be more acceptable to Christian groups than Hindu or Muslim groups.

Importance of Parental Support

Many of the youth in YCMTW live at home with their parent(s), and facilitators and participants in six of the eight groups reported that parental support was an important influence on youth participation. In the best cases, youth described their parent's enthusiasm for the program and interest in the subject matter. A few parents even required their children to attend the program. In other cases, parents did not think their child's participation in the program was very important, and they sometimes kept them home to study or work in the home or business. In the following quotes, two group members, Aleç and Lisa, contrast the attitudes of different parents in their group. They start by describing the mother of one group member who required her daughter (and her siblings) to work in the family business during group meeting times.

> *Lisa: [the mother would say] 'You have to do this, you know, you have to do that'. She wouldn't understand. She would think this is something where you just come and have fun. She won't think you're learning something because maybe she don't ask them. They just go and do whatever she asks them to, she don't ask them back anything about the group you know.*

Then they describe the support they receive from Aleç's father

> *Aleç: I live with my father... and he would like, he would keep telling me, "Boy, you ain't going to your group? What happened today? What you guys did?"*
>
> *Lisa: Yeh, and he'd call and ask how was our banner.*
>
> *Aleç: Right, he was so interested that he actually want to become a part- a member of the group!*

In one extreme case, a young woman was very distraught because her mother would soon leave the country to work and had told her that she could no longer attend YCMTW, but must stay home to care for her brothers and sisters instead. Lisa, Aleç and some other youth believed that some parents were not supportive because they did not understand what the program was about or appreciate its importance. Selona, a former facilitator and YCMTW staff member, agreed and added religious leaders with parents.

> *Well, the thing is that I want to see in the program is the parents' contribution, or the religious leaders, their contribution to the program. Because it's just that, they send the youth to the program, the youth come, but when they come and they do the training and they go back into their community, you know a lo of them cut out from it because Mommy have a problem with it or Daddy have a problem with it, religious leader has a problem with it, you know, and I don't think that the adults in the situation have really looked at the program and see that this could really help my child, help my child, or help young people. They haven't done that and I think I would like to see them do that- encourage the young people to participate.*

Currently YCMTW has no formal parental outreach mechanism. Parental support might be increased if parents had a clearer picture of what YCMTW is and what it can do for their child.

4.2.2. Did youth engage in conscientization?

YCMTW provides youth with opportunities to engage in learning that can raise youths' consciousness about the causes of the problems in their society and help them develop effective solutions. YCMTW was designed to help youth think more deeply about issues by encouraging group dialogue, including theoretical topics such as gender equity, and including some moral/spiritual perspectives on the different issues. The following sections describe how these three aspects of the program were implemented.

In general, dialogue was an important part of nearly all YCMTW groups, but fewer groups felt that the theoretical topics and moral/spiritual materials were useful, at least in their current form.

4.2.2.1. Dialogue in YCMTW Groups

Dialogue was an important part of the learning process even in the more facilitator-dominated groups interviewed for this study. The majority of facilitators and participants alike said that youth were encouraged to share their experiences and what they believed about the different topics. The youth discussed multiple aspects of the problems, such as how they've experienced it in their lives, ethical dimensions of a problem, and gendered perspectives on the problem. The youth were especially interested in talking about the topics that had immediate impacts on their lives or that they saw as problems prevalent in their society, such as reproductive health, domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse. According to facilitators in two groups, participants often did not want to stop talking about these topics and facilitators did not want to rush them, so extra time was given to these topics. Facilitators and participants in three groups said that some youth felt comfortable enough share personal, sometimes painful experiences with problems like domestic violence. Jesette, a former facilitator, shared the following experience.

> *You find that each one of these children, some way or the other- maybe directly or indirectly- they are attached to some part of domestic violence. There's been violence within their home sometime or the other. So they are affected by it ... one of the girls, her stepfather broke both of her mother's hands. So we talk about domestic violence, so she had a lot of input in this thing- that she knew what is it about and all. And you find that we did domestic violence so often, you find that that is one of the topics that we did- it lasted for like 4 or 5 sessions! ... they [the youth] had a lot to say and we didn't like try to cut them off. We didn't*

cut them off, we just like encouraged them, encouraged them to say what they had to say. And it was very interesting, the things that children would say to you.

Besides talking about issues, at least two facilitators also used role-playing to help youth see a problem from multiple points of view. Chucky, an assistant facilitator, used role-playing to help youth explore the question of how much freedom parents should give their children. At the beginning, most of the youth were of the opinion that kids could take care of themselves and should be given more freedom, but after the role-play they could understand the parents' point of view. Zena, a member of another youth group, describes the benefits of role playing situations of domestic violence and drug abuse,

The information is good, but when you actually put yourself and feel the work of it, it's better. It's like you're actually putting yourself in someone else's position for feel what happens.

According to Kohlberg's moral development theories, having opportunities to consider the needs and feelings of others can help youth reach higher levels of moral reasoning (Thomas, 1985).

At least two YCMTW groups reported that members also came to groups seeking information and ideas for how to deal with the problems they currently face. This can be an important aspect of the program because youth may not have access to accurate information or may be afraid to ask their parents for advice about some issues. The level of education in schools on topics such as reproductive health and drug and alcohol use is not known by the author, but it seems to be insufficient in at least some communities. Eleanor, an older facilitator, explains that girls in her village lack knowledge about reproductive health.

I know girls especially; there are a lot of things they don't know much about. It's just what they heard from friends or what. I don't know if their parents don't sit

and tell them or their mother doesn't say exactly. And they come and ask you. As a matter of fact I told you before I had to use personal experience to explain to some of them, right. (Laughs) Because they're of the knowledge that certain things are this way and that way, and if you do this and if you do that and stuff. So you have to sit down, and as much as I know I have to explain. And we had some other pamphlets, we had to go through them and that's how we went through that.

Kim, a youth group member says that the group gave youth a chance to look for solutions to the problems in their lives.

