A Comparative Study Of Community Youth Development Projects, &

Innovations For Community Enterprising

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ABSTRACT

**A Comparative Study Of Community Youth Development Projects, &
Innovations For Community Enterprising**

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The broad area of study of the thesis is the engagement of young people in community development. The thesis is organized in two parts. The first is a comparative study of nine community and youth development projects that had significant elements in common: program design, applied dissemination and structure. The second part introduces emerging practices, and a framework and a practical social enterprise design for community enterprising.

The researcher developed a working theory, with action-oriented research and developmental evaluation. Open Systems Theory (Emery, F. & Trist, 1965) provides a theoretical foundation. The research demonstrates limitations to conventional approaches to the assessment, convening and backbone support of comprehensive community and youth development projects. The thesis builds on theory, findings and previous experience in the field to identify conditions for engagement, and a new paradigm for organizing community development that includes criteria for convening. Part B discusses a set of practices for facilitation and developmental evaluation, and a whole-systems framework to guide community builders. The research concludes with the completed design of a social enterprise model intended to generate and fuel a chain reaction of community enterprising.

Key words: community enterprising, youth engagement, community youth development, comprehensive community youth development, intervene, developmental evaluation, facilitation, convening, backbone support, community development, social enterprise, social franchise, open systems theory

Dedicated

Keith Thompson
August 7, 1948 – April 15, 2013
mentor, friend, ember carrier

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<u>Abreviations</u>

CCI: Comprehensive Community Initiative
CCYD: Comprehensive Community Youth Development
CII: Collective Impact Initiative
CYD: Community Youth Development
DE: Developmental Evaluation
DYER: Department of Youth Elders and Recreation, Nain
HW: HeartWood, national convener
RA: Research Assistant
YERC: Youth Engagement in Rural Communities project
YS: YouthScape project

<u>Roles</u>

Community actors: individuals of all ages that participated in the project without remuneration

Design group: a group that has come together to design and carry out a community enterprise (e.g. project, initiative, event) for the benefit of the community.

Front-line project facilitators: site coordinators with YERC, and all staff that worked directly with
        Community actors in YS

Interveners: A term used occasionally to refer to the intervener role in general. These roles included
        with YERC, the national convener, the project consultant, the local conveners, and the site
        coordinators; with YS the roles included the national convener, program manager, youth work
        consultant, developmental evaluators, and the program manager of the funder.

Local convener: community organizations that received a grant to locally convene one of the two national
        projects in their community

National convener: community organizations that received a grant to convene a group of other community-based community organizations

Project consultant: An employee of the YERC national convener that carried out the dissemination role in the local community sites

Project organizers: the collective group of service providers and community actors

Service providers: all or part of the collective group of community organizers that received
        remuneration for their work with the project (staff of the local convener organization, site
        coordinator), and community partners

Site coordinators: These individuals were the primary employees responsible for the front-line project

execution at the YERC and YS sites. As the primary interface between the community and the national convener, the local convener and the community participants, and the project and community members, this was a primary area of focus for observations.

YouthScape researcher: a researcher affiliated with the national convener that led an inquiry into YS's impacts

Youth Engagement in Rural Communities (YERC) convening organization and community sites:

Division of Youth Elders and Recreation, Nain, NL
Quesbec 4H
Youth in Action, PEI
Community Futures Association (pseudonym)
YouthScape project (secondary study)

YouthScape (YS) community sites:

Rivière des Prairies (RDP), QC
Thunder Bay, ON
Calgary, AB
Saskatoon, SK
Halifax, NS

Preface

All men create without even knowing. Like breathing. But the artist feels himself creating and the act engages all of his being. His beloved pain fortifies him.
Paul Valery, French poet.

For 35 years Marc Langlois has worked in the *space-in-between* youth groups trying to make postive changes in organizations and communities, and adult decision makers. . It is breathtaking to watch these changemakers find the spark and then fuel the flames as they discover the capacity to become. Youth and adult partners ready to contribute to people and the planet are propositions too compelling to ignore. With support, their enterprising can fuel a chain reaction of engagement capable of transforming any community.

My experience, appreciation and curiosity have coalesced into a working theory that informed the research. As a practiced social entrepreneur and late-blooming academic, I entered this leg of my work-life journey resolved to soak in the wisdom of others and locate the courage to create one simple offering—a way for the inspiration of children, the passion of youth and the common wisdom in communities to coalesce to create neighbourhoods where all ages can thrive.

The thesis then has two distinct parts and one organizing purpose—to inform practical strategies of intervention capable of releasing young people's creative energy, skill and drive as a catalyst for social change for the collective good.

Part A presents a comparative study of nine examples of community and youth development projects carried out in remote, rural and urban communities. These cases are introduced briefly in the body of the text and in a richer format in the appendix. There are examples drawn from the cases sprinkled throughout later sections of the thesis to clarify my analysis and elaborate on conceptual ideas. Part A includes the Introduction, Methodology, Findings and Insight chapters.

Part B encapsulates a practical response to my reading of the findings—a call for the democratization of solution-seeking spaces for compelling community issues. The chapters explore the theoretical and practical implications of *spaces for enterprising* aligned more directly with the diversity of gifts in a

community, and organized and governed with participatory and democratic principles; practices for community building *intramediaries*; and a Framework for Comprehensive Community Youth Development (CCYD).

With my curiousity catching up with my convictions and experience, the Afterward of the thesis conclude the writing with the practical design of a way to sustain *community enterprising* for the long term required to transform communities. The offering described in the Afterward is the product of significant post-research work with two community-based youth and adult *design groups* and a learning partner. Together, we social entrepreneurs are creating social enterprises based on the findings of the research and our practical experiences of occupying the space-in-between the inspiration of children, the passion of youth, and the common wisdom of community.

Part A: A Comparative Study Of Community Building Attempts With Youth And Community Organizations

Section I: Getting Started

Chapter 1: Introduction

The broad area of the thesis is *youth engagement*[1] in community development. The focus of the research was an experiment on the notion that engaging young people in community building is a critical element of community development. That is, when young people are engaged they can stimulate others to engage and create conditions that foster an enterprising culture. The research was investigating the hypothesis that young people's contribution to community building is critical. Throughout the study the precarious role of adults walking the fine line between supporting and interfering with enterprising youth surfaces as a major theme. Therein lay both a phenomena and the problematic situation that bounded this inquiry.

The value of youth engagement for a young person's development has been well established with empirical research (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond, 2003; Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2000; Rose-Krasnor, Pancer, & Busseri, 2003). Rather than explore this evidence further, the research picks up where much of the existing research leaves off, by taking a course of inquiry into organizational processes that underlay efforts to engage youth.

If we are to increase the success of attempts to include and engage youth, then a deeper understanding of the organizational context where the majority of the work unfolds is critical. Moreover, not only do we need to understand the context but also understand how to leverage that understanding to foster spaces conducive to engagement and enterprise.

To engage with youth and adapt to ongoing changes in the environment requires a change in entrenched attitudes, behavior patterns and cultural norms (Innovation Centre, 2003; Zeldin,

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[1] Youth engagement is defined as "the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity that has a focus outside the self" (Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, 2007). The researcher will expand on this definition in Chapter 6: Insights to incorporate evidence from the study.

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2004; Grossman, & Bulle, 2006; Burgess, 2000). Karen Pittman (2000), a leading expert in youth engagement, fears the idea of youth engagement in community development organizations may, "be little more than another community program rather than a community principle" (p. 20). As the thesis will demonstrate, a significant factor holding back a breakthrough in youth engagement is the difficulty youth and community development organizations face in adapting to new ways of working (Bynoe, 2008; Langlois, 2010a; Langlois, 2010, Tolman & Pittman, 2001; Wheeler, 2003).

Ironically, there are still many youth development organizations that do not include any significant input or leadership from young people. Most community organizations with a youth mandate remain focused on the needs of youth as clients to be served, with organizational decisions program services, and governance primarily resting with adults. "For the most part, young people are provided with few opportunities to engage in discussions about their economic, social and environmental futures. It would seem that participation is still conceived to be an adult activity" (Matthews, Limb, & Taylor, 1998, p. 135).

Policy and strategy decisions made by senior staff with little input from front-line staff, further decreases youth influence. This characteristic is evident in a number of the case studies presented in this thesis. Research has found shared power between staff and with youth most readily accessible in smaller organizations (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hillfinger, McLoughlin, 2006; Royce, 2004). An alternative design for structure to help community organizations adapt and engage stakeholders will be discussed in Chapter 6. When community organizations do receive funding to experiment with new ways of working, they struggle to scratch below the surface of change. There is seldom any innovation that would lead to sustainable change in the way they operate or in their services (Schorr, 1977).

Finding a genuine role for youth in the community and in organizations is clouded by a popular misperception that they are more of a problem than an asset in community renewal (Boyte & James, 1997; Burgess, 2000; Tolman & Pittman, 2001; Curnan et al., 2002). A high percentage of youth services in Canada deal with youth problems versus youth engagement in the community, and there is a significant disconnect between the personal values young people seek from their engagement and what youth and community development organizations provide in the way of

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youth engagement and organizing (Gambone et al 2006). Attracting long-term participation by adolescents is a particular challenge (Gould, 1987; Quinn, 1999).

