Cultivating Developmentally Attentive Communities

A Report on the First Wave of the National Asset-Building Case Study Project

Marc Mannes, Shenita Lewis, and Nicole Hintz
Search Institute

Karen Foster and Michael Nakkula
Harvard University

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Introduction

This report presents findings from the first wave of Search Institute's National Asset-Building Case Study Project. The first wave of the project consisted of working with four Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth community initiatives to study and learn about the changes they are making in support of the healthy development of children and youth. The four community initiatives are operating in Moorhead, Minnesota; Orlando, Florida; Portland, Oregon, and Traverse Bay Area, Michigan.

In the broadest sense, the National Asset-Building Case Study Project is a qualitative-oriented research endeavor examining how diverse ideas about community and the community context for the positive development of young people come together and play out among stakeholders from a range of professions, personal interests, and civic experiences. The project also seeks to understand how engaged community members craft a shared agenda for the promotion of healthy development and then join forces to take social action on behalf of developmental attentiveness. Engrossment in generating developmental strengths for all young people across a range of life settings (family, schools, religious institutions, youth-serving agencies, etc.) within a particular geographic place defines a developmentally attentive community.

This first wave of inquiry aims to produce initial knowledge of how adults and youth in communities build and maintain relationships to create a climate and culture conducive to young people thriving, how they organize and collectively act in ways that suggest a social movement is transpiring, and how they establish community settings and socializing institutions that are developmentally attentive.

The National Asset-Building Case Study Project represents a line of inquiry within Search Institute's Individual, Community, Sector, and Social Change research platform. The research associated with the platform examines the individual, community, and social contexts for fostering greater attentiveness to the developmental well-being of children and youth. Search Institute is especially interested in studying the public's perceptions of factors that are important in raising healthy kids as well as appraising adult performance. We are also intent upon building a knowledge base derived from assessing the dynamics of change associated with citizens and socializing institutions promoting and engaging in positive development.

The report is composed of two major sections. The first section renders a *descriptive* perspective on the four community initiatives. A series of drawings community members sketched to capture the mission and purpose of the initiatives and the words they used to describe their vision of what the community initiative represents are presented. This is followed by an operational profile that depicts the implementation of each community-based effort. The sectors involved in each community initiative, the major activities being conducted, critical events and turning points, major insights, several promising practices, and technical assistance needs are summarized. This information was obtained directly from conversations with focus group members, key informants, and a review of written materials made available to the Search Institute research team.

The second section of the report provides an *interpretive* perspective on the four community initiatives based on the formal qualitative research conducted during Wave 1. The overall background, purpose, and approach to the case study inquiry are explained. A condensed form of the thematic codebook that resulted from the application of qualitative research methods is included. The codebook is then used as the basis for conducting an interpretive analysis of the four initiatives. The discussion section considers some of the broader implications of key findings for the world of practice and implications of the findings for future research.

The National Asset-Building Case Study Project and Wave 1 Report would not have been possible without generous funding from the McKnight Foundation and additional financial support from Aid Association for Lutherans/Lutheran Brotherhood, the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, and the Kansas Health Foundation. Our deepest gratitude is extended to all.

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We also cannot present the report without paying tribute to the scores of people from the four communities who opened their doors, hearts, minds, and spirits to us, and who gave to us that most precious commodity in the psyche of modern America–time. Their dreams and discourse were critical to beginning to make sense of how communities become developmentally attentive. Without these caring and thoughtful people bringing their community initiatives to life and replaying critical moments for us, this project would not have been meaningful. We close this introductory portion of the report by acknowledging and thanking all the people across the four communities that helped make this research and report happen. To one and all we express our deepest appreciation for being—and staying—in relationship with us.

Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative Moorhead, Minnesota

Joe & Cory Bennett
Michael Benson
Sayra Crary
George Davis
John Eidness
Nancy Frosaker-Johnson
Maria Garcia
Rosie Gonzalez
Steve Grineski
Heather Haarstad
Jenna Hagen
Dianna Hatfield
Sonia Hohnadel
Becky Hulden
Jessi Hurner
Scott Hutchins
Danielle Korte
Patti Larson
Frankie Martinez
Mannie Martinez
Wendy Merick
John Molinaro
Barry Nelson
Larry Papenfuss
Jim Ross
Ashley Sauter
Nichole Sauter
Deborah Shasky
Silver Swaney
Nancy Taralson
Nichole Weinkauf
Del Rae Williams
Cari Zitzow
Jeff
Morningside-Greenwood
    Block Club Staff and
    Volunteers
MHCI Board of Directors

Take the Time Initiative Multnomah County, Portland, Oregon

Chris Bekemeier
Judy Brodkey
Jim Clay
Charlotte Cook
Deborah Davis
Elizabeth Edwards
Eric Einspruch
Margie Harris
Janet Kretzmeier
Carson Mitchell
Leticia Longoria Navarro
Lisa Race
Peter Rosenblatt
Jana Rowley
Chris Tebben
Nan Waller

GivEm40 24.7 Coalition Traverse Bay Area, Michigan

Mimi Petritz Appel
Laurie Bassett
Becky Beauchamp
Christina Benedict
T.J. Berden
Lisa Bracey
Bob Brown
Scruffie Crockett
P.J. Darga
Barb Duvall
Tom Emling
Mary Fraquelli
Nava Hall
Alicia Harris
Laura Herd
Mike Jurgensen
Kirsten Keilitz
Mike Kenney
Randy Kiessel
Ken Laatz
Barb Lemcool
Bob MacEachron
Mary Marois
Regis McCord
Mike McIntyre
John McKinney
Margie McNabb
Pastor Charlene Minger
Jayne Mohr
Jim Pavelka
Stephanie Perault
Marsha Smith
Ralph Sofferdine
Terry Street
Amy Strom
Celeste Sturdevant-Reed
Ken Taylor
Alan VanderPaas
Francisco Villaruel
Elizabeth Wicklund
John Yager
Kingsley High School
    Asset Team

Healthy Community Initiative HC • HY of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

Leisa Bishop
April Boykin
Tommysene Carter
Dave Christiansen
Joey Cradle
Lisa Crangle
Art Cross
Anna Diaz
Amy Ellos
Cindy Frongello
Scott Gabrielson
Mike Green
Sydney Green
Shelly Humbrick
Kathy Hummel
Hope Kramer
Jennifer Kupper
Ray Larsen
Aaron Liberman
Lindy Liberman
Pierce Neinken
John (J.Q.) Quiceno
Karla Reyes
Twanna Scroggins
Mary Scott Singer
Sean Smith
Sarah Stack
Jack Stader
Linda Sutherland
Barbara Vickers
Viveca Vickers
Deb Watson
Beverly
Youth Focus Group
Members:
    Anna
    Dante
    George
    Jack
    Joey
    Katie
    Kaylee
    Latonia
    Michelle
    Sean

I. A Descriptive Perspective on Community Initiatives

The Visions and Voices of Initiative Participants

During the first site visit focus group participants were asked to describe their initiative in a drawing. Through this exercise we captured the visions and voices of youth and adults in the four First Wave Communities.

Operational Profiles of Wave 1 Inititatives

The purpose of this section is to summarize the implementation of each initiative and provide a practical tool for community use. Whereas the interpretive portion of this document includes a thorough description of research methodology, theoretical underpinnings, qualitative research, and key findings from the four community initiatives, this section communicates information on the four sites in nontechnical, easy-to-access form. It is organized around brief community sketches, followed by a list of community sectors involved, and a description of key activities, critical events/turning points, learnings/insights, promising practices, and technical assistance needs as identified by each initiative. We have attempted to present this information as succinctly as possible, without losing the site-specific character of the practices, insights, and lessons from the field. Our hope is that this section will stimulate cross-site discussions of strategies and techniques for promoting meaningful and sustainable community change so that young people can thrive.

Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative

Moorhead, Minnesota

Descriptive Profile

Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative (MHCI), begun in 1994, grew out of a grassroots organizing effort that had a large citizen volunteer base and aimed to address the problem of juvenile crime and its sequelae on the youth of the community. This citywide initiative is a nonprofit organization staffed by four full-time employees and governed by a volunteer board of directors. The mission of MHCI is to mobilize the community to provide developmental assets for every child and youth in Moorhead. Its primary focus is providing free after-school and summer enrichment programs for all Moorhead youth using the developmental assets model. Asset Teams, such as the After-School Hours Asset Team, the Intergenerational Relationships Team, and the Neighborhood Assets Team, organized free training in the developmental assets approach. The engagement of local citizens on behalf of positive youth development has been enhanced and deepened through the initiative's connection to faculty at the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Clay County. Brenda Shafer and Nancy Frosaker-Johnson were instrumental in conducting focus groups throughout the community as part of "Community Speaks/MCHI Listens," a project intended to assess the initiative's progress in achieving its goals. Efforts have been focused on out-of-school time, with an emphasis on ensuring access to developmentally healthy activities for low-income youth. MHCI' s offices are based in a former church rectory located within a neighborhood setting across the street from a school. The rectory building is shared with juvenile law enforcement staff (e.g. DARE, GREAT officers); this has supported the development of positive relationships between youth and law enforcement officers, as well as enhanced the overall community policing effort in Moorhead.

Primary Sectors Engaged

- Education
- Business
- Law enforcement
- Parks and recreation
- Religious organizations

Key Activities

Some of the important collaborative activities that MHCI is involved in include:

- A Weed 'N Seed program funded by a State of Minnesota grant that has cleaned up one neighborhood that was heavily trafficked by drug dealers and drug users in Moorhead. Now the once deserted park is filled with children playing soccer and families having barbecues. The Moorhead Police Department has a trailer in the park, from which it runs after-school programming.
- A Community Christmas Party is organized by a local business leader and asset champion. Each year Joe and Cory Bennet, a senior couple and longtime residents of Greenwood, host a party at their video store drawing hundreds of children and their parents for hotdogs and soda, gift giveaways, and Santa. Joe also started a soccer team in the neighborhood and has raised funds for sneakers and sports supplies for the team.
- Mentor Link is a MHCI initiative that provides technical assistance and resources to support the mentoring of Moorhead Youth. Volunteer mentors are recruited and trained, then referred to mentor matching programs or neighborhood mentoring sites.
- Citywide after-school and summer enrichment programs are a cornerstone of this initiative. MHCI received a large grant from the State of Minnesota to implement after-school enrichment programs. These programs include the Raices de Mexico After-School Enrichment program, and the Mujeres Unidas Quinceañera Club (hereafter referred to as Quinceañera) for pre-teen and teenage girls. MHCI provides scholarships to those who cannot afford fee-based activities.

- Morningside Greenwood Block club, which meets monthly to make neighborhood improvements and promote unity. Special events are planned such as neighborhood clean-ups, youth soccer, Harvest Party, Christmas Party, neighborhood barbecues, and National Night Out.
- Linking Up, a collaborative among several Moorhead schools and three institutions of higher education to promote higher education as a goal following high school.
- Partnering with the owner of a skate park to allow youth to skate free of charge one afternoon per week.
- Conceptualization of an Intergenerational Youth Center in a former neighborhood church.
- Youth Board, which helps plan and implement activities within MHCI.

Critical Events / Turning Points

Each of the initiatives can point to critical events and key turning points that have contributed momentum to the work, or, in some cases, slowed it down or restricted its impact. In Moorhead, some of those key events and turning points are:

- Barry Nelson is the new initiative leader, taking over from Diana Hatfield who had served for six years and provided the continuity that is essential to the growth of this work. The change in leadership is viewed as an opportunity to experience new energy and commitment, but it also places the initiative in a position to refocus and experiment with a new leader’s style and ideas. The full impact of the leadership change is not yet felt, but it is clearly viewed as critical to the ongoing success of MHCI.
- Although MHCI has developed and maintained an impressive array of youth-based activities, it has experienced some difficulty in maintaining consistent youth involvement. This challenge appears related to the desire among many young people to establish a youth center. According to both youth leaders and adult staff, youth have consistently expressed the need for a safe place with unstructured activity. Further, some of the youth have not felt authentically involved in the debate over whether to invest in the youth center, and as such have become somewhat

disillusioned with the MHCI decision-making process, particularly as it relates to involving young people.

- For MHCI to prosper, it has considered a partnership with its sister city of Fargo, North Dakota. Linking with Fargo could bring greater opportunity for funding, larger numbers of youth, and a larger impact. An ongoing partnership with Fargo is viewed as unlikely because MHCI fears that, as a smaller, lower-income city, the needs of Moorhead would be overshadowed, thereby compromising some of the potential benefits of this partnership. Rather, it appears more likely that MHCI would partner with Fargo to serve as a resource if an initiative starts.
- As one of the older initiatives, MHCI's role in relationship to ongoing programming in Moorhead has, in many cases, shifted from providing direct services within those programs to a less visible role of supporting their autonomous development. Consistent with the original hope, some programs that MHCI once funded and staffed have successfully gone on to secure other means of funding. According to some staff, this has resulted in the early contributions of MHCI being forgotten or downplayed. In addition, MHCI has been an important networking resource; this is also a contribution to successful programs that is not always apparent. As the initiative was faced with the challenge of sustaining its own funding, staff became increasingly aware of the dilemma of showing positive community impact when their role had evolved in a manner that though is, in most respects ideal, is at the same time difficult to recognize or define.

Learnings/Insights

Under the new leadership of Barry Nelson, MHCI has entered a period of self-assessment. Lessons learned to this point include:

- Ensuring that MHCI's commitment to supporting all youth in accessing positive developmental activity was not reinforcing the stereotype of “at risk,” low-income minority youth. Ironically, the emphasis on making activities available to all youth, and advertising accordingly, can lead to the perception that youth are in need of “special services.”

- MHCI has learned the importance of carefully framing its activities as natural and necessary for healthy development, as opposed to “special” and designed for remediating problems among youth.
- Anticipating long-term funding needs at the inception of the initiative, as well the “misfit” of short-term, programmatic funding with the long-term mission of MCHI. Many initiatives face this problem: the need to capitalize on immediate funding opportunities without considering the longer-term implications carefully enough can leave initiatives struggling to sustain existing programmatic components. The more specialized and expensive these components are, the more difficult they are to maintain, and the more energy they draw from the everyday, basic activities of the initiative.
- Diversifying the sectors in which the work should be carried out–don’t put all of your eggs into one basket. This can be a difficult lesson to act on when one or two sectors come to the table enthusiastically and assume a strong leadership role in the initiative. While it is important to nurture the relationships with strong, enthusiastic sectors, it is critical not to lose sight of the other sectors that need to be nurtured in order for the initiative to grow and be sustained in the long run.

Promising Practices

Some of the promising practices contributed to the study by MHCI include:

- The decision of a local business and long-term funder to stimulate community ownership of MHCI through awarding a challenge grant for other businesses to match, rather than making an outright donation. The matching-grant practice is designed to generate more investment in the initiative by the local business community than would otherwise take place. This diversification of the local funding stream is critical to longer-term continuity, given the relative instability of any one or two funding sources.
- The proximity and partnership of law enforcement with MHCI, which has facilitated positive relationships with youth, the schools, and minority neighborhoods in a community in which there has been a history of racial tension with law enforcement. The proximity with law enforcement is due to the sharing of space in a neighborhood

building (formerly a church rectory). This physical arrangement has facilitated relationship building and made law enforcement one of the critical sectors in the initiative.

- Adding a media specialist to the MHCI staff, not only to promote and sustain the work of MHCI, but also to focus on capturing some of the less visible but critical functions the initiative has served in improving community conditions for youth.

Technical Assistance Needs

MHCI presented a strong desire for technical assistance for two specific needs. The first is in the area of funding sustainability. As discussed above, the Initiative has successfully secured funding for critical programmatic components, but is now struggling to secure funding for the longer-term core mission of the work. The second area relates to youth engagement and the sustainability of youth involvement. MHCI has experienced inconsistent youth engagement and relatively limited long-term youth involvement. It would like to share ideas with other initiatives in which youth engagement and sustained involvement has been more successful.

Take the Time Initiative

Multnomah County, Portland, Oregon

Descriptive Profile

Take the Time was launched in 1997 by the Commission on Children, Families, & Community of Multnomah County (CCFC), and was the only initiative of the four studied that was not an independent nonprofit organization (501c3). This county-wide initiative has been staffed by four full-time CCFC employees. It is the outgrowth of a statewide county government initiative establishing local community commissions to support healthy youth development. The approach of Take the Time is highly interpersonal, with a focus on relationship building. The initiative has three fundamental goals that guide its efforts; children and youth have a relationship with a caring adult, children and youth have a meaningful role in the community, and children and youth are valued and supported by their community. A grassroots approach to mobilization is heavily utilized in the development and implementation of the initiative, and guiding models for this work is diffusion of innovations theory and Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point.* The awarding of mini-grants in which citizens propose projects that address one of the three developmental assets chosen for focus by Take the Time; this reflects the value placed on individual contribution, creativity, and egalitarianism that characterizes this initiative.

Primary Sectors Engaged

- County government
- Education
- Media
- Business
- Youth serving organizations

Key Activities

Core activities of Take the Time include or have included:

- Review of over 1,000 proposals for mini-grants over the course of three years, resulting in the awarding of over $150,000 in grants to more than 400 small asset-building projects.
- Awarding Collaboration Grants for multiyear projects involving partnering teams, with an emphasis on cross-sector partnership.
- A 33-member youth board that helps plan and implement activities in the initiative and the commission. They have created a Youth Voices project to help integrate youth further into community organizations and CCFC. A subgroup of the youth board has also participated in the mini-grant review committee.
- Establishing Parent Outreach Organizers in 13 middle schools with the goal of helping parents better understand how to help their children be successful students. Specific parent activities include trainings on school policies that affect student performance and raising awareness of advisory opportunities available to their children.
- Stimulating public awareness of developmental assets through a wide range of advertising media and promotional strategies including billboards, bus signs, radio public service announcements, TV news coverage, print news, movie screen ads, and a website.
- Establishing a Speakers Network for presentation to diverse audiences on the goals of Take the Time and ways to integrate asset building into daily activities.

Critical Events/Turning Points

Critical events described by Take the Time included:

- Obtaining media sponsors early on in the life of the initiative. A concerted decision was made to invest in media support and influence as a primary focus of the initiative. This choice stands out as unique among the four initiatives in the study.
- Adopting a theory of change based on diffusion of innovations theory and The Tipping Point to focus and provide a rationale for activities leading to community

change. This identification of a specific theory of change and use of it in their implementation strategy also stood out as unique among the four initiatives.

- The hiring of staff was key to the initiative progressing. The director alone could not take on the responsibility of mobilizing the rapidly growing initiative. Key individuals who were ready and willing to take on the challenge were critical for the advancement of the initiative.
- A large volunteer network demonstrates strong community ownership of the initiative. Take the Time staff members mentioned that it will be a test of the strength of their efforts if the volunteers continue their community work in the future when there may be less direct support from the initiative.
- Choosing the name “Take the Time.” Although all initiatives choose names that represent their work, the choice was presented as particularly pivotal to this initiative’s work. To the initiative members, “Take the Time” communicates their core philosophy that healthy development of youth is contingent upon all people taking time to contribute to the well-being of the community’s youth.
- Portland Public Schools approaching Take the Time and offering to fund the Middle School Parent Outreach work they were doing. This represented both a symbolic success for the initiative and an important step in a particular sector sharing responsibility for the work.
- The initiative launch in October 1997. This event was both positive and negative. Although over 300 people turned out for the event, it was dubbed a disappointment by the county commission due to dissapointing media coverage. It was hoped that the media would deliver high visibility of the event–which featured the county commission’s strong early support of the initiative. Because the media coverage fell far short of expectations, the “failed launch” created a rift between the commission and Take the Time, a rift which has required ongoing work to repair.
- A budget crisis stemming from a reallocation of resources due to the county commissioners’ decision to allot resources in proportion to need: those organizations serving the neediest youth and families were prioritized for receiving the greatest proportion of financial support. Given that Take the Time was designed to serve all

youth and the entire community, it was not viewed as a "high priority" initiative focused on serving the neediest populations.

- Sharing the name and philosophy of "Take the Time" with other county commissions in Oregon was a turning point for the initiative. When other counties heard of the positive work Take the Time was doing, they were interested in starting their own HC • HY initiative and wanted to use their catchy name. After much consideration, the initiative created a licensing agreement with four other counties with the stipulation that they use the three-goal focus of Take the Time and share ideas and strategies with each other.

Learnings / Insights

- Evaluation should be launched on the front end, rather than the back end of the initiative. The inability to implement a careful evaluation plan at the onset of the initiative, may, according to staff, jeopardize its very existence.
- Not systematically documenting stories of the initiative's work resulted in limitations related to supporting and defending the value of Take the Time. In addition to a formal evaluation plan, the initiative learned that it is critical to capture "success stories" and programmatic efforts. Not doing so, "when other programs present compelling testimonials in town meetings," according to staff, placed the initiative at a strategic disadvantage, particularly for funding purposes.
- Relationships are key to this work. Although this point is obvious, Take the Time in particular emphasized how relationship development at every level of collaboration–professional and political–constitutes the core of this work. The ethos of this initiative is that all relationships require time to develop, and that we must Take the Time if we expect positive results.
- Involve youth in every aspect of the initiative. Although obvious in theory, the initiative learned how important this is in practice, and how difficult it can be to implement.
- Establish databases that capture every individual, organizational, and sector contact, the initiative's activities and accomplishments, and stories. Be disciplined and intentional about gathering stories.

- Utilize theory of change, a realistic timeline, and strategies for leveraging limited resources. Staying carefully connected to these guiding structures is critical to long-term success. The initiative stated that they originally took on too much and were spread too thin to accomplish goals that were clearly linked to their theory of change, timeline, and strategies.
- Utilize trained speakers who can present in a variety of settings—from formal conference presentations to an informal discussion with a youth group. Speakers should be trained and supported in storytelling.
- During difficult times, stay connected to those that support the work.
- It's important to have key people on board at the outset. Advice: Get people personally involved and diversify the sector involvement of an initiative.
- Communicating via marketing and advertising is a profession, and changing people's opinions is a science. Hire professionals.
- Differentiate promotion and advertising. Public relations should not be hired "out of house" because the asset message can be difficult for PR people to internalize.
- Media should not be seen solely as a tool for public information, but should also be used as a social marketing resource—applying marketing strategies to the solution of social and health issues. Whereas media has been successful in encouraging people to buy products, social marketing encourages people to adopt or "buy-in" to healthy behaviors.

Promising Practices

- Focusing on specific goals derived from selected assets within the developmental assets framework rather than trying to build all 40 assets at once.
- Development of a Web site.
- Placing Parent Outreach Organizers in the middle schools for the purpose of educating parents on the initiative's activities and getting them involved in the schools. It's especially helpful when the outreach workers are themselves parents and can thereby exemplify the nature of and commitment to the messages they're communicating.

- Use of multiple trained speakers to reach different audiences to raise awareness, engage, and mobilize different sectors.
- Youth connection with the newspaper and contribution to “The Zone.” This column has focused on positive youth stories; in particular, ways in which youth are contributing to the community.
- Youth Voices project aimed at helping youth-focused organizations incorporate assets into their policies and practices.

Technical Assistance Needs

- More presence, ownership, and leadership from Search Institute.
- Desire for Search Institute to convene initiatives for reflection, dialogue, and assessment about their work.

GivEm40 24.7 Coalition

Traverse Bay Area, Michigan

Descriptive Profile

The GivEm 40 Coalition is a community-based initiative supported by significant partnerships throughout the five-county region. The coalition was launched in 1999 in a collaborative partnership of three local funding agents: Rotary Charities of Traverse City, Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, and the United Way of Northwest Michigan. The United Way continues to be the designated coordinating body for the GivEm 40 Coalition.

GivEm 40 is staffed by one full-time coordinator who works with community sectors on collaborative partnerships to develop and implement innovative programs that address the needs of youth. The coalition has one high school student in a part-time stipend position as a youth leader. Since the coalition office is located in the United Way facility, some staff support is available. Additionally, the Intermediate School District has created the position of Asset Development Coordinator; this person works with local school districts to integrate asset building into the school improvement planning process.

Through a partnership grant provided by Michigan State University, two evaluation professionals support the coalition. They provide local organizations information and training to apply their asset-impact evaluation model.

The mission of GivEm 40 is "to provide collaborative leadership to increase the average number of assets among children and youth in the five-county region, thereby increasing their participation in activities that build their successful futures and decreasing their participation in risk taking behaviors." The GivEm 40 Coalition goals are:

1. We want all our children to have supportive relationships with caring adults. Community members will reach out to youth in their

> neighborhoods, in business, and through youth programs. Our children will experience a community that cares about them.
>
> 2. We want all our schools to be great places to learn. School communities will use developmental assets to help make all their practices even more effective for students. Our students will feel connected and be motivated to do well in school.
>
> 3. We want all our children to feel respected. Community members will ask youth for their opinions on matters that affect them and provide them leadership opportunities. Our children will have meaningful roles in their community
>
> 4. We want all our children to enjoy growing up in their community. Community members of all ages will work together to create activities, programs and fun places where our children will thrive. Our youth will be partners in creating their opportunities.