We used to share our problems right there. Like other people would come up with answers to problems and different information and... when you get these answers to these problems it is up to you, to make the change or not. Because it is a whole lot you used to get because the class is big. Everybody had different opinions.

Reflection questions were included in the manual to encourage dialogue. The researcher did not ask specifically about the use of reflection questions, but one facilitator, Eleanor, reported on her group's use of the questions and their ability to lead to deeper thought about the issues.

There's a part here in reflection, "Is it a good idea to have sex before marriage so you'll be able to be experienced with your marriage partner?" right? Things like this, we ask them what you think about this first, each group, they've got to tell you the advantage of it, and then each group you ask back the disadvantage. And then after anybody has any more to add and then you go, then we going to sit and discuss it.

For Eleanor at least, these questions made her think more deeply about the issues.

...and then you have to participate in these reflections where you have to sit and ponder on certain things you just took for granted sometimes. And you ask yourself the pros and cons of it. You have to try and make a choice which one you think is better.

She hoped that these reflection exercises would also help the youth in her group to take a fresh look at the topics, and not simply accept social problems just because they are everyday occurrences.

4.2.2.2. Consciousness Raising and Theoretical Topics

Dialogue was a major part of most YCMTW groups interviewed for this study. Youth approached topics from a number of angles, including their personal experiences, their beliefs, and what the manual said. However, it's not clear if the dialogue lead students to consider deeper causes of social problems- causes like inequality of the sexes and economic injustice. Unfortunately, the data gathered do not answer this question. Direct observation of the groups' meetings would give a clearer picture of the dialogue process. Existing interview data do provide some clues, however.

In Freire's pedagogy, group facilitators are generally academics or other trained activists from outside of communities and are aware of connections between wider societal forces and problems on the ground. They are expected to contribute this awareness as participants in the dialogue process and help others see the connections. In the Bahá'í concept of education, a study of the Bahá'í Sacred Writings would also bring connections to light. In YCMTW, facilitators are often not academically trained in these areas, and may or may not see the links between local problems and wider social forces. The manual also does not make explicit connections, so youth may miss the connections between the major issues they face and the deeper causes of those issues.

The inclusion of the more theoretical topics like the equality of women and men, racial equality and global prosperity is one possible way that youth in YCMTW could become more aware of those concepts, and could make connections between them and other problems in society. In practice however, the majority of groups interviewed found those topics to be of little interest and did not focus much energy on them (either not

covering them or covering them quickly. Three reasons were given for the lack of interest in theoretical topics. Their importance varies depending on the group and topic in question.

One major reason was that youth were most interested in those topics that they could directly relate to. Many youth had first-hand experience with drug or alcohol abuse, domestic violence and unplanned pregnancy or were aware of these problems in their community, so it was clear to them how it could affect their lives and was interesting to talk about. Facilitators recognized this, and spent the majority of their sessions dealing with the most popular topics, since they attracted the most youth and held their attention. All four of the groups that gave the reasons why certain topics were most popular cited the prevalence of the issues in society as a reason for their popularity. Group members and facilitators talked less about implementing theoretical topics, and those who did reported negative experiences with the topics. One group member explained that the topics which seemed less important (including some theoretical topics) were less popular.

> *Sex, suicide, domestic violence, and child abuse we had full. Like global prosperity, and protection of the environment and something about art- we didn't have much turn out that day. But like, the major topics that are prevalent in today's society we had turnout for.*

Some facilitators and participants also expressed their frustration in trying to understand the theoretical topics, particularly global prosperity. Facilitators in two groups reported that they or their groups had a hard time understanding global prosperity. Two facilitators, Anthony and Jesette said they had trouble understanding the gender equality topic. They said that the problem began at the facilitator training when they were first

exposed to the topic in the YCMTW context. If facilitators don't understand the topic they have a hard time coherently and enthusiastically presenting it in their home groups. Anthony and Jesette, former YCMTW co-facilitators had this experience with the gender equity topic.

> *Anthony: the way they did it at the training- the facilitator training, that was boring- I was bored...*
>
> *Jesette: She just stood up there and she talked and talked.*
>
> *Anthony: talked and talked. So when you come there you don't really have no edge [grasp] of this thing, what you could do, you know?*
>
> *Jesette: You don't really understand much of what you could tell the children.*

Many of the youth interviewed were confused by the chapter on global prosperity. Michelle's experience as a facilitator was typical, "Global prosperity- I don't think they ever understand what is global prosperity. I was trying to explain- but they don't want to do that one." Another frequently misunderstood topic was promotion of the arts. This topic focused on using the arts to bring about positive social change. A number of youth interviewed, however, thought that it had to do with improving one's drawing skills. The youth didn't see this topic as important, because in the words of one participant, "Anyone can draw." Improved training sessions and clearer vocabulary (use common terms or define new ones) could probably improve youths' understanding of the content and relevancy of these topics. In some cases, the theoretical concepts may have been difficult for youth, especially younger youth, to understand at their current level of cognitive development. Some of the concepts, such as international economic justice, are quite abstract and may not make sense to youth who are just beginning to think about ideas that go beyond their own concrete experience. This research did not investigate the cognitive

development of youth group members and the developmental appropriateness of the YCMTW materials, but these may be important areas for further study.

Finally, one of the subjects, racial prejudice and discrimination, may have been avoided or downplayed because it was considered too controversial. Only one facilitator interviewed expressed this opinion outright, but it may have been felt by other facilitators and should be considered in light of the racial tensions that continue to plague Guyana. Interestingly, few facilitators mentioned this topic at all- as either a topic that was popular, or that was unpopular. It seems like the relevancy of this topic should be apparent to most youth, who certainly hear about racial tensions and divisions in the media, even if race relations are good in their own villages. Lack of enthusiasm about this topic could be due to a denial of racial disunity in their village or neighborhood, confusing or un-engaging presentation of the topic in the manual, or fear of talking openly about this very touchy subject. Eleanor, a YCMTW facilitator, includes a combination of these factors when explaining why she was uncomfortable with the topic.