Therefore, the research for this thesis looked at the specific actions community and youth-serving organizations can take to foster youth engagement at a national and local level. More specifically, the thesis is an in-depth look at national and local organizing of what I refer to as *Comprehensive Community Youth Development* (CCYD) projects. These were attempts to create spaces for young people to not only get involved but to become enterprising within their community.

In this chapter and then further in Chapter 3: Literature Review there is a discussion of the relevance of youth and community development as an area of study. The situation in organizations and communities appears to be one of youth and adults not only seeking places and spaces where the conditions not only attract them but also provide them a balance of structure and freedom that causes them to want to engage.

To set the context for the research and the thesis the chapter includes a discussion on the importance of the area of study, organized with the following themes:

- the search by youth and adults for meaning in community,
- how the engagement of youth helps to build community,
- the gap with the current youth program offerings,
- the trend of youth creating their own ways and organizations to support their engagement, and the risk that presents for community building.

In a departure from conventional thesis organization, to further clarify the context I introduce in this chapter some important works of sociology rather than only later in the Literature Review. There is also a discussion of current options for young people to engage within adult-led and youth-led organizations, and an introduction to the concepts, approaches and language from related fields of practice. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the research that informed the thesis.

Youth And Adults Are Searching For Community And Meaning. Youth and adults are struggling with complex changes in their environment as they seek a deeper connection to community and greater meaning in their lives. It is important that we look at youth engagement

in the context of adult engagement and the environments they share. If youth and adults are drawn together, though their searching is different along with their different stages of life, that difference can be a catalyst to change. Three important sociological works help to describe a condition in society of drifting apart from one another and a yearning for more connection and community engagement. Kenneth Keniston is a respected social psychologist interested in the relationship of technology, personality and culture. From his earlier research he created the 1965 sociology classic, *Uncommitted, Alienated Youth in American Society* (1965). For his later work, *Youth and Dissent, The Rise of a New Opposition,* he looked at what causes alienation in a group of highly educated and comparatively successful ivy-league university students in the late 50s and early 60s. His work is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3: Literature Review. Two other works by leading sociologists fill out the picture, Robert Bellah (1985) with *Habits of the Heart*, and Richard Sennet (1998) with *The Corrosion of Character*. The work of these three scholars will be referred to throughout this and the next chapter. Keniston, Bellah and Sennet each looked at the challenges individuals face as they try to adapt to society's demands and the consequences they suffer if they can't achieve what their hearts desire.

Bellah and his associates (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, Tipton, 1985), and Tipton (1996) tell the stories of individuals who are desperate to hold onto a meaningful life at work and in their communities. The inquiry Bellah and associates undertook concerned the relationship between character and society. To get at the nature of public life Bellah and his team undertook four research projects mostly with the middle and working class. Their study of private life focused on themes such as: love and marriage, peoples' use of therapy, and older and newer forms of civic participation.

The study consisted of four separate research projects each by one of the authors. The collective work consisted of interviews and observations of over 200 persons over a five-year period. The book draws on the interviews and observations of these people as well as reflections by the authors on their own lives. A limitation of the research is that those interviewed were predominantly white middle-class Americans

Their work follows Tocqueville's and other classical social theorist in focusing on the established customs of consciousness, culture, and the daily practices of life—habits of the heart. The

authors speak to a deep searching for, "greater moral coherence." As the authors point out, "the kind of life we want to live depends on the kind of person we are—on our character." Therefore, their work is a discussion of the relationship between character and society, and more than anything a study of culture. They present a concern that individualism rather than equality has grown like a cancer. This work reinforces the fact that there is an overwhelming search in society for more from life than what people are currently experiencing.

In Keniston's, *Uncommitted* (1965) he describes a phenomenon of men increasingly choosing alienation as a path to individuality (p. 3). He describes how an adult's search for some of the comforts of earlier family closeness and mother's care, can lead to alienation in adulthood, because adult life in America offers so few of these qualities (p. 191). He predicted that, "as a consequence of our high regard for change and of the institutionalization of innovation, we have guaranteed that change will not only continue but accelerate and increase its pace" (p. 215). He goes on to warn that, "Economic success exacts a heavy human toll by encouraging one-sided human development, by splitting men's lives into parts" (p. 215).

Today, almost 40 years later, Keniston's 1965 predictions seem to ring true. Though the causes of the disconnection are many and complex, some are increasingly clear. More parents working out of the home than at any time in history (Marshall, 2010; LaRochelle-Côté & Dionne, 2009; Burton & Phipps, 2010) and the workplace is demanding more of our time (Bryant, 2006; Sauvé, 2009; "Family work patterns", 2009). For the urban worker, greater distances to the workplace and longer hours are reducing home to a place for sleep more than anything else. Demands are causing a concerning sense of disconnection from self (Statistics Canada, 2011), our families and our communities, and are stealing our time away from our primary relationships (Krull & Sempruch, 2011; Williams, 2000).

Sennet's research and writing is about the decreasing personal value derived from work. He is concerned with the fact that with decentralization, globalized companies and remote workplaces, there are decreasing connections at the workplace. He draws his insights from interviews he conducted with dismissed IBM workers, a barmaid turned advertising executive, bakers in a high-tech bakery, and others. Sennett (1998) comments, "A larger sense of community, and a fuller sense of character, is required by the increasing number of people who,

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in modern capitalism, are doomed to fail" (pg. 135). Whether the regime is a workplace or a community, a sense of caring for one another is central to its resiliency.

Sennett (1968) argues that work has been pivotal in creating the conflict in our lives between what we need for personal fulfillment and what we need for our livelihood.

When achieved, the increased sense of community people are seeking is good for their health and wellness. The Public Health Agency of Canada identified some important community-related wellness indicators such as: social support networks that include families, and friends, and the need to extend that base to the broader community. The Agency also recognizes that civic vitality with strong social networks within a community as critical. Finally, they suggest that these social networks need to be, "reflected in the institutions, organizations and informal giving practices that people create to share resources and build attachments with others" (Federal, provincial, and territorial advisory committee on population health, 1999).

An important paradigm is that creating positive community environments that engage children and youth will also result in creating more positive environments for all citizens. The connection and engagement adults are seeking we also know to be important to the healthy development of children and young people. Extensive research by Search Institute resulted in a *Forty Assets* developmental framework used broadly throughout the world to assist communities to transform themselves into places in which there is more positive youth development. Those assets include: caring neighbors; support from non-parent adults; useful roles in and service to the community; and a sense of safety in a child's neighbourhood (Benson, Leffert, Scales, Blyth, 1997).

The message we can take from this evidence is that for an individual and his/her community, well-being begins with care of relationships within a community. With that fire fed, community will grow. Connecting with, and showing we care for one another are intrinsic needs. It becomes imperative for our own wellness and that of community, therefore, to weave a social fabric in which citizens can take positive action on those things and for those people that they care about. It is critical to a community's resilience (Putnam, 2000; Engler-Stringer, 2006; Richard, et al., 2008). Sennett (1998) adds, "a regime that provides no deep reason to care about one another cannot long preserve its legitimacy" (p. 148). Harvard's popular social scientist, Robert

Putnam (2000) also emphasizes the importance of trustworthiness, saying that it, "lubricates social life" (p. 21) and that, "an impressive and growing body of research suggests that civic connections help make us healthy, wealthy and wise" (p. 287).

How The Engagement Of Young People Can Help Build Community. The next question important to the thesis then is, "What role and impact might young people have if engaged in helping build community?" At a time when governments and private agencies are struggling with complex challenges without familiar guideposts to aid their decision-making, innovative ideas, fresh perspectives and inspired actions are in short supply. Problem solvers who are able to rise to the challenge unhampered by traditional thinking or established patterns of action are in high demand (Woods, 2008). Engaging young people en masse may well be our best strategy to catalyze community building. Their passions, life stage, and imagination place them as uniquely qualified to create excitement and positive change. Today's youth are also more diverse, urban, mobile and educated than any in the decades that preceded them (O'Rourke, 2012).

Campbell explains, "Young people are naturally less constrained by the limits of tradition and convention. Some call it idealism, others energy... But the reality is that young people contribute to communities, systems and problems around them with different eyes, certain level of clarity of values, possibility, and innovation – with an ability to be less compromised and to 'say it like it is'" (Campbell, 2002, p.4). Those who have witnessed what engaged young people could accomplish understand the imperative of positive social change strategies that leverage youth at their core. Time and time again, young people are helping others discover new and exciting pathways to build a more caring and compassionate culture (World Youth Report, 2003; Kinkloch, 2012; Black, Walsh, & Taylor, 2011). History has already proven that youth can lead social change. They did it in a large way in the 60s and they are doing it again today. Around the world, stories abound of young people leading positive social change in organizations and communities (Chinman & Linney 1998; Ford Foundation, 2000; Honwana, 2012).

In his popular book "Bowling Alone" Sociologist Robert Putman puts out a challenge especially to young adults, "we need to find ways to create bridging social capital beyond what it was even in their grandparents era." Young people often bring distinct elements to a group involved in a

shared action for collective good. They demonstrate ease in building connections between diverse cultures, empowering not only themselves but also those with whom they connect (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond, 2003; Zeldin, 2003; Burgess 2000). This, of course, is a key to building a community's social fabric. They tend to see different things and imagine different possibilities.