The initiative functions from a “top down” organizational model rather than a grassroots model and is characterized by careful, strategic decision making and mindful risk taking. GivEm40 seeks depth over breadth in its approach to community change and has deliberately proceeded one sector at a time, beginning with the education sector, where all 19 school superintendents in the area committed to support the developmental assets framework.

Primary Sectors Engaged

- Education
- Law enforcement
- Youth and family serving agencies
- Service and fraternal organizations
- Religious organizations
- Media
- Business

Key Activities

- The GivEm 40 Coalition in collaboration with school districts in the five-county region implemented the YouthFriends Program. This program provides the invaluable opportunity to connect schools to their community, while also connecting caring adult volunteers with young people in schools. The activities for YouthFriend volunteers and students vary greatly and are limited only in that they occur within the school itself. These relationships have been shown to encourage academic and personal success and promote healthy behaviors while also building a strong sense of community.
- The Teen Theatre Troupe uses the developmental assets model to educate teens and adults about issues critical to teens. The troupe brings to life the difficult choices teens face each day. Performances are made to peer groups as well as fraternal and community organizations around the Traverse Bay area.
- After the formal launch of the coalition in May 1999, not only did all 19 school districts in the five-county region adopt asset building as their common goal, but five school districts made the commitment to become Asset Pilot Schools. This innovative approach applied intensive training, resources and seminars, organized by the region’s asset development coordinator, to create intentional asset building environments in the pilot schools. Marked improvements were noted after the second-round Search Institute survey was taken two years later.
- There have been several large youth-driven events held in the five-county region. In 1999, the GivEm 40 Coalition was launched with the Rally Around Youth, in which almost 1,000 youth and adults were energized by the asset message. Dr. Peter Benson, president of Search Institute, reported the regional results of the *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitude and Behaviors* survey. Also in 1999, the Youth Summit on Violence Prevention: Teens Taking Action to GivEm 40 was organized by the regional Youth Action Councils. In 2001, again almost 1,000 youth and adults came together for the Choose To Lead Conference to talk about ways to help their schools become more caring and connected places. Every school in the region sent a team of students; they returned to their schools with ideas and plans to create change and make a difference.

- Early on, to spread awareness about the initiative, media work focused on the production of television public service announcements and local radio spots featuring local youth.
- Partnership with Michigan State has been pivotal. The Families and Communities Together (FACT) Coalition has awarded GivEm 40 Coalition a grant providing resources and services from their Institute for Children, Youth and Families and Outreach Partnerships divisions. This collaborative partnership, focused primarily on evaluation and social action research, is unique among the initiatives studied. This critical infusion of research and evaluation expertise was built into the initiative from the onset.
- Integrating the developmental assets model into youth-related funding criteria among the area's major funders. The strong relationship between the initiative and the funders allows not only for the growth and maintenance of the initiative, but also for joint planning on developing activities. Rather than viewing the funders as external to the work, they have been incorporated as a critical sector of the initiative.
- Youth are the focal point of this initiative. The Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation has a Youth Advisory Council in each of the five counties. These councils were an active and vibrant part of this initiative in its formative stages. The coalition has since identified a number of ways to consult youth on decisions about activities, events, and new strategies.
- Creating Saturday Night Jive, weekend youth events, developed by youth, provides opportunities for teens to gather in healthy, safe, and creative ways.

Critical Events/Turning Points

- Achieving the "buy-in" of the superintendents in all 19 school districts in the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD) to adopt the developmental assets framework into their school improvement planning.
- Pilot schools project, which served to ignite the larger buy-in of all 19 school districts. The pilot schools project was an effort to take a comprehensive asset-building approach to a small number of schools in the area and to use preliminary evidence to enhance buy-in at the multi-district level.

- In 2001, the TBAISD created the position of Asset Development Coordinator for the asset building work in the pilot schools. This commitment by TBAISD to a core staff person to coordinate the asset work marked a critical step forward in the educational sector for GivEm40.

Learnings/ Insights

- Strategic focus on deeply engaging one sector at a time versus spreading the work thinly across multiple sectors. This approach is markedly different from some of the other initiatives. The fortuitous events and commitments the coalition received in its partnership with the school sector set the stage for this approach. The 19 school districts have integrated the asset framework to such an extent that they now "own" that sector's asset-building promise. The next sector to receive in-depth orientation is the business sector through an alliance between the coalition and the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, which has 3,500 members.
- Anticipating potential negative comparisons across schools. With recognition of the importance of linking this effort with the media's need to report on current events in the schools, an agreement was reached with the media to be fair, sensitive, and responsible when reporting survey results, using a regional perspective rather than district by district.
- Recognizing the importance of choosing activities that are likely to produce an assessable impact, given the importance of showing impact as a means of sustaining and building momentum and funding. However, initiative staff feel that they and other asset-based efforts are often "winging it," thereby placing themselves in a vulnerable position from which their ability to accomplish their goals and assess positive impact is compromised.
- Fully recognizing the financial tenuousness of the initiative's work, leading to the constant worry over making a decision that could prove "fatal." It seems that this recognition and concern is related more to the ambiguous nature of a social movement built on vision and ideology than to an inherent frailty of GivEm40.
- The leadership in the GivEm40 Coalition has been attending Search Institute conferences since their inception. They are concerned that the conference is best for

initiatives just getting started and less useful for more mature initiatives. Staff would like to help change this perceived limitation by joining with other maturing initiatives and Search Institute to develop more in-depth planning for “next steps” and long-term comprehensive impact; i.e., genuine social change.

- Effective leadership includes taking risks while simultaneously planning for all possible consequences of decision making.
- Individuals or even institutions acting alone are unlikely to stimulate systemic change. GivEm40 recognized early on that critical mass would need to be attained within sectors in order for the work to accomplish anything; accordingly, staff have been cautious when embarking on new initiatives, being careful to establish that broad-based sector support is available.
- Establishing links between the developmental assets framework and business. Businesses are encouraged to view youth as citizens and consumers, who are already connected to the workforce and need to be mentored as community stakeholders before they leave the area to pursue higher education. Not doing so virtually guarantees that the community’s youth leaders will invest their talent elsewhere following college.

Promising Practices

- Establishing a strong partnership with Michigan State University’s Insitute for Children, Youth and Families and Outreach Partnerships in anticipation of assessment needs and challenges.
- A volunteer speakers bureau makes presentations about the developmental assets, allowing community members to feel ownership and investment in the initiative.
- Engaging funding agencies and foundations as partners in developmental assets work, rather than simply traditional monetary granting agencies.
- Proactive partnering with the media in order to prevent negative comparisons between schools due to survey results.

- Using the language of the sector in introducing the developmental assets framework. GivEm40 utilized the existing school improvement plans to engage the school superintendents.
- Rotary Charities funding a vision when they regard themselves as primarily a “bricks and mortar” funder.

Technical Assistance Needs

- Need for a model of community change that focuses on the community as the unit of change, rather than the individual. “There needs to be a ‘road map’ for change at the community level” linking specific strategies for individual sectors.
- Support in developing a deeper research base that goes beyond raising awareness and initial engagement. Desire for this was expressed at the specific initiative level and comprehensively at the cross-initiative level.
- Better understanding of the researcher/doer gap. More attention to the lack of communication between practitioners doing the work in the community, and researchers studying community change.
- Need a model for “going deeper” in nonschool sectors. For instance, is there a cluster of assets that are specific or more pertinent to the business sector? What are the existing mechanisms of sectors in which assets can be infused?
- Depth versus breadth. Do we know which is more important? Need to know how other initiatives are addressing this dilemma and/or striking a balance between the two.

Healthy Community Initiative

HC • HY of Central Florida

Orlando, Florida

Descriptive Profile

Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth of Central Florida is part of the larger Healthy Community Initiative of Greater Orlando (HCI), which was begun in 1998 to address the problem of high mobility in Central Florida. HCI's focus is community revitalization through training and support to local grassroots initiatives, such as the new Nap Ford Charter School, a focal point for revitalizing the Callahan neighborhood. HC • HY of Central Florida, the developmental assets initiative, is seen as an important "tool" supporting positive youth development within the larger initiative. HCI is a countywide effort reaching all of Orange County and is staffed by five full-time employees and three community faculty. The mission of HCI is "to create a new sense of community which leads to an environment where all individuals and families flourish." Its location in a former neighborhood health clinic illustrates its community health and wellness orientation. HCI has a diversified focus on sectors other than the schools, which provides an important counterpoint to the initiatives studied that focus heavily on the education arena. In addition to the developmental assets model, HCI also utilizes McKnight and Kretzmann's model of community work and has become the initiative coordinator of Orlando's Community of Promise, part of the national America's Promise initiative.

Primary Sectors Engaged

- Higher education
- Education
- Local business
- Foundations

- Youth and family serving organizations
- Neighborhood action groups
- Government

Key Activities

Key HCI activities have included:

- The Carver Court Oral History Report in which students interviewed elders in Carver Court. The interviews were developed into a book, and a documentary film was made of this experience.
- Listening Projects, an organizing tool to stimulate resident participation in low-income neighborhoods. Listening Projects have been conducted in three such neighborhoods: the Harrison, Parramore, and Holden Heights communities.
- The Hispanic Task Force called "Hispanics United for Healthy Community." This group focuses on issues particularly relevant to the large Hispanic community in the Orlando Area.
- A Leadership Development Institute in which neighborhood residents are trained in basic leadership and community organization skills. Each class develops a specific Citizen Involvement Plan to address short and long-term community issues.
- The establishment of the Legacy Venture Team in which youth are trained in all aspects of philanthropy, including review of grant applications in conjunction with the developmental assets, and awarding of funds. The Youth Philanthropy Team awarded $75,000 last year to youth initiatives supporting developmental assets.
- HandzOn youth comprises Winter Park High students who have come together to strengthen their school and community through youth-led actions. They work to improve school climate, change negative perceptions, and make their school and community a caring place to live.
- The recent establishment of Youth United for Enduring Freedom in response to September 11th , which severely impacted Orlando's economy. HandzOn youth and community adults work together to allocate Florida FOCUS Fund money to those in economic need due to job layoffs.

Critical Events/Turning Points

- The events of September 11th curtailed air travel to entertainment meccas such as Disney World which, in turn, depressed the state's economy, which is heavily dependent on tourism. One response from HCI was establishment of the Youth United for Enduring Freedom philanthropy initiative in which adults and youth addressed the economic hardship suffered by their community.
- Expansion from Winter Park to West Orange. HCI successfully supported community capacity-building efforts in West Orange through use of their "community faculty" model, in which HCI leadership support the development of localized leadership committees.
- Strategic engagement of "power brokers." The initiative leadership made a concerted effort to engage powerful and wealthy citizens in the community, a sector of the citizenry, staff argue, that are typically left out of grassroots initiatives.

Learnings/Insights

- Ownership and sustainability of this work lies with the community. Any chance of sustainability and growth requires that leadership from centralized organizing groups be distributes within and across sectors. For this to occur, however, clear models must be in place for mobilizing and linking the various community leaders.
- A genuinely balanced and reciprocal relationship between youth and adults that authentically includes youth in decision making appears to sustain youth involvement in initiative work. This focus, although shared to a degree among the initiatives studied, was particularly strong in HCI.
- Local community initiatives can conduct and/or support qualitative data collection. The Callahan Listening Project consists of interviews conducted by youth and young adults with neighborhood residents to learn what they would like to have happen in their neighborhood. The Carver Court Oral History Project captures the story of the Carver Court housing project, which was demolished due to its dilapidated condition. One of the asset champions of this initiative is a documentary filmmaker who captured the experiences of the young people as they interviewed senior residents of

Carver Court. The interviews were designed to preserve the history of the community, as only elders could tell it. The result might be seen as a qualitative study of intergenerational asset building.

- Developmental assets should include adults as well as youth, since adults cannot give what they do not have.
- Measuring change is difficult, especially when funders want results in traditional means and measures. Since quick results cannot realistically or authentically be generated, it is imperative that initiatives find their own ways to compellingly capture the progress and achievements of their work. This assessment process should be carefully linked to the specific goals and practices of the initiatives.
- Being successful does not mean being sustainable. Sustainability, among other things, requires broadly distributed local ownership within and across sectors and communities.

Promising Practices

- Youth philanthropy. The tremendous appeal of this civic engagement project for youth is that it provides an opportunity to creatively harness young people's knowledge of one another and to work collaboratively with that knowledge to build developmental assets. Each of the teams awarding funds explicitly focused on a particular area, such as diversity and sustainability.
- Distributed leadership model. Consistent with its focus on stimulating local ownership of revitalization efforts, HCI/ HC • HY utilizes Community Faculty to locate, train, and support the local leadership of underdeveloped areas of Greater Orlando.
- Documentation of the initiative's history and activities is captured through a weekly newsletter, which is distributed to Search Institute, community stakeholders, and throughout Central Florida.
- Civic engagement of youth. As summarized above, HCI/ HC • HY stands out as unique for its robust youth involvement.

Technical Assistance Needs

- National affiliation and visibility of the developmental assets model. Sustainability depends, in part, on Search Institute developing visible, national affiliation among HC • HY communities. America’s Promise has created name visibility and national awareness that encourages “buy-in” and participation. Similar visibility could be brought to the “Search Movement” by raising the nation’s awareness of the accomplishments of the 600 plus communities adopting the developmental assets model.

II. An Interpretive Perspective on Community Initiatives

Research Study Purpose, Theoretical Approach, and Design

Purpose

Search Institute maintains fundamental applied research interests in examining how Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth (HC • HY) initiatives, primarily guided by the developmental assets framework, strive to realize developmental attentiveness. Search Institute also maintains a particular interest in learning how community-based approaches to human development manifest across the first two decades of life and what happens to the initiatives as they conduct the work.

These interests are consistent with increasing attention that has been paid during the past decade to the community contexts that influence child and youth development. In a number of practice and research arenas it has become more evident that approaches to promoting the healthy development of young people require a deeper understanding of community and neighborhood influences. The 1997 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health concluded that young people’s connectedness to the vital support networks of family, school, and community serves as an important protective factor against risks associated with emotional vulnerability, violence, substance use, and sexuality. With community and neighborhood increasingly being viewed as primary contexts for strengthening young people, various conceptions of community are now routinely employed across such disparate developmental areas of concern as alcohol and other drugs prevention, student academic achievement, and general health promotion.

The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000) presented a comprehensive synthesis of the research examining the impact of neighborhood and community conditions on the development of young people. While the complexities inherent in studying neighborhood effects on child development make it difficult to secure concise answers, this synthesis used the data available to help focus future inquiry on critical factors that need to be further understood. In 2001, the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine also compiled the existing knowledge base for fostering youth development via community-based programs, highlighting the key design elements for nurturing positive development in community settings, including issues related to serving youth living in diverse communities. The summary report identified categories of personal and social assets and the characteristics of programmatic settings that facilitate positive development.

What accounts for the current emphasis on neighborhood and community in the promotion of child and adolescent development? This occurrence likely stems from disappointment within the helping professions and among the general public over the value of traditional approaches to changing problematic trends in child or adolescent outcomes. Such approaches tend to utilize interventions targeted exclusively at individuals, or, at best, discrete collections of individuals such as families or schools. On the public policy front, the devolution in federal funding has granted greater service delivery responsibility to state and local units of government, resulting in the federal government shifting funds to them and actively promoting community-level interventions. At the same time, the philanthropic world also has made community a preferential context for improving the well-being of young people. The convergence of these forces and the accompanying financial incentives have piqued interest in exploring community-based approaches to human development and deepening the inquiry into how knowledge about the influence of community can be translated into effective community change efforts on behalf of young people’s development.

Search Institute’s community change work fits naturally within this larger canvas. Hundreds of cities, towns, suburbs, and neighborhoods throughout America are currently using Search Institute’s developmental assets framework, often in conjunction with other developmental approaches and models, to guide initiatives intending to enhance the health and well-being of young people. Consequently, Search Institute has a deep and abiding interest in studying strength-based community and social change and its impact on human development. Funding from the McKnight Foundation and Aid Association for Lutherans/Lutheran Brotherhood allowed Search Institute to help build our own internal capacity to initiate a National Asset-Building Case Study Project and begin to conduct inquiry on the intersection of community change and human development. The McKnight Foundation award supported learning about the history of four strength-based community initiatives, how the initiatives operate and are actually structured, and the events that have influenced, shaped, and defined their planned change efforts.

Several questions raised in the proposal submission to the McKnight Foundation represented the study’s original and expansive thoughts about the intersection of community change and youth development. These overarching items of interest served as a launch pad that, not surprisingly, spawned a host of additional questions.

- What critical events foster awareness of positive development and how do community networks coalesce to support change?
- What occurs when communities launch initiatives to support the positive development of children and adolescents?
- What are the dynamics of change as communities utilize the developmental assets framework as a primary set of ideas for organizing and implementing a planned change effort?
- What are the pathways by which communities become more developmentally attentive?
- How do youth development frameworks like the developmental assets framework support strategies for organizing the community and eliciting a community way of thinking to promote change?
- What strategies are typically employed?
- What constituencies have engaged in what strategies and how do those activities come together to effect change in the social life and fabric of the community?
- For community initiatives, we know that the process of creating and sustaining positive change is both rewarding and challenging, but what does an organizing structure to make it happen actually look like?
- What exactly does that structure do?
- Does every community go through similar phases or stages to create an environment that is attentive to the needs of children and adolescents?
- How can citizen-engaged, multisector change be initiated and maintained?

Search Institute considered the relative priority and practicality of seeking answers to these questions. In doing so, Search Institute's primary interests were in 1) learning how these community-based initiatives are organized and structured to do the work, 2) acquiring some insight about their meaningful experiences, and 3) gaining a better appreciation of their evolution. These three primary interests reaffirmed the boundaries for the preliminary inquiry that forms the basis of this part of the report.

A Theoretical Approach to Tracking Community Pathways of Change in Pursuit of Healthy Development

Developmental attentiveness remains the goal and represents the "ends" of the intersection of community change and the healthy development of young people. Community-based human development (CBHD) is emerging as a conceptual template shaping Search Institute's efforts to understand the procedures and processes, the strategies and tactics—or the "means" by which community change secures positive child and adolescent development. The CBHD conceptual formulation sharpens thinking about the means by which communities address healthy development issues and actively work within and across different sectors (education, city services, law enforcement, congregations, business, etc.) to strengthen development for young people. Search Institute has delineated several characteristics of CBHD that are useful to consider in the context of this report. First, CBHD is "socially constructed," suggesting that clarity about the value and importance of a particular initiative unfolds and becomes apparent to community members as a natural outgrowth of their activities promoting developmental well-being. This clarity is a gradual process that eventually produces the shared meanings and common agreements that bind people together in support of healthy development. Second, and quite similar to the ways in which many scholars and practitioners have discussed the formation of social capital, CBHD manifests "self-organizing tendencies" and has a decidedly "emergent" flavor. These characteristics remind us that each and every community tends to organize and act in unique and idiosyncratic ways based upon their special set of conditions, cadre of invested stakeholders, and historical circumstances. Moreover, even with deliberative plans and carefully constructed road maps, community initiatives evolve in ways that remain highly sensitive and reactive to unforeseen developments.

To guide our study of this complex undertaking, and to help community members and organizations make sense of their change efforts on behalf of young people, Search Institute crafted a theory of change for its CBHD formulation. The theory of change helps define the journey that we believe people, organizations, and communities embark upon in the course of building the social relationships that undergird developmental attentiveness, taking collective action on behalf of young people's development, and establishing a developmentally attuned community infrastructure. We refer to the change theory as the Change Pathway.

Theoretical Basis of the Change Pathway

In order to establish a theoretical basis for the Change Pathway, we identified several key dimensions of change that required attention. First, we wanted to acknowledge change at the individual level—changes that take place within individuals that lead to and stem from efforts toward creating positive, healthy environments for young people. Second, we wanted to affirm the group level of change manifested in communities or the various socializing entities that make up a community and which leads to support for positive development. Third, we wanted to make clear that, for many people, a framework for positive development, like the developmental assets framework, offers a new way of thinking about acting (a cognitive shift) and represents an innovative approach to creating caring, competent, and responsible young people. Our initial design of the change framework has taken all of these dimensions (individual and group-level behavioral changes and cognitive shifts) into account.

We next pinpointed a representative theory for each dimension and sought to integrate those different theoretical approaches. For the personal change dimension, we employed Prochaska, DiClemente, and Norcross's theory of individual behavioral change. According to this model, personal change unfolds over several distinct stages. In the *precontemplation* stage, an individual becomes aware of a problem and begins to think about addressing it. When awareness of the problem grows to such an extent that an individual begins to seriously think about how to overcome it, but has not yet committed to taking action, he/she has moved to the *contemplation* stage. In the *preparation* stage, an individual has established the intent to take action regarding the problem, but has not yet done so. Once an individual engages in personal behavioral change and/or endeavors to change the environment to resolve the problem, he/she is in the *action* stage. After a course of action has been taken, the individual moves to the *maintenance* stage, in which he/she consolidates his/her work to sustain the behavior change.

Smelser's Theory of Collective Behavior, which addresses value-oriented and norm-oriented social movements, informs our understanding of how group social change transpires. Smelser suggests several stages through which a social movement progresses. The initial stage of *structural conduciveness* indicates whether social conditions are such that creating a movement and attempting a modification of norms is even possible. Next, in the stage labeled *strain*, pressures within the social order stimulate demands for changes in the norms and values affecting social circumstances and prompt greater potential for a movement to actually coalesce. *Generalized beliefs, precipitating factors, and mobilization for action* is a broad stage that includes three primary components: a shared belief system for interpreting the forces and pressures for change, the catalyzing events that bring people together as a precursor to action, and the actual process of organizing to catapult the movement into action. The last stage, *social control*, represents ways in which agents of the status quo deflect issues that have been raised by suppressing emotional fervor, closing off avenues for the movement to bring about normative change, or, if necessary, co-opting the entire change process as a means of managing it.

Everett Rogers's Diffusion of Innovations Theory informs us of the process by which new ideas that lead to changes in thinking and action are communicated and implemented. According to this theory, *knowledge/persuasion* occurs when an individual (or decision-making unit) is exposed to an innovation's existence, gains an understanding of it, and then forms a positive or negative attitude toward the innovation. *Decision* occurs when the individual decides whether to accept or reject the innovation. When an individual actually makes use of an innovation, he/she is in the *implementation* stage. Lastly, *confirmation* occurs when an individual seeks reinforcement of a decision, or reverses a previous decision to accept or reject the innovation because of exposure to new information.

Each of the stages, phases, and processes of the respective theories were compared and then integrated to form the Search Institute change framework. The Change Pathway comprises five distinct phases that emerged from this synthesis: (1) Receptivity, (2) Awareness, (3) Mobilization, (4) Action, and (5) Continuity.

The Phases of the Change Pathway

Each phase of the Change Pathway plays a role in bringing about developmentally-based change. For presentation purposes, the phases are presented as discrete components of an orderly pathway. Yet, we fully recognize that the phases overlap to varying degrees: oftentimes different phases are in play simultaneously, transitions to and across phases are neither linear nor sequential, and the various phases wax and wane in importance as new opportunities and challenges arise.

RECEPTIVITY: Being Open to Change.

For the change process to begin, individuals, organizations, and communities must recognize that young people's life experiences are not developmentally sound and that enhancements to the general environment, including specific life settings, are warranted. This phase reflects dissatisfaction in one's head and heart—a cognitive dissonance and an emotional unease with the developmental status quo in a particular context—and creates a willingness to consider the need for strengthening the lives of children and youth.

AWARENESS: Understanding the Possibilities of Change.

Before individuals, organizations, or communities take action around positive youth development, they are likely to need exposure to information that helps them think differently about the developmental needs of young people and exposure to situations that alter their emotional state and shift the way they feel about meeting the needs of young people. This can either be a transformative process in which they learn to think and feel differently about youth and child development, or a reinforcing situation in which their instincts, beliefs, values, and actions regarding youth and child development are validated. In both instances, they are persuaded to see novel and beneficial developmental possibilities, feel that they can make a difference, and acquire the readiness to act accordingly. In this phase, people may make an independent determination of the value of change and of their own capacity (time, skills, and opportunities) for personal engagement with young people and for taking social action to better young people’s circumstances.

MOBILIZATION: Organizing for Change.

The mobilization phase focuses on heightening individual motivation, advancing team building and other expressions of collective action, as well as crafting strategies to prompt and sustain action enhance young people’s development. A shared vision for child and youth development is articulated and individual and group action plans are created to realize it. As people and entities commit to healthy development and mobilize, they begin connecting with allies through informal networking as well as establishing more formal coalitions.

ACTION: Making Change Happen.

Bear in mind that Receptivity, Awareness, and Mobilization do not in and of themselves translate into effort. Individual and group decisions to foster the healthy development of young people do not automatically translate into strength-based behaviors and projects. In the action phase, the emphasis is on the doing. The work here is about establishing a wide range of activities that fill perceived gaps in the developmental landscape. This occurs via individual acts, organizational practices, and community initiatives.

CONTINUITY: Ensuring That the Changes Become a Way of Life.