> *And this one with prejudice/discrimination, I had a problem with this because I'm an Indian and the majority of children, they are Negroes. And I've grown up in this community- actually I was, we were the only Indians in our church, and I don't have a problem with race. And if I had, if people knew I had a problem with it they wouldn't send their children here or to the school or whatever, I'm not a racial [racist] person. Everybody is equal to me... Well when we did it [the topic], we didn't say East Indian or Negro we said Coolie Man [Guyanese term for East Indians] and Black Man, because you have to go down to their level too and explain to them because- I mean you find that in [this Region] you don't have these type of problems as prevalent as you have in Georgetown- race and stuff.*

Even if racism is less of an issue in some of Guyana's regions, it is still a problem of critical national importance and should be included in YCMTW. However, some

adjustments in the manual and training may be necessary to make facilitators and groups feel comfortable delving into the topic.

4.2.2.3. Moral/Spiritual Content in the Manual

The Bahá'í concept of education stresses the importance of moral/spiritual education for all people because it can orient their motivations and actions towards "good" ends. Moral and spiritual education can make people aware of moral principles or truths that can guide personal decision-making in a world of conflicting messages and pressures. YCMTW gives youth an opportunity to draw upon the moral guidance of Guyana's religions while they study and discuss the various topics. Religious quotes related to each topic can be found at the end of each chapter, and can be used by groups as they see fit. Few groups, however, utilize these quotations. When asked about their use of the quotations, two facilitators seemed unaware that there were quotations! Lack of awareness could have resulted from a training process that did not demonstrate why and how the quotes could be used, or it may be a polite way for facilitators to say they didn't think that the quotations were important. Facilitators in three groups were aware of the quotations but used them very little or not at all. Their reasons included fear of parental disapproval and a belief that the writings of other religions did not apply to the youth in their group. Interestingly, none of the facilitators said that they opposed using the quotations simply because they were religious, which seems to support YCMTW's presumption that Guyanese youth would not on principle object to the inclusion of spiritual or religious material in the program.

Those who did use the quotations extensively included a group with Bahá'í facilitators and one Christian church group. These three facilitators said that they felt the moral aspect was an important component of the program. They said that most youth did not object to reading and thinking about the quotations and that the youth actually enjoyed it. One facilitator reported that the youth in her church group gained a new perspective on the problems facing youth when they "realized that the spiritual part went hand in hand with the social part". They felt that solving these problems would require youth to think about them at a spiritual as well as social level. While most of the youth did not have a problem with the quotations, some members of the church did object to the youth reading the writings of other religions, and one girl dropped out. The other group, which was lead by two Bahá'í youth, believed that the youth in their group felt comfortable with the quotations because they made it clear from the outset that they were not interested in converting anyone to the Bahá'í Faith or any other religion. They presented the quotes as teachings about virtues that the religions believe are important and that could help youth.

The experience of the facilitators seems to indicate that if YCMTW wants the quotations to be used by facilitators, training should be improved to help facilitators see the purpose of their inclusion; namely, that the quotations are included as sources of moral wisdom that add another perspective to the social problems, and that they are *not* to be used to convert anyone or make anyone uncomfortable. The shared message of the quotes may be emphasized to show that the religions agree on many of the issues. Also, greater balance in quotes might be helpful when possible, so that youth could find quotes from their religion on each subject.

4.2.3. Did youth engage in praxis?

The ultimate aim of YCMTW is to help youth transform Guyanese society through reflection and action. This section looks at the action and reflection undertaken by YCMTW groups, and at the program's ability to promote praxis through skills development and accurate, useful information. Finally, the barriers to action after a group's first year are discussed.

4.2.3.1. Facilitator/Group Action and Reflection

The most significant action taken in YCMTW is the organization and operation of dozens of youth groups around the country involving hundreds of youth. Youth facilitators with varying backgrounds and experience put tremendous effort into organizing their fellow youth into groups that learn about important issues, work together to develop their abilities to cooperate and communicate, and hopefully share their knowledge and abilities with their communities. Although not all groups are unqualified successes, the hard work and commitment of the volunteer youth is truly impressive. The facilitators had a genuine sense of service to their fellow youth and communities, and YCMTW gave them the opportunity to turn this into action.

Simply creating a space where young people can come together and learn about important issues is a great service that YCMTW facilitators provide. The opportunity to learn about these critical issues with other youth was a major attraction to YCMTW and is a need that is often not met elsewhere. The majority of facilitators and participants interviewed said that the opportunity to learn about the issues presented in YCMTW was

a major reason they joined the program. By learning and working together, youth from an area who might not have know each other well have the opportunity develop deeper friendships that could lead to future cooperation.

The majority of youth groups interviewed have taken further action in their communities. This action has mainly been education/awareness-raising through the arts. One hinterland school-based group hosted a village-wide Mashramani (Guyana's national celebration, which is similar to carnival in Trinidad and Tobago) celebration, including a costume parade where youth carried banners and signs with messages relating to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and other YCMTW themes. The celebration, which also had sports and food stalls, was well-attended and attracted a lot of attention. Another group performed educational puppet shows, skits and dances for local elementary schools and a well-attended village festival. Some groups engaged in other forms of community service, including school maintenance and literacy classes for neighborhood children. Other groups expressed an interest in doing community service, including environmental clean-ups and providing food for local people in poverty, but they had not managed to get to these activities before the end of the one year program.

None of the actions undertaken by YCMTW groups have involved partisan politics. This is in line with YCMTW's design, which is based largely on Bahá'í principles that stress the fundamental importance of unity and forbid partisan political involvement. The Freirean approach to social change, on the other hand, promotes political involvement and frames education in the context of the struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed. The political non-involvement of YCMTW and its emphasis on unity among youth is an important part of the program's success because

Guyana has a history of crippling political and racial divisions. Politics is largely race-based in Guyana (Economist.com, 2002), and in the researcher's opinion an association with any political party would alienate youth who identify with the opposing party and youth who wish to promote racial harmony. Many Guyanese want unity and see the critical importance of it for their development, and YCMTW has been recognized in the press for promoting unity among a very diverse body of youth (Prabhala, 2003). Only one interviewee mentioned the importance of political non-involvement. She stated that she was not a political person and would not use her group to get the youth to engage in political activities. Politics was not mentioned in any of the other interviews, and it did not seem to play a role in any of the groups.