Young people involved as staff and volunteers in youth development organizations improve the quality of the organizations' service and relationships and keep the mission, values and relationships at the forefront (Stollea & Dietlind, 2004; Zeldin, 2000). Today's youth bring the possibility of a new kind of community response to the significant shifts in the environment. Notably, they express that trust and honesty are very important to them (Bibby, 2009); as are social responsibility (Industry Canada, 2011) and diversity (Bibby, 2009); they express passion and politics differently than adults (Young, Cross, 2007; Blaise et al. 2011); and, in the case of 12-19 year-olds, report the highest level of attachment to community (Scott, 2009). Moreover, today's youth are comfortable with the rapid pace of changing technology, have easy access to global networks, and collaborate on-line without hesitation (Weber & Dixon, 2010; Bratich, 2011; Tapscott, 2009). Later chapters will draw a conceptual link between organizational cultures that foster innovation and ones ready to meaningfully involve youth.

Communities and organizations are beginning to realize that youth can be leaders *today*, not just sometime in the future. Recent trends have helped to enable young people to contribute positively as planners, decision makers and managers (Burgess, 2000; Camino, 2000; Jarvis, Shear, & Hughes, 1997; Tolman & Pittman; 2001). A recent syntheses of more than thirty-five program evaluations of youth and community organizations, published in two volumes by the American Youth Policy Forum, found that one of the most consistent indicators of effective programming is when youth are treated as community resources and given opportunities to make and implement decisions for the common good (1997, 1999). Under such conditions, the research indicated that youth developed resiliency and other protective factors associated with healthy adolescence.

Although the value that engaged youth offer to community development isn't obvious to most, the evidence and trends suggest that youth engagement deserves significant consideration as a

central strategy for community renewal. The question then becomes, "What is holding back youth engagement in communities?"

Current Offerings Fall Short. For young leaders ready and willing to get involved in their communities there is a gap. Most efforts to engage youth are based out of youth-serving organizations and to a lesser degree, community organizations with other primary mandates. What is concerning is that so many of these attempts fail to achieve their objectives, and many more never get to the point of trying for lack of expertise or confidence with how to carry the work out. Many of these current spaces convened for youth and community development are not conducive to facilitating youth engagement. Over the last thirty years, the domain of youth organizations has grown broad and expansive. Mandates are clustered under various themes that include: character development, sports, leadership, rehabilitation, education, youth ministry and social justice. There are programs that are adult-led, youth and adult-led, and a growing segment that are solely youth-led.

Youth Are Creating Spaces For Engagement. Good youth leaders are busy, they don't have time to deal with the distractions of working with adults that don't want to include them as partners. Youth leaders aren't waiting around for adult-led organizations to get it right.

With a lack of access to decision-making structures of conventional community organizations, youth are developing their own solution-seeking spaces. Around the globe there is a rapid increase in youth-led initiatives with themes such as social justice and environment (Bell, 2005; Breton, Jeppesen, Kruzynski, Sarrasin, 2012; Polaris Institute, 2007; UN Habitat). Young adults are forming and driving their own organizations to organize campaigns, provide programs and advocacy, and to do research and evaluation (Burgess, 2000; Tolman & Pitman 2001). Tim Broadhead, past CEO of JW. McConnell Family Foundation shared this perspective, **"**In several parts of Canada, there are emerging hubs of youth-led organizations that are pooling resources, learning how to effectively engage mainstream institutions, and becoming a coherent voice for youth on policy issues" (p. 36, 2011). The funding, passion, and entrepreneurial action of young people is reshaping the domain of youth involvement in community and social policy development.

Youth-led social change activity is not new. We are all aware of the distinct youth culture brought to the world's attention in the 1960s. What's different this time around is that a sanctioning by adults seems to be providing the movement more legitimacy and with it, new resources and sophistication. Over the last decade there has been noteworthy recognition from government and private foundations[2] (Cawley, 2010; Cawley, J., Freeman, A. Ilkiw W. 2010; Wheeler, 2003). Funders have developed innovative strategies for capacity building in young social entrepreneurs and youth philanthropy programs.[3] They have initiated alternatives to their traditional granting processes; and are being proactive with the financing of social infrastructure that encourages development of a community of practice among youth organizing bodies (Freeman, 2012).

In addition to formal youth-led organizations, we need to recognize the value of other forms of young people's community involvement (Social Policy Research Associates, 2003; Clark, 2010). Youth create social movements that are known to critique the status quo and offer and create new solutions. A growing roster of advocates are now promoting youth organizing as a powerful strategy that brings relevance, enthusiasm and importance to the skills young people need to acquire, and as a strategy to engage marginalized young people (Caputo, 2000; Social Policy Research Associates, 2003). These more informal types of youth engagement including participating in a protest, helping out a friend, or on-line engagement are outside of what most conventional statistical measurement captures (Clarke, 2010) but there is no doubt a trend of youth organizing is taking place.

Why should we care? Though youth-led initiatives are to be celebrated as a sign that youth are ready to step up if the space is there for them to engage, it also presents a caution. If adult-led community organizations don't learn how to better engage with youth it is clear they will increasingly do it on their own, if at all. Either way, the opportunity to engage with them in partnership for multi-level social change is diminished.

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[2] Laidlaw Foundation, Youth Organizing http://www.laidlawfdn.org/category/resources/youth-organizing Ontario Trillium Foundation, http://www.otf.ca/en/applyForaGrant/future_fund.asp

[3] Community Foundations of Canada, Youth and Philanthropy http://www.cfc-fcc.ca/programs/youth-in-philanthropy.html

Youth and Philanthropy Initiative http://www.goypi.org/ypi-what/about-ypi.html

If growing youth-led activity is at the expense of growing more initiatives built on quality youth and adult partnerships there is a concern. Part of the concern centres around the fact that youth and adults generally have different circles of influence. On their own, youth-led organizations can face an uphill climb to establish the relationships and foothold that many adults may already have in various systems. Lack of access for youth to decision-making in traditionally organized youth and community services reduces their options to create systemic change (Hill, Davis Prout, Tisdall, 2004; Tolman & Pittman, 2001). On the other hand, adult organizations without the tech savvy, passion, ideas and energy of young people can find it difficult to break out of old habits and worn out methods. The potential for systemic change without youth involvement is compromised.

There are lessons available to inform conventional adult-led services for youth from the way young people organize, the innovation they aspire to, and the spirit they put into their engagement. Youth tend to organize in different ways than adult groups do. Youth-led organizations, both formal and informal, tend to adopt more democratic and cooperative principles than do adult-led organizations and put a high value on innovation (Campbell, 2010; Gabrieal, 2012) Bell, 2005; Mathews, 1998; Clarke & Dougherty, 2010; Pleyers, 2004). The observed result of youth engagement in organizations has been to increase connections, possibility thinking and vision, and meaningful caring for others (Burgess, 2000; Cervone, 2002; Warner, Langlois, & Dumond, 2003; Zeldin, 2000).

New Language - From Engagement To Community Enterprising. The term *youth engagement* falls short of effectively expressing the insights that are drawn from the actions of youth with adults and their shared community projects. The term on its own leaves the obvious question, Engagement in what? The definition of youth engagement presented in an earlier footnote is, "sustained involvement in something beyond self." This definition leaves out any sense of the element of control, the personal experience, or association with a community.

To better represent the findings and insights of the research the term *community enterprising* is introduced. I also integrate the intent of CCYD into a fuller definition of youth engagement, that is, *young people involved in sustained community enterprising*. This definition provides a way to

speak about a generative end result for both the individual and the community. In the thesis, the focus will be on community and individual (youth and adult) enterprising. Management consultant, executive coach and friend, Keith Thompson, offers the following definition of community enterprising:

> "It is about collaboratively and creatively engaging to imagine, start and pursue initiatives for collective well-being. Personal enterprising is an individual choice. It is a core competency rooted in self worth. It is about having a drive to be self reliant and successful; balanced and energetic; compassionate, courageous and creative. Enterprising people see possibilities and pursue them, even in the face of uncertainty and risk. They are willing and able collaborators, committed to creating value and sharing it equitably."[4]

One thing has always been clear in my work over the years, and is even more so with the thesis research complete—if the conditions are conducive, youth and adults will be enterprising. And when they are, creative energy is released in the community for the benefit of all.

Current Research

The applied dissemination case. The funder, the catalyst of the projects that set the stage for the field research, tossed an objective into the water hoping for ripples of growing resilience in communities, social innovation and youth engagement. They chose a national convener and they in turn, chose local conveners they thought would have good positioning to toss their own stones into the water. HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development (HW)[5] in Nova Scotia, Canada was the national convener selected and it was HW's Framework and approach that was the subject of the dissemination.

Primary study. The primary research consisted of a comparative analysis of four case studies in rural, near-rural or remote communities. Each was part of an exercise in applied dissemination from the same national convener organization (HW) focused on developing community-based youth engagement. Each case also had a local convening organization. The analysis of the cases includes a description and assessment of the attempt by the disseminating

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[4] Keith Thompson (personal e-mail exchange, 12/11/13)
[5] http://www.heartwood.ns.ca/index.html

organization to utilize its framework of ideas and principles for fostering youth engagement. Thus it serves as an inquiry into what can be learned from an exercise in applied dissemination.