As action around healthy development transpires, maintaining commitment becomes paramount. Perpetuating a heightened level of developmental attentiveness at individual, organization, and community levels is essential, as is ongoing attention to making development an integral part of the identity of people and places. The Continuity phase emphasizes sustaining momentum, energy, and progress around healthy development for young people so that it becomes woven into the fabric of personal, organizational, and community life. Continuity also confronts the challenges of keeping a developmental focus as the newness wears off and competing ideas come along.

One of the goals for this particular research is to acquire insight into the dynamics of each phase of the Change Pathway and the interplay among the phases, as we examine how four communities tackle the range of issues and concerns associated with promoting healthy child and youth development.

The Case Study Research Design: Adopting a Qualitative/Ethnographic Perspective

When the research purpose is to articulate a process and understand the meaning people ascribe to certain events, rather than simply measure an outcome, qualitative methods constitute the research approach of choice. The National Asset-Building Case Study Project explores how communities adopt a vision, build a plan, and implement a range of activities to foster healthy development, as well as the meaning participants attribute to that work. It is designed to offer insights about how community constituencies that do not traditionally work together come to partner in the interest of a common developmental mission. It is intended to build appreciation for how leadership plays out in community change on behalf of healthy child and youth development, and the incumbent responsibility of leaders to role model a positive development orientation both personally and professionally. It also pays homage to the tenuous economic circumstances in which this work often takes place.

Qualitative research is also characterized by the inclusion of multiple participant perspectives. In our study, we compare the perspectives of law enforcement officers and small business owners, of middle school youth and the elderly, of community leaders and everyday citizens. To capture these perspectives, we conducted individual interviews and focus groups with initiative participants. We also documented discussions at staff meetings as well as informal conversations via detailed field notes.

Our study is ethnographically informed by its emphasis on community contexts and a recognition that community change processes in support of positive development will be better understood by examining the various contexts in which personal, organizational, and social change occur. Therefore, we have paid attention to settings such as boardrooms and kitchens, law offices and classrooms, neighborhood community centers and skate parks.

We also used our expertise as field observers to gain additional perspectives on the process of change. Although we were not “participant observers” in the classic ethnographic sense, in that we did not participate in the work and/or live in the community, we did conduct field visits to capture an abbreviated, but useful, sense of the lived experience of the local initiative members and the initiative culture that evolves from engaging in community-based human development. Visiting each community initiative, albeit briefly, provided an opportunity for making a more holistic interpretation of our findings.

For this report, we used our visits to describe each of the communities by profiling their operations, depicting their context and structure, highlighting salient characteristics, and considering what their experiences mean for the Change Pathway. We selected four community initiatives that had been underway for at least two years and were likely to have reached the Mobilization and Action phases in our change theory. We began this line of inquiry without knowing what was “typical” or “unusual” in a community-based human development initiative. We approached each community to study its individual history and lived experience of developmentally driven community change, wanting to discover what each could contribute to our understanding of process. Our intent is not to generalize these finding to other initiatives. Rather, our desire is to uncover practices and strategies that may inform our understanding of the similarities and differences in the pathways through which community change takes place. We hope this analysis produces insights that communities can use to enhance their developmentally related goals.

Consistent with qualitative methodology, we took a team approach to data collection and analysis involving both Search Institute staff and researchers from Harvard University. The inclusion of researchers external to Search Institute was also intended to address implicit assumptions that Maxwell argued can be “smuggled in” when the institution conducting the research is also deeply invested in the implementation and success of the work.

In addition to multiple observers, the research design utilized triangulation, or multiple modes of data collection, to address the biases of any one method. As referenced above, the data includes transcriptions from individual interviews, focus groups, and staff meetings; observational field notes; and review of print materials and artifacts (objects or symbols, such as art, logos, awards, etc., that represent the meaning of the initiative). The research design also included visits and/or communication with the initiatives at two points in time (Time 1 and Time 2) in order to offset biases inherent in the timing of the first visit. Not surprisingly, each initiative had undergone considerable change during the interval between our two data collection points. Staff members changed, funding situations changed, and world events changed. Our research design allowed us to explore the nature of these changes and their implications.

Qualitative analysis seeks “veracity” for its data rather than validity in the traditional sense; that is, it seeks to thoroughly represent that the data through the presentation of a coherent picture, rather than measuring the accuracy of the findings against objective, external criteria. Discovery is the goal of this case study inquiry—not accurate measurement. Our concern is whether we have depicted and interpreted the processes of community change honestly and coherently and in a manner that the communities themselves determine to be verifiable and plausible. Our qualitative method focused on the search for dominant themes and striking patterns in the data. Important to this method is the ongoing search for evidence that challenges these themes and patterns as they begin to emerge, in order to keep the analytic and interpretive efforts fully rigorous. During our Time 2 visits, we presented our preliminary findings to the initiatives for feedback to assess the extent to which we had succeeded in constructing an accurate, coherent portrait.

Melding Data-Driven and Theory-Driven Orientations for Thematic Analysis

For the case study project, we incorporated both data-driven (inductive, grounded) and theory-driven (deductive, conceptual) approaches. Both approaches use thematic analysis in which salient issues and patterns identified in collected data are encoded. From a theory-driven perspective, Search Institute's Change Pathway allowed the research team to consider the evolution of the initiative and examine the data in relation to the hypothesized phases of change: Receptivity, Awareness, Mobilization, Action, and Continuity. The inductive approach was applied to the data in a manner that allowed themes and a more grounded theory to emerge independent of the Change Pathway. Combining theory-driven and grounded data orientations help to offset potential biases inherent in using the Change Pathway alone as the analytic lens. Additionally, the data-driven approach holds the potential to inform the Change Pathway by more clearly defining the phases and dynamic tensions that bind them together and keep them discrete. For our analysis to be fully credible, the process of melding the theory and data-driven approaches must be made explicit and upheld throughout the course of the analytic and interpretive process. Here again, the use of a team composed of researchers internal to Search Institute and its mission, and those external to Search Institute who bring qualitative research expertise, was a central strategy for making the melding process as rigorous and explicit as possible.

The Research Team

The team included the project's principal investigator, a field research coordinator, and a senior research assistant from within Search Institute, and two senior researchers from Harvard University. The two external researchers, Drs. Karen Foster and Michael Nakkula from Harvard's Graduate School of Education (HGSE), served as external researchers for the case study project. Nakkula is codirector of the Risk and Prevention Program, a master's specialization within the Human Development and Psychology Area at HGSE. He studies the environmental and psychosocial obstacles that place urban middle and high school students at risk for academic failure, underachievement, and general educational alienation, and the strengths that allow them to pursue options for growth. He is the cofounder of several prevention programs including Project IF: Inventing the Future, a community partnership program that places Harvard students and staff in mentoring, tutoring, and counseling relationships with youth in public schools and subsidized housing developments. His research expertise lies in mixed-method designs that combine quantitative and qualitative approaches interactively. Dr. Nakkula is also a licensed clinical psychologist with specializations in cross-cultural and substance abuse counseling. The lens he brings to the research is one of a researcher and clinician, or, as he defines himself, “applied developmentalist.”

Dr. Karen Foster of HGSE is an external consultant to Search Institute. She, too, is a trained clinical psychologist, with specializations in behavioral medicine and child and family therapies. She developed and managed the Project IF mentoring and tutoring programs for five years and continues to advise the mentors and staff of that program. Her research interests lie in developing qualitative methods to capture youth perspectives in a naturalistic way. Her research has focused on inner-city adolescents’ experiences of stress and coping, the development of civic engagement among adolescents, and mentoring. Foster’s qualitative research expertise is in the area of quasiethnographic methods and grounded theory analysis.

Shenita Lewis is the Field Research Coordinator for the project. She holds a master’s degree in Counseling from the University of Wisconsin, with a specialization in Community Counseling. Her five years of research and related training experiences include working with children, youth, and families in various capacities. Her interests specifically target children and adolescents with histories of maltreatment. While at the University of Wisconsin, she was engaged in research at a mental health institution with children and adolescents who had behavioral problems associated with histories of child maltreatment. The focus of that project was to understand whether pair counseling, a less directive and less structured psychosocial treatment modality proved effective for working with pairs of children and adolescents who had severe emotional and behavioral disorders. In addition, Lewis participated in research on children and adolescents who had histories of child maltreatment and were patients at a children’s hospital. Ms. Lewis’s group counseling experience includes co-facilitating a Southeast Asian Girls Group at a county mental health center. The unique lens that she brings to the project is her work with a range of children and adolescents in community-based treatment settings.

Nicole Hintz is Senior Research Assistant at Search Institute. She brings over five years of historical knowledge on projects and practices at Search Institute. Her prior experiences have ranged from researching engagement of faith communities in asset building, to a study of the needs and unique strengths of “distressed communities”—those particularly stressed by poverty and its concomitant lack of resources. She has worked closely with Dr. Peter Scales, a Senior Researcher at Search Institute, on a study of social norms relating to children and youth. In addition to her work at Search Institute, Ms. Hintz has worked for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, supporting mentoring relationships as a Match Advocate. She brings a community health education background to her research perspective and has specialized in qualitative methodologies centering on youth engagement and youth/adult relationships.

Dr. Marc Mannes is Director of Applied Research at Search Institute. He served as the Principal Investigator for this first wave of the case study project. He has held leadership positions in government, the nonprofit sector, and the academy, and has 25 years of experience in planning, managing, and evaluating efforts benefiting children, youth, and families at the local, state, and national levels. His professional career has dealt with the intersection of applied research, policy formulation and implementation, program and product development, organizational and community change, and training. As Principal Investigator, he provided guidance and oversight to research design and data collection and analysis. He also played a primary role in producing this report.

Case Study Site Selection

Community initiatives in Moorhead, Minnesota; Traverse Bay Area, Michigan; Orlando, Florida; and Portland, Oregon were selected for this first wave of the study based on criteria/demographics we set for representativeness. Criteria included length of existence (relatively mature versus new); geographic region; population demographics (urban, suburban, rural); and type of initiative (for example, primarily school-based versus more broadly community-based). Regarding the length-of-existence criterion, we targeted more mature initiatives because they would more likely be working towards mobilization and sustainability. This would help us gain a perspective of the full range of phases contained in the Change Pathway. Even though, for purposes of focusing in depth in Wave 1, the number of sites we selected was small, we were able to meet our sampling criteria.

	Moorhead, Minnesota	**Portland, Oregon**	**Traverse Bay Area, Michigan**	**Orlando, Florida**
Length of Existence	**7 years**	**4 years**	**3 years**	**3 years**
Geographic Region	**Midwest**	**West**	**Midwest**	**Southeast**
Urban, Rural, Suburban	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural/Small Town**	**Urban/Suburban**
Type of Initiative	**Citywide**	**County-wide**	**5–County-wide**	**County-wide**
Hypothesized Stage on Change Pathway	**Sustainability**	**Sustainability**	**Mobilization**	**Mobilization**

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection occurred over the course of 15 months, from September 2000 to December 2001. Initial visits were conducted with each of the four initiatives between September 2000 and April 2001. Each visit included an “entry interaction,” a staff meeting interview, a neighborhood walk, and an initiative focus-group interview. The purpose of the initial field visit was to provide opportunities for observation, to conduct face-to-face interviews with informants, and to gain a sense of the physical and economic context of the initiative’s work. Six to 12 months later, follow-up contact was made with each initiative to get feedback on our preliminary findings and learn of new developments in the life of the initiative. Follow-up site visits were made to three of the initiatives (Healthy Community Initiative in Orlando, Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative, and GivEm40 in Traverse Bay Area); due to travel logistics, follow-up telephone contact was made with Take the Time in Portland. The data consisted of interview and focus group transcripts, researcher field notes and memoranda, and print materials from the initiatives. The field research team that collected the data consisted of one senior researcher (Mannes or Foster) and two other staff (Lewis and Hintz).

Initial Visits. The initiative director and the field research coordinator (Lewis) constructed the two-day itinerary of focus group interviews, meetings, and observations. The “entry interaction” was a shared meal—dinner or breakfast—for the purpose of introducing the field research team and community initiative staff to each other informally and to establish rapport. Each of the four initiative directors selected which initiative members to invite to the entry interaction. The staff meeting interview was designed to learn the history of the initiative from the staff perspective, as well as the role of each staff member and how each had become involved in the work. The neighborhood walk, a visit to a local programming effort that illustrated the work of the initiative, provided opportunities to meet neighborhood leaders and residents outside of the initiative’s central office. Neighborhood walks included visits to an after-school program in Moorhead, a pilot school in Traverse City, and a youth team meeting in Orlando. To learn how the work was defined by the initiative, the personal experiences of initiative members, challenges faced, and the perception of the initiative in the larger community, focus group interview was conducted with 8 to10 participants selected by the director. The focus group questions are listed below. An interview with evaluation staff was conducted to learn the assessment strategies of the initiative and the function of the developmental assets framework, alone or in conjunction with other models, for facilitating community change.

Focus Group Protocol

1. What is your initiative doing?
2. Why is your initiative doing those things?
3. Why did you start your initiative in the first place?
4. How do you implement these ____ (e.g., strategies, things, activities)?
5. What was the most important to getting the initiative where it is today?
6. What are some of the things that happened or that you did or that just came together that seemed to move things forward?
7. What challenges did you face and how did you address them?
8. What does all of this mean to you and your community?

Interim Analysis and Preliminary Findings. Following the initial visits to the initiatives, Nakkula and Foster, the external researchers, led the research team in an analysis of the focus group transcripts. Through this process, a codebook of dominant themes from the data was developed and used to identify weaknesses in the data collection, such as missing information or ambiguities which could be addressed in the planned follow-up contact with the initiatives. A weakness we discovered in our interim analysis was the underrepresentation of youth in the various data collection modalities, despite attempts to recruit them for participation. Although youth participated in the focus group interviews, we now questioned the wisdom of having youth and adults interviewed together as our sole data collection modality with youth. This concern was rectified to the best of our ability at Time 2 (follow-up visits) and is central to our planning for the subsequent stages of this work.

Follow-Up Contact: “Member Checks.” “Member checks” (Guba, 1981, cited in Miles and Huberman, 1994), or “respondent validation,” is a process of presenting findings on the research back to the respondents in order to assess the accuracy of the findings from the respondents’ perspectives. In the case study project, member checking was conducted as a professional courtesy that underscored Search Institute’s commitment to shared learning with the participating initiatives. Member checking can reveal discrepancies in data collection and analysis; it may also put future opportunities for data collection at risk. With the passage of time, respondents may no longer make the same meaning of responses given months earlier. Researchers and respondents may interpret the same events differently. The information may conflict with the respondents’ self-interest. Nonetheless, we believed that presenting the findings back to the participants for feedback and correction provided an opportunity to increase the accuracy of our interpretations. We agree with Stewart (1998) on this point, who argued that whether or not participants agree with the researchers’ interpretations, presenting them back for review “increases the range of subjectivities” beyond our understanding alone (p. 38).

Community Presentation: Review of Time 1 Data. Presenting the information back to the communities required that the team translate preliminary findings into a jargon-free, accessible, sensitive, and brief format that could reach a large audience of respondents. We chose to utilize large screen-projected displays of the preliminary findings accompanied by live narration by Lewis and Foster. The presentation was a main feature of our return trips. The initiatives were eager to hear what we had learned about them and the other three initiatives; we were eager to assess the accuracy of our preliminary findings. The presentation was intended to be an invitation for community discussion and was limited to 30 minutes. In some cases, responses came from the community following the presentation; in others, the initiative participants raised questions and discussion during the presentation.

Collection of Time 2 Data. Follow-up contact occurred six to ten months following the initial visit and included two-day visits with three initiatives and telephone interviews with the fourth initiative (Take the Time in Portland). In addition to the community presentation, we conducted individual interviews with key informants who we felt could address missing or ambiguous information. We conducted a staff focus group to learn of new developments and changes in the work since our initial visit. A youth focus group was conducted when possible to allow for freer youth participation than the mixed adult-youth focus groups. When focus group scheduling was not possible, individual interviews were conducted with youth.

Individual and group data collection modalities allowed us to triangulate (gain multiple perspectives from multiple sources or approaches) what we learned, thereby securing further consistency or reliability of information. The various data collection modalities also provided different capabilities for capturing precision or depth of data. Staff focus groups allowed participants to help each other recall information, but, in some cases, became a forum for discussion of more personal or conflicting issues. In such cases, individual interviews or even informal conversations proved most useful.

For the Time 2 visits, Foster replaced Mannes, providing an external voice and perspective, thereby serving as a check on internal bias. Mannes is not only the internal Principal Investigator on the project, but also the primary author of the Change Pathway model; as such, we found it important to balance the Search Institute perspective by including a member of the Harvard team on the return trip. Hintz and Lewis from Search Institute were consistent to both the initial visits and follow-up visits, thereby providing continuity of perspective.

Developing the Codebook

Extensive qualitative data was collected for this case study project, presenting a challenging task for data management and analysis. Based on the guiding themes of the study, including our interest in the Change Pathway, we conducted a thematic analysis to uncover and link the critical themes in the data. In this section, we summarize the process by which a “qualitative codebook” was developed to help categorize themes and focus the analysis. A qualitative codebook organizes thematic material into a carefully constructed manual that is used to interpret data from a variety of sources.

Audiotapes of the focus groups from the four sites were transcribed after each visit. The focus group transcripts constituted the primary source of raw data used to identify the themes that were compiled in a codebook. Transcripts from staff meetings and community presentations were also used. A team of four researchers—two from Search Institute and two from Harvard University—served as “coders,” or readers of the transcripts for the purpose of constructing and extracting themes. The resulting codebook is a compilation of codes from each of the four sites. Rather than creating individual codebooks for each individual site, codes were created for comparison across sites. This working codebook will continue to evolve as Search Institute and Harvard University study additional HC • HY communities.

To develop the codebook, the transcribed interview data was broken down into smaller, more discrete pieces of information, or categorical themes, which ultimately will be integrated into coherent case-study presentations. The data reduction began with a standard process of “open coding,” which is defined as a means of capturing nontheoretically-driven concepts or categories of responses that emerge from data. Open coding literally refers to the importance of staying open to that which is striking or stands out in the data, without being overly guided by theoretical or practical assumptions. As such, open codes were primarily inductive or data-driven, rather than being constructed in response to our working model of change. To help organize the open codes, the research team used a model developed by Boyatzis (1998) for the structuring and analysis of thematic data. In general, the codes were more interpretive than descriptive; that is, they focused more on the participants’ challenges, thoughts, and concerns, and less on the description of their roles and the classification of activities in which they engaged. Nonetheless, for our purposes, both descriptive and interpretive data are important to the study, so both types are captured to varying degrees in the codebook.

Boyatzis developed five elements of a good thematic code:

- Label—a label or name of the code;
- Definition—a definition of what the theme concerns;
- Indicators—a description of how to know when the theme occurs;
- Qualifications and exclusions—a description of any qualifications or exclusions to the identification of the theme; and
- Examples—a positive and negative example of the code.

In addition to these basic elements of the Boyatzis model, the research team added the element of "dimensionalization." Dimensions are defined as specific aspects of larger, more general codes. Because we are using the codebook to analyze data across multiple sites, we require the capacity to track and document specific commonalities and differences across sites. Dimensionalizing allows us to comparatively analyze broad, general categories of responses, as well as more specific aspects of those categories. An example of a code that was dimensionalized is "Orientation Shift," which reflects the focus-group participants' discussion about the importance of shifting from deficit-based to strength-based attitudes toward youth. But this general code does not provide information regarding the target of this shift. Some participants discuss the shift in perspective as it applies to themselves: "I had to change my thinking about youth before I could really do this asset work." For this we added the dimension of "Self," with the full code reading "***Orientation Shift—Self***." Participants also talked about the importance of others needing to make this shift; that was coded "***Orientation Shift—Others***." Such dimensionalizing was added to the majority of codes, allowing for a very specific analysis of the meaning communicated by the participants.

After codes were constructed and organized into a first iteration of the codebook (Code Construction Task), two coders—one from Search and one from Harvard—individually applied each of the codes to the Time 1 transcripts from all four sites (Code Application Task). Following completion of the Application Task, our team of four coders compared the applications of each two-coder team. This process resulted in confirming applications that were similar across the two coders and debating applications that differed. Each debate resulted in a final consensus of the agreed-upon code application; at times, this consensus required a revision of the codebook to best capture the meaning of the thematic material. We termed this the Consensus and Revision Task. It resulted in agreed-upon coding for all four sites and a rigorous and comprehensive codebook. Currently being completed is a Reliability Task, in which the coders will use the newly revised codebook to assess their application consistency to the transcripts from our Time 2 visits, for which the focus group data has not yet been coded.

The identified and coded themes that emerged as prominent during this first stage of our interpretive data analysis are salient to one or more of the four initiatives. In some cases, an initiative contributed a unique theme to the study, such as senior citizen involvement in the Orlando initiative, which we coded ***Elder Engage***. In other cases, common themes were applicable to several of the initiatives even though they manifested differently; an example is the description of the community sectors committed to the work of the initiative (coded ***Sector Connection***) and the specific ways in which they are involved. Law enforcement was an influential partnering sector in both the Traverse Bay Area and Moorhead initiatives, but the nature of the police involvement was markedly different in these two communities.

All code applications resulting from the Time 1 Consensus and Revision Task have been entered into the NVIVO software package we're using for analysis. NVIVO allows for thorough and efficient searching of the codes and connects them to related data. It allows for the embedding of links to external multimedia data or internal documents, including ideas stored as annotations and rich text memos that can also be coded, linked, and searched. The research team is primarily using this software to manage the coded data. Only data that has gone through the Consensus and Revision Task, which is a particularly rigorous form of reliability checking, is entered into the system. A powerful aspect of NVIVO is its searching capacity. Instead of tediously searching through multiple files and reams of paper, our coded data can be quickly accessed through NVIVO's electronic searching capacity.

A condensed and practical version of the codebook is presented in the next section of this report. (The dimensionalization aspects of each code are not included.) The codes have been organized into three categories:

- Codes that provide insights regarding how Developmentally Attentive *Community Building* occurs;
- Codes that imply a *Social Movement* is afoot regarding developmental attentiveness, and
- Codes that suggest how *Community Infrastructure* is reoriented to foster developmental attentiveness.

The codes have been organized into the three categories on the basis of a thorough review of the community development field and an assessment of how the methods of community development are impacting the expression of community-based approaches to the development of young people.

The Thematic Codebook

This condensed version of the codebook describes and defines the themes that emerged from the application of qualitative research methods to the transcripts of the focus group sessions that were conducted during our site visits to the four Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth initiatives. The thematic codes have been clustered into three categories that are indicative of the primary ways in which these community-based human development initiatives work to build thriving young people. The subject matter of the three categories deals with: 1) community building on behalf of development; 2) collective social action indicative of a social movement emphasizing development; and 3) attempts to reorient the community infrastructure to enhance development.

Building Community Developmental Attentiveness

Initiatives build a community sense of developmental attentiveness by helping youth and adults develop an appreciation for their potential to support, and their capacity to become purposeful about, the healthy development of young people. The intent here is to maintain the recognition of community as place—a defined geographic setting—while also evoking community as relational—with the relations predicated upon promoting the development of children and adolescents. The expectation is that under the rubric of developmental attentiveness, people transition from being community residents of a particular place to being engaged community members committed to building human connections. Community building fosters an emotional closeness and social relatedness that runs counter to maintaining isolated, self-absorbed lifestyles. The codes deal, in part, with affective aspects of inner life that contribute to the emotional basis of one’s social self. They also address human relations issues that serve as the foundation for positive social interactions and lead to greater social cohesion. The codes reflect the tapping of interpersonal and social networks and suggest methods that create the personal and interpersonal foundation of developmental attentiveness.

Fueling a Developmentally Attentive Social Movement

Initiatives help spawn a social movement by harnessing the community-wide energy catalyzed by adult and youth recognition of the importance of collective social action on behalf of developmental attentiveness. The notion of “social movement” encompasses the transcendent process by which individuals and groups view their actions as integral to a higher calling and a more broad-based phenomenon. It entails the means by which people either self-organize, or are organized around shared developmental interests and then act collectively to bring about healthy development. Oftentimes, there are precipitating events or critical moments that galvanize people to work collectively and spearhead ongoing activity. Social movement codes notate the formation and exhibition of a shared belief system that drives group behavior and the use of symbols that propel the work. The codes also evoke the visionary, reformer, agitator, and statesperson aspects of leadership that are vital to advancing a social movement’s goals.

Reorienting Community Infrastructure to Strengthen Developmental Attentiveness

Initiatives reorient community infrastructure through the actual work of adults and youth revamping aspects of agencies, institutions, and formal groups that comprise community life so they become more supportive of developmental attentiveness. Efforts to change the community infrastructure have a decidedly sector flavor. The intent is to transform various life settings such as schools and congregations that directly influence the lives of young people, as well as community sectors such as law enforcement and business that can make meaningful contributions to the developmental strengths of young people. Interest is in creating a conducive climate, developing policies and procedures, and promoting practices that enhance developmental well-being. The realignment of delivery systems and the forging of cross-sector alliances are of particular interest to those seeking to alter the community’s infrastructure. The community infrastructure codes encompass systemic and interorganizational factors through a consideration of structural, operational, and programmatic strategies. The codes pay particular attention to planning and implementation of tasks seen as relevant to enhancing healthy development.