The previous paragraphs on dialogue in YCMTW indicate that facilitators and participants engaged in a lot of personal reflection about the different issues. Their reflections may have been expressed in the artistic works they created and the other actions they took, but the connection between their reflection and action is not clear. The extent to which YCMTW groups reflected back on their actions after they were taken, or reflected on their functioning as a group is also not known. I simply did not collect the appropriate data to answer these questions. However, facilitators (in some years at least) had an opportunity to reflect on their groups at follow-up trainings where they were encouraged to share their experiences, both good and bad, with their fellow facilitators. Some groups were also able to reflect on their activities and group functioning during visits from YCMTW volunteers.

4.2.3.2. Development of Action Skills

In order to take effective action in their communities, youth need to develop a wide range of skills. YCMTW provides hands-on opportunities for youth to develop a number of these skills, especially group cooperation and decision-making and communication through the arts.

As previous paragraphs have demonstrated, YCMTW is a highly participatory program that demands hard work and commitment from youth and gives them first hand experience with the difficulties and rewards of running their own youth groups. The youth groups were run in a variety of ways and undertook different activities in different locations, but the youth reported similar experiences and lessons learned. These lessons are applicable to any voluntary group activity, and should prepare the youth for future endeavors. First, facilitators and participants found that being a part of an active youth group required serious commitment, at least on the part of some individuals. The youth sacrificed their time and in some cases financial resources to achieve their goals. For instance, two of the 2001-02 groups found that they needed to supplement the basic art supplies they were given in order to create their desired quantity and quality of artistic works. While some of the facilitators said they felt somewhat burned out at the end of the year, most still felt good about their experiences and about the program. Jesette, a former facilitator, summarized it well,

> *If you want to enjoy yourself you have to make sacrifices. If you really want to do this program... it calls for sacrifice. Anything you do in this life you have to sacrifice. Ok, you have to put aside one hour per one week just for this program. And you may not have time to do it, but you have to make that time- just an hour- to get that program done. 'Cause it's very important.*

Second, the facilitators learned that keeping momentum and excitement up in a group is a difficult, but necessary aspect of group functioning. Initial excitement is often high, but as time goes on, people become bored or simply stop coming if they aren't stimulated by new activities or goals to work towards. Drop-outs occurred in every group and are to be expected since the program is voluntary. To maintain interest and vitality, however, facilitators learned that they had to keep things fresh by adding new activities (especially fun activities) into their usual program. Co-facilitators Yve and Chucky said that keeping their members interested was a challenge. To address this they would take a walk to the sea wall when they sensed the youth were getting too bored, and they organized short trips for the group. The youths' excitement about the trips kept them interested in coming to the weekly YCMTW meetings. Other facilitators reported using similar tactics, though only the older facilitators organized group trips to destinations outside the local community.

As mentioned above, YCMTW provided basic arts training and supplies for facilitators and required groups to create a number of artistic works. The inclusion of the arts was a major attractor for many youth group participants. All of the individuals interviewed said that they enjoyed the artistic component and many were especially drawn to the puppets and the banners. The arts training was relatively short and basic, and two facilitators complained that training in some of the arts was not extensive enough.

In addition to learning artistic skills, working with the arts helped the youth in many groups to develop communication skills, build their self confidence and build greater group cohesion. These positive side-effects of the arts are not surprising, as they

have been found in other programs around the world (Cornwall, 1997; Hart, 1997; van der Wijk, 1997). In two groups, drama also played an important part in the dialogue about youth issues in some groups where it helped youth to express themselves and to understand others' perspectives.

For many youth in YCMTW, getting the courage to stand up in front of an audience and perform is difficult. While some Guyanese youth are involved in dance, drama or music, most have little or no experience on-stage. Thus, when these stage-shy youth are able to successfully perform a skit or dance in front of an audience they are surprised at their own success and their self-confidence grows. Ann, a youth group member, describes her experience singing a song for the arts festival:

> *...when I went up in town, when I had to sing the piece... of the song I never expected I could've hold a mike in my hand. I was like nervous! You know, like, I say when I hold the mike it was like I'd drop it out back (demonstrates dropping the mike from a shaky hand) because I never hold one of them before... No, I didn't drop it. You know, but I was trembling and I was moving out of time (laughs). But when I came off the stage they [her fellow group members] all told me that I sound real good- they never expected I could have do it.*

The artistic creation and practice process also helped to break the ice between youth group members and built bonds of trust and friendship between the youth. Ann, a youth group member, got to know youth from her village better through the arts. "

> *There was a lot of them live around my area and I never used to talk to them. But since I came down here, like doing these things like drama, singing songs and things I get to like everybody.*

The arts festival held at the end of the program year is a major motivator to some groups to work hard on their artistic works. It seems likely that if this competition did not exist, a number of groups would not get around to creating many of the types of artwork or performances. The timelines created by the three 2001-02 groups interviewed

showed a rush of activity at the end of the program to get their entries ready for the festival, sometimes meeting every day of the week once school is out. Winning an award at the festival is a real source of pride for groups, and groups work hard to be number one. Both Anthony and Eleanor described winning first prizes at the festival as one of the best parts of the program because they felt it reflected the hard work they'd put into their groups.

While this source of motivation is positive, it may overshadow the real purpose of the artistic creations, which is to give youths a way to express themselves and to share important messages with their communities. Perhaps more emphasis should be put on encouraging youth to share their works with their communities and to create works that will be most meaningful and effective in those communities. YCMTW may also want to experiment with some participatory forms of theater that might be more effective in creating community dialogue than traditional message-delivery theater.