The project activity at the four community sites comprising the 2-1/2 year long *Youth Engagement in Rural Communities Project* (YERC), was one of a number of projects funded under the Models program for rural development and community capacity building of the Rural Secretariat of Agriculture Canada. The Models program was the Secretariat's attempt to restructure the way they had traditionally provided funding to rural communities for community development. The hope of the program was to support the dissemination of promising models for retaining young people in rural communities. The funder was intent on developing more understanding, tools and best practices that could be applied in multiple situations to engage youth as community builders.

The four local conveners included two community development organizations and two youth development agencies. The systems-change objective of the intervention for each of these sites is listed in Table 1.1. The post-classical Latin for 'objective' is the goal, or aim (13th cent. in Aquinas), also, thing thrown before or presented to (in the mind or thought) (Oxford on-line)[6]. With the 'thing thrown before' image in mind, CBC radio host and storyteller Stewart McLean conjures up the right image for the potential of a community enterprising objective, "The ripples are always bigger than the stone that goes in the pond."

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[6] Oxford on-line: http://oxforddictionaries.com/

MANDATE OF LOCAL CONVENER	GENERAL SYSTEM CHANGE OBJECTIVE (The stone tossed in the water)	COMMUNITY	CONVENER
A youth leadership department of a regional government	To involve young people in strengthening a remote northern town.	Nain, NL	Division of Youth Elders and Recreation
Youth development (youth-led)	To keep senior youth members involved in the organization.	Quebec	QC 4H
Regional community development	To engage youth in the region, and to have them involved as decision makers in a community development organization.	Community A (pseudonym)	Futures Association (pseudonym)
Regional community development	To support a solo leader in her attempt to engage youth in two rural communities.	Mount Stewart, Scotchfort, Abegweit First Nation, PEI	Hillsbourough River Area Development Corporation (HRADC) and YouthinAction (YIA) youth-led program of HRADC

Table 1.1. Systems-change objective of the intervention of each local convener

Secondary study. The research included a secondary study of five additional urban-based community project sites that comprised the YouthScape[7] project (YS). Very similar to YERC, the intent of YS was to invite young people to come together with a local convener organization and other community groups to participate in community development initiatives. A primary difference from YERC was that although YS also had a national convener, they did not have an applied dissemination mandate for the project. Though YS operated for a period of approximately three years, the research concentrated on the first eighteen months of the project's intensive development at a national and local level.

With YERC preceding YS by eighteen months and the complementary purpose and principles of the two projects, I immersed in an ongoing comparative interplay between the two projects. As YERC findings emerged they informed my evaluation methods for YS. The secondary study,

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[7] http://www.youthscape.ca/

therefore, became more about the attempt to create an effective culture within an organization responsible for convening and facilitating a community and youth development initiative than youth engagement as a stand-alone objective. Henceforth YERC and YS will be referred to as the *projects*.

The YS national convening organizations proposed to address an array of issues that included: strengthening relationships among young people of diverse heritage; creating community among Aboriginal young people migrating from northern communities; and tightening community and intergenerational relationships in the context of an economic boom. Four of the urban sites were funded by the J.W. McConnell Foundation (JWM), the fifth by the Calgary United Way for a site in their community. JWM's intent was to jump-start changes in the youth engagement domain in Canada. The YS project is discussed in the final of the 6 case studies.

Intervention Roles Common Between Nine Research Sites	Notes
local convener	A locally-based organization
national convener, (supervisory/management staff)	An organization to whom the local sites were responsible for project administration
site coordinator	A half-time staff position employed by the local convener to carry out front-line project facilitation
program consultant from national convener	An emissary, or consultant, employed by the national convener with a role of coaching site coordinators, through occasional field visits and remote consults.
action-oriented research assistants or developmental evaluator	A half-time position responsible for research or evaluation (YERC sites had a Research Assistant, YS had a Developmental Evaluator)
steering committee (or alternative)	Some form of community-based advisory group to guide local project activity
funder	*funder expectations*: Participatory decision-making Youth leadership Discover new ways to engage youth Competitive assessment process for selection of local conveners

Table # 1.2. Intervention roles common between the cases

In all, this accounts for nine communities from which the research has drawn its conclusions. All research sites were involved in their respective projects between 2005 – 2009. The nine community sites are not directly comparative but they had significant elements of program design, applied dissemination and structure in common. These similarities created the opportunity to do a comparative analysis between sites and give further rigor to the study. There was ample opportunity to observe the intricacies of enacting local project activity at the organizational and community level, ideal for a comparative study. The common elements among all nine sites are presented in Table 1.2. There were other noteworthy similarities between sites, as well as variations that presented the opportunity to further accelerate learning. These are elaborated in Table 1.3.

Similarities and notable variations	Notes
Engaged marginalized youth	Six of the sites (1 YERC and all 5 YS sites)
Youth-serving organizations	5 of the 9 sites were convened by youth-serving organizations
Convened by adult-led organizations	3 of the 4 YERC sites, and four of the 5 YS sites were convened by adult-led organizations
Learning community	The national conveners of YERC and YS attempted to build a learning community network between sites.
Shared framework	The 4 YERC sites, and 1 YS site based their project activity on the framework provided by HW, the national YERC convener.
Small grants fund	All of the YS sites were mandated by the funder to commit 35% of their project budget to a small grants fund for youth-infused projects
Youth-led	1 of the YERC sites and 1 of the YS sites were mostly youth-led

Table # 1.3. Similarities and notable variations between the community research sites (cases)

Summary. The research demonstrates limitations to conventional approaches to convening and facilitation of community-based youth engagement initiatives intended to be comprehensive. Although across nine community research sites there were many false starts and community projects that were all but launched, in isolated instances across the research sites there were also success stories to learn from. Youth and adults created spaces together that resulted in community enterprising. These group spaces started off as so many others during the project as simply space occupied in common by youth and adults, yet these examples advanced to become empowered spaces with a culture that fostered community enterprising.

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Drawing from the lessons associated with these stories of community enterprising and similar themes drawn from the HW case, a primary organizing theme for the thesis is:

> *How can spaces best be created within community organizations to foster enterprising with youth and adult partners?*

I build on the research with existing theory to clarify conditions of an enterprising culture and the importance of effective convening and facilitation, fluid structure, stakeholder relations and responsive, service-oriented and knowledge-rich support for community-based initiatives contribute to community enterprising. (It is in Part B. that I build on this theory with an applied response that explores the advantages a group of social entrepreneurs might have that operates outside conventional organizational structure). It is the premise of the thesis that:

> *Given certain conditions, principles and intervention practices a group of youth and adults can successfully design and host a resilient space to propagate community enterprise with citizens of all ages.*

And, that the following factors have significant impact on the direction and outcomes of CCYD:

- Conditions of group culture that increase engagement and enterprise

- The knowledge, preparedness and quality of practice of conveners and front-line facilitators

- Adaptable structural components that serve function regardless of how emergent; and that impose positional authority judiciously

- The quality and breadth of intergenerational relationships a convener maintains in the projects *task environment*[8]

- Real-time, service-oriented and knowledge-rich support of community actors, front-line facilitators and conveners

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[8] task environment: (Williams, 1982) A slice of the environment that is clarified and characterized because of its, "closer relevance to and impact on the day to day operation of the system" (Emery, M. 1999, pg. 173) or project. At times in the thesis I use the analogy of a stone (project objective) being thrown into the pond (task environment).
use the analogy of the pond as the task environment. the objective of the project is thrown into, as being the task environment.

<center>**Chapter 2: Methodology**</center>

Introduction

The chapter is divided in to four parts as follows: 1) overall approach to research; 2) research methods; 3) fieldwork; and 4) my multiple identities as a researcher. The methodology and fieldwork had to work for the complex nature of the systems and environments of the projects, and the desire for a participatory and action-oriented approach. I was interested in a methodological and fieldwork framework that would to guide my immersion in the activities on the front-line of the projects in the community sites, while also leveraging my lived experience with youth and community development in a way that tested my assumptions. The right methods and data collection processes had to face the demands of keeping up with fast-paced needs for sharing observation and analysis with project organizers at multiple levels.

Ontology

      Contextualism. My paradigmn is contextualism; the root metaphor for which is the historic event in the life of a whole in context. "Contextualism is the only root metaphor based on constant change" (Emery, M., p. xvii). As such it is the only paradigm that starts from the assumption of change, versus a static view of reality.

      What is it? - A contextualist view is that any action that occurs, even as simple as remarks, body language, or expressions, can only really be understood relative to the context they take place in. And second, the truth and meaning of an idea is a measure of its function or utility for the stakeholders, not in how well it is said to mirror reality (Fox, n.d.).

Within a contextualist assumption my inquiry paradigm was a pragmatic one, analyzing each situation in relation to their specific contexts (Morgan, 2007). The pragmatist paradigm arises out of a belief that one must consider the context of a circumstance along with actions, and consequences (Guba, 1970). It holds that the researcher does not know all of the important variables going into a study.