COMMUNITY BUILDING CODES

1. ADULTS TOO

   Definition: References to adults needing developmental assets, just as youth do.

2. AFFIRMATION

   Definition: Some individuals and organizations have always tended to have a strength-based perspective. The Developmental Asset framework serves to reaffirm or validate their strength-based beliefs, thoughts, structures, or processes that are already in place.

3. AWAKENING

   Definition: Youth or adult member of the initiative recognizes a bias they have held toward another youth or adult, which results in coming to understand things differently.

4. BAGGAGE ASSESSMENT

   Definition: Respondent discussed taking stock of personal issues that were interfering with the asset initiative and had to be worked through or addressed in order to effectively engage with the initiative.

5. COMMON LANGUAGE

   Definition: Acknowledgement of the asset framework providing a positive language that allows everyone to understand the work of the initiative.

6. DOING WITH, NOT PROVIDING FOR

   Definition: References to youth or adults being engaged in solving problems or participating in constructive activities, as opposed to being recipients of services or programming.

7. ELDER ENGAGE

   Definition: Senior citizens referenced as an important sector of the community that needs to be engaged in the initiative.

8. GUIDING PURPOSE

   Definition: Core philosophy/beliefs and values that guide the initiative.

9. HALF-FULL GLASS

    Definition: Recognition of wellness, strength, or positive resources within the community.

10. IT'S SIMPLE, BUT…

    Definition: Assets are simple, doable things that people can do with little extra effort. However, there may be barriers or difficulties that keep people from engaging in asset-building activities.

11. KEEP IT SIMPLE, KEEP IT SMALL

    Definition: Keeping focused on the simplicity of assets in order for people to not feel overwhelmed.

12. LANGUAGE HINDRANCE

    Definition: The language of developmental assets or of an initiative may be hard to grasp and communicate by individuals and sectors, thereby rendering the initiative less effective.

13. MEANS OF ASSET EXPOSURE

    Definition: This is *how* or the *means through* which the developmental assets framework and message are spread, shared, or transmitted to others inside and outside the initiative.

14. ORIENTATION SHIFT – *OTHERS (THEY, THEM, THOSE, OUR)*

    Definition: An individual makes a judgement that someone, the community, or a particular sector(s) has shifted or needs to shift their thinking and/or action/behavior about youth and children from deficits (negative) to strengths (positive).

15. ORIENTATION SHIFT – *SELF (I, ME, MY, WE)*

    Definition: A shift from deficits (negative) to strengths (positive) in individuals' thinking or actions/behavior about or toward children and youth.

16. PARENT RECEPTIVITY

    Definition: Parents' response to the initiative or asset framework.

17. PARENT SUPPORT

Definition: Statements by initiative members addressing the need to support parents in their efforts, often juxtaposing this to the typical “blame the parents” model.

18. PEER TO PEER

Definition: References to youth building assets for and with other youth.

19. PERSONAL 1ST

Definition: An individual, organization, or community takes the asset framework, understands it, gains more knowledge about it, and feels passionate about it before promoting it and informing others.

20. PERSONAL GRATIFICATION

Definition: Self-benefit that stems from involvement in an asset initiative.

21. SELF-REFERENCE

Definition: When a member of the initiative references a personal or professional experience and connects it to the initiative or assets model.

22. SURVEY REACT

Definition: Reactions to survey results.

23. UNDERLYING VALUES

Definition: Recognition that shared values among participants are essential to initiative success.

24. YOUTH ASPIRATIONS

Definition: The initiative helps youth develop their dreams. There is an emphasis on learning, discovery and building a knowledge base. Youth reference learning or preparing for later asset development and life work.

25. YOUTH VALUE

Definition: A demonstrated genuineness by members of the initiative, community, or different sectors toward youth that is marked by engaging, empowering, listening, valuing, soliciting, and respecting youth’s opinions, ideas, feedback, and efforts.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT CODES

26. A CALLING

Definition: Feeling personally drawn to a special or “larger than everyday life” mission of the asset-building work.

27.ALL KIDS

Definition: The focus of assets should be on all youth, not just youth that are troubled.

28. ANYBODY & EVERYBODY

Definition: One does not have to be in a position of authority, of a particular status, or have special abilities to build or share assets or personal stories.

29. BRANDING

Definition: Participants of the initiative talk about a name and some visual representation that identifies the initiative, typically for the purpose of enhancing the initiative’s visibility to the public.

30. EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY

Definition: Everyone is responsible for playing a role in promoting healthy youth development and building a positive community.

31. EVIDENCE OF CREDIBILITY

Definition: A group effort, research, and/or credible leaders makes the initiative valid, legitimate, and credible, thus leading to some benefit.

32. FUTURE INVESTMENT

Definition: Both adult and youth initiative members devote time and commit to building assets for the purposes of having a healthy community and future.

33.GROWTH METAPHOR

Definition: Use of metaphors to describe any aspect of the initiative growth or development.

34. GUIDING STORIES

Definition: Sharing of common or symbolic stories that represent or organize the work, experiences, or history of an initiative.

35. INCONGRUENT EXPECTATIONS

Definition: Discrepancy between the thoughts, ideas, and understanding different individuals and organizations have about the mission, vision, activities and plans of the initiative.

36. INGREDIENTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Definition: Key pieces that have been identified as necessary to the long-term development and maintenance of the initiative.

37. JOINING IN

Definition: Specific reasons for joining the initiative at specific points in time.

38. LEADERSHIP DETERMINATION

Definition: A strong champion, organization, or group demonstrating experience and wisdom critical to success of the initiative, which moves the initiative forward to a stage that it would not otherwise have reached.

39. LEADERSHIP MODELS

Definition: The intentional type of management or guidance style of the initiative.

40. LONG HAUL

Definition: A Healthy Communities• Healthy Youth initiative is a long-term social and community change effort that could take decades to have significant and meaningful impact.

41. MOVEMENT NOT A PROGRAM

Definition: References to the initiative being larger that just a program and more of a social movement.

42. NEW NORM

Definition: New norm is the perspective and vision of working toward a community that naturally builds assets. Asset building becomes normative.

43. SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION

Definition: Symbols initiative participants use to describe or represent the initiative. Visual representation of the initiative through art or images.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE CODES

44 ALTERNATIVE MODELS

Definition: The non-Search Institute strength-based frameworks that initiatives use to support and compliment the development asset model.

45. BARRIERS

Definition: Obstacles to mobilizing, sustaining, and/or developing the initiative.

46. CHANGE AS WE LEARN

Definition: Initiatives learn from their successes, challenges, and mistakes which results in making a shift in direction or action on the basis of new insight or perspective. Gaining knowledge and experience sheds new light on difficult processes, procedures, and other challenges.

47. CONNECTIVITY

Definition: Bringing together different sectors of people in support of the common mission of the initiative.

48. CONTEXT CREATE

Definition: References to the need for creating a place, philosophically or literally, to locate and propel the work of the initiative.

49. DISSIMILARITY

Definition: References to bringing together different sectors of people with different perspectives who normally do not interact. This also concerns the challenge of bridging the barriers that commonly keep sectors from interacting and sharing information, perspective, and resources.

50. FUNDING STRATEGIC

Definition: Specific approaches to raising financial support for the initiative and strategies for use of existing funds.

51. IMPACT ASSESS

Definition: References to assessing the depth and sustainable effect of the initiative on the community or society.

52. KEY BRIDGES

Definition: Critical connections across sectors facilitated by a key individual, organization, or group.

53. LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Definition: The degree or type of involvement one has with the initiative.

54. LITTLE THINGS COUNT

Definition: Small efforts are necessary and move things forward in the initiative.

55. LIVING IT OUT

Definition: References to taking actions that illustrate behaviors consistent with developmental assets.

56. MAKING IT HAPPEN

Definition: People; resources; concrete tasks—e.g., events, activities, planning processes that move the initiative along and give rise to other things happening.

57. MEDIA FIERCE

Definition: Strong emphasis placed on the role of the media in the initiative, including the importance of understanding how the media shapes people’s perspectives on youth and how the media can be used to enhance the work of the initiative.

58. NOT A SCHOOL SLAM

Definition: Stated or implied that school has been held responsible for youth deficits in the past.

59. NOT QUITE THERE

Definition: Sustained effort and enthusiasm in the face of recognizing that the initiative is currently falling short of desired goals and expectations.

60. PROCESS OF EXPANSION

Definition: Respondents state how the initiative spreads through intentional strategies or unintentional events or circumstances.

61. SEARCH INSTITUTE’S ROLE-RESPONSIBILITY

Definition: References to responsibilities (e.g., financial, technical support, inspirational, etc.) that lie with Search Institute to community initiatives.

62. SECTOR CONNECTION

Definition: Specific ways in which sectors connect with the initiative and each other.

63. SHARED LEARNING

Definition: Sharing experiences of asset building and social change for the purpose of capacity building, exchanging ideas, and sharing knowledge within and across initiatives.

64. SPARE NO OPPORTUNITY

Definition: Individuals belonging to different sectors enthusiastically utilize the focus group to disseminate materials and information specific to their work or sector.

65. SPREAD CONTROL

Definition: References to the initiative's work being too broad, too big, and needing to make some decisions as to what things need to be honed down and where the initiative expends its efforts.

66. STRATEGIC CARE

Definition: Intentional action related to the implementation of the initiative.

67. UNIQUE ADAPT

Definition: Concerns initiative members' recognition that existing systems and ways of doing things need to be understood and respected, as the asset framework is uniquely negotiated to fit the needs of each system.

68. YOUTH ACTIVITY

Definition: General code for capturing the types of activities in which youth participate in the initiative.

69. YOUTH STRATEGIC

Definition: Thoughtful actions and ideas carried out or recommended by youth.

Bounding the Data: Moving from Thematic Codebook to Interpretive Analysis of Wave 1 Initiatives

A challenge in field research is reducing hundreds of pages of interview transcripts, field notes, artifacts, and memoranda into key findings. That challenge is often referred to as the need for "bounding the data." The bounding process pulls the data together around a given focus and presents it within a structure that brings the data to life and makes it meaningful to the targeted audiences. Through our analysis, we attempt to bring the data to life by highlighting what we see as most significant within and across the four initiatives. In addition, since our data consist largely of interviews—individual and group—we make sure we incorporate the actual voices of initiative participants. This allows us to stay consistent with a basic tenet of qualitative research: providing the reader with a sense of the participants' lived experience of the phenomenon at hand (Seidman, 1991). In our case, that phenomenon is community change resulting from the developmental assets framework.

We chose to bound the data in a format that: 1) appreciates the "context" of each site; 2) delineates "noteworthy themes" from the codebook that find expression in the initiatives; and 3) guages how the evolution of each initiative helps inform our Change Pathway.

The interpretive findings begin with a summary description that locates the initiative within its economic, social, and historical environment and highlights a number of structural characteristics that lay the groundwork for subsequent interpretation. These descriptions are based on print resources provided by the initiatives, such as evaluation reports, quarterly progress reports, newspaper articles, and meeting minutes, in addition to transcripts of interviews, staff meetings, and focus groups. The second and third sections stem largely from employing the thematic codebook, which was primarily derived from analyzing focus group transcripts The second section directly links the codebook with certain attributes and circumstances of the community-based initiatives. This section provides examples of the thematic codes in the four sites, citing actual codes. Finally, the third section considers how the initiative’s experiences relate to the hypothesized phases of the Change Pathway and how those experiences can be used to inform the utility of the Pathway. Here again, when appropriate, relevant thematic codes are identified. Our interpretations for this section are preliminary because the analytic process is ongoing and only partially presented in this report. Our interpretations could be modified with more complete integration of follow-up data.

The interpretive analysis depicts each community as a discrete entity, though when appropriate, it makes comparisons across sites, allowing each presentation to build on the prior one. This approach is in keeping with authentic depiction of an interactive analytic process, as described by Maxwell (1996). Each initiative visit and resulting transcript affected how we experienced and analyzed the next visit or transcript. The content of the portraits of each site reflects some of that natural effect.

Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative

Moorhead, Minnesota

> Parents just know that kids are able to stay after school and get homework help . . . Sometimes they didn't know that it was Healthy Community that was funding it, or if it was the school district that was funding it (Staff Meeting, p. 17).

Context of the Initiative

Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative (MHCI) began in 1994 in response to an increase in youth violence. It is the second oldest HC • HY initiative in the country. Moorhead is a city of approximately 32,177 residents (US Census, 2000). The largest community of color is Mexican American, followed by Native American, and African American, with the combined communities of color comprising 5.7 percent of the population; however, the public school population is 15 percent students of color. A primary employer is the sugar beet and sugar-refining industry which has a seasonal migrant workforce. The area hosts three institutions of higher education: Concordia College, Minnesota State University-Moorhead, and Northwest Technical College. Moorhead shares a border and a river with Fargo, North Dakota, a larger and more affluent community of approximately 70,000 residents. There is a history of barriers to partnership between the two cities, according to focus group participants, who said that Moorhead is viewed as Fargo's "poor stepsister," due to its larger population of migrant workers and lower-income citizens.

Youth Access, Isolation, and Representation. MHCI's development was driven by the lack of resources and opportunities for youth to constructively use their time. There were few organized activities on the weekends and during the summers, and negative, racist stereotypes of youth, especially youth of color, prevailed. It was fairly common for parents to be perceived as unaccountable. Lack of transportation limited access to existing youth programs, and negative peer pressure was viewed as having little competition due to the lack of constructive alternatives. Focus group responses consistently depicted the critical importance of the asset-building work in countering this grim picture:

> I think my favorite activity in this initiative is the money that we've been able to raise for kids. First, it was youth of color, and now it's all youth who have, ah, their economic situation is such that they cannot afford to buy those pairs of skates to go out for hockey, or to pay for those piano lessons, or to get involved in some kind of what I want to call an extracurricular activity. And you know, Moorhead is a big enough place that if you aren't practicing a golf shot at seven or eight, if you aren't playing basketball . . . you're not going to be in any of those events in high school, in all likelihood. You can't show up as a ninth grader and say, 'I think this is a golf club. Show me how to play golf,' and get on the team, like you might in a real small town. And so, to give those kids that same start, to me, is something that I think is . . . you gotta do that. (Focus Group, p. 8)
>
> The new program that we've started, ah . . . I called Diana once and I said, 'You know, there's probably a lot of kids who just don't have access to a college campus. And for whatever reason, they may perceive that a college education or even just post-secondary isn't part of their story. You know, what can we do about that?' . . . We created this program called 'Linking Up'…whereby every sixth grader got a field trip to one of the three higher-ed institutions, over 250 sixth graders. (Focus Group, p. 20)
>
> And I remember when my son was trying with some of his friends . . . to get a skateboard park going . . . Ah, one of the council people . . . said, 'Well, you know we don't do special interest groups in the park system.' Somebody else said, 'Well, what about the golfers, the tennis courts, all these other people?' I mean what's the definition of a park? A park is supposed to be swings, a swimming pool, tennis course, golf courses.

> Skateboard, what’s that, you know? And the idea being that, well, traditionally kids are supposed to like tennis and golf. What’s this little board with wheels on it? And . . . to have an organization that says, ‘Well, maybe this generation has other ideas of what constitutes the way they spend their time, and that it might actually be healthy to have that to go to. (Focus Group, p. 30)

MHCI is characterized by its strong commitment to developing youth resources where none existed, and for assuring access to these resources for all youth, particularly youth of color. The list of achievements—which includes the awarding of Youth of Color Scholarships, the establishment of Raices de Mexico After School Enrichment program, which travels and performs throughout the state, an American Indian Youth Cultural Awareness Club, and the Quinceañera Club for preteen and teenage girls—reflects the commitment to diversity. After-school activities were funded by state grants and youth are able to attend them free of charge. Increasing after-school bus transportation addressed barriers to access.

MHCI has had a large board of directors: thirty members can serve up to two three-year terms. The size of the board is intended to ensure representation and a broad range of expertise. The option to serve two terms is intended to provide adequate time to acclimate to the working context of the board, as well as provide continuity for MHCI. There are three paid staff positions, in addition to the director. In the past year, a communications coordinator position was to promote the initiative’s work.

Focus on Out-of-School Time and Partnerships with Law Enforcement and Higher Education. The initiative’s community-infrastructure focus has largely been on developing programs and activities to address the lack of positive youth development opportunities during out-of-school time. This effort has actively engaged the school system, which often houses the before-school and after-school programming. In addition to the school system, the inclusion of community law enforcement is a structural feature of MHCI, and the initiative shares a building with juvenile crime prevention officers of the community police force. MHCI moved into this shared space in 2000 when the initiative relocated from a downtown banking building to a former church rectory, based in a residential neighborhood. The new space is adjacent to two elementary schools, which has increased youth traffic for the after-school programming between the schools themselves, and the MHCI offices. Most importantly, it has increased opportunities for positive relationship-building between youth and law enforcement. Given a history of strained relations between minorities and police, MHCI has intentionally fostered increased contact between law enforcement and youth in positive contexts.

MHCI is also linked to the university system through board members who are faculty in child development, education, counseling, social justice, and community partnership. MSU-Moorhead became an established partner of the initiative through the advocacy of faculty who had been active on the Asset Teams and are now on the MHCI board. By virtue of this connection, a large mentoring program called “Linking Up” has used college students as mentors for young people in the community. Dr. Steve Grineski’s students are matched with Moorhead youth in four neighborhoods, including Greenwood, for community-based tutoring as part of their preservice teacher training. Mentoring activities have brought college students to the neighborhoods and are changing the traditional “town/gown” divide, which had kept students sequestered on campus. College students receive course credit for their participation as mentors. “Linking Up” is part of a national mentoring movement, and one of MHCI’s roles is to serve as a local clearinghouse for organizations interested in starting mentoring programs and for individuals interested in becoming mentors.

Specialized after-school programming for Hispanic youth was developed and championed through the efforts of outreach coordinator Sonia Hohnadel, and $13,000 was awarded through Youth of Color and Thompson Scholarships in one year. Raices de Mexico, a performing arts program, promoted a positive image of diverse youth through statewide performances.

The initiative was striking, compared to the other three, for committing its attention and finances so heavily to particular elements of the infrastructure, out-of-school time and youth access to resources (***Youth Value***). No doubt that emphasis provided new concrete developmental opportunities for youth and in infusing strength-based philosophy and approaches within the community. Engagement with other sectors of the community beyond the schools might possibly foster more widespread community ownership of MHCI.

Changes in Leadership. MHCI is at a particularly interesting point in its history. Between our first and second site visits to Moorhead, Diana Hatfield, initiative director for six years, resigned, and Barry Nelson was hired. Nelson is a trained social worker and administrator from a prominent refugee agency and has a strong human-development background. He used our visit to better orient himself to HC • HY initiatives, which had not been heavily emphasized during his hiring process. In addition to a new director, the board of directors was about to undergo major turnover as many members were reaching the end of their second terms. In contrast to feelings of discouragement reported by the field team in March, those associated with MHCI seemed reenergized in October.

Tension with Fargo and Emergent Partnership Potential. Over the course of our interviews with MHCI, the relationship with neighboring Fargo was repeatedly referenced. A degree of rivalry and less than positive feeling often surfaced. A participant in one of the focus groups argued that: “North Dakota has been exporting its poor since it became a state” (Focus Group, p. 29). Others expressed concern that Fargo demonstrated little interest in genuine partnership around activities like the healthy community effort, but would on occasion make superficial connections to Moorhead to secure recognition stemming from the partnership, including opportunities for funding. Sharing the All-American City Award in 2000 is cited as an example of Fargo benefiting from partnership, but having little interest in Moorhead otherwise.

> Fargo-Moorhead went together this year, in 2000, to compete for All-American City Award and they won. But the untold story is that in 1998 and 1999, Moorhead was already up there in the top 30 finalists, and we were there. And Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative was the [lead project] they were bragging about . . . we worked our tails off, and we put in tons of hours to try to tell our story. The Civic League said ‘We’re all about regionalism now, so if you, Moorhead, really think you want to win, then you’ve got to do a joint application with Fargo.’ (Focus Group, p. 27)

Tensions between the two communities extend into multiple aspects of community life, many of them converging around the well-being of children and youth:

> Our superintendent and mayor have had two meetings with Dilworth, Fargo, and West Fargo to say . . . kids don't stop at the river. Let's make this a Health Community region. Blah-blah-blah'. We did our pitch. We da-da-da. They had absolutely no interest whatsoever in this. (Focus Group, p. 27)

According to many MHCI participants, Moorhead is viewed as a "welfare magnet" by Fargo, because of its higher population of migrants, low-income residents, and visible homelessness. The *Fargo Forum*, the major newspaper serving both cities, was described as featuring negative news about Moorhead, and the larger Minnesota state papers are viewed as pretty much neglecting Moorhead altogether.

> We don't have our own newspaper. We don't get morning news from the *Fargo Forum* . . . we're so doggone far from Minneapolis-St Paul, even when they have legislative news [that involves us] in their paper, you look what it is, [it's] this tiny graphic down there . . . the attitude is that we don't get our fair share of state revenues, ah, attention. (Staff Meeting, p. 9)

Initiative members expressed concern over losing representation if they were to partner with Fargo, due to its larger size and disdainful attitude. However, they also recognized the movement toward regionalization and appeared to be readying themselves for renewed efforts at building a trusting relationship between the two cities. Several past board members of MHCI have been residents of Fargo, and the new director currently lives there, suggesting potential for cooperation.

Blend of Old and New. As the most mature of the four initiatives, MHCI was an especially important contributor to the case study. At the same time, it was the only initiative to experience a change in directorship. Our visit was enhanced by the opportunity to view longstanding achievements, processes, and concerns through the eyes of the new director, Barry Nelson, who talked with us several times during our two-day visit. Further, because Nelson was barely a month into his position, participants in our focus groups and meetings had an added incentive to share information; our visit served as an opportunity for the staff to further inform its new leader. The community presentation during our return trip to Moorhead had the largest audience of the three initiatives we visited twice during the case study. Those in attendance were active in sharing historical background and in framing contemporary challenges, seemingly to inform both the research team and the new director.

Noteworthy Expression of Themes

The dominant interpretive themes from the Moorhead initiative focused on sustainable funding and recognition of accomplishments. The funding issues seemed intertwined with the fact that MHCI did not receive credit for changes in the community infrastructure that resulted from its labor (***Impact Assess***). However, the larger issue of financial sustainability suggested the need to encourage community ownership of the initiative and to locate funding within the community, rather than feel beleaguered by funding sources that did not understand the long-term nature of the work (***Funding Strategic***).

The Poor Fit between Funding Frameworks and Initiative Mission

> So the challenge is that . . . most of the funding sources are targeted to certain little issues, and we are broader than that . . . And at a time when we have nine different funding sources, it becomes a big challenge for Deb and I and our accountant and our treasurer to go . . . there are those intricacies that take a lot of attention. (Focus Group, p. 10)

The initiative’s maturity allowed us to extensively explore a challenge encountered by all of the initiatives—the difficult fit between traditional funding approaches and the HC • HY orientation. The most obvious disparity between funding priorities and community-based human development involves the “time perspective” as it relates to the delivery of programs. Programs are typically funded on a yearly basis and and expected to produce measurable impacts, or indicators of change, in a short timeframe. MHCI participants adhere to a longer-term vision that must be maintained over time in order to bring about change in the community (***Long Haul***). MHCI’s Annual Report (2000-2001) referenced the 20 to 30 years’ time frame applied to other social initiatives, such as seatbelt use, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, and the antismoking campaign. HC • HY efforts depart from the typical nature of funding over partnership issues. Community-based human development is characterized by pooling resources and bringing disparate constituencies together in the service of an environment fostering healthy youth development (***Connectivity-Sectors***). Contrary to this approach, request for proposals often foster competition for scarce resources, thereby splintering the community. The misfit of funding and community-change frameworks raises the question of whether HC • HY initiatives should pay more attention to explicitly engaging funders as partners in the initiatives (***Funding Strategic***). In several cases, we heard foundation program officers describe the appeal of working with the developmental assets framework and the community change it fosters. In Moorhead, the following story was shared:

> In our early days, we were very much a general purpose grant maker, we had all kinds of grant applications coming in for this year’s Campfire program or Boy Scout program, but very little that had any kind of long-term impact. So we started looking for models . . . ah, and . . . we modeled a grant program, really, on the kind of things that were being done in Moorhead . . . with the Healthy Community Initiative . . . and for the last five years, we’ve been building that program in partnership. We’re a funny funder in that we don’t just hand people money and go away. Ah, we tend to . . . kind of get in partnership with the people that . . . to whom we provide resources. And so we’ve learned a tremendous amount from Moorhead. Moorhead’s benefited by the money, but I think, also, by the assistance of our staff at various times with various issues . . . their staff might be facing. So it’s been a real two-way street for us. (Staff Meeting, p. 8)

Another strategy for addressing the incompatibility between short-term traditional funding goals and the longer range goals of the initiative was to encourage community ownership of the initiative, much as a congregation or college approaches financial development through donor programs and planned giving.