4.2.3.3. Barriers to Action After Year 1

The process of learning, action and reflection is ideally an on-going process that groups or individuals continue with over time. The youth in YCMTW take part in this process at varying levels for roughly one year in their youth groups. Once that year is over, youth can continue with this process as individuals but often the groups formed to take part in YCMTW dissolve or have a hard time functioning after graduation is over. This loss of active youth groups represents a missed opportunity for the promotion of social change. All of the 2001-02 participants were interested in continuing with the program in some manner, but the majority was not sure how they would proceed. A

number of barriers make group continuation difficult. If these barriers can be overcome, then YCMTW could potentially have greater long-term benefits.

Currently YCMTW does not have any suggested curriculum or activities for second year YCMTW groups. Some of the youth group members can become trained as facilitators and may take a new group of youth through the one year program, but this still leaves the rest of the group wondering what to do. Groups may continue using the YCMTW materials and participating in YCMTW events, but for obvious reasons youth are often not interested going through the same materials and activities again. Ideally groups would move forward on there own, setting their own goals and creating their own activities. Unfortunately, at this point facilitators are often very tired, and may not be enthusiastic about continuing without a manual or other ready to use materials.

Two of the 2001-02 groups interviewed planned to finish the topics they had not covered and then to do more community service and outreach. These groups had not begun meeting again at the time of their interviews, so I do not know how they have actually proceeded. The third 2001-2002 group completed all the topics, and their path forward was less clear. All participants in that group expressed an interest in continuing either as participants or facilitators, and the current facilitator (though tired) was willing to continue with the program for another year. She hoped that some other youth would be trained as facilitators and would take over that role. The members of this group wished continue learning about youth issues and wanted to bring in new members, but they did not wish to simply repeat what they had already learned. The dilemma of how to proceed was not solved by the time of the group's last interview (in early September 2002).

A number of possibilities exist for a continuation program for YCMTW. Currently the YCMTW program may not be able to afford extensions to the program in terms of finances and human resources, but it might be a worthwhile addition in the future. One potential plan suggested by past two YCMTW facilitators, is that youth who have finished the one year program in a village could continue to meet as an educational performing arts group. They would perhaps not meet as regularly as the first year groups, but would continue to create and perform artistic works in the community. These groups could also perform community service. This plan could be especially beneficial to groups who did not have many opportunities to reach out to their communities during the one-year program. Groups may also want to develop the skills to investigate and act on issues in their communities, drawing upon the skills and knowledge they developed in their first year in YCMTW. This plan of action would quite closely resemble Freire's vision of education for social change.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Summary of Findings and Possible Implications

The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate YCMTW's potential to bring about social change in terms of its design and implementation. YCMTW provides an interesting case study of an educational program that hopes to promote social change in Guyana, an ethnically diverse developing country. This study is organized around a theoretical framework that assumes that education programs that encourage participation, consciousness-raising, and action and reflection can bring about social change. Qualitative data was gathered mainly through interviews with program staff, volunteers, and participants, and was used to begin investigating how YCMTW has been implemented in terms of participation, consciousness raising, and action and reflection. This research pays particular attention to the factors that influenced the implementation of the program. The following paragraphs summarize the findings of this research and suggest some possible implications of these findings.

YCMTW has taken steps towards promoting social change through education, as it is genuinely participatory, engages youth in dialogue, and leads to action and reflection. YCMTW can continue to improve through continued evaluation and experimentation with new materials, techniques and approaches to learning. The lessons learned from the YCMTW experience are in one sense specific to Guyana, but also demonstrate in a more general way that factors on the ground interact with a program's design to influence its implementation and outcomes.

The YCMTW program is a truly participatory youth education program, meaning that youth are actively involved in the program and have real decision-making power. Youth participate at many levels in the program, and youth groups function as autonomous youth-run organizations. The program's most visible success is its ability to bring enthusiastic and dedicated youth together to learn about and work on issues they care about. The program has been especially attractive to young women and to Christians and Bahá'ís, but is apparently less appealing to young men, Hindus and Moslems. YCMTW could benefit from having greater male, Hindu and Moslem participation, especially since a number of the youth issues covered in the program have significant gender and religious dimensions. While this research provides some potential reasons for the gender imbalance, YCMTW may want to investigate ways to make the program more attractive to members of under-represented groups.

The core activity of YCMTW is education about youth issues, but this is not merely didactic teaching. Dialogue about the issues, often drawing on the real-life experience of the youth, is an important part of the youth groups. This dialogue includes not only concrete experiences, but also emphasizes the moral and societal implications of choices and behaviors. The dialogue and cooperation on artistic projects have also helped to build bonds of friendship between youth in a community. This friendship can help youth to deal with the stresses of adolescence and establish a positive identity, and may lead to cooperation in future efforts for social change.

While the dialogue in YCMTW groups can be very positive, the majority of the youth interviewed are not talking about the connections between individual experiences and deeper societal problems such as gender inequality and racism. Although these

deeper problems are presented in the program manual, a number of youth find these materials hard to understand and uninteresting. This may be addressed by modifying the materials to make them more relevant to youth and by highlighting the importance of investigating these connections in the training sessions. In some cases it may not be reasonable to expect youth, especially younger youth, to make these connections if they have only begun to develop their abstract thinking capabilities. Facilitators, many of whom have never worked with youth or taught before, could benefit from training about the developmental stages of adolescence and how to deal with the differing cognitive, social and emotional needs of younger and older youth. Since YCMTW covers such a large age range (12-25), it may useful to give facilitators specific suggestions about how to use the materials differently with youth in early adolescence (roughly the 12-14 year olds), late adolescence (roughly the 15-20 year olds), and young adulthood (roughly the 21-25 year olds).