Comment [ML1]: Use Morgan article here from RR

<center>18</center>

How it worked in this project – My observations during the research were guided by the degree to which they might support project organizers to effective strategy and activities towards their goals.

An inquiry framework helped to make sense of the context and ongoing actions and reactions from their observations. The framework was undergirded with: 1) Open Systems Theory's (OST) socio-ecological framework and, 2) *retroduction,* a process of inquiry with an evolving working theory and reasonable hypothesis. Following is an elaboration of both.

Contextualism honors what I have long observed in the field—people's inherent ability to learn, grow and act to create change.

Socio-ecological whole system perspective. Fred Emery and Eric Trist presented their whole system perspective publicly in 1965 in the paper, "The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments (F. Emery & Trist, 1965). They worked with associates at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations to develop their robust work (F. Emery & Trist, 1965; Trist, Emery, & Murray, 1997**;** M. Emery, 1997, 1999).**[9]**

What is it? The fundamental idea of OST is that there are systems and social environments, and there are direct correlations between them with a permeable boundary. That means that whatever the system, whether an individual, family, group of people in an organization, or community of interest, it is in a constant mode of learning about, being effected by, and adapting to its environment. "OST is a theory that views organizations not as simple closed bureaucratic structures separate from their surroundings but as highly complex entities, facing considerable uncertainties in their operations and constantly interacting with their environment" (Malikovich-Gordon, 2001, p.165).

There are four parameters to open systems and that one must know something about each to be able to characterize (not define) any system, or any environment. Figure 2.1. describes the four:

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[9] The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations is a not-for-profit organization that applies social science to contemporary issues and problems. It was formally founded as a registered charity in 1947. http://www.tavinstitute.org/

i) a system, ii) an environment, iii) the system learning about its environment, and iv) planning and acting as an individual or together as a group to better adapt and change that environment (F. Emery and Trist, 1965). The system actively adapting to its environment is the principle of *cohering over time*. Emery describes the principles as, "being in a constant state of change appropriate to both the nature of people and a continuously changing environment" (deGuerre, 2002).
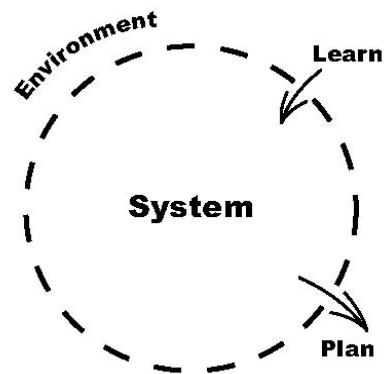
Figure 2.1. The Open Systems Theory perspective (F. Emery and Trist, 1965)
The *Learn* arrow indicates the system or organization with a common organizing principle, learning from its environment. And then, represented by the *Plan* arrow, taking that information in, interpreting it, and forming a plan to adapt to the environment. "The system cannot be characterized without characterizing its environment, and the environment cannot be characterized without characterizing the kinds of systems for whom it is an environment" (Emery & Emery, 1997, p. 12). (Later in the thesis I adapt the visual representation of the iterative process in Figure. 6.1. to read: Learn – Plan - *Act*).

How it worked in this project – The socio-ecological framework was invaluable to help make sense of the constant change in the social (project organizers) and environmental context during the research. It provided a way to both conceptualize project organizers as a system, as individual and a group, and, how they cohered over time with their task environment.

Epistemology

Retroduction. Induction and deduction are the two forms of logical inference generally accepted. Processes of induction make observations to test a generalized statement. Processes of deduction come to their conclusions by applying rules of logic to a pre-established premise.

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C.S. Peirce, sometimes known as the father of American pragmatism, demonstrated that there are in fact three forms of logical inference not just two.

What is it? - In one of the few articles they penned together, Fred and Merrelyn Emery discuss Peirce's perspective, "He [Peirce] distinguished between induction as a form of statistical generalization and abduction (*retroduction*) as a form of inference that yielded *reasonable ex post-facto hypotheses*. He showed that it was only by this ability to arrive at reasonable hypotheses that we could have advanced scientific knowledge (Emery and Emery, 1997, p. 1). The idea of determining reasonable hypothesis—a snapshot of what the researcher sees at that moment aligned well with my comfort with *sense-making* in complex environments. M. Emery suggests that, **"**Retroduction is the only form of reasoning which contributes new ideas in science through a process of studying the facts and "devising a theory to explain them."[10] (In the case of my research, the retroduction process contributes new ideas to practice. Emerys describe the process retroduction as a process within contextualizm which produces [and supports others'] novelty and creativity" and to describe its logic as, "it should reveal the theme of the puzzle, knowledge of the syntax - the curves, colours and graphic features that suggests where a piece might go" (Emery & Emery, 1997). It is this kind of data in real time essential for project organizers as they try to puzzle with a diversity of ideas, perspectives and agendas to birth social innovation (Westley, 2013, p. 6). It is the puzzling that posits the value of a working theory.

How it worked in this project - With all the complexity of moving CCYD landscapes I used a working theory of change to prioritize my time and sensitize my observations. OST's grounding in purposeful people actively adapting to their environment, provided the keystone for the ongoing development of the working theory (Gloster, 2000, p. 672). With the template of directive correlation between system and environment, my research paid particular attention to the multiple systems that constituted the project organizers and their adaption or mal-adaption to the projects dynamic task environment.

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[10] the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1931-35 (Feibleman 1946: 4 footnote).

While OST provided a general overlay for the working theory its finer focus emerged during the research. The nature of a working theory is that it continues to evolve (Emery & Emery, 1997; Argyris & Schon, 1978; Gloster, 2000; Elliot 2005). The jumping off point for the working theory was influenced by my pragmatist approach. What matters to the pragmatist is, "intended purposes, available resources, procedures followed, and results obtained, all within a particular context and for a specific audience" (Quinn-Patton, 2002, p. 71). The practical entry for the fieldwork was on the front-line activity of the service-providers and characterizing the project environments they faced. The research and the working theory that guided it evolved to include the many layers of people, policies, practices and perspectives that exist between a decision to initiate a community project and its execution in a community. A initiative's responsibility, vision and resources change hands many times. Most of the research findings emerged from observation of the spaces-in-between these handoffs – between what the funder envisioned and mandated, what the local conveners proposed, and front-line project staff eventually carried out.[11] The working theory therefore, evolved around how the various organizers carried out their project task, their willingness and capacity to adapt, and the need for support for local conveners and front-line project facilitators. This highlighting of the dynamic relations that occur in complex systems change initiatives resonated with the reality of organizing CCYD.

In later parts of the research the working theory included those anticipated and unanticipated factors that work to foster successful community building projects with youth component, as well as the obstacles that seem to frustrate these efforts.

Methodology

     A blend of two methods. The socio-ecological framework provided an apt template to drawing together two methods—*action-oriented research* and *developmental evaluation*. Though distinct methodologies, there is a wonderful synergistic quality to the methods in the field and for analysis. The blended methods and the two projects all shared an important

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[11] A metaphor of *ember carriers* is apt to describe the challenge of this dynamic. Ember carriers were the members of a nomadic tribe entrusted with carrying burning embers from the fire of one campsite to the next. The camp's fire held the spirit of the tribe; it was where they cooked their food, kept warm, and inspired others with stories and songs. Around the fire is where information was exchanged, and ideas were discussed (American Indian Publishers, 1981). As the embers of the projects changed hands often they lost some of their heat, or sense of vision, passion and significance.

organizing principle, a focus on *development*—as opposed to problem solving. Action research expert John Elliot asserts, "good action research is developmental" (2005, p. 8). These two methods are explored more fully in later parts of this chapter.

The decision to use two methods was a pragmatic one in response to the many various contexts within the cases, and to leverage the successive timing of the two studies. The methods were also well aligned with with my values.

The action-oriented research method was used for the primary study first, and then with some overlap, DE for the secondary study. With the progressive refinement (Gloster, 2000) of my working theory, the action-oriented research was well on its way by the time the secondary study commenced. As the secondary study unfolded, there was significant validation of the working theory and findings of the primary study. There was a sense of *I've been here before* as YouthScape, the secondary study, went into its first phase. The validation of the data increased my assuredness of where to direct attention during the secondary study.

Participatory and Action-oriented research.

What is it? Participatory action research (PAR) is collaborative and emphasizes deliberate participation, contribution and empowerment. It is designed to address specific issues identified by local people and has emerged in recent years as a significant methodology for intervention, development, and change within communities and groups. It is generally accepted that participatory research has as its aim producing both action and knowledge, and, "unlike academic research is driven by practical outcomes rather than theoretical understanding" (Park, 1999).

Because of potentially confusing associations and connotations, rather than use the term PAR to describe my method, or a number of others associated with action and participation-oriented research, I have taken Peter Park's lead of the Fielding Institute.[12] He describes the term *action-*

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[12] http://www.fielding.edu/
Fielding Graduate University is an accredited nonprofit leader in blended graduate education, combining face-to-face and online learning. Fielding's faculty members represent a breadth of scholarship and

oriented research to refer to all forms of endeavor in general where action is an integral feature of the core research activity (Park, 1999, p. 142). Action research (AR) is most commonly a cyclical systemic process of action (change) and research (understanding) pursued at the same time. The action and critical reflection take place in turn (Stringer, 2014). Taking time for reflection assures the actors and researcher look back and learns from their previous actions, to inform subsequent ones. AR is intended to directly impact and improve practice in a localized context. It is also a general understanding of action-oriented research that the people that will benefit from the research should participate in the research. This principle is shared by developmental evaluation (Patton, 2011, p. 13).