> Well, the problem with that, then, is that everybody's focused on that area where the pool of resources is rather finite, versus the capacity of individuals . . . of individual giving, which is much less restrictive and finite. People's generosity is, frankly, the biggest, you know, resource we've got out there. (Focus Group, p. 16)

The decision of businessman Steve Scheels to sponsor a matching grant this past year to encourage local businesses to contribute to the initiative is an effort to stimulate community ownership (***Key Bridges*** and ***Making It Happen-Funding***). Scheels has given large grants over the past several years without the matching challenge.

While all four initiatives realized that a programmatic perspective does not easily fit a long-term orientation focused on organizing people into a movement for community change (***Movement, Not a Program***), MHCI provided important detail related to funding a movement—how challenging it is and what strategies might be included.

Capturing Influence, Impacts, and Crediting the Initiative. A common experience among the four initiatives is the difficulty of discerning not only what's happening to youth and adults in the communities as a result of the change intiatives, but also *how* it's happening.

> [You ask yourself] 'Do these things actually happen?' You've gotten the money, 'Great, look at all the numbers, look at all these [reported assets on the surveys] . . . but what assets?' . . . I'm not saying that they haven't happened, but it has been a concern in the past, saying, 'Okay, you said you did this. What kind of outcomes?' How do you measure, just because somebody says, 'Yes, I interacted with an adult.' Is that an asset? (Focus Group, p. 28)

Gauging the effects of the type of initiative MHCI is and what it tries to do to change the community infrastructure around healthy development in order to make the case for sustaining funding presented another key set of challenges (***Impact Assess***). MHCI serves as a catalyst, clearinghouse, and brainstorming resource, in addition to being involved in community collaborations and partnerships. It appears that the catalytic influence and impact of MHCI have not been fully appreciated. For example, the initiative had been the catalyst for programs that then went on to successfully secure funding independently of MHCI (***Process of Expansion***). The initiative seeded the Quinceañera Club for young women not only financially, but by providing valuable networking information for staffing, implementation, and continued financial support. Two years later, the Quinceañera Club became independent of MHCI's funding, and there was no longer a concrete connection between the initiative and the program. Another example of illusive attribution was the initiative's fostering of mentoring programs. MentorLink is the MHCI program linking mentors from Concordia College with elementary-school youth at Robert Asp School. In addition to implementing their own mentoring program, MHCI provides training and support for other local mentor program providers and serves as an active participant in the national mentoring campaign. Staff described receiving many calls from programs and organizations seeking advice on funding resources. They also made important networking connections between organizations that would go on to implement their own mentor programs (***Connectivity-Sectors***). Translating these influences and impacts into the kind of results that could be assessed according to funding criteria was often beyond the initiative's expertise.

Another challenge to capturing impact was the difficulty of teasing out the contribution made by MHCI when they had partnered with other organizations or institutions. For example, several faculty members in the university system have incorporated a developmental assets framework into their curriculums in teacher, counselor, and social justice education (***Sector Connect-Higher Education***). How would one go about capturing an impact such as contributing to the professional development of future teachers and counselors? If MHCI was no longer connected to a successful program, the contribution seemed abstract, and not easily apparent, even if the initiative had served an instrumental function. In January 2000, MHCI hired a Communications Coordinator. One of her functions will be to promote the role of the initiative in the community.

Forgotten Neighborhoods. In 1996, Moorhead was chosen as one of four sites in the state of Minnesota's "Weed and Seed" program, an effort to strengthen communities by improving the natural beauty of the environment. In one neighborhood, Greenwood Mobile Home Park, two long-term residents and developmental assets activists, Joe and Cory Bennett, have focused on improving living conditions for low-income youth. Partnership with the Parks and Recreation department was used to upgrade park equipment and supplies for youth in the "forgotten" neighborhoods, such as Greenwood. Promoting the work through his yearly Christmas party, Joe, a small-business owner, has managed to secure upgraded park equipment, sneakers for his soccer team, and bike helmets for neighborhood youth. He has spoken before the state legislature on behalf of the neighborhood's needs numerous times. The chief of police, who has been a strong contributor to MHCI through his community policing program, helped secure ongoing funding for the neighborhood-based positions when the "Weed and Seed" grant money ended.

"Providing For" and "Doing With…"? The commitment to providing opportunities for youth was so compelling that we wondered whether it had created a kind of "tunnel vision" for MHCI, resulting in unintended consequences. The community now has an extensive after-school program, along with a morning gym component, and mentoring activities to address idle, unsupervised time for youth on the weekends. The tremendous amount of time needed for building this programming and altering this portion of the community's infrastructure might have narrowed the breadth of community building and limited attention to connecting with other sectors and a broader segment of the infrastructure. In contrast, the leadership in Orlando decided not to focus exclusively on the school sector and not to be a direct service provider.

We also wondered whether Moorhead has gone about providing so much for youth that young people have, paradoxically, become less involved in leadership roles with MHCI. This prompts additional thinking about the different kinds of engagement with youth. The Orlando initiative provides an intriguing juxtaposition. Their successful engagement of youth, through the youth philanthropy work, seemed based on their ability to step back and relax the tight grip adults are accustomed to holding in youth activities. They relinquished this control in favor of providing opportunities to foster youth decision-making and leadership development.

The frustration associated with establishing a youth center in Moorhead, which has been a continuous theme in the life of MHCI, also illuminates this issue of “providing for” in relation to “doing with.” Given the disappointment we heard from youth on this score, we wondered how they were staying engaged with and maintaining faith in the initiative. Youth have consistently voiced the desire for an age-segregated recreation center, without younger children or seniors, where participation does not require involvement in structured activities. Some MHCI adult staff countered that youth were lobbying for a location and approach for the center that was not consistent with the initiative’s focus on intergenerational development (***Youth Strategic***). But Moorhead youth have persisted in their efforts to raise funds for such a center throughout the history of the initiative, recently proposing a juice bar as a moneymaking endeavor (***Funding Strategic***). However, some adults expressed concern that older youth, who had been drinking alcohol elsewhere, would then mingle with underage youth at the proposed center. Questions around function, location, and staffing of the center indicate that the issues are far more complex than failed attempts at funding. The fact that the initiative has been struggling with this challenge for many years suggests a need to focus on more than funding challenges. We specifically wondered how these concerns have been processed with youth. In “Moorhead Speaks, Community Listens,” a community-wide assessment of MHCI conducted in 2000, youth referenced decisions made without their input, suggesting the need for more time and training spent on authentic adult-youth dialogue that engenders developmentally attentive community (***Youth Value***).

Informing the Change Pathway

Chronicling a Particular Path. In 1993, the Superintendent of Schools invited Search Institute President Peter Benson to Moorhead. The community was introduced to the developmental assets framework and the research indicating that the more developmental assets young people say they have, the more likely they are to engage in thriving behaviors and the less likely they are to participate in risky behaviors. Community leaders, such as the chief of police, the mayor, university faculty, leaders of congregations, and business people, were in attendance, indicating Moorhead’s Receptivity, as a community, to an alternative perspective for addressing concerns about youth. Asset Teams, involving over 300 volunteers, held town meetings throughout the community to raise Awareness of the strength-based model and Mobilize residents to plan for its potential application in specific areas. The After School Hours Asset Team conducted a survey of youth to learn their interests for after-school activities. The Neighborhoods Assets Team organized free trainings in developmental assets for neighborhood Block Clubs, in partnership with the Moorhead Police Department. The Intergenerational Relationships Team led to what is now the MentorLink program. In short, Receptivity to the need for change was rapidly followed by a growing Awareness of a range of change strategies and a flurry of mobilization efforts.

The move from volunteer to hired staff with a significant budget was viewed as a critical turning point in the initiative's history. Between 1994 and 1996, Diana Hatfield was hired as the initiative director, the board of directors was established, and the *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors* survey was administered to grades 6 to12. Initiative members stated that broad representation of all community constituencies was highly intentional and necessary to activating the initiative, even though a great deal of its focus was in the education sector. In 1996, Moorhead was selected as the pilot site for a state after-school enrichment program, and MHCI was designated as the organization best equipped to implement the programming, on the basis of its implementation of the developmental assets framework. MHCI has achieved a significant change in the social infrastructure by shifting the school sector from an earlier emphasis on "getting youth out of the building" when the school day was done to a "let's make our valuable facility available to young people as much as we can."

Reassessment: "Are We Doing What We Set Out to Do?" In 1999, the *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors* survey which measures youth experience of and exposure to developmental assets, was conducted again with youth in grades 6 to12, the average number of assets for youth remained unchanged. This is not a surprising finding, given that the survey has not been designed as a tool that can effectively measure pre-post change in asset levels. Nevertheless, the survey data prompted the return to a grassroots assessment modality in the form of the "Community

Speaks, MHCI Listens" project—a study conducted by MSU-M researchers and long-time initiative participants Brenda Shafer and Nancy Frosaker-Johnson.

This project demonstrates how a community initiative's evolution across phases of the Change Pathway is not just linear but can just as easily be recursive. Between February and April 2000, Shafer and Johnson conducted 16 focus groups, with 126 participants, to review the results of the survey and to learn the community's perspective on future direction. Four of the focus groups were conducted with high-school–age youth, who had been active on the Youth Board of MHCI. According to the Community Speaks report, one of the youth board members noted that the initiative should be a "connecting force," with its efforts focused on linking youth services and organizations rather than on providing specific services (Community Speaks, MHCI Listens, 2000, p. 13).

The Community Speaks project provided important opportunities for reflection and dialogue among a range of citizenry. The feedback indicated a need for diversification in sector outreach. Businesses were encouraged to support flexible hours and "family time" as a positive value countering the "frenzied lifestyle" of many families. Congregations needed to further explore opportunities to move away from age segregation in church activities. The work of the MHCI was described as "too focused on youth." Specific areas of adult need were outlined. One such area was parenting education, particularly focused on raising older youth. Another was adult role modeling around the drinking culture of Moorhead. A third area targeted was the need for more opportunities for youth and adults to interact and genuinely communicate. The failure to successfully negotiate the establishment of a teen center, where youth could safely enjoy "down time," was cited as a community limitation, along with other examples of unilaterally discontinued youth-based activities. Youth expressed the need to feel that their input was seriously considered in decision-making processes, particularly around areas of disagreement.

The Community Speaks project stimulated the community to once again revisit Awareness, Mobilization, and courses of Action. The reality of a community having to revisit and reevaluate many of these matters after they have dealt with them once should not be seen as a failure. To the contrary, it should remind us that progress occurs just as easily from returning to one's existing work and making modifications to it, as it does from moving ahead and forward through a host of sequential activities. As an example, revising and even rewriting an existing document to make the arguments stronger and clearer is a different kind of progress than writing an entirely new document, but both should be seen as accomplishments. For community-based approaches to healthy youth development that are so dependent upon relationship building, a periodic revisiting of the connections among people, a reassessment of strategies, and a reevaluation of benefits is most natural and normal.

“Are We There Yet?”: A Broader Perspective on Continuity

> 'Okay, we gotta have an after-school program.' Would the community come back and say 'it's gotta have assets'? (Focus Group, p. 26)

MHCI’s concern about Continuity took the form of perceived invisibility. As cited earlier, many participants stated that the initiative’s contributions were lost when local community leadership took over work MHCI had begun. Further, since the initiative became so busy with the intricacies of service provision, there had been little time for promoting and maintaining a larger community presence and getting the credit it was due. In seeking funding, it was difficult to show concrete products or outcomes, since programs MHCI had begun were now functioning more independently and finding their own financial support. It seemed ironic that a community initiative that had been perhaps the strongest of the four we studied in bringing visibility to the needs of low-income and minority youth should now experience itself, seven years later, as “invisible” and lacking in accomplishments. It’s as though the good work of community building for positive youth activities and even promoting specific programs to change a portion of the community infrastructure had been lost in the eyes of the casual Moorhead observer.

Recently, we learned that the after-school funding had come under siege a second time. If the initiative were to lose funding and become volunteer-dependent again, would a strength-based approach like the developmental assets remain core, or would something else appear to take its place? MHCI’s response is that developmental assets have permeated the community and “there is no turning back” to deficit-oriented approaches to youth development.

Their response to this particular set of circumstances prompts further thinking about the Continuity phase in the Change Pathway. Are there periods of dormancy, or time frames of less visibility, during which community initiatives are able to still exert strong influence? These ebbs and flows also seem common, but how are they contended with? Are there critical numbers of staff or activities without which an initiative cannot sustain continuity of the change process, at least at meaningful levels? The new leadership of MHCI has inherited a mature initiative and serious threats to existing funding. The immediacy of these challenges suggests the potential for MHCI, through its next steps, to enhance both its understanding and our understanding of weaving healthy development into the ongoing daily tapestry of community life.

Take the Time Initiative

Multnomah County, Portland, Oregon

Context of the Initiative

Take the Time is an initiative of the Commission on Children, Families & Community (CCFC) of Multnomah County, Oregon. As a county-funded initiative, it is subject to political tides and undertows. A change in county leadership, a succession of cuts in their social-marketing budget, and a reassessment of CCFC priorities all impacted the initiative's ability to carry out its plans in the larger community. This political backdrop was the dominant contextual feature we encountered in Portland
during our second visit in early winter of 2001.

Multnomah County is a region of 660,496 (US Census, 2000) residents that includes the city of Portland, surrounding suburbs, and small, outlying rural communities. During the 1990’s, under the administration of Governor Neil Goldschmidt, a statewide network of citizen-led, local commissions supporting healthy community development was initiated. The intention was to mobilize and empower local communities to establish thriving conditions for youth. This shift was a dramatic move away from professionalization and a pathology-based approach. Since established indicators of youth health were deficit-based, such as statistics on school dropouts, pregnancy rates, and substance abuse arrests, Multnomah County sought a tool for defining and measuring wellness. *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors* survey was administered to 10,000 students in grades 6, 8, and 10 to measure protective factors consistent with the community orientation toward youth health. Take the Time was launched by the Commission on Children, Families, & Community and the Multnomah County Youth Advisory Board in October 1997, in response to findings from the survey,

Government Sponsorship. Take the Time is the only initiative we studied that was situated in local government. Staffing includes a managing director, outreach coordinator, grants coordinator, part-time communications director, and part-time clerical assistant. The steering committee is composed of 18 youth and adult volunteers. Take the Time recently expanded to include four additional counties—a change that they have been reluctant to make in the past. In order to share the initiative’s name, Washington, Clackamas, Marian, and Clark counties have agreed to adopt the three-asset focus of Take the Time’s strategic plan. Multnomah County will provide technical assistance to the new county partners. The expansion is similar to the accommodations made by the Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative in relationship to the city of Fargo. In both cases, expansion was viewed as the most viable way to continue the initiative’s work, even though that process brought with it risks that otherwise would not have been taken.

A major strategy for mobilizing the community around developmental assets was the awarding of “mini-grants” of several hundred dollars, given to more than 400 organizations and individuals. Many of these grants have been used to support the initiative’s work within the school system, which has focused on school/community partnerships using the developmental assets framework. The Middle School Outreach Project is one such partnership; it has expanded its reach into the community by targeting parent involvement. Thus, although much of Portland’s work is anchored in the schools, its emphasis is on partnerships that reach out to multiple sectors of the community.

A Different Primary Model of Community Change: Innovation Diffusion Theory. The developmental assets framework is not viewed as the model of community change adopted by the initiative, but rather “the what and the why.” Instead, Diffusion of Innovations theory, and Malcolm Gladwell’s best-selling book *The Tipping Point*, guides the initiative. The premise is that change is disseminated person by person, and successful innovations are characterized by simplicity, observability, apparent advantage, user friendliness, and consistency with existing values. Principles of Diffusion of Innovations theory, as conceived by Everett Rogers, were assimilated by Search Institute into the Change Pathway. Not surprisingly, then, the theory postulates stages of individual change not unlike the Change Pathway phases: Knowledge (“Awareness”), Persuasion (“Receptivity”), Decision (“Mobilization”), Action (“Action”), and Sustainability (“Continuity”).

Noteworthy Expression of Themes

Personalized Approach: “*Personal First.*” Take the Time is driven interpersonally, which might be expected from an initiative interpreting innovation as spreading through people in relationship. Relationships are seen by leaders of Take the Time as the “key” to “getting anything done.” The initiative’s work is imbued with explicit relational values—trust, valuing individual contribution, openness to learning, and equality. The work emphasizes listening, rather than “preaching,” as the basis of positive development, and honoring the individual, program, or sector’s existing ways of operating, an example of the ***Unique Adapt*** code—a code common to all of the initiatives. Clearly, the emphasis of this initiative is on human relations at the heart of community building.

> I think one very important principle of how we implement all of this, is to try to make it relevant to an individual or an organization’s unique situation and their own agenda. So trying to fit it to their agenda, instead of saying, ‘You have to take on our agenda.’ (Focus Group, p. 28)

Participants describe their involvement in Take the Time as personally gratifying but also requiring a level of introspection and self-assessment of biases and beliefs (***Baggage Assessment and Personal Gratification***). The following passages provide examples of codes contributed by the Portland initiative that emphasize dimensions of individual responsibility and transformation that must occur prior to effective asset-building work with youth. The perspective leads one to consider that community building and the reaching out to others begins with a good deal of internal work.

> I think the Youth Advisory Board taught me a really important lesson . . . which was my own ingrained ageism [**Baggage Assessment**], and my recollections of how when I graduated from high school, I had all these ideas, and then graduated from college and had all these ideas . . . I felt like everybody told me, ‘You don’t matter until you have some experience, and we don’t want to hear what you have to say.’ [***Youth Value***] So I spent a whole lot of my twenties trying to gain the experience to have a voice. Then came this Youth Advisory Board. I thought, ‘Well, it’s not their turn.’ You know ‘You have to wait like I did.’ And suddenly I thought, ‘This is really stupid. It’s

wrong.' And I had a very profound awakening [***Awakening***] and I realized just how much we as a society miss by doing that to young people by not wanting to hear what they have to say... (***Orientation Shift – Self and Society***) (Focus Group, p. 2)

I think we all have thought in every arena that we operate, whether it's our own families, and I . . . on my way over here my children called me to say, 'This is really funny, that you're going to talk about Taking the Time . . . two nights in a row.' (***Self Reference-Personal***) So, whether it's within our own families or within our own . . . professional work (***Self Reference-Professional***)—and I think that that's one thing that we have talked about a lot on the Steering Committee, both in terms of how we live our own lives, how we will model what we are doing in every area so that whether it's professionally or personally, or, ah, in spreading the word . . .(***Living It Out***) (Focus Group, p. 10)

Like me and Carson, under a normal situation, I probably wouldn't go up to Carson and talk to him because I just, like, we're not exactly alike. We don't . . . we have some of the same interests, but we're just, we're not the same. But, and there's some of the other Youth Advisory Boards even more crazier than our connection, but it's like, it allows me to talk to who I wouldn't usually. And I always find the person that I least think that I'll get along with, or mesh well with, is like the person that I can work so well with. (***Dissimilarity***) (Focus Group Youth Participant, p. 15)

Well, when you talk about transformation, that of course is a change in attitude. But I think you have to get people to the point where they're recognizing their own attitudes first, and really saying, 'What is my attitude toward youth? Am I afraid of them? Am I willing to meet them on an equal basis? And we need to begin to tap into what their attitude is. Then you have the ability to change it, and go into transformation. (***Personal First***, ***Baggage Assessment***, ***Orientation Shift***) (Focus Group, p. 22)

Egalitarian Context. We have described the ***Context Create*** theme, common to all four initiatives, as the need for a physical and philosophical "space" for locating the efforts and idea exchange on behalf of the positive development of young people. GivEm40 characterized this context as making explicit linkages across sector leadership. Healthy Community Initiative of Orlando emphasized communication across central Florida by locally generated community revitalization initiatives. Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative emphasized representation and access to the philosophy and activities of the ***New Norm*** of positive youth development for all youth. Take the Time described itself as "creating an atmosphere" of high regard for individual contribution and maintaining openness to new ideas as contributing to a context for opportunity development. It is highly egalitarian in nature, and of the four community initiatives we studied, Take the Time was the most understated in terms of leadership, though strong leadership was identified and apparent.

> It's about trust, and valuing people's individual contributions. That we don't have all the answers. That, ah, we're here together equally [***Anybody & Everybody***]. So those are kind of underlying values . . . that I attach to Take the Time. (Focus Group, p. 12)
>
> It's a matter of creating an atmosphere. And what you just identified, that can be an atmosphere—they hold trust, they value each other (***Context Create***). (Focus Group, p. 27)
>
> . . . contacting somebody and really focusing the first meeting around building a relationship, learning their stories, sharing some of your own. And really leaving it there, not trying to push an agenda . . . But using relationship, which is, I think, a key theme (**Connectivity**) (Focus Group, p. 35)

The Energy Promoted by Grant Making. Consistent with the egalitarian approach of valuing individual creative contributions from youth and adults, Take the Time used the awarding of numerous mini-grants for mobilizing the community around developmental assets activity. Over $150,000 was awarded in small grants, ranging from $65 to $500, for 418 asset-building projects and activities. Youth, adults, and organizations could apply for these grants. The wide range of grants awarded emphasizes reach, over depth—as contrasted, for example, with GivEm40's focus on the regional school system. One example of a grant activity was a white water rafting trip for eigth-grade girls from North Portland, designed to address developmental assets associated with high expectations, responsibility, and peer influence. A regional program for the deaf and hard of hearing was funded to provide sign language books for parents of deaf toddlers, addressing the developmental asset of positive family communication. Portland public schools were awarded funds to plan activities for an African-American Leadership Conference, which would address the developmental assets of decision making, youth as resources, and relationships with other adults. Community gardens, community cleanup, reading buddies, foster grandparents encouraging pre-reading skills, intergenerational quilting, and Saturday tutoring for third graders are other examples of asset-building activities supported through the mini-grant initiative.

Media Campaign: Setbacks and Success. The Take the Time initiative has both generated and earned considerable media coverage since its inception. Significant resources from local businesses and media organizations have helped underwrite three social marketing campaigns. Sponsors have donated services worth $2 to $3 million over the past three years. A local advertising agency has donated its creative services for the social-marketing campaign and provided advertising worth over $500,000. Over the duration of the initiative, the diversity of Take the Time's media messages and their frequency have increased. The responses to the social-marketing campaigns have been positive. In addition, Take the Time has been the subject of regular reporting (earned coverage) with over 50 articles about the initiative published in local newspapers. Still, there have been complications.

> It was our big initiative launch and we thought it was going to be that everyone was going to come. And you know, it didn't come. And the rest of the community didn't kind of go, 'Wow! We get it.' (***Making It Happen-Challenges***) (Portland HC • HY Conference Focus Group, p. 12)

The hired promotional consultant failed to deliver the visibility through planned media coverage, and the initiative suffered a serious blow to [its] credibility from that mistake.

> It was one of the biggest setbacks . . . of the whole campaign. Not just because of the event itself, but actually because of what it did to the relationships between staff and the commission (***Barriers***) (Portland HC • HY Conference Focus Group, p. 13)
>
> Because we had built expectations so high . . . But the commissioners were like, 'This is not what you sold us . . . Where is this stuff that was supposed to happen? This was a huge failure.' . . . I think we all went through a very hard phase for about 4 months, where we were just stuck with that and had to really process through it . . . if there was ever a time we thought about giving up, that was the time. (***Long Haul-Threats***) (Portland HC • HY Conference Focus Group, p. 13)

There is some question as to whether Take the Time has ever fully recovered from the perceived psychological and political setback. Internally, the staff described working through the disappointment and the stigma of "failure"; meanwhile, the initiative work continued and Take the Time went on to achieve important successes, but not without politically related concerns about its very survival.

Youth Advocacy for Balanced Media Coverage. "My survey found that 1 in 14 stories in the daily sections was about people ages 12-22. More than 4 in 10 of those stories were about college or high school related sports, almost 2 in 10 were about crime, and nearly 2 in 10 about youth-related political and social problems. Fewer than 1 in 10 stories was about accomplishments by young people" (*The Oregonian*, 9/12/99).

We earlier discussed the paradoxical nature of assets work as "seemingly simple" (***It's Simple, But…***) and underscored the large effort involved in shifting perspective on youth from deficit orientation to strength orientation (***Orientation Shift***). Convincing the major regional newspaper to research the claim that news coverage of youth in Portland was negatively unbalanced is a tremendous achievement of Take the Time. *The Oregonian's* decision to hire a writer to expand the depiction of youth beyond criminal or athlete is a concrete and significant example of the initiative's impact. The active involvement of youth in this effort, formally known as the Journalism Credibility Project of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, exemplifies the ***Doing With, Not Providing For*** differentiation discussed earlier . Youth involvement in creating "The Zone," a weekly front-page feature in the Friday "Living" Section, is a strong example of authentic, proactive youth engagement (***Youth Value***). It is also a stunning illustration of the contribution youth themselves are making in countering the pervasive fear of young people by adults. Moreover, it is also a prime example of the strong desire of youth to contribute to their communities. As in the Orlando initiative, Take the Time staff described this highly personal work with youth as facilitating a shift from provider to mentor.