In addition to organizing youth groups in their home communities, the majority of groups interviewed took other forms of action in their communities. Public education and awareness-raising through the arts was the most common form of action. Youth groups shared their artistic presentations in schools and at a variety of community events, and some groups undertook other forms of community service. None of the YCMTW groups engaged in political action. Non-involvement in politics is important for the cohesiveness and inclusivity of YCMTW and consistent with the Varqa Foundation's goal to promote unity. Facilitators and at least some group members committed tremendous time and energy to YCMTW during the program year and developed their knowledge, skills and group cohesiveness. Unfortunately, the momentum may be lost

after graduation since the program is designed for one year, leaving the youth without a clear way forward for their groups. The majority of 2001-02 facilitators and participants interviewed were interested in continuing with their groups, but they had not reconvened by the end of the research process and their actions in 2002-03 are not known. YCMTW may be able to assist groups by developing optional 'year 2' manuals that provide suggestions and resources that can help groups remain active and become self-sustaining. Ideally, these YCMTW groups would develop into centers of continual learning and could become real agents of change in their communities.

5.2. Future Research

This research examined the design and implementation of YCMTW, but much remains to be learned about this program. Perhaps the most interesting question is how much social change will actually occur as the result of YCMTW. At this point YCMTW is a relatively young program (less than 5 years old) so it is too early to know what the longer-term impacts will be. Also, this study was not designed to look comprehensively at the short-term impacts in terms of attitude and behavior changes on the part of participants. Future research could investigate short-term changes, using methods such as surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews. Longer-term change could be assessed by following the lives of facilitators and other participants through periodic interviews and/or surveys that gather information on their attitudes and actions over time, and how those attitudes and actions are related to their participation in YCMTW. It would be very interesting to see if YCMTW participation influences involvement in future community activities such as service, education or other work for social change. It

would be especially interesting to see if youth who took part in the program are able to avoid the social problems that concerned them most in YCMTW. Will the youth be able to avoid infection with HIV/AIDS, and create relationships free from domestic violence?

YCMTW is a continually evolving program, and will thus present new opportunities for research in the future. Currently the program is undergoing a major transformation to increase its emphasis on HIV/AIDS at the request of UNICEF, which has also increased funding for YCMTW. While the other topics will remain, the emphasis on HIV/AIDS recognizes the growing threat of the epidemic in Guyana, which has the second highest infection rate in the western hemisphere. Since the start of the 2002-2003 program year, YCMTW has held major conferences on HIV/AIDS, and has begun adding related materials to the program. The additional funding has increased the program's paid workforce, and two volunteer youth from North America are working with the program for one year. The additional man-power, financial resources and excitement around HIV/AIDS prevention have added additional momentum to YCMTW. These changes in the program might lead to significantly different experiences and outcomes among participants, and may be another interesting topic of study.

Finally, this research raises many questions that could be answered by future research. For instance, the research found that women and Christians seemed to be over-represented in the program, but it was beyond the scope of this study to look deeply at why this was the case. Further research into this question could be valuable if it brings to light some of the factors that influence participation among different demographic groups. While these factors might be specific to Guyana, awareness of the possibility of these factors could be useful in similar societies. This research was also not able to

directly observe the functioning of youth groups and the nature of their group interactions. Program volunteer observations suggest that the level of participation in groups was related to the age gap between facilitators and participants. Further research on this possible relationship could result in improved training for facilitators that encourages greater participation of all youth in groups, regardless of the age gap.

5.3. Research Limitations

It is important to note that this research was exploratory and small scale, and thus is limited in its generalizability. This research is narrow in scope. The research and findings refer only to one program, YCMTW, in one country, Guyana, and cannot be generalized to other programs or to the same program in other countries. The findings of this study are not intended to provide a definitive and representative account of YCMTW. Instead, they are intended to identify some potentially important trends and issues for further study.

The data used in this study were gathered from a limited number of program staff and participants, and do not represent the entire program. In particular, because I was interested in learning about the experiences of youth throughout the entire length of the one-year program, I only interviewed youth whose groups had successfully completed the program. This sampling bias has probably resulted in findings which are more positive than average, since youth who completed the program probably had a more positive experience than those who dropped out or whose groups dissolved. Sampling bias also occurred because time and financial considerations prevented me from interviewing youth from the interior of Guyana. Interior communities vary in significant ways from

communities on the coast, including greater isolation and more influence from Amerindian cultures. Finally only one of the facilitators interviewed worked with a school-affiliated group. There was no specific intention to avoid school-based groups. They were not well-represented at the graduation when 2001-02 groups were selected, and none of the former facilitators had worked with a school-affiliated group. It is not clear how school-based groups would differ from independent youth groups, but there may be differences in the relationships between facilitators and participants if the facilitators are also teachers in the school. School-affiliated groups may also receive better support than independent groups. Interviews were used to gather much of the data in this thesis. Although these data provide rich accounts of participants' experiences, they can be influenced by the interview process and are subject the interpretation of the researcher. For instance, interviewee answers may have been influenced by a desire to give answers that reflect well on their group or themselves. Interviewees may also have misunderstood some of my questions, and I may have understood some of their answers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide

In-Depth Interview of a Facilitator

Date: _____
Time: _____
Interviewer: _____
Location: _____

I. How did you get involved?

1. How did you find out about youth can move the world?
2. Why did you join YCMTW?

II. Likes and dislikes about the program?

1. What was the most important part of the program for you?
2. What was the best part of being a facilitator?
3. What was the hardest part of being a facilitator?
4. What did you think about the factual information- did it answer your questions? Would you like to see anything in added or left out?
5. What about the social aspect of the program?
6. What did you think about the skills you learned in the program- were they useful, fun?
7. What did you think about having writings from the different religions in the program? Was it important? Did you have a problem with it? Did others have a problem with it?
8. What would you like to see changed in the program?

III. Knowledge, beliefs and attitudes

1. What kinds of abilities and/or knowledge do you need in your life in order to make good choices?
    - Does right and wrong matter?
    - Does correct information matter?
    - Does the ability to reason matter?
    - How do you think you would have answered this question a year ago? What has changed or stayed the same?
2. Has your knowledge about the different youth issues changed over the last year? How? What lead to this change? Did the program play a role?
3. Have your beliefs about what kind of behaviors are right and wrong changed over the last year? What led to this change? Did the program play a role?