How it worked in this project. The research incorporated participatory practices with all community project organizers in terms of prioritizing interventions and observations, analyzing, establishing outcome indicators and communicating findings. Collaboration between the research team and the conveners, service providers, and community actors was maintained as a top priority of the researcher. The Emerys describe the these important relationships, "The parties agree on joint responsibility for their mutually agreed purposes. This relation is known as the collaborative relationship" (1997, p. 13). Reason and Bradley define action research more as a process than a method, "a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory world view that is currently emerging (2001, p.1).

The objective at the heart of my method was to give voice to, and build the capacity of, the service-providers and community actors while also contributing to the development of social practice and a working theory. I considered my role explicit and collaborative and characterized by joint involvement and shared responsibility. Participation on the part of the people who were to benefit from the process was a defining feature and this required a high quality of communication between the researcher, the research team and all levels of those involved in the project. The quality of action research is dependent upon the researchers' attention to the

practice within the fields of clinical psychology and media psychology, human and organizational development, and educational leadership and change.

quality of communication between the researcher and the community actors (Lewin, 1948). Qualities that include: active listening, diplomacy, clarity, and attentiveness in exchanges.

Multiple community settings strengthened the potential of the study. The use of more than one action research setting can help overcome one of the methodological shortcomings associated with action research when used for a single setting (Emery, 1963, Dick, 1994, Gloster, 2000). The opportunity to carry ideas, concepts and observations between diverse yet complementary sites for constant comparison is one of the ideas of the retroductive approach of building reasonable hypothesis at multiple points during the research. Park explains the objective of successive cycles of action-oriented observation and learning as, "examining and coming to understand the ways in which prevailing social structures, value systems and ideologies produce effects…" (1999, p. 150). The cyclical method enabled observations of, "an end-to-end string of directive correlations of particular system-environment relations" (Gloster, 2000, p. 674). With a working theory, multiple sites and successive action research cycles the research had the opportunity to appraise existing situations and design interventions with community actors and service providers to change relations, and then observe once again for changes to the system and environment.

A number of project activities were followed through their lifecycle from idea to their ending point. These paths surfaced factors that aided, challenged or blocked progress of enterprising efforts.[13] It is from extensive observation on this path that a spectrum of engagement and enterprising was conceptualized—from the beginning of an idea for project activity through to in some circumstances engagement and eventual enterprising activity. Though the study surfaced numerous blocks and constraints to youth engagement, my tendency as a researcher was to first give attention to the launching of ideas that community actor(s) and/or service providers stood behind. Merrelyn Emery speaks about the importance of paying attention "to the emergence of quality" (Emery, M., 1993, p. 37). The enterprising activities and the culture of the group spaces that seeded them were an expression of the project's quality.

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[13] Case story: 17. "Barriers and near-actions" (p. 312).

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Developmental evaluation.

What is it? DE is an approach to evaluation that is outcomes-oriented in focus and is useful in environments where the outcomes are emergent. Patton (2011) coined the term to distinguish evaluation of complex systems-change interventions from traditional formative evaluations that seek to improve fixed models of practice in stable environments. The method challenges the disciplinary conventions and mindsets of traditional program evaluation (Fagen, et. al., 2011). While summative and formative evaluations are largely based on attaining and verifying a pre-determined logical model, DE is, "designed to be congruent with and nurture developmental, emergent, innovative, and transformative processes" (Patton, 2008, p. 137). Summative evaluation is more appropriate in those situations where an initiative is stabilizing and well established, and its environment quite predictable. For initiatives that are up and running but still under refinement, formative evaluation would be an appropriate method to apply. For circumstances where decision makers want to remain with the status quo—DE is not a good fit. These conventional forms of evaluation ask questions about relatively stable program models with fixed core components designed to reach predetermined outcomes. Where these approaches fall short are in circumstances of highly dynamic project environments with project organizers attempting to innovate. Such was the circumstance faced by the service providers and community actors in the case studies.

As a method DE emerged from recognition that in complex circumstances which operate within interconnected and interdependent systems, to pre-determine outcomes was counterproductive. Increasingly the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors are investing in comprehensive collaborations and innovative new strategies in hopes of tipping the scales on stubborn social issues. These new projects face unpredictable, dynamic and complex environments. For the organizers, uncertainty, adaptation and fast paced decision-making is the norm. They require elbowroom, nimble structure and real-time evaluative information to help them make wise decisions even as the project landscape moves beneath them. This is familiar territory for developmental evaluation. This was the environment and circumstances of CCYD.

A DE focuses on the organizers, on what they are learning, and how to build their capacity to achieve their objectives by providing timely and actionable data about how a complex system is

responding to an initiative (Gamble, 2008). It is about, "…gathering real time data to inform ongoing decision making and adaptations" (Patton, 2011, p. 1). DE defies assumptions and uncovers connections and ambiguity between intent and actions, so that novel ideas and solutions are brought to the forefront, furthering social change. It is the most fitting approach for facilitating the re-entry of data and information into a system in actionable ways at the right time and place (Fagen, et. al., 2011).

Innovators need flexibility to adapt, as well as space for outcomes to emerge and evolve (Westley, Zimmerman, & Patton, 2006). Perhaps most importantly, innovation in a complex situation requires that evaluation and learning be intrinsically linked, with evaluation contributing to learning and vice versa (Chevalier & Buckles, 2008; Gasper, 2000). DE supports these aims by challenging the convention of traditional evaluation that positions the evaluator as objective and distanced from the program implementers (Skolits, Morrow, & Burr, 2009). Unlike standard evaluations that thrive on objectivity and distancing the evaluator, a DE is part of the team not only learning from the individuals directly involved in the project, but also learning *with* them (Dozois, Langlois, & Blanchet-Cohen, 2010).

It was the closeness of relationships that aided grounded observations and interventions that were responsive to the action-oriented needs of the funder, community actors and service providers. This positioning as *insiders* meant that the YS researcher and I were also participants, allowing for the joint sense-making of the researchers and project organizers most relevant to action research (Hertz, 1997). Benium's description of the relationship between stakeholders resonates with this notion, "the researcher, the researched and the action form a triune structure on the experiential level" (Benium, Faucheux, van der Vlist, 1996, p. 19).

How it was used in this study. DE was an ideal complement to the action-oriented research method used for the primary study. While the DE focus on supporting learning to build capacity in stakeholders with a systems change objective is consistent with the principles of being participatory, collaborative and action-focused, there is more to the strength of using DE as follow-up method to the primary study. While the core purpose of action-oriented research is an increasingly knowledgeable, empowered and capable organization (Toulmin & Gustavsen, 1996), DE has complementary and distinct purposes. While like action-oriented research, DE

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takes a bottom-up approach to capacity building, it also adds a closer look at the dynamics at play, recognizing all the while that what works for who and when in complex situations is subject to rapid change. DE's purpose takes the need of context and sharing results of action-oriented research, to a finer level both in context and sharing to effect ongoing development and rapid response.

The DE team consisted of a DE in each of the five research sites of the secondary study, and my role as lead and the team coach on DE practices. The focus of my field time was with the central organizing team consisting of the Foundation and national convener. The group of us learned and worked together creating distinct applications of DE for each of our context. There was some alignment of what each DE directed their attention to based on the shared project timeline and the projects guiding principles (Appendix C).

Each DE took significant field notes and was judicious with their asking of questions. Cooperrider suggests that a system moves towards what it asks questions about (1990). The DEs endeavored to have good questions asked of the right person and at the right time – part of a practice I refer to as the *Art of Nudge* (Langlois, Blanchet-Cohen, Beer, 2013). (Chapter 13 introduces five practices under the theme of the *Art of Nudge* based on lessons learned about the DE method. The DEs attended meetings that seemed strategic based on the project organizers goals and emerging observations, and as appropriate, shared observations back to the organizers. Since e-mails were a significant part of the way the project's were organized, the DEs also paid attention to e-mail threads on particular themes. To strengthen the practice of the DE team and the analysis of our collective observations I employed a series of activities to build the teams capacity and test emerging themes from the evaluation:

> • Bi-monthly check-in and learning calls with the DE team,
> • regular one-on-one conversations with each DE,
> • checking in with front-line project staff and the senior staff of the convening organizations,
> • regular check-ins with the national convener team,
> • ongoing and regular communication with the YS project researcher,
> • ongoing check-ins with lead program officer of the funder,
> • DE reports and reflective writing.

Critical Elements of the Research Process

      Sensitizing Themes Of Observation. The themes of the observation foci for both studies are described as *sensitizing themes* (van den Hoonaard, 1997). These themes helped to fine-tune my own and the observations of the RAs. With a refined working theory in-hand and these themes I was able to create a DE framework highly responsive to the needs of the organizers and reflective of emerging findings from the distinct, though complementary, sites of the primary study.