> And I think that the initiative has pushed us in some ways . . . some of it is just reinforcing simple, everyday things that are very, you know, greeting a child or . . . but the way it pushed us . . . to really think about . . . youth involvement . . . it's one thing to just sort of say, 'Well, for the sake of the grant' . . . it really pushed us to be very thoughtful about what that meant, and involving youth in a way that wasn't just bringing them to the adult table and asking for their opinion . . . but really integrating them into this project. (***Youth Value***) (Focus Group, p. 16)

Parent Outreach. ***Adults Too*** is our code capturing the theme that adults are in need of developmental assets as well as youth. All of the initiatives targeted parent outreach, and these efforts proved challenging and often frustrating. Some initiatives appeared to shelve these efforts in favor of focusing on the school environment where they have access to youth, teachers, and school administration (and indirect access to parents). Take the Time's Middle School Outreach Project suggests that although progress is slow, small but significant impacts can be made in this area. Take the Time hired a Middle School Outreach Project coordinator to develop and maintain a network of parent outreach organizers in 13 middle schools. Parent organizers were volunteers who were often working full-time and still managing to actively participate in their children’s schools. The work of the parent organizer was to attend monthly, three-hour trainings with other parent organizers across the network and to schedule two or three events annually at their school to increase parents’ understanding of how to help their children be successful students and citizens **(*Sector Connection-Family*).** Trainings focused on research behind the developmental assets, parenting skills and adolescent development, encouraging parent communication with school personnel, and raising awareness of school policy advisory opportunities **(*Connectivity-Sectors*).** Activities and acceptance of the parent outreach efforts varied widely with each school. Parent organizers used newsletters, family nights, recognition rallies for youth achievement illustrating developmental assets, and school visits for fifth graders and their parents transitioning to middle school **(*Making It Happen-Key Events*).**

In evaluating the parent organizer efforts, Take the Time learned that some parents struggle to understand the developmental assets **(*Language Hindrance*)**; parent organizers were most successful when they were able to continue in their roles for longer periods of time **(*Impact Assess*).** Somewhat unanticipated was the impact of parent organizers as role models for the adults **(*Adults Too*).** Given the report of certain comprehension barriers regarding the developmental assets, the ability of the parent organizers to model applications of the assets may have turned out to be more influential than the actual dissemination of information.

Informing the Change Pathway

Strategies for Transitioning Across Phases. There is an intriguing association between the initiative identifying itself as an interpersonally driven campaign and the use of social-marketing approaches such as a media campaign. Are these notions complementary or contradictory, and if so, to what degree? On one level, social marketing seeks blanket coverage with a more broad-based and tenuous connection, whereas an interpersonal emphasis would more than likely work in a deeper way through an individual’s existing personal and professional social networks. Both are examples of methods one can use to move through the phases of the Change Pathway. The grantmaking serves as an illustration of yet an additional strategy.

The value of the individual as change agent was a common thread woven throughout Take the Time's orientation and operation. Yet, there did not seem to be a comprehensive strategy that would forcefully build off of that approach. Certainly all citizens were seen as potential contributors. The mini-grant initiative extended an invitation to get people working on community-based human development, and the grant effort did appear to help get the county and city on board with the initiative. The question remains: Might there have been other mechanisms that would have been more effective outgrowths of an interpersonal campaign? Moreover, while the media launch did not seem to work, one has to wonder whether there were site-specific issues that prevented success, and whether social marketing is itself a viable means of fostering community-based approaches to enhance the development of young people.

The previous discussion of grantmaking and the media campaign were important to note as attributes of the Take the Time initiative. They also serve as examples while keeping in mind all of the dilemmas associated with them.

Staff were open about acknowledging they needed to learn as they went along since this initiative was on the cutting edge and there were no models to follow.

> I think we all . . saw the developmental assets and saw this model and said, 'Wow! This is so different. This is so new. This is so exciting and refreshing, that people are just going to grab it and run with it.' And so we really thought it was going to happen quickly. (Portland HC • HY Conference Focus Group, p. 12)

Initiative staff did not externalize their mistakes, but instead, modeled the reframing of failure as "lessons learned" (***Change As We Learn***).

> And we'd known not that much about public relations firms, and it just turned into this horrible relationship for both them and us . . . And part of it was really not understanding the full range of where were their skills versus what were we asking them to do. Part of it was we really didn't know what we wanted to do, and that was changing . . . After working with them for about 10 months . . . we said, 'This is really not working. Mutually let's just stop . . . And we'd found so much energy had been going into that relationship, trying to just work it through . . . (**Making It**

> **Happen-Challenges**) (Portland HC • HY Conference Focus Group, p. 14)

Reassessment: *Spread Control*. Each initiative described an expansive style during the stages of Receptivity, Awareness, and Mobilization. As they became involved in Action and invested in the Continuity of the work, there was a period of reassessment and recognition of the need to target a narrower range of activity. This theme, coded ***Spread Control***, reflects the need to choose certain activities over others, or risk compromising all of the work and the future of the initiative. Take the Time's expression of ***Spread Control,*** through recognizing barriers and limitations and deciding how to change course, may have occurred in an earlier phase of the Change Pathway. Its timing also provides a useful counterpoint to the fears of "back-pedaling," so clearly described by GivEm40.

Turning points, or critical events, in the life of the Portland initiative were defined at the personal level, such as the director's maternity leave. Staff described having been dependent on the director to facilitate communication and suddenly needing to develop better communication skills with one another in her absence. The director, for her part, described feeling that she had become somewhat resistant around certain issues, such as the initiative logo. She credited her leave and the subsequent empowerment of the staff for allowing her to work through her own resistance. This reflexive stance allowed the staff to recognize the need for a more realistic strategic plan—another critical event in the history of Take the Time.

> This idea of a committee of 15 and a staff of, at that point, 3, magically transforming schools in six months, really was silly . . . And plus we were learning a lot of things like even for people who really like this and grab on to it, it is very much a process and a continuum they move along . . . even though you believe it . . . you still act . . . inconsistently with it. And so this notion that in six months these complex institutions with multiple goals are going to do this was silly . . . (***Change As We Learn***) (Portland HC • HY Conference Focus Group, p. 15-16)

A staff retreat provided the opportunity for assessment, gathering of new information, and the decision to shift direction. Take the Time highlighted the personal stimulus of deciding to change course and reminded us that that the phenomenon of “taking stock” can occur in any of the phases and can prompt a return to earlier work, a revision of existing work, or an alternative plan for future work. This reality only serves to underscore the iterative, cyclical nature of the Change Pathway for communities seeking to build healthy development. While this can no doubt appear frustrating to people involved in the initiative, it may depict more accurately the reality of how change occurs. The data gathered from the four case study sites has implications for the Change Pathway. For example, based upon our findings, the Continuity phase may actually be as much about ongoing change and revision as it is about sustaining a particular course of action.

GivEm40 24.7 Coalition

Traverse Bay Area, Michigan

Context of the Initiative

Northwest Michigan has a population of 154,452 residents, and consists of five counties: Kalkasa, Benzie, Antrim, Leelanau, and Grand Traverse. The area is roughly the size of the state of Delaware. About 75,000 people live in Grand Traverse County and close to Traverse City, the hub of the region. Similar to Orlando, though on a much smaller scale, Traverse City is a resort town dependent on a service economy; however we did not hear more than passing mention of the economic recession during our second visit to GivEm40 in early winter of 2001. The beaches, protected parklands, and ski slopes draw an affluent population. However, the number of students receiving free or reduced lunch in the five-county intermediate school district exceeds the state average (GivEm40 Coalition document, p. 3). Similar to Orlando, the region is undergoing rapid growth and is dealing with an influx of new families with both the challenges and rewards that that entails.

In fact, newness, or renewal, is a prominent theme that emerged from our visits to the Traverse City area. The GivEm40 initiative has been operative for several years now and, having accomplished a good deal over that period, its leadership is hungry to see the work move to another level. This hunger was at times manifested as frustration, not only with its own rate of progress, but also with the evolution of Search Institute's interest in promoting a social movement in support of healthy development. Passionate energy in this initiative is being directed toward initiative change, as well as toward influencing the very nature of Search Institute's community change efforts.

GivEm40 is administered through the United Way of Northwest Michigan, and the executive director, Becky Beauchamp, is credited with bringing the developmental assets framework to the area from her previous work as director of the United Way in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Prior to the inception of the initiative in 1999, three major funders had committed financial resources and staff time, and all 19 of the region's public school districts agreed to administer the *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life:*

Attitudes and Behaviors survey to students in grades 7, 9, and 11. Beauchamp insisted on a “critical mass” of commitment from the region’s school administrations, funding sources, media, and university prior to the launch of GivEm40, and the coalition was deliberate in targeting leadership from each of these sectors. GivEm40 is different from the other three initiatives in having partnered with a university to help with accountability issues from the beginning. Several Michigan State University faculty evaluation specialists are members of the coalition and have developed a logic model for assessment and evaluation of the work. GivEm40 approaches community change in a sector-specific way, with the goal of achieving depth within a particular sector, rather than breadth. An example of this, as cited by GivEm40 staff, is the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District’s hiring of Mimi Appel, the first coordinator of the initiative, as asset development coordinator for the school district. The impact of this decision will become apparent as we discuss the outstanding accomplishments of the school district below.

Noteworthy Expression of Themes

Determined Leadership. Effective leadership was a theme we coded ***Leadership Determination***, which refers to a strong champion or group that demonstrated experience and wisdom critical to the progress of the initiative. Each initiative made a unique contribution to our understanding of effective leadership. HCI in Orlando underscored the importance of local, grassroots leadership. Moorhead showed us the value of leadership that includes constituencies not traditionally invited to the table. GivEm40 expanded our understanding of careful planning (***Strategic Care***), independent of its connection to the Mobilization phase of the Change Pathway, including an enhanced appreciation for the risks connected with even the most thoughtful decision-making processes. It also taught us about the role of resistance in leadership—community resistance to change strategies, and the healthy resisting of status quo approaches to community change that may well lead to repetitive mistakes and the wasting of time and resources. It compels us to think more about leadership in terms of community building, infrastructure, and collective action. Are the same sets of skills and talents needed? Are different personality types suited to one more than the other?

Strategic Care, our code for capturing the strategic planning processes, came to represent the special flavor of GivEm40. Of the four initiatives, this one was the most explicit in its initial focus on engaging leaders who were critical to the progress of the initiative's plans, prior to the community-wide launch. As one of the initiative staff put it: "You can't just go after the low-hanging fruit, but need to go after the blossoms—the powerbrokers (Community Presentation, p. 44). Establishing linkages among sectors (***Sector Connection***), through coordination of the leadership (***Making It Happen-Recruitment/Moblization***), was seen as the critical mobilizing effort that would differentiate this community-based human development initiative from previous programs that had experienced a short "shelf life" in the Traverse Bay Area.

> People say, 'We've been doing this forever, why do we need a coalition?' Ah, and it's precisely about the community conversation of if we stay with a bunch of isolated, disparate efforts in community, obviously the sum total of that is not producing the results we want for children. But that is a harder conversation to have in a regional community than I ever anticipated . . . but, you know, we're getting there. It's about, you know, if the schools work in their beleaguered silos, and if community organizations work like the world revolves around them, and if we don't have citizens engaged in this process, and if we don't have more of a community road map, we're just going to get kind of the same result. And that somehow, this is about a conversation about the sum total being more than just the individual parts. (***Anybody & Everybody***) (Staff Meeting, p. 6)
>
> Trying to have the agencies see that they're a piece. They're an important piece where they link, but they're not the whole puzzle or half the puzzle. And while that seems like such an easy kind of conversation, it is not. (***Sector Connection***) (Focus Group, p. 12)

Effective coordination of leadership that laid the groundwork for change in a sector of the community's infrastructure was often facilitated by positive, long-term relationships among colleagues. The regional school district superintendent's ability to gain the support of all 19 schools in the region is such an example (***Key Bridges*****).** Careful attention to timing, action, and strategy characterizes the initiative's leadership; there is a sense that little occurs accidentally. There are many descriptions of the importance of judgment and timing, such as introducing the pilot schools initiative.

> We sold these pilot schools with Youth Friends [mentoring program], and we bridge granted them and we painted all these rosy scenarios . . . We didn't have a dime of it raised . . . Ah, but that's how we sold the pilot schools. Now we can separate them [from other granting opportunities] because the school's seeing, 'Wow, there's some things that can happen.' We got us some superintendents ready to talk about what can happen in schools. We don't have to incent them anymore to do it. We don't have to oversell on Youth Friends . . . We couldn't have done that a year ago. We had to be on the stump, you know. (***Funding Strategic***) (Staff Meeting, p. 24)

"Strategic abandonment" is a term coined by the initiative that captures the necessity of choosing some efforts over others to counter the tendency, described by all of the initiatives, to overextend (***Spread Control***). GivEm40 was a relatively young initiative compared to the other three sites examined in this report. Yet, in its first two years, it had grasped the pitfalls of premature expansive efforts and demonstrated an important lesson for effective leaders.

> We had to get real about the amount of time that it actually takes to do one thing well, and go deep versus going a mile wide . . . guess it's that strategic abandonment thing (Staff Meeting, p. 7).
>
> Good idea. It sounds like fun, sounds cute, sounds like it could work. Let's go there.' And you'll be spread all over the map, ah, and not have a strategic focus, and not gain that momentum that's going to go, that's really going to set down roots . . . (Staff Meeting, p. 11)
>
> Focusing on a few things, doing them well and learning from them, and figuring out how to expand those rings of concentric circles . . . (Focus Group, p. 12)

Strategic Risk-Taking. GivEm40 articulated the "high wire act" of effective leadership, as well as careful planning.. Both approaches, according to the GivEm40 leadership team, come down to strategy and being cognizant of one's responsibility on behalf of others. As the leadership team notes, being overly cautious can be just as problematic as being too cavalier.

> I think the assets are at a danger of being a nice blather in communities, a very nice blather. Or, you know, is it really going to change the environment for children? . . . we're on the verge of this really becoming something here. Or on the verge of it just having been, 'Oh, this nice thing' that we can talk about and congratulate ourselves about, but that really didn't accomplish what . . . all that it can. And that's the part that I think is really tenuous . . . I have no sense of illusion about what could happen to this. I mean, there's . . . you know, three . . . bad decisions in the next week . . . and this could . . . become . . . you know, an Amtrak train moving through the community. (Staff Meeting, p. 23)
>
> Something I've learned, though, in this process of helping to form a coalition and through this work is that partnership really is the work of, ah, secure individuals from mature organizations that have the ability to take a little bit of risk. (Staff Meeting, p. 21)

Becky Beauchamp describes another risky position undertaken by the school leadership in supporting GivEm 40, knowing that the re-administration of *the Attitudes and Behaviors* survey, just two years later, would likely show little change given that the survey is not designed to surface short-term change.

> But that kind of skepticism is real, it's what you face in communities . . . you can sound like you're back-pedaling . . . and that's just the high wire act without a net . . . even with the schools . . . I mean the ISD [Intermediate School District] is a wonderful partner in this thing, but it takes so much risk on their part to say 'Okay, we're going to commit these resources.' . . . It's pretty hard for an organization to keep its attention on something with no money attached to it, you know, with more

> dreams, than . . . actual substance at the moment. To stay focused here, to keep going in that work. I mean that takes . . . you know, an enormous amount of faith, ah, that most organizations don't have. (Staff Meeting, p. 26)

Risk taking is not just something engaged in by the initiative itself. It applies to philanthropic entities that choose to support this kind of community effort. A program officer representing Rotary Charities described the atypical nature of the foundation's partnership with GivEm40:

> It was like the concept of us as a foundation being a part, a working part, of a coalition was very different than what we've done in the past. And . . . it's had some challenges from our board . . . in that my staff time usually isn't allocated to participating actively in grants. So that's been one of the challenges, is kind of bringing our board members up to speed on what does this mean. What does a partnership mean versus a grantee? And I think initially they all thought, 'Well, it's a five-year commitment. That's what a partnership means—we will fund them for five years.' And that's longer than we usually fund anything. So that was quite a step in the first place. But what it really has meant is that more of my staff time has been involved . . . in decisions about the coalition, and more of a leadership position. I think our board has more ownership in it [now], and more interest in the outcomes and really can see the potential . . . of it having a broader effect than just a one-time grant. (Staff Meeting, p. 2)

Other risks are tied to the relationship these communities have with Search Institute, given the evolving and emergent nature of the community change work itself and the channeling of research-driven knowledge to support the actions designed to bring about change. As one staff person made clear,

> My biggest frustration with Search is that it seems to be saying, 'We're spawning a social movement,' but does precious little to bridge that huge chasm of what researchers know and what practitioners do . . . If we're model builders here [in

> GivEm40], then the world's really in trouble . . . We're just groping our way through. (Community Presentation, p. 24)

Resistance. Maturity is a prerequisite for effective initiative leadership, but it can also be a barrier if key leaders maintaining powerful positions in the community are reluctant to revise their approach. Mature leaders have typically worked in their fields for many years, and those with human services training and experiences have often conducted their work from a deficit-oriented model. Letting go of one's history and facing its limitations can feel devaluing to such long-time workers in youth programs. Engaging them in community building and revamping community infrastructure for purposes of developmental attentiveness is not an easy chore.

> It does threaten some of them. [It's as if] 'What we've done to date doesn't count.' (Staff Meeting, p. 12)
>
> . . . .and there's just the continual discussion, communications, without getting so totally frustrated, because it feels like they're dragging us back. And from the community perspective, the people I anticipated being leaders have clearly been some of the ones that are dragging their heels. And that's disappointing. It's probably predictable . . . Carve out their turf . . . (Staff Meeting, p. 15)
>
> You're seeing the people who are bold partners . . . even, almost derail it, because it's threatening. (Staff Meeting, p. 21)

Adapting the Framework. Initiatives' implicit or explicit awareness that strength-based approaches need to be adapted to existing community systems, such as the schools or businesses, was central to their adoption of the developmental assets framework. We coded this theme ***Unique Adapt***, in our effort to reflect the common belief that each sector's operational systems needed to be respected if the asset framework was to be incorporated effectively.

GivEm40 has successfully mobilized several sectors as part of its Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth initiative. Funders, university faculty, law enforcement, and the schools all described themselves as systems that were not originally aligned with strength-based approaches but are now on board. However, not all were. For example, the community relations staff member in Orlando described carefully watching and waiting for an opportunity to engage Disney World in the work of HCI. She recognized that Disney was not ready to take the actions in support of assets that had already been taken by smaller businesses, such as offering employees paid time off for volunteerism. Monitoring the situation was worthwhile because the "buy-in" of this mega-industry was highly desirable (***Joining In***). In some of the other community initiatives, sectors were easier to engage because they perceived themselves as already in alignment with a positive youth orientation (***Affirmation***).

Perhaps the most pronounced way in which the asset framework was uniquely adapted to GivEm40 was through the thorough integration into the school sector via its fit with the School Improvement Plan:

> Every one of the schools has what they call a School Improvement Plan, which is written with specific goals and objectives in place that are supposed to improve student achievement. And it could be through improving your environment, it could be through changing classes or how you teach classes, or materials and supplies . . . we kind of jumped into the asset building piece by having all our staff who are out in the schools working with professional development, teacher training, curriculum development . . . When they go and they talk about school improvement issues, then we try to write in specific strategies that support . . . asset development into their goals…If I'm looking to improve your language arts score, for example . . . there may be some things that are going to be developmentally appropriate from this asset list that we're going to fit into that strategy to help you, because we know that most of our kids don't feel real good about being in school, for whatever reason. We don't do a very good job of that . . . There are other issues that impact your learning. (Focus Group, p. 14)
>
> Adaptation by a large system, like the five-county school system, set the course for other smaller funders and other school initiatives. As a program officer from a relatively small

> foundation who participated in one of the focus groups, stated: 'People who apply for funds to support programs, we ask them [to] show us what assets [they're] trying to reach. We're following what Rotary Charities has done, what United Way has done.' (Staff Meeting, p. 5).

Adaptation also prompted a shift in orientation on the part of faculty members from Michigan State University (***Sector Connection***):

> The shift we purposely made on this, is that traditionally I think . . . faculty come out and drive communities, and say, 'You must do it this way.' The approach we've taken here has been a real one of invitational intersection. We will respond when we're invited to respond . . . And it's a real fine line, because what...was not driving this is how many publications we can get out of this . . . It's a very different format. (Staff Meeting, p. 30)
>
> For MSU it's been an incredible opportunity for us to do something we've really never done in quite this way from our land grant, which is trying to knit together our campus-based expertise and our field-based staff working with children, youth, and families. (Staff Meeting, p. 13)

Law enforcement can be a particularly resistant system to positive development, given its explicit requirement to crack down on residents engaged in highly negative behavior. The chief of police in Traverse City is a self-described skeptic who eventually became a big supporter of the community change initiative. He describes the challenge of this transition for police officers:

> The hard part of dealing with that [asset framework] is getting [it] integrated within our services . . . how do you deal positively with somebody when you're putting the snatch on him? I mean when you take him into custody. And that's a different approach than . . . what we're used to . . . before it was very up front, very, you know, this is the way it happens. We have officers in our schools who have gone through the asset building and [are] trying to utilize those particular different assets in their

> everyday day-to-day operation. Not only with youth. (Staff Meeting, p. 8)

The Seeming Simplicity of Developmental Assets

> It's just amazing to me how simple the actions are, but how complex the process to get to the, you know, the intentionality to do it. (Staff Meeting, p. 8)

In the course of constructing the codebook, we noticed the emergence of several contradictory themes. The developmental assets framework was often described by people from the sites as extremely user-friendly, which was key to its potential adoption as an innovative approach to youth and community development. The actions and behaviors are seen and understood as being simple, and as being within everyone's capability—a common response that was coded as ***Anybody & Everybody***. This seeming simplicity, though, is deceptive. People often are resistant to a positive orientation toward youth, and tremendous effort is required for reaching the "critical mass" insisted upon by GivEm40 as the basis for social change—an effort they described as helping the community to reach a "blinding revelation of the obvious."

Their depiction of the work also captured the tendency to underestimate the challenge of building community, reorienting infrastructure, and fostering collective social action. ***It's Simple, But*** became the code to represent this paradoxical tension between the apparent simplicity of the developmental assets framework and the complexity of consistent implementation of its tenets. GivEm40 provided numerous examples of this tension.

> I think what they thought is we went to them with the Youth Friends program and within three weeks a thousand people were going to be in that school . . . And they were going to see huge results without giving some thought to the fact that we had to build the infrastructure in the school to make it effective to begin with . . . we thought it was going to take a couple of months and it actually took about six. (Staff Meeting, p. 24)

> And the beauty of our human nervous systems is that they're so efficient that we prune out all of that neurotransmission that

> got us to the obvious, and we forget how hard it was to move there. And so I think the difficulties just are perception, because we forget how difficult it was for us. To even be having this conversation denotes some level of sophistication that naïve people coming into this arena, it would be really hard. But we forget, I think, how hard it was. (Staff Meeting, p. 12)
>
> When they replicated Youth Friends in Kansas, it took them 12 months before they had everything set up with their school districts . . . Well, you know, I had 250 volunteers in three months, you know? Ah but . . . some of them had a problem with the schools because the schools weren't ready for them. (Staff Meeting, p. 25)

Paradoxical Tensions. GivEm40 enhanced our understanding of paradox, which seem integral to community-based human development. Paradoxes highlighted by this initiative include the tension between simplicity and complexity (***It's Simple, But…***), and the tension between broad-based support (***Everyone's Responsibility***) and sector-specific focus, which can also be thought of as depth versus breadth (***Spread Control***). These paradoxical findings remind us that simple truths can often be taken for granted, and thus neglected by funders, change agents, and other leaders. Because developmental assets seem simple, it is tempting to try to build community, take action in multiple sectors, and manifest a movement everywhere and immediately (***Anybody & Everybody***). While this approach may have merit in some cases, it can also lead to a diffusion of efforts and wear down the spirit of people in leadership roles. These insights, which were not unique to GivEm40 but particularly obvious there, may well be critical reflection points for all communities embarking on broad-based change initiatives.

Informing the Change Pathway

The Interplay of Strategy and Phases. In just two years, GivEm40 in many respects already represents a successful expression of community change on behalf of healthy development that is consistent with the phases articulated in the Change Pathway. GivEm40's leadership used a "top down" approach to establish Receptivity and raise

Awareness in community leadership prior to the launch of the initiative. They also avoided the pitfall of initially spreading their efforts too wide. Their focus, particularly in the Mobilization and early Action phases, was sector specific and deep—most notably, in the schools, where the reach and depth is evidenced by the participation of all districts and the adoption of the pilot schools' initiative. Youth had been successfully engaged in leadership roles across the phases through the Rally Around Youth launch of the coalition, and six months later through the Youth Summit on Violence Prevention.

The initiative illustrates strong success in the Action period by way of the strides it has made infusing the developmental assets framework in a number of sectors, with the deep school involvement standing out as a particularly strong example. Its leadership has forged an important partnership with an evaluation team from Michigan State University, not only to deepen its understanding of impact, but also to help sustain funding and heighten the likelihood of Continuity. Continuity has been strengthened through GivEm40's nurturing of critical relationships with both major and minor philanthropic foundations in the northwest Michigan region, such as the local United Way.