IV. Future

1. What do you see your group doing in the future?
2. What do you see as your role in Guyana's/your community's future/development?
    - Thinking back to last summer, what do you think your answer would be?
    - Why do you think your answers changed or stayed the same?

Interview Guide

YCMTW Focus Group Interview

Date: _____
Time: _____
Interviewer: _____
Location: _____

1. How did your group form, or decide to take part in YCMTW?
2. What was a typical session (or some other logical time period) in your group like? How did your group run? How did you go through the materials in the manual?
3. How did you make decisions about what you would do as a group?
4. Which topics were most popular?
5. Have you done any activities in your community? Describe them.
6. How did your group change over the year (can ask how it changed after particular events)?
7. What are you most proud of? Why?
8. What would you improve if you were to do it again?
9. Where will your group go from here?
10. What did you like best about the programme?
11. What would you like to see changed in the programme?
12. What advice would you give a group who is just starting out?
13. Any other questions the youth would like to discuss as a group.

Interview Guide

In-Depth Interview of an Individual Group Member

Date: _____
Time: _____
Interviewer: _____
Location: _____

I. How did you get involved?

1. How did you find out about YCMTW?
2. Why did you join YCMTW?

II. Likes and dislikes about the program?

1. What was the most important part of the program for you?
2. How did your group run? How did you go through the materials in the manual?
3. Which topics were most popular?
4. What did you think about the factual information- did it answer your questions? Would you like to see anything added in or left out?
5. What about the social aspect of the program?
6. What did you think about the skills you learned in the program- were they useful, fun?
7. What did you think about having writings from the different religions in the program? Was it important? Did you have a problem with it? Did others have a problem with it?
8. What would you like to see changed in the program?

III. Knowledge, beliefs and attitudes

1. What kinds of abilities and/or knowledge do you need in your life in order to make good choices?
    - Does right and wrong matter?
    - Does correct information matter?
    - Does the ability to reason matter?
    - How do you think you would have answered this question a year ago? What has changed or stayed the same?
2. Has your knowledge about the different youth issues changed over the last year? How? What lead to this change? Did the program play a role?
3. Have your beliefs about what kind of behaviors are right and wrong changed over the last year? What led to this change? Did the program play a role?

IV. Future

3. What do you see your group doing in the future?
4. What do you see as your role in Guyana's/your community's future/development?
    - Thinking back to last summer, what do you think your answer would be?
    - Why do you think your answers changed or stayed the same?

Interview Guide

In-Depth Interview of a Past Graduate

Date: _____
Time: _____
Interviewer: _____
Location: _____

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience in YCMTW? Why did you join the programme?
2. What was your group like? How many members? How did it form?
3. How did your group run? How did you go through the materials in the manual? Which topics were most popular?
4. Looking back on your time in YCMTW, what was the most important/meaningful part of the programme to you? What sticks with you?
5. Have you done any activities with your YCMTW group since graduation?
6. What kinds of abilities and/or knowledge do you need in your life in order to make good choices?
    - Does right and wrong matter?
    - Does correct information matter?
    - Does the ability to reason matter?
    - What things have influenced your answer to? In what ways?
7. What do you see as your role in Guyana's/your community's future/development? How did you see that role before you joined YCMTW?
8. Do you think your participation in YCMTW will affect your life in the future?

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORMS

25 July 2002

Dear Potential Research Participant,

You are being asked to participate in a study called Values in Youth Development Education: A Case Study in Guyana. Ms. Karen Brook is conducting this study in cooperation with Youth Can Move the World. The study is intended to help improve the Youth Can Move the World Programme, and to fulfill a university graduation requirement for Ms. Brook at Michigan State University in the United States.

In this part of the study, individuals and groups who have worked with or graduated from the Youth Can Move the World programme will be interviewed about the programme. These interviews will take about one to two hours and may be taped on a cassette. Tapes and transcripts will not contain the name of the person being interviewed, and will be kept separately from any identifying information. Tapes and transcripts will be stored in locked boxes, and tapes will be destroyed after the completion of the research process. Research participants may leave the study at any time, but the cassettes and transcripts of their interviews will remain with Ms. Brook and may still be used in the study.

The risks involved with participating in this research may include personal embarrassment if your name and things you said in your interviews are made public. This could happen if research documents are stolen, if the interview is overheard, or if someone in a group interview tells others about what was said in the interview. You may also receive unwanted attention if you are seen talking with an American researcher. Being in this study might require short distance travel, which also has risks. There are no financial benefits from participating in this study, but snacks will be provided at all interviews, participants will be paid back for any travel expenses, and participants will have access to the final findings of this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to answer certain questions or refuse to participate in certain parts of the study. If you choose to participate, you may leave the study at any time without penalty. Any data you provide, however, will remain with the investigator (Karen Brook), and may be used even if you withdraw from the study. If you choose to participate, your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Any data gathered from you will be treated with the strictest confidence, your name will not be used, and you will not be identifiable in any report of research findings.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the investigator, Karen Brook, by phone: 268-2050, e-mail: brookkar@msu.edu, or regular mail: 14 Hague Front, West Coast Demerara, Guyana. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Ashir Kumar, M.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Brook

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Name *Date*

25 July 2002

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child is being asked to participate in a study called Values in Youth Development Education: A Case Study in Guyana. Ms. Karen Brook is conducting this study in cooperation with Youth Can Move the World. The study is intended to help improve the Youth Can Move the World Programme, and to fulfill a university graduation requirement for Ms. Brook at Michigan State University in the United States.

In this part of the study, individuals and groups who have worked with or graduated from the Youth Can Move the World programme will be interviewed about the programme. These interviews will take about one to two hours and may be taped on a cassette. Tapes and transcripts will not contain the name of the person being interviewed, and will be kept separately from any identifying information. Tapes and transcripts will be stored in locked boxes, and tapes will be destroyed after the completion of the research process. Research participants may leave the study at any time, but the cassettes and transcripts of their interviews will remain with Ms. Brook and may still be used in the study.