These sensitizing themes are based on my experience in the field and the evidence discussed in Chapter 3. Herbert Blumer (1954) is the qualitative sociologist credited with originating the use of sensitizing concepts to help orient his fieldwork. By tracking the, "emergent patterns of these relations and how they have been co-produced by planned interventions and unanticipated events" data were gathered for progressive refinement of the working theory (Gloster, 2000, p. 674). Sensitizing concepts cross over in use from research traditions to evaluation. From the world of developmental evaluation Patton describes sensitizing concepts as, "a container for capturing, holding, and examining these manifestations to better understand patterns and implications" (2011, p. 146). The sensitizing themes of my research were:

      Interactions between youth and adults. The researcher explored answers to questions such as: "What are the qualities of the listening that takes place between the young people and the adults involved?" "What is the adult's general disposition towards life?" "What are the reasons adults get involved, stay involved, or end their association with a youth group?" "What are the adults' perceptions of the youth, and the youth of the adults, before and after the program?"

      Background. Most community and youth development settings incorporate youth-adult partnership to create positive change in the community, shifting the bottom line from traditional youth development success indicators of individual change and growth, to include indicators of community change and growth. Though the value of supportive adults in community and youth development initiatives has been established, there is insufficient

evidence on its related processes or impacts (Perkins, Borden, Keith, Hoppe-Rooney, and Villaruel, 2003).

The dynamics of youth service contribution to a community. Reflective questions that focused the researcher's observations included: "Are there differences in community service projects that youth selected and those selected by project staff or adult actors?" "Are participation levels impacted by the type of service experience?" "What factors move youth to act?" "What skills and competencies prepare youth to take action in the community?"

Background. Evidence of the benefits for the community from youth engagement is very limited. Being able to make a case for the impact youth engagement has on community is, understandably, difficult. Those involved in youth service in the community, myself included, have observed how doors and attitudes open for youth and adults when involved in service experiences working toward a common good. This is such a rich aspect of youth, adult and community exchange that observing young people involved in service projects was assumed to be an ideal opportunity to gain insight for this study.

The processes of young people connecting to others in peer groups and to the broader community. The researcher also maintained a focus on the dynamic of youth connecting to one another in a group, and then, the group as a bridge to others in the community. General reflection questions which helped the researcher's focus on this theme included: "Does the youth group network in the community?" "How does the group network?" "What are the forces that tend to keep the group together, or pull it apart?"

Background. It is when young people find their individual and collective voice within the support of a team that they are in a stronger position to enact meaningful social change in the community (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond, 2003). There is also strong evidence that the resiliency of a community grows relative to the diversity of its social capital (Reimer, Lyons, Ferguson, & Polanco, 2008; Stolle & Marc, 2004). It has, however, proven difficult for agents of community development to build bridges between diverse community groups. Youth reaching out to serve, link and engage others represents one of the greatest natural gifts young people can contribute to community building efforts, yet is dreadfully under-researched. Though the

literature is limited, it is bolstered by the researcher's own frequent first-hand observations of such exchanges.

Youth involvement at an organizational level. This sensitizing theme of inquiry highlighted impacts on organizational culture and leadership as a result of youth involvement. The researcher watched for components of culture shifts resulting from increased youth involvement, including indicators of innovation, staff morale, and mission focus.

Background. Many inter-connected formal and informal community groups are responsible for organizing much of what goes on in any community. There are individuals that meet together because they share a common interest or bond for purposes of both social and market exchanges, such as social clubs, service clubs, or a support group. There are also those institutions, agencies and organizations that operate community-based services for the betterment of life in the community. Currently, these groups are becoming a critical link to successful youth engagement (Benjamin & Wharton-Fields, 1999).

There are also networks of youth-serving agencies in most communities that are well positioned to play leading roles as advocates for youth inclusion in community decision-making processes. Unfortunately, these organizations are products of a broader tendency in society that leaves decision-making primarily to adults (Hill, Davis Prout, Tisdall, 2004). Conventional youth development agencies have spent years doing things to, and for, young people rather than with them (Jarvis, Shear, & Hughes, 1997). If community youth engagement is to have broader appeal, these agencies could play an important role in leading by example.

There has, however, been little research to assist or encourage either youth-serving or community organizations to involve young people as a meaningful part of their operations (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006). The doctoral research provided a rich opportunity to look at the processes and impacts of youth involvement in organizations and associations.

Primary Informants. Primary Informants were those individuals that were deemed important to pay particular attention to in light of the primary information their perspectives and actions might provide the research.

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Community actors. Youth and adults participated at each site in both projects without remuneration. Though all actors were observed during the research, various primary informants were interviewed at strategic points during the research to clarify emerging findings.

Site coordinators. Responsible for the front-line project facilitation, these individuals were the employees of the local conveners. As the primary interface between the community and the national convener; the local convener and the community participants; and the project and community members, the activity of the site coordinators was a primary area of focus for observations and interviews.

Local conveners. Each of the nine community sites had one community organization responsible for convening the project in their community. The research primarily focused on the actions of the organizations' supervisory staff, how they impacted the site coordinators, and their exchanges with the national convener.

National conveners. The administrators and agents of the funders that provided the backbone support activity provided by the two national conveners (one each for the two studies).

Data Collection.

The Research Team. There were additional researchers working under my lead. Two of the YERC sites each had a half-time research assistant and a third was shared between two sites in the same region. For the secondary study there was a site-based developmental evaluator working approximately 20 hours per week placed in each of the five sites under my coaching and guidance.

In the thesis, for the primary study the research assistants (RAs) will be referred to as such, for the YS case, in light of their distinct role the research assistants will be referred to as

developmental evaluators (DEs). At times the complete group will be referred to as the *research assistants*.

Collecting Data.

Participant Observation. The RAs and DEs were based in the community sites and observed the front-line facilitators and community actors on a regular basis in formal and informal settings throughout the research.

Interviews. I conducted over fifty interviews and the research assistants conducted another 15 over the course of the research. The process of ongoing cyclical analysis informed with whom and when interviews were conducted. The site coordinators, consultant from the national convener and the supervisory staff of the convening organizations were primary informants.

Field Notes. The RAs, two site coordinators, and I maintained field notes. The site coordinators and managers of the local convener organizations also completed quarterly reports that were available to the researcher.

Coaching and Reflection Calls. I also conducted phone meetings every two weeks with each of the RAs and DEs to guide their practice and harvest their leanings.

Analysis

HyperResearch[14] software for qualitative data analysis was used for all cases in the primary study to code and cluster all interviews and field notes. There were over 110 codes and 1,818 coded entries, primarily from the YERC project, that informed the research. The codes with the most frequency and clarity were determined and clustered manually. These codes can be characterized, in priority order, under the following themes: navigating the task environment, structural components, early organizational and community assessment, group culture,

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[14] HyperResearch is a computer assisted qualitative software tool. http://www.researchware.com/

practices of the interveners, and actions of youth and adult citizen entrepreneurs. The findings were clarified through final interviews with all primary informants in the YERC project.

For the secondary study the data from was not processed through Hyper Research. This data was clustered manually based on the final reasonable hypothesis from the working theory.

The Researcher's Multiple Identities

It is important to understand that the design of the strategy for data collection and method of analysis, the selection of primary informants, and the identification of sensitizing themes were each informed by the multiple identities that I carried into my role as an action-oriented researcher, developmental evaluator, and someone passionate about youth and community development. As a longtime practitioner prior to entering a PhD program, my role during the research might be best described as practitioner-researcher, with multiple identities at play during the study. These were: a) the founder of the national convener organization of the primary study; b) educator; c) entrepreneur; d) friend; and; e) community and youth development practitioner. While being conscious of these identities, I used the concept of self-as research instrument common in qualitative inquiry. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the research instrument and data are typically viewed through the lens of both the study participant contributing the data, and the researcher analyzing the data (Connolly & Reilly, 2007). At various times during the study the multiple identities and lenses I juggled made it difficult to have a consistent and clear role dimension as a researcher. The potential for my bias and multiple identities to unduly influence the direction of the project was real.

The multiple identities and closeness I had to the subjects of the research, and the activities of the projects is not without empirical precedence. Qualitative researchers will often have a positioning to participants in a study that allows for co-creation of knowledge (Maynard & Purvis, 1994) within the context of social interaction (Vygotsky, 1987). In the primary study I maintained particularly close positioning with the national convener's consultant and a number of the site coordinators. During the secondary study, it was the funder's project officer that I had the closest positioning with. Some evidence suggest that researchers *perform* specific types of identity with specific types of participants in order to facilitate their research (Lavis, 2010, p. 5).

In the broader literature on ethnography, fieldworkers are encouraged to bring different aspects of themselves to the fore in response to the particular context and the various situations that arise (Castellano, 2007; Mazzei & O'Brien, 2009). My multiple identities offered me positioning as an observer that would not have been possible otherwise. As a result there were plentiful opportunities for co-construction of learning with project organizers, and for the primary study, effective interventions with the national convener. As stated earlier in the discussion on my research approach, deep knowledge of the context is a critical element of a retroductive approach and can only come from intimate knowledge of the field from which an explanation might be drawn (F. Emery & M. Emery, 1997, p. 13). They argue that, "the search to match each piece to a gap in the puzzle cannot otherwise be specified" (F. Emery & M. Emery, 1997, p. 13). My multiple identities were a direct result of my direct experience and intimate knowledge of the field. Following, is a discussion of the multiple identities and positioning that resulted with the project organizers and how they shaped the projects.