During the first site visit to Traverse City, the leadership was bracing for the public presentation of the survey results. Although they knew that little change would be apparent in just two year's time, they did not want to risk credibility with the community by changing the original survey administration plan. The fear here is that the inability to show a rapid increase in the number of assets will undermine Mobilization and undercut Action. During our second visit, the leaderships concerns seemed to have changed dramatically. They barely mentioned the challenges of showing impact or of raising funds. Their concerns now lay in what they perceived as the lack of a concrete model for systemic change to guide them beyond their deep, sector-specific work in the schools. They attributed much of their success in the schools to the leadership of Clay Roberts, a Search Institute educational consultant. And they were now seeking similar "intermediate-level" guidance for development of the business sector. Just as they credited Search Institute with the effective work of Roberts, they criticized Search Institute for what they described as a lack of direction for the larger challenge of supporting a "social movement." The GivEm40 leadership found fault with Search Institute for providing "very good lists of things individuals can do" (Community

Presentation, p. 42), but not specific guidance for the larger systemic infrastructure work needed to propel a movement. GivEm40 seeks a model in which the community rather than the individual is the unit of change. Their perception that Search Institute has failed to adequately develop and articulate a community change model more deeply—both in theory and in practice—was viewed as dooming the potential of a social movement based on the developmental assets.

Despite the concerns and criticisms by the GivEm40 leadership team, the initiative seemed to have a fairly clear plan for deeper engagement of the business community: positive youth development would be framed as economic development. Businesses needed to view young people as important stakeholders in the community through their membership in the workforce and as consumers. Had youth development not already been identified as a primary issue for the business sector, GivEm40 would not have turned attention to developing this aspect of the community infrastructure more deeply. They clearly stated that they did not have the staffing, time, or financial resources for fomenting Action within a particular sector—it had to come from within the sector (***Making It Happen – Sector***). The initiative viewed its role as that of community building. By promoting linkages and connections among pivotal people, the business sector would be able to create healthy community more deeply. For the GivEm40 community initiative, Continuity meant expanding the work to additional sectors. Yet, even with the interest and understanding exhibited by the business community it is quite plausible that GivEm40 will still need to spend time with the key stakeholders in that sector to move them through the Awareness and Mobilization Phases.

GivEm40 has achieved notable systemic change in their region. Its criticism of Search Institute—and, at times, itself—might be viewed as a plea or even demand to push this important work forward more efficiently and effectively. Despite their references to “transformed climates” based on use of the developmental assets framework in such places as the Intermediate School District and Family Services in Leelanau County, they continued to seek a road map for change at the systems level of the community’s infrastructure. The GivEm40 team is investing immense time and energy in their work, and so they feel compelled to work closely with Search Institute to improve communication at all levels of involvement. To impress upon our research team the power of their convictions, initiative leadership challenged Search Institute to convene all of the initiatives experiencing difficulties at its next yearly conference. From their perspective, this would foster genuine learning and communication, not just about the successes that typically get highlighted, but with the real struggles to make community change happen and to sustain it over time. Anything less than this, according to the initiative, would be irresponsible, particularly given Search Institute's call to communities to invest their time and energy in community-based human development. Although this challenge might be read in any number of ways, it is, on one level, a call for learning about the successes and failures of initiatives at all phases of the Change Pathway.

Risk and Continuity. The case study line of inquiry is testament to the fact that each community brings a unique context, structure, and orientation to interpreting the developmental assets framework and establishing a Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth initiative. GivEm40 appears to have developed a successful blueprint for sector-specific systems change within northwest Michigan. One of their important characteristics is their willingness to take risks—carefully planned, strategic risks. Given that risk is always accompanied by anxiety, however, it may be that the capacity for bearing risk is difficult to sustain over time. The cumulative effect of repeated risk-taking can eventually reach a "tipping point," wherein a substantial remedy is required. Such an antidote brings clarity and at least temporary relief of the stress inherent in the risk taking. One is left to consider how much risk taking, experimentation, and mistake making is manageable for an initiative? Answers to this question will enrich the explanatory value of the Change Pathway.

As each initiative has suggested in one form or another, transformation can either be manifested as renewal in preparation for the ***Long Haul*** of the work at hand, or it can lead to a markedly different course. The latter course of poses a core challenge to Search Institute and its community initiatives face in their efforts to build and sustain community-based approaches to young people's developmental well-being.

Feelings of tenuousness characterized all four of the initiatives studied. Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative suffered threats of state funding cuts to the after-school programming. Healthy Community Initiative in Orlando was hard hit by diminished travel and tourism, following the events of September 11, 2001.

GivEm40 describes itself as “groping along a pathway to change.” In December 2001, when we interviewed Portland’s Take the Time staff, they described themselves as being in the midst of reorganization. Sudden structural changes in the political climate of the county commission had resulted in severe budget cuts that were compromising the work. The dedication of Take the Time to this work was compellingly evidenced in their strong desire to share “lessons learned” with us in this study. Amid a harrowing previous six months of “paralysis” due to uncertainty and attacks on the integrity of the initiative, Chris Tebbin, the director, and her staff reminded themselves that “this was not about us.”

Healthy Community Initiative

HC • HY Orange County, Orlando, Florida

Context of the Initiative

The *Orlando Sentinel* (11/20/01) reports that between 1999 and 2000, 476 new residents moved into central Florida daily. Of the 500 people who move into Central Florida daily, 300 will move out over the next 5 years. The increasing population and high population mobility into greater Orlando has depleted natural resources such as the tree canopy, air quality, lake systems, and the unique flora and fauna that are one reason people are so attracted to the area. Further, the high influx of residents into Orlando moves *through* the area rather than "putting down roots" and becoming invested in the ecological and economic sustainability of the community. The service economy that supports the vast tourism industry has an especially high turnover. Forty-five percent of all jobs in central Florida are in the service industry, 13 percent are in retail, and 7 percent in manufacturing. The events of September 11 have crippled the local economy due to its heavy dependence on the tourism industry. This heavy dependence on tourism creates an undiversified and thus fragile economic foundation for central Florida, which, prior to Disney's arrival in 1971, depended on agriculture and manufacturing.

Community Sustainability and Youth Development. Within this context of a fragile economy and high mobility, positive youth development is seriously compromised. According to a locally produced Legacy Report, forty-four percent of elementary school children do not finish a school year in one school, and child poverty is higher now than it was 10 years ago. HCI materials highlight local studies showing high mobility related to low performance on school outcome measures. Related to the high mobility that impacts school readiness and start-up is the need for affordable housing that will interest renters in becoming homebuyers. The move from tenants to homeowners is seen as a critical political focus, and the visits to Orlando included tours of several community revitalization efforts. An understanding of the economic, social, and ecological context of Healthy Community Initiative is critical to understanding its unique use of the developmental assets framework and the ways in which community sustainability is linked to developing youth as active citizenry.

HCI is located in Orlando, which has a population of 500,000. Greater Orlando is one of nine communities within Orange County, which has a population of 896,344 (US Census, 2000). Five of the nine communities—University, Winter Park, Maitland, West Orange County, and Apopka—are part of the HCI network. The Executive Director of HCI is Ray Larsen, formerly the director of the Beta Center, which provides transitional housing for pregnant minors. Larsen has published in the area of school readiness and the health of younger children. HCI's office is located in a former neighborhood health clinic, exemplifying the wellness orientation that differentiates this initiative from the others in our study. Early funding of HCI came from two hospital systems: Orlando Regional and Florida Hospital. Florida Hospital no longer provides funding but donates use of the building. HCI also received substantial initial financial support from the Winter Park Health Foundation. In addition to youth health needs, the focus areas of the foundation include access to health care for all citizens and issues specific to seniors, such as "end-of-life care," lifelong learning, and driver safety. Links are made between similar needs of teens and seniors, such as improved nutrition and increased physical activity; the foundation utilizes the developmental assets framework in grantmaking that addresses these needs. A health and wellness orientation is the organizing theme for this initiative; however, reliance on the financial support of the health-care may create economic vulnerability for HCI.

Compass Model of Community Change. The Compass Index, an assessment tool developed by Orlando consultant Alan AtKisson, is a guiding model for HCI's work. A brief description of the model illustrates how developmental assets "nest" within the larger mission of community sustainability. The Compass Index evolved from a model of community wellness known as "Daly's Pyramid." In this model, the economy rests on the foundation of natural resources and ecosystems that are unique to the area and support economic productivity. Economic production, in turn, supports the development of specific operating systems and culture, such as education, government, social services, health care, and art. At the top of the pyramid is the well-being of the community, which is determined by community members' perception of their health, happiness, and personal fulfillment. AtKissen's Compass Index converted the hierarchical nature of Daly's Pyramid to the four equal directions of a compass, with *nature-social-economic-well-being* corresponding to *north-south-east-west*. Structurally, the developmental assets framework serves as an important tool for addressing community needs in each of the four quadrants, but it is not a "compass point" in and of itself.

Noteworthy Expression of Themes

Initiatives Within an Initiative. HCI provides the purest illustration of a theme we found to be common to all four community change initiatives: the need to differentiate the actual work of the initiative from diverse philosophical orientations and physical spaces. We coded this theme ***Context Create***[1] to capture the importance of creating a definable context propelling the intersection of positive development and community change. In many cases, the change initiatives establish the belief system and the physical location for the work as much any particular approach. HCI, for example, stresses neighborhood and community ownership of programming and sees itself as a framework composed of many smaller initiatives. Its function is to help organize and even catalyze the work of these separate or sub-initiatives. Ray Larsen, the Executive Director, describes the process as "rebuilding community at the meta level and also at the very local level" (Focus Group, p. 4). Within this framework, HCI, the parent organization, is distinguished from HC • HY (Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth), which is viewed as a specific tool, or "lever," within the larger initiative. HCHY's particular role is to emphasize the critical importance of healthy youth to a vital community, an emphasis particularly important to an area like central Florida with its high mobility rate.

In Orlando, the size of the smaller initiatives working to build community around developmental attentiveness and create a developmentally attentive infrastructure is not uniform. A sub-initiative can be a school cluster composed of a high school and feeder middle and elementary schools, organized around the use of developmental assets. It can also be a neighborhood initiative, such as the rehabilitation of the Callahan neighborhood, which is organizing around the innovations of the new Nap Ford Charter School.

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[1] Examples of codes from our working codebook are presented in italicized bold print throughout the report.

> . . . what I mean by that is that the local community owns, in a sense, that subcommunity's initiative and, by owning it, I mean they are not only the ones to plan, but local, they got to find the local resources so we don't fund the survey for them. They've got to find a partner . . . and the strategy is, if a meteor comes and hits my organization, Winter Park and West Orange will continue with their initiative. So it's in effect self-sustaining and very locally owned. At the same time, we work hard to be kind of the center that holds and so we have a community asset network. We have a Website. We facilitate. We connect. We do all the things so that overall there is a strategy . . . a cohesive strategy for the community as a whole, but the way that we're going about it is by nurturing these kind of subcommunities in building assets. (Focus Group, p. 3)

Within these subiinitiatives, the developmental assets framework provides a means of expressing similar thoughts and emotions (***Common Language***) and mission (***Guiding Purpose***) that fosters the social cohesion needed for all the community-building efforts.

Thinking Beyond the Schools. A distinguishing characteristic of HCI was the fact that schools were not the focus of the initiative's work, and the schools were not seen as the sole piece of community infrastructure to bring about positive development. HCI intentionally sought to mobilize in nonschool sectors and sidestepped the typical indictment of the school system as the source of much that is wrong with youth today (***Not a School Slam***).

> You know, these kids feel their communities have let them down, not their schools . . . we need to put our children with the community, and not rely on the schools to raise our kids. It's just not fair. (Focus Group, p. 22)

> We [society] want to shove schools down there [to the ground]. At HC • HY we like to call it [our approach] a safety net—

> mentors, faith institutions, or other adult relationships . . . And then the schools . . . they can be allowed to teach. (Focus Group, p. 26)

HCI presented a sympathetic understanding of the experience of school administrators and teachers when new programs are suddenly thrust upon them to address problems, and the fact that all members of the community have an obligation to deal with human development matters.

> As a school system we're used to people saying, you know, 'Here's all 40, now go do them.' . . . and it's been a real helpful tool to say that we are just a piece of that, and the community has to come together and fill in the rest of the pieces [**Everyone's Responsibility**]. (Focus Group, p. 18)
>
> You have to understand how beleaguered our teachers are. And I cannot emphasize that enough . . . we [say], this is [about] community, this is not a program for the school, but I knew I was going to walk into a room full of teachers basically saying, 'Yeah, right, something new from central office.' (Focus Group, p. 36)

Not a School Slam was an important code contributed to the case study by HCI, because it provided a comparative lens with which to consider multi-sector involvement across all the initiatives.

Virtual Sectors. Reference to "sectors" and "communities" does not necessarily imply a shared meaning system or operational commonalities within a particular sector. To the contrary, most sectors are likely to be highly diversified. The notion of a faith community or business community was described by an Orlando focus group participant as a "virtual" concept—an abstract notion in need of tangible supports to function more cohesively. HCI's role, overall, is to foster communication among community sectors as the basis for building community and forging a supportive infrastructure (***Context Create/Common Language/Sector Connection***). The developmental assets framework was described as a tool for forging connections within and across these virtual sectors

(***Sector Connection***), leading toward the development and operation of a functional community network.

A Distributed Leadership Model. Another characterizing theme unique to HCI was its use of what we would consider distributed leadership. Consistent with its focus on local ownership, “community faculty” of HCI assist communities in raising awareness (***Means of Asset Exposure***) and eliciting activity to promote healthy development (***Process of Expansion***). Their goal is to foster and promote local leadership essential to making changes (***Making It Happen – Recruitment and Mobilization***).

> The crucial asset to any neighborhood are the people that live there . . . so that if we’re going to have an initiative here, it needs to be owned by people and not by an agency. And so in these local communities what we do is we send somebody in, essentially. In Winter Park it was Sidney, Art Cross in West Orange. And their job is . . . to build capacity for an initiative. And what we’ve told them to do is look for the people that stick to you. And then when there’s nine or ten of them, bring them into one room and call them the Leadership Committee. And it becomes theirs . . . Winter Park found funding to keep the people that were facilitating. The same thing’s happened in West Orange. We contracted with Art, for a year, to do that. Now they’ve found resources to keep Art working with them [***Funding Strategic***]. (Staff Meeting, p. 7)
>
> I think it’s more intentional [than casting seeds]. Certainly in some sense we’re casting seeds [***Growth Metaphor***] . . . we’ll do a presentation about assets just about anywhere they ask us to, but we’ve been very specific about . . . one of the tips we gave was to go slow [***Spread Control***] . . . What we meant by that was that when we work within one of these subcommunities, an example would be this one named Winter Park . . . we spent a whole year doing what we called building capacity for an initiative there. And what that means is lots of presentations and recognizing and identifying and bringing together leaders for a steering committee for that subcommunity [***Making It Happen – Convene/Organize***]. When that group came together

> we changed our role; Healthy Communities changed its role to facilitating that homegrown leadership group. They began to plan how they wanted to spin this off and they decided to survey their high school and then have a community event and mobilize from there. So, we've been very intentional about that [***Strategic Care***], and by intentional I mean that we chose our most affluent subcommunity to begin this with because we felt that would help us get past 'it's not our kids problems.' [***All Kids***] (Staff Meeting, p. 2)

Key Bridges was another characterizing theme of HCI, and it, too, is linked with leadership. This code refers to critical connections across sectors facilitated by key individuals, organizations, or groups. Without the influence, power, and commitment of such key bridges, the work of the initiative would be less likely to progress as effectively and the likelihood of growing a more robust developmentally attentive infrastructure would be reduced.

> Before there was ever a survey done or the community event that released the surveys, that community group worked for about a year and a half to two years in preparation. We called it community capacity building, and they made the links, . . . we . . . chose the people that came to their community very carefully. There weren't a lot of social workers and teachers there, because those are the people that come to all these things. We really worked hard . . . if you'll pardon the expression, ah, it's true for all of central Florida and certainly for Winter Park, we needed white guys over 50. That's who we needed to come to this room if we were going to start having [an impact]. (Staff Meeting, p. 12)
>
> When Mike walked down and he says, 'You guys didn't do well because there were Lexuses and Cadillacs and Jaguars in the parking lot,' we said, 'That's exactly the crowd we were going after.' Ah, because they're often left out when we have, like, community events. (Staff Meeting, p. 12)

Developing the Leadership Capacity of Youth: Civic Engagement. As one of the focus group participants put it: "Keeping kids busy does not mean they feel like they are contributing” (p. 14). The data from all four community initiatives generated themes about the role and value of youth in connection with community building and community change. However, one particular code, ***Doing With, Not Providing For***, captured a unique element in the approach of HCI. It is common for adults to view “active engagement” with youth as providing opportunities or services *for* them. Actively engaging youth to work alongside adults is a different experience, however, and requires relinquishing control and exercising patience. We have reason to surmise that an initiative that emphasizes ***Doing With, Not Providing For*** would have a more balanced, reciprocal relationship between youth and adults. Making sure youth are vital players is essential to building the sense of community needed for developmental attentiveness. Adults in such an initiative often function as mentors who model leadership, while also allowing themselves to be transformed by the energy, optimism, and creativity that youth contribute to the work.

The connection between youth development and HCI’s emphasis on youth leadership capacity is best illustrated by HCI’s Youth Philanthropy Program which is made up of Legacy Venture Teams. The youth philanthropy group that was trained in a grant-making process to encourage effective development. The team assessed different aspects of the grant applications, including the timeline, budget, purpose of the project, implementation, and role in furthering asset building. Last year, the team awarded $75,000 to youth initiatives supporting developmental assets.

Being able to see the results of their work through the programming and infrastructure changes they had chosen to support held strong appeal for youth on the Venture Team (***Youth Value***). Another strength of this project for youth is that it provides an opportunity to creatively harness young people’s knowledge of one another (***Peer to Peer***) and to work collaboratively with that knowledge to propose or make changes (***Youth Strategic***). Moreover, each of the teams awarding funds to alter aspects of the community infrastructure explicitly focused on a particular asset area. The Jewish Community Center’s team focus was on diversity, the Boone High School team focused on sustainability, and the Winter Park High team focused on using all 40 assets.

Adults who facilitate the youth work in HCI describe “letting go” of some of the control and finding that youth have risen to the higher expectations and trust. In our youth focus group, we posed questions around managing differences of opinion with adults and asked about the negotiation and decision-making process in the face of such challenges. Overwhelmingly, youth described feeling listened to by adults, which seemed to be an important condition of feeling valued. Youth have recently decided to challenge business owners in the community about the perception of youth as shoplifters. The decision to be proactive around a negative perception of youth illustrates the energy and creativity inherent in youth empowerment and leadership practice. Tackling this issue directly is testament to the possibility of youth as change agents.

Informing the Change Pathway

As the youngest initiative of the four studied, we did not expect HCI to be as focused on the Continuity phase of the Change Pathway. Surprisingly, attention to Continuity, existed from the inception of the initiative, according to focus group participants. It was driven by the reality of diminishing natural resources in a traditionally resource-rich environment. Concentrating on Continuity from the outset functioned as a catalyst for this initiative. This insight serves to underscore the nonlinear nature of the Pathway. When making the work of the initiative part of everyday life in the community is part of the original design, Continuity occurs concurrently with earlier phases of the model, such as Awareness and Receptivity.

Developmental Assets as the "Lever." A typical stimulus for embarking on the Change Pathway is dissatisfaction with the status quo. Dissatisfaction in Orlando, centered diminishing natural resources, an undiversified economic base that was recently dealt a severe economic blow, and the struggle to sustain community in the face of extremely high population mobility. HCI sees one of its functions as catalytic. Healthy Community Healthy Youth (HCHY) is the developmental assets initiative under the umbrella of HCI, the larger mission of which is healthy human development within an ecological context that includes economic, social, and environmental factors. The developmental assets framework and the initiative were seen as providing a "lever" for addressing a piece of this problem—the impact of high mobility on healthy youth development.

Moreover, the developmental assets approach had strong appeal in relation to Receptivity and Awareness: that it is within one’s capacity to contribute to the desired change. Search Institute’s ability to package and present the research on developmental well-being and thriving in the form of simple concepts and doable behaviors allowed HCI to use the developmental assets framework for community building and organizing purposes. The user-friendliness of this tool, as focus group participants describe it, allows for the building of cohesion within subcommunities. HC • HY’s trainings on developmental assets are didactic, but in addition to providing accessible information, they serve as opportunities for citizens to network and explore potential collaboration (***Connectivity***). The trainings also address Receptivity to and Awareness of the need for change.

The developmental assets framework is a powerful, common thread woven throughout many different sectors and emerging entities comprising the infrastructure of greater Orlando, such as the Nap Ford Charter School in Callahan, the Beta Center, the Winter Park Health Foundation, and the Youth Philanthropy Program. The flexible and diverse applications of the framework supported the overarching HCI mission of building connections within subcommunities and identifying local resources that can establish a firmer foundation of local ownership.

In short, virtually all of HCI’s work speaks to the Continuity Phase of the Change Pathway. Participants spoke clearly of early experiences with the initiative that represented Awareness, Receptivity, and Action, but the emphasis was on “continuity factors” that were considered from the outset and that remain central to the initiative’s work today.

Community Faculty Leadership across the Phases. The building of a cadre of “community faculty” who conduct the trainings and engage the subcommunities serves as an intriguing Change Pathway leadership strategy. These experienced and skilled leaders had long histories of activism in greater Orlando and were deeply committed to the issues of youth development . The faculty hold considerable bridging social capital within their communities, which provides them with the potential to link the diverse stakeholders needed for the success of the initiative. Community faculty are lawyers, small business owners, university faculty, realtors, and former staff of the city planning office. The strong female leadership within HCI had its beginnings in the Junior League, where several of the community faculty have been past presidents. Making explicit linkages among key stakeholders committed to healthy development is one of the ways in which community faculty generate Mobilization and further “buy in” within the greater Orlando area, increasing the potential for the Action phase of community change, while simultaneously creating a firmer basis for Continuity. As an example, establishing HCI within an affluent community, Winter Park, was intended to model that community revitalization was not “code” for deteriorating neighborhoods or “at-risk” youth. While deploying community faculty is a way to mobilize strong local leadership, their broad-based involvement raises the importance of strong, consistent leadership across all the phases of the Change Pathway.

But HCI is also more than the developmental assets framework and healthy youth development. The establishment of a Saging Center represents community-building efforts with senior citizens as the target population **(*Elder Engage*)**. In addition, the goal of HCI is to be a “partner of integrity” (Staff Interview) with all of the initiatives within the community revitalization movement in central Florida. In this role, it would ideally provide constructive feedback on tough issues and have the respect “of the local resident and the mayor.” It is through this immersion into all sectors of its citizenry that HCI uses the developmental assets framework as the community-building common language for leveraging community-wide participation in its change efforts. A core belief of HCI is that Continuity is best assured by ongoing Action that exemplifies broad Receptivity and Awareness of the need to develop youth as important community assets, and by garnering the Mobilization of both a broad and powerful constituency. One of the codes from our research, ***Anybody & Everybody***, was derived from our first visit to Orlando. That code, combined with ***Doing With, Not Providing For***, captures the emphasis in HCI of seeking Continuity through comprehensive, shared ownership of community change—ownership held by adults and youth, and by influential leaders and everyday people alike.

DISCUSSION

Our intent has been to study the life and dynamics of four HC • HY community initiatives to better understand how they organize, plan, and conduct their work to secure developmental attentiveness. We were also interested in gaining insights about the ways in which their purpose, focus, structure, and activity evolves as the work proceeds. The intent of our questions and analysis was to forge a better understanding of how these HC • HY initiatives are designed, operate, grow, and are sustained. In that vein, we were interested in the implementation challenges they confront, the range of achievements they attain, and the paths they take in support of young people's healthy development.

This report summarizes our preliminary findings. In the descriptive section we exhibited the images initiative participants created and the words they used to evoke what their community-based human development work means to them and the benefits they believe their initiatives can bring about for young people. Their visions help clarify why people commit time and energy to making communities more hospitable places for growing competent, caring, and responsible young people. We also present a descriptive profile of the initiatives to exemplify operational approaches and extract applied lessons tied to their implementation. These profiles will hopefully have practical benefit for other communities, given that they allow for comparison and contrast across sites.

In the interpretive section of the report, we lay out the rationale for and description of the research approach we employed to conduct the case study inquiry. We then present a condensed version of our thematic codebook, which is based on the use of formal qualitative research procedures to analyze transcriptions from focus group sessions and related conversations. The codebook represents a thematic analysis of the four versions of community-based human development that are being cultivated at the sites. The codebook demonstrates that in order to advance developmental attentiveness, these initiatives strive to build community, catalyze collective behavior akin to a social movement, and work with representatives from various sectors in order to reorient the community infrastructure. In addition to providing short summaries of the environmental context for each location, we used the codes and actual narrative statements of adults and youth to identify the noteworthy expressions of certain themes in each initiative. Where appropriate, we pointed out situations where an initiative illustrates a unique spin on a particular theme. Finally, we explored how the initiatives' experiences inform the Change Pathway Search Institute has established to help communities make sense of the journey they have embarked on.