The risks involved with participating in this research may include personal embarrassment to your child if his or her name and things your child said in interviews are made public. This could happen if research documents are stolen, if the interview is overheard, or if someone in a group interview tells others about what was said in the interview. Your child may also receive unwanted attention if he or she is seen talking with an American researcher. Being in this study might require short distance travel, which also has risks. There are no financial benefits from participating in this study, but snacks will be provided at all interviews, participants will be paid back for any travel expenses, and participants will be have access to the final findings of this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to allow your child to participate at all, and your child may refuse to answer certain questions or refuse to participate in certain parts of the study. If you choose to let your child participate, he or she may leave the study at any time without penalty. Any data your child provides, however, will remain with the investigator (Karen Brook), and may be used even if your child withdraws from the study. If you choose to let your child participate, his or her privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Any data gathered from your child will be treated with the strictest confidence, your child's name will not be used, and your child will not be identifiable in any report of research findings.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the investigator, Karen Brook, by phone: 268-2050, e-mail: brookkar@msu.edu, or regular mail: 14 Hague Front, West Coast Demerara, Guyana. If you have questions or concerns regarding your child's rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Ashir Kumar, M.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Brook

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to allow your child to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian's Name Date

_____

Child's Name

APPENDIX C

CODE DEFINITION TABLE

General topic of codes	Codes	Definitions
Participation		
	Design for participation	The text illustrates how the design of the program does or does not promote participation.
	Participation as Implemented	The text illustrates the level of participation in the program as it was implemented.
	Reaction to participation	The text illustrates how the participants reacted to the way participation occurred in the program.
	Breaking participation barriers	The text illustrates how the program broke participation barriers
	Gender differences in participation	The text refers to differences in participation based on gender.
Conscientization		
	Design for dialogue	The text illustrates how the design of the program does or does not encourage dialogue
	Dialogue as implemented	The text illustrates the use of dialogue in the program as it was implemented.
	Reaction to dialogue	The text illustrates how the participants reacted to the dialogue in their youth groups.
	Design of moral content	The text illustrates how the design of the program does or does not promote moral education.
	Implementation of moral content	The text illustrates how moral education was implemented in the groups.
	Reaction to moral content	The text illustrates how the participants reacted to the moral education in their group.
	Design for factual education	The text illustrates how the design of the program does or does not promote factual education.

Figure 5: Code Definition Table Part 1

	Implementation of factual education	The text illustrates how the implementation of the program at the first level does or does not promote factual education
	Reaction to factual information	The text illustrates how the participants reacted to the factual education in their groups.
	Favorite topics	The text refers to the individual's or group's favorite topics
	Least favorite topics	The text refers to the individual’s or group’s least favorite topics.
Praxis		
	Community service/education	The text refers to any community education or service activities that groups engage in. It may also include the fact that a group has not done any community activity.
	Skill development	The text refers to participants’ experience developing skills because of their participation in YCMTW.
	Difficulty sustaining group	The text refers to the leader’s difficulty sustaining his or her YCMTW group either before or after graduation.
Other (may be related to one or more of the above)		
	Program support	The text refers to YCMTW staff support of youth groups (e.g., visits and materials)
	Facilitator training	The text refers to the participants experiences in facilitator training
	Parental support and involvement	The text refers to the level and implications of parents support and involvement, as stated by YCMTW participants.
	Improvements Varqa could make	The text refers to improvements that Varqa could make to YCMTW, as suggested by program staff and participants.
	Use of the arts	The text refers to the use of the arts in YCMTW. It may relate to participation, conscientization or praxis.
	Arts competition	The text refers to the participants’ experience with the arts competition or attitudes towards it.

Figure 6: Code Definition Table Part 2

APPENDIX D

YOUTH CAN MOVE THE WORLD ADVERTISEMENTS

VARQA FOUNDATION

presents

Youth Can Move The World (YCMTW)

A one-year Youth Leadership programme, sponsored by

THE INTERNATIONAL BAHAI COMMUNITY

in collaboration with

IDCE, UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA

The YCMTW programme is in two parts:

A: **Training of facilitators:** Oct. 26 - 28, and Nov. 16 - 18 at School of Nations. The course focuses on youth issues - suicide, domestic violence, poverty, prejudice, etc. This training is for youths 16 - 25 years. The youths trained then become the facilitators of the second phase of the programme.

B: **Facilitators return to their own communities** and conduct a similar programme weekly with their peers. This will continue weekly from Nov. 2001 to July 2002.

Programme is open to youths of all backgrounds. There are no fees for the course.

TO APPLY CONTACT:

VARQA FOUNDATION

120 Parade Street, Kingston, G/town, Tel: 226-7870 (day) Tel: 226-2732 (evening)

Deadline for applications Oct. 23, 2001

Figure 7: YCMTW 2001 Advertisement #1

VARQA FOUNDATION

Presents

Youth Can Move The World (YCMTW)

A one-year Youth Leadership programme, sponsored by The International Bahai Community
In collaboration with IDCE, University of Guyana.

The YCMTW programme is in two parts:

A) **Training of facilitators:** October 26-28, and November 16-18 at School of Nations. The course focuses on Youth issues - suicide, domestic violence, poverty, prejudice etc. This training is for youth 16-25 years. The youth trained then become the facilitators of the second phase of the programme.

B) **Facilitators return to their own communities and** conduct a similar programme weekly with their peers. This will continue weekly from November, 2001 to July, 2002.

Programme is open to youth of all backgrounds.
There are no fees for the course.
To apply contact: Varqa Foundation, 120 Parade Street, Georgetown,
Tel: 226-7870 (day) 226-2732(evening)
Deadline for applications October 23, 2001.

Figure 8: YCMTW 2001 Advertisement #2

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