Several cross-site themes and patterns begin to emerge from these preliminary First Wave findings. In general, they offer credence to some of the often stated community-based asset-building precepts. They also surface a number of nettlesome matters for community initiatives. As such they are worthy of additional discussion.

Community Initiatives Bring Adults and Youth Together in Relationship to Attain Developmental Well-Being for All Young People

Initiatives are assemblies gathered for a common social purpose. They can also be considered interactive ensembles—intersecting collections of adults and youth intent on building interpersonal relationships throughout the community in order to raise competent children and youth. The initiatives serve as formalized conduits for the interplay of the various ways and means by which adults and youth build relationship within and across generations. The three categories of thematic codes spelled out in the codebook make this evident. The underlying common impulses cutting across these categories are rooted in people banding together around vision, purpose, and behavior.

While there are many different ways to secure those relationships, they are all pursued with one purpose in mind. A theme coded ***Orientation Shift,*** one of the overarching themes emerging from the First Wave study, denotes the common purpose. Simply defined, it references the transformation from deficits to strengths in thought and action toward the younger generation that rests at the core of developmental attentiveness.

This is no easy feat in our culture or in our communities, given that a Gallup Poll conducted in early 2001 found that the majority of Americans focus on their weaknesses and try to correct them, as opposed to building on their strengths. We differentiated the code ***Orientation Shift*** along a number of dimensions to deal with this penchant. In the individual dimension, people described different facets of the shift to a strength-based youth perspective. Some elaborated on the personal baggage they brought to their perspective on youth based on their own negative experiences of feeling discounted as a young person. Many described the positive youth orientation as personally gratifying and enjoyable. Others described resonating with the work as an approach they had already adopted in their lives and welcomed their initiative identity as an affirming affiliation. The transformation in orientation sometimes occurred as a result of being around others who have made the switch. The chief of police in Traverse City, a self-described skeptic, wondered whether the developmental assets would become another DARE program, one which people were passionate about, but which had eventually been shown by research to be ineffective.

Forging meaningful relationships with youth means moving beyond their token presence on committees with adults and requires that adults make a significant attitudinal shift. Take the Time staff described personal recognition of their biases toward young people, based, in part, on their own experiences as youth of having been silenced or "not mattering" because they lacked experience. Walking the talk of authentic adult-youth relationship requires that adults relinquish some of their control and power. Adults building relationships *with* youth that results in a meaningful partnership is very different from, and more difficult than, providing services and activities *for* youth. Partnership involves taking risks in allowing youth to participate in initiative decision making and countering the prevailing beliefs that they are disinterested, irresponsible, and socially unaware. Initiatives that mentored youth in leadership roles, such as the Youth Philanthropy Team in Orlando, learned that youth are highly motivated to serve their communities and to contribute their ideas and energy when they feel it is genuinely invited.

Youth also have a unique and critical role to play in initiative work—that of engaging other youth. GivEm 40 youth utilized a theater troupe to involve their peers in the community work. Youth also have an important role to play in addressing negative stereotypes. Take the Time youth contribute to The Zone, the weekly feature on Portland youth in the regions major newspaper. Clearly, authentic civic engagement of youth in developmental asset work is a critical aspect of representation.

Youth likely need be an active constituency of the initiative throughout all the phases of the Change Pathway if the goal of developmental attentiveness is to be carried forward by the next generation. But how much control can adults really extend to youth? How many mistakes on the part of youth—or adults, for that matter—are allowable? And, what impact do those mistakes have on authentic relationships, and how much of that impact is tolerated? How are these decisions determined? Once the community has adopted the mission of authentic adult-youth relationships leading to engagement, how far will it go in supporting youth? These are questions that require a deeper understanding of the ways in which adults and youth partner. How is active youth representation sustained? Many of the initiatives referenced graduating youth leaders who were no longer involved in the initiative. How does the turnover of youth leadership affect the adults with whom they are in partnership? Perhaps there's an alumni role for youth who graduate—one that can serve to enhance the quality of genuine youth-adult partnering. Clearly, a more informed Change Pathway requires a deep understanding of how adults become more or less invested in partnership with youth.

Community Initiative Energy is Grounded in the Integration of Head and Heart For Healthy Development

The young people and adults working and living in the families, institutions, and agencies that comprise community and the community writ large are drawn to the goal of developmental attentiveness by virtue of having their hearts touched and their mindsets reinforced or altered. In our design of the Change Pathway, we were sensitive to the issues of head and heart proliferating in each phase. The realization of the centrality of meaningful relationships has only reinforced that duality, or, more precisely, the integration of that duality.

The raising of consciousness about what it means to be personally invested in seeking healthy development for all children and adolescents is a matter of thought, feeling, and perhaps above all—action. The solace of entering into what Parker Palmer refers to as "communities of congruence"—in this case, a constituency that also believes in attaining developmental attentiveness, and the commitment to act and heighten the consciousness of other adults and youth about how they can make community-based human development happen, signify the presence of rich thought and feeling, integrated through engaged activity. The reformulation of caring from feeling for young people in want to a passion about the vitality and potential of all young people produces a novel affective approach. From this new perspective, caring is transformed from how we readily understand it. In lieu of being about reaching out to those in need, caring, in this sense, is resolute in affirming each young person's capacities for optimal development. Our thoughts and feelings shift from not just caring about the negative—youths' risks and problems—but also to caring for the positive—their hopes and aspirations.

Daniel Stern has defined "attunement" as the process by which individuals learn to identify, experience, and adapt their affective states so that they match and are shared with the affective states of others. Originally based on mother-child relations, the concept of attunement has been applied to the adult/therapist relationship in psychotherapy, the teacher/student relationship in the classroom, and peer relationships among adolescents. The concept of attunement characterizes a deep-seated emotional connection that lies at the core of building community developmental attentiveness. The notion of "mind-sharing," as conceived by science fiction writer Arthur Clark, proposes that the ability of humans to get into each other's heads will represent the next stage of human evolution. Perhaps intellectual synchronicity around the tenets of building healthy community is a very modest modern day approximation of that next proposed evolutionary stage. At a minimum, sharing a language and mindset around healthy youth development seems a prerequisite to countering the barrage of violent imagery and negative messages portraying young people.

But the experience among the adults and youth involved in the community initiatives captures something greater than just the ratcheting up of emotional intimacy on the one hand and cognitive congruence on the other. The engagement of head and heart interdependently leads to something qualitatively different than utilizing either alone. Interestingly, similar conversations about the profound interconnections between thought and feeling are underway among disparate groups including cultural theorists, molecular biologists, and behavioral neuroscientists. At the societal level, cultural anthropologist Renato Rosaldo argues that cognition and affect, or reason and the irrational, cannot be viewed as separate and distinct. Instead, he asserts we must understand and sense thought as feeling and feeling as thought, and gain a deeper appreciation for how their integration actually shapes cultural forces. At the cellular level, Candace Pert's research as described in the Bill Moyers book on healing shows that molecules circulating throughout the entire body known as "neuropeptides," not only appear to mediate intercellular communication throughout the brain and body, but may also be the biochemical units of emotions. Related discoveries at the intersection of biochemistry and neurology raise the specter of the mind and emotions as inseparable and united in maintaining our physical and mental health.

Participants in the study from the four communities didn't converse in the dialect of culture studies or science, nor did they deliberately speak to the synthesis of thinking and feeling. But, when a number of the thematic codes that were derived from their statements are considered in combination, the fusion of thinking and feeling that propelled their engagement is evident. A careful scrutiny of what lies behind codes such as ***Awakening, Baggage Assessment, Common Language, Guiding Purpose, Guiding Stories, Personal First, Personal Gratification,*** and ***Self-Reference*** reveals the mix of affective and cognitive revelations that motivate adults and youth to put their being into the cause of healthy development.

It could be something more than just the touching of heart and mind that helps explain the power that adults and youth told us they often experience as they work together to bring about human development-based social change. The actual integration of intellect and emotion may be the tailwind spurring many of those exponential energy increases and stellar community efforts. Questions designed to extract the various syntheses of head and heart to which participants attribute progress are sorely needed.

Community Initiatives Spawn Relational Leadership

Robert Chaskin and his associates remind us that leadership is essentially about relationship. Therefore, if the initiatives are understood as assemblies fostering meaningful relationships among adults and young people, then the formal and informal leaders of the initiatives are the primary proponents and the facilitators of those relationships. By informal leaders, we mean the girls and boys and men and women who volunteer their time and give of themselves to engender healthy communities for young people. By formal leaders, we mean the individuals holding specific positions within the community initiative itself. Both facets of leadership are necessary to make progress toward developmental attentiveness.

Our investigation of how four communities bring about community change on behalf of healthy development has surfaced diverse expressions of relational leadership. The range of champions—the people who assume leadership roles in building community, fomenting collective will, and reorienting community infrastructure all in the name of developmental attentiveness—is especially broad. The leadership roster includes soccer coaches in Traverse City, small business owners in Orlando, semi-retired citizens in Moorhead, and parents in Portland.

In addition to beginning to catalog the range of formal leaders, we were also able to sketch portraits of the initiative directors. We had numerous occasions to communicate with directors by phone and email, as well as to meet them in person and observe them working with their staffs and steering committees. We also heard compelling descriptions of their roles and their achievements from focus group participants, interviewees, and citizens attending the community presentation. Directors were often described as having "a fire in the belly"—a passionate commitment to developmental attentiveness leading them to make efforts that go “above and beyond” on behalf of the initiative.

From Search Institute’s experiences in Colorado with its statewide Assets for Colorado Youth Initiative, we coined the term “innovative stakeholders.” It seemed as if directors in the four First Wave sites sometimes pushed innovation so far that they brushed up against the edges of chaos and calamity. The Wave 1 directors needed to be experienced enough to take risks in their decision-making, remain visionary in spite of short-term setbacks, and maintain vigilance in the face of the instability of their social climates. Directors were savvy and respectful of the existing history, culture, and beliefs of partnering constituencies and routinely looked for ways to infuse and adapt the developmental asset framework when the timing was right. They were smart about the importance of forging key alliances with power brokers in the community. HCI in Orlando described the white men over 50 as key leaders, given their power in the community and their traditional lack of involvement in youth-based initiatives. GivEm 40 referenced the key role of the intermediate school district superintendent in securing all 19 schools partnership with that initiative. In Moorhead, the police chief was key to the community policing efforts in that region, which has a history of poor relations with law enforcement in the low-income neighborhoods.

While specific approaches to leadership are more appropriate in certain situations, it is clear that the directors of these initiatives incorporate a wide array of strategies. They are able to manifest leadership because of the actual position they occupy and the authority that comes with being in that role. They are able to produce different types of rewards that various individuals and groups find appealing and that stimulate people to action. They are able to persuade key actors that their interests and values can be met by participating in healthy development activities. They are able to offer faith to adults and youth that involvement will make life better for young people in the community. They inspire people to think and act in ways that manifest their beliefs and ideals. In general, the formal leaders are charismatic people who engage others in community-based human development, as well as choosing to be important role models themselves.

As these glimmers of insight begin to emerge, a bevy of other questions related to leadership come to the fore. What are the values and beliefs of adults and youth who assume leadership positions? What kinds of actions do they undertake that they see are making a difference? How do they see themselves changing as a result of leading this work? Is the type of leadership needed for the early stages of asset building awareness and mobilization in a community different from the type of leadership required for later stages of action and continuity? These questions lend themselves to further examination as we continue to study community initiatives and deepen our understanding of the Change Pathway.

Community Initiatives Must Strive to Find and Sustain the Delicate Balance Between Imparting and Imposing New Norms

All of the initiatives describe embarking on a community change process that endeavors to alter the status quo of deficit-oriented perspectives on youth. There is recognition that the developmental assets framework does not use a traditional program approach, but instead integrates individual enlightenment and collective action. Developmental attentiveness is predicated upon most community members seeing themselves as having a responsibility to contribute in small and big ways to the positive potential of youth and to the community conditions conducive to healthy development.

As interactive ensembles dedicated to producing healthy and competent children and youth, community initiatives create multiple venues for conversations among community members about how to strengthen the developmental circumstances for children and youth. Over time, these conversations form the community narrative about healthy development. These narratives gradually become codified to a point where they contribute to shaping perceptions, influencing thought, and regulating behavior. (One of our goals as external researchers was to collect examples of the narratives and try to make some interpretive sense of them using qualitative research methods. The focus group method served us well as an efficient way of gathering youth and adult articulations of the narratives.)

The new narrative is imparted as a ***New Norm*** that seeks to replace the old social norms pertaining to the community’s raising of young people. The key word in the above sentence is “impart.” Imparting suggests a more natural and organic process of influence in which diffusion is characterized by mutual conveyance, joint granting of responsibility, and negotiation. Imparting is consistent with what David Brooks labels “intimate authority.” Intimate authority references all community members exerting a constant, gradual and subtle pressure on others so that the whole network can thrive. The ***New Norm*** of healthy development is imparted via survey findings, stories, and modeling behaviors as represented in the codes ***Living It Out*** and ***Making It Happen*** in both personal and professional domains. The imparting method of norm change can be understood as deliberative, voluntary, and reasonable.

Yet, in addition to functioning as local assemblies and ensembles, these community initiatives also view themselves as social movements, or part of a larger social movement tied to strength-based youth development. Social movements historically have not been about imparting but instead about “imposing” new sets of norms. In examples such as the civil rights and women’s movements, there has been tremendous urgency to forcefully impose one’s views on an entrenched status quo in order to be heard and taken seriously. Imposition, in such cases, encompasses strongly persuasive and even coercive strategies. While coercion can be readily dismissed as a viable approach to shifting people’s attitudes toward youth, because it is obviously antithetical to the premises and values of community-based human development, persuasion cannot be so easily discounted. In fact, persuasive tactics are apparent in the four initiatives we studied. Persuasive appeals to change attitudes based in social comparisons and moral suasion, organized campaigns to accomplish new attitude retention, and the more complex dilemma of eventually pushing for the translation of those attitudes into behaviors are common ingredients of the initiatives.

Aspects of both imparting and imposing approaches are evident in each initiative. Healthy Community Initiative in Orlando is an initiative with many "sub-initiatives" in order to focus and reinforce novel normative expectations and behavior in a highly mobile region. Moorhead Healthy Community Initiative functions as a service provider and a clearinghouse for training and networking opportunities that remained attentive to creating a norm that includes traditionally marginalized low-income and Hispanic citizens. GivEm 40 takes a sector-by-sector approach to changing norms, emphasizing depth over breadth and targeting the "buy in" of key stakeholders. Take the Time in Portland was more egalitarian in nature and invited its citizens to personalize the new orientation and introduce new norms through its funding of mini-grants.

However, the tricky preposition for community initiatives is to be capable of regularly modulating the balance between the softer imparting of new normative expectations and operating as a social movement committed to a firmer imposing. Attempts to adjust and fine tune a fusion of imparting and imposing strategies occupies a borderland that few have explored.

The ***New Norm*** also captures a long-term perspective, with some initiative participants indicating they do not expect to see dramatic change in the course of their lifetimes. They are engaged for the ***Long Haul*** and frequently reference other social change movements that have taken decades to take hold.

The role of the language associated with the developmental assets framework and the contribution it makes to shaping new norms must also be taken into account.

Although the language associated with the framework sometimes hinders comprehension, initiative participants also referenced the overdue need for the common language it provides. They have often felt hampered historically by not having a common basis for communication across sectors and constituencies. Having a shared language creates the foundation for a culture of intentional behaviors and communal responsibility for changing community conditions.

The ***New Norm*** idea also needs to be considered in relation to the Continuity phase of the Change Pathway. Several initiatives described the challenge of continuing the work when the newness had worn off. How is the norm of a strength-based orientation to the raising of healthy children and adolescents and the community conditions needed to sustain healthy development maintained on a day-to-day basis over a long period when it is no longer challenging the status quo? Is it inevitable that the initiative's early identity of "catalyst" during the Receptivity, Awareness, and Mobilization phases will shift to an identity characterized by maintenance and reinforcement? How does the verve tied to altering the status quo sustain itself in the move toward institutionalization and potential co-optation?

As an applied research institute with a social change agenda, what is the role for Search Institute to play in the Continuity phase of developmental attentiveness? While requests for direct financial support from Search Institute to the community initiatives may not be feasible, what means of support are appropriate and viable? The four initiatives studied strongly questioned Search Institute's role and responsibility as an ongoing partner in the strength-based social movement. Given Search Institute's role in activating initiatives, what responsibility does it have for their ongoing growth and development? Asset-based initiatives often reprioritize limited youth-development resources, at times resulting in the foreclosure of "remediation-based" approaches in order to energize the strength-based work. The magnitude of this shift must not be underestimated. In that light, what role can and should Search Institute play as a responsible partner with the initiatives, not just at the onset of their work, but throughout their development?

All of the initiatives referenced the need to harness national visibility on behalf of the developmental assets framework through advocacy by state and national leaders, such as governors, mayors, and former presidents. Former President Clintons support of Americorps, and Secretary of State Colin Powell’s support of America’s Promise are examples of this type of advocacy. HCI, in Orlando, describes its decision to become a City of Promise as a strategy to gain national recognition through association with a high visibility program. Initiatives want Search Institute to assume leadership in directing national leaders' attention to the idea of developmental attentiveness and the hundreds of community initiatives that are engaged in community-based human development around the country. The institute needs to work with community initiatives in order to reach a mutually agreed upon degree of responsibility for meeting that expectation.

Managing the Ongoing Tension Between Stability and Instability

The initiatives need to be seen as complex and adaptive ventures that unfold in nonlinear, dynamic, and unpredictable ways. As initiatives evolve across time they manifest periods of clarity, stability, and regularity. These are points at which funding is secure, staffing and key major players are consistent, and progress is being made on community building, social movement, and reorienting community infrastructure. And, there are also periods of instability where events become tumultuous, rendering the partnerships more unstable and assessments of the future far less certain. During these episodes, funding can become precarious, movers and shakers transition to other positions, roadblocks to progress are increasingly evident, and demonstrations of results are fraught with complications. The fluctuations between these stable and unstable periods are often not readily detectable beforehand and become apparent only after the fact. Sometimes, a very small action such as hiring a new part-time secretary can bring about incredible changes in the community presence and productivity of an initiative. Other times, vast investments of time and money in communication and outreach to a particular sector can appear to have minimal demonstrable effect. This only underscores how hard it can be to gauge when stable and unstable timeframes might occur and how long each will last. The periods of stability are opportunities to move forward with purpose and garner accomplishments. The timeframes of instability are occasions for headache and heartache and can produce a huge disquieting impact.

The dynamics of instability were strikingly evident when we review what transpired between our two site visits to each community. Considered from a complex-adaptive perspective, the initiatives were in the throes of “far-from-equilibrium” conditions where they find themselves tilted more towards randomness than control. In the period between our contact with the initiatives, several became immersed in, if not overwhelmed by, periods of instability; all were grappling with difficult issues. Some were perplexed by how to build on their achievements. Others were trying to come to terms with a fundamental shift in what the initiative would become or were in peril over the potential demise of the community-based human development effort. Some seemed resigned to the initiative work possibly ending or being replaced by a program. Others believed the initiative might lie dormant and then reemerge and revitalize the work after adapting to changing community conditions. Regardless of the response mode, all were in the painstaking period of having to hurriedly adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

In her discussion of innovation dilemmas Rosabeth Moss Kanter coins the phrase “newstreams” which is salient for community initiatives. For Kanter, newstreams represent the innovative ventures businesses take as they move beyond their core products, services, and customers to create an expansive identity, establish new markets, and increase profitability. Yet, the concept of newstreams is just as applicable to the cultivation of developmentally attentive communities. Community initiatives construct innovative channels for creating healthy, caring, and responsible young people. Kanter makes a number of points about these innovative pathways that are relevant to the unfolding of community-based human development. The paths are uncharted and the course is bumpy. Newstreams often have to be managed with a measure of faith that the uncharted waters do indeed lead to a desired destination. In moments of travail and anxiety, community initiatives may also need to lay claim to the same maxim.

The periods of uncertainty can become opportunities for reinvention. In human development terms, these turbulent times for the community initiatives can be thought of as analogous to identity crises, and as such, they are attended by excruciating levels of anxiety, indecision, and doubt. The human development literature makes the case that the successful negotiation of identity crises leads to newfound potential and positive change. In line with Erik Erikson’s notion of identity development at the individual level, these initiative identity crises mark a moment of opportunity to coalesce a central identity around a particular community life direction. Moreover, choices made in times of crisis tend to have lasting repercussions for subsequent development.

These perspectives are consistent with Search Institute choosing a qualitative approach for its inquiry. Our interest was less in assessing what community initiatives did or didn't do for predictive and prescriptive purposes, and more about listening, learning, and making an attempt at interpreting the experiences, but only for purposes of accurately representing them as the basis for knowledge building.

The dilemma is that even as community initiatives work to instill habits, develop rituals, create decision rules, and script relationships associated with the imparting of a ***New Norm***, they must also remain cognizant that adults and youth are able to vary or ignore the rules, scripts, and schemas. This speaks to the pervasiveness of improvisation along the entire odyssey to developmental attentiveness.

Nevertheless, a prevailing operational question for both the communities and Search Institute is how to best prepare for and cope with these periods of crises, timeframes of excessive turbulence, and periods of uncertainty. We all must remain vigilant about the real money and accountability pressures the initiatives confront. Certainly plans have to be developed and outcomes have to be detailed, but one has to also be prepared for the wealth of spontaneous and unexpected "stuff" that happens along the way.

Surprising as it might seem, those of us striving for developmental attentiveness will discover we have lots of company in the realm of uncertainty. In his recent book on the contemporary practice of medicine, Dr. Atul Gawande writes that, "Medicine's ground state is uncertainty. And wisdom—for both patients and doctors—is defined by how one copes with it." His prescient observation is essential for all people connected to community initiatives to consider. If medical science with all of its scientific robustness and methodological precision still maintains vast reservoirs of uncertainty, are we to be surprised when it finds its way to our shores? The key to success is also cited by Gawande: We will become wise as a natural byproduct of working with and through the uncertainty.

The Change Pathway affirms the messiness of uncertainty and the ambiguity of stability as it attempts to put community-based human development work into motion. It interprets the work not just as an accumulation of discrete events, but as a long-term endeavor that is fluid and often wildly unpredictable. Even though “tipping point” moments are essential to identify and mine for insight, there are also the factors that led up to and influenced those points, and the echo or “footprints” that remain long after those points have receded in time. The Change Pathway also endeavors to reify the recursive nature of the complex adaptive work that constitutes community-based human development. As Ralph Stacy has pointed out in his description of how the science of complexity applies to the social life of organizations, cause and effect relationships are circular and the potential to move back and forth across various states is quite common.

It is evident to us that, despite accomplishments in building community, fueling collective energy, and reorienting infrastructure, the people involved in these HC • HY community initiatives can easily confront inhospitable circumstances. Participants fancy themselves as a movement in a world whose default stance in response to the trials and tribulations of childhood and adolescence is programmatic. Adults and youth train their vision on the distant vista of developmental attentiveness, understand that long-term efforts are needed to get there, and yet must work in a culture with a truncated attention span and an obsession with quick fixes. These community initiatives live on the frontier as they go about determining how to create developmentally rich habitats for young people. They seek novel ways to try and manage the tensions in purposefully integrating thought and action. They perform an innovative balancing act in the blending of “imparting” and “imposing” strategies to transform community norms governing development across the first two decades of life. They manifest relational leadership responsive to local conditions and circumstances. The excitement and tension accompanying these factors only exacerbates the perennial intrusion of more mainstream challenges such as constantly securing funding, streamlining operations, and meeting accountability demands.

The study of community initiatives cultivating developmental attentiveness is compelling and complex. These early findings affirm the appeal and exhilaration of a mission that is empowering and convey the depth of commitment youth and adults make to the practice of healthy development. The findings highlight the epiphanies rooted in thought, feeling, and action that propel participants beyond their self-perceived limitations. The findings also communicate the frustrations, anxieties, and challenges that are an essential part of community-based human development.

The short-term intent of the case study research is to listen to the dreams and aspirations of people young and old actively involved in these community initiatives and to chronicle their testimonials and deeds. The next step is to use qualitative research methods to analyze and interpret their information and then close the loop by checking back with them to ascertain the merit of our interpretation.

The long-term goal of the case study research is to have the real world practice of community-based human development serve as the raw material for fashioning theory and to then employ that theory in real-world settings to advance knowledge regarding the social contexts of applied development. The oscillating nature and integrative flow of practice-theory-application are essential to this inquiry. We begin our second wave of case studies somewhat wiser because of our work with the first wave of communities who so generously and graciously welcomed us into their worlds. It is our hope that the cumulative insights resulting from this and subsequent waves of case studies begin to assuage the hunger for shared learning among communities throughout the country that are striving to become developmentally attentive.

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