As founder, colleague, friend, and *co-creator*. As founder and past 15-year executive director of the national convener organization of the primary study, I was very familiar with the convener's approach to community youth development, and the conceptualization of that work in their Framework. In fact, I was part of a small team that had conceptualized that Framework over 10 years earlier. I also had a friendship and collegial relationships with the national convener's program consultant responsible for the fieldwork of the primary study.

This positioning dictated the importance of maintaining a priority focus on the way various community actors and project staff organized broadly to carry out their youth and community development work and not on the national convener's specific framework or the quality of their fieldwork.

My identity as a founder of the national convener organization, and positioning as colleague and friend of the national convener's program consultant, informed both my crafting of questions and the ongoing assessment of appropriate timing. I consider an effective question to be one that moves a system towards what gives it life, and the inquiry, further insight. To accomplish

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this required sensitive timing and positioning such that I could make my inquiries in an empowering manner.

At most times I was aware of the challenges, strategies and weekly objectives of the national convener's work both upon and beneath the surface. I was also acutely aware of the gaps between the expectations of the YERC project sites and the response of the national convener. I could quickly direct observation towards those processes, misunderstandings, blocks and opportunities that required more understanding. Navigating these obstacles was critical if the national convener and the sites were to meet their shared objectives. These moments of potential stress and tension can be those times when the need for clarification of the researcher's role comes about (Bakhtin, 1981).

It took diligence on my part not to cross the line that would place me in a position of coaching the national convener. Rather than fall into that role I leveraged my history with the convener organization and their program consultant for shared sense-making as the inquiry unfolded.

As youth engagement educator. At times I found myself educating on the benefits of youth engagement. In both studies my experience in the youth engagement field was well known. The brief instances of my stepping into an educator role with project staff were times when to not have done so, seemed a disservice. I treaded slowly and carefully at these times assessing in real-time my research role and as such the appropriateness of any comments I might make. Generally the comments were about evidence of the impact of youth engagement on an organization's culture and service. My mantra became to educate only with permission or invitation. In my juggling of my youth engagement educator identity, I was careful not to cross a line that placed me more clearly in a position of advocacy.

As community and youth development practitioner. My identity as an experienced youth and community development practitioner also came into play during extensive observation of the activities of the site coordinators and the national conveners' program consultants. These observations were made across all nine cases and provided important insights. I was able to obtain a front-line depth of perspective that may not have been accessible to many. As Emery spoke about earlier, so to Beinum speaks about action research as a relationship and the

importance of this kind of closeness to the area of study, "The researcher should not only have a genuine appreciation of the empirical object as subject and be willing to be involved in a process of collaboration and joining learning, but should also have the ability to do so (p. 195)."

To mediate the risk of compromising the research. To manage the multiple identities without compromising the quality of the research required a conscious and ongoing reflection on my research role. My sense is that the multiple identities were a strength of the inquiry to be leveraged, and that by staying true to the principles of the action-oriented and developmental evaluation methods they could be appropriately managed. There are a number of practices I put in place to assure my researcher role was informed rather than overshadowed by my multiple identities. As a practitioner researcher, I was aware that the attention I gave to reflective practice would yield rich fruit. To that end, I diligently maintained extensive field notes throughout the eight years of research. These journals are full of valuable insights from the field and were carefully harvested to inform the analysis. In addition, there was collective agreement established for the sensitizing themes with key organizers at the outset of the research. Building on those touchstones, my ongoing interpretation of events and analysis was reviewed with the research team, community actors, and project staff whenever possible in formal and informal ways, and grounded with literature from peer-reviewed research. An important part of this grounding was the regular check-in and learning calls with RAs for the primary study and developmental evaluators for the secondary study. These calls were a valuable time to compare notes, discuss shared findings, and suspend assumptions. Throughout the secondary study, there was also a close collaboration with the researcher associated with th**e** national convener for the YS project. This ongoing learning exchange was a rich shared analysis, with each of us harvesting from the dialogue what was relevant to our separate but woven research agendas.

My findings and insights were further validated with potential users in an applied format through **a**dditional field-testing. During the four-year gap between the completion of the research and final writing of the thesis, there was a number of opportunities to transfer practical knowledge from the research to community development and youth engagement practitioners in the field. These context included an action-oriented research project with a group of young people associated with a local children's aid society, a developmental evaluation for a collaboration between funders, and another for a youth and community development

organization, two retrospective studies of innovative community programs and collaborations, a design lab for national community youth leaders, and a future planning process with a child and community development organization. Collectively, this work helped clarify the insights reported in Section IV Insights of the thesis, and the conceptualization offered in Part B.

In addition to this applied work, was 2 years of extensive work with 2 grassroots groups of community activist in Nova Scotia, Canada. These small groups of 6 – 12 youth and adult citizens wereprototyping the creation of two Café 12s, a novel social franchise developed based on my research. The interpretation of the research for practical use was in the second year of a spiral design process with these groups at the point of the thesis completion. A design lens was a valuable perspective to hold in the knowledge transfer. Bob Dick, one of the world's leading action research theorists and consultants describes action research as using, "a cyclic or spiral process that alternates between action and critical reflection." A discussion of Café 12 and how it represents the research in a practical application is discussed in Chapter 15.

In summary, my field experience and the multiple identities they created, provided my research with a distinct advantage for retroductive development of theory. I imbedded deeply and frequently in all levels of the activities of project organizers. For whatever challenges there were to the multiple identities, my 30 years as a community and youth practitioner proved valuable to fine-tune observations, reflections and analysis. Researchers have found that involvement in such inquiry projects can enhance practitioners' sense of professional role and identity, because it supports the idea that practitioners are legitimate agents of knowledge rather than passive recipients of knowledge (Britzman 1991; Lankshear and Knobel 2004). The same holds true for this practitioner-researcher. Any tensions that did arise from my multiple identities and positioning with actors ultimately became invaluable insights for my practice and integrity as a facilitator of CCYD and as a researcher. A new understanding of my practice is summarized in Part B. of the thesis.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction

Though youth engagement is a powerful and transformative public idea, as my applied experience, research and literature makes clear, it is quite difficult to put into practice. Not only do we know little about how to engage a community in a comprehensive manner, we know even less about how to involve young people in the process. Considering this reality and the rare opportunity the research presented to look in-depth at multiple comprehensive attempts to engage youth, I undertook an unconventional approach to this literature review. Rather than a deep review of other works, I build a foundation with a small selection of classical and contemporary works based on themes that seem important to better understand the implications of the research findings and concepts introduced in later sections of the thesis. The literature is organized under three themes and along with previews from the community cases elucidate the relevance of the literature to the thesis:

      System and environmental implications,

      Approaches to youth and/or community development,

      Considerations for the design and organizing of CCYD projects.

The organizing principle for the literature review is an attempt to better understand youth as potential agents of change navigating spaces-in-between their own lives and adult service-providers. Though youth and all levels of youth-serving organizations and institutions can be uncomfortable bedfellows, they do find themselves at times sharing a community cause or activity. The literature review explores a pathway to extraordinary spaces rich with conditions that empower its participants to engage–I refer to these as *enterprising spaces*.

This chapter adds to the works introduced in Chapter 1—Keniston (1965, 1971) and Bellah (1985)—and builds with that of Victor Turner (1969) and Lisbeth Schorr (1989, 1997). Schorr's work provides a reflective lens rooted in evidence, to consider the qualities of four community development approaches and the design and operation of the community projects. Works of F. Emery & Trist, 1965 introduced in Chapter 2: Methodology provide a conceptual framework to

consider the themes in this chapter. Throughout this chapter, other evidence is brought forward to elucidate the themes, as well as previews of stories from the community case studies.

System and environmental implications

The following themes provide corner post to address the theme:
- Interplay between groups of organizers and their environment
- Youth drift in changing seas
- Spaces that attract youth
- Organizational structures that influence engagement.

Interplay between groups of organizers and their environment. As introduced in the Chapter 3 on Methodology, Open Systems Theory provides a theoretical framework for the thesis. The framework is a way to conceptualize the interplay between service providers, community actors and the environments in which they interacted. OST's characterization of system and environment is known as the socio-ecological perspective (F. Emery & Trist, 1965; Trist, Emery, & Murray, 1997**;** M. Emery, 1997, 1999).

Fred Emery and Eric Trist did significant development of OST during their years at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations from 1941 to 1989 (F. Emery and Trist, 1965). Trist was a British scientist and founding member of the Tavistock Institute and like Emery, a leading theorist in organizational development. They were close intellectual collaborators, fond of testing their theories in the field. Trist and Emery's seminal contribution to systems thinking was to characterize the environments of systems. The collaborators did ground-breaking field studies and theory development in Norway and the UK that brought attention to the value of self-managed working groups as the core element to people-centred and effective work groups (F. Emery and Trist, 1965). Emery's theoretical work demonstrated how these work groups proactively adapt to high rates of emergent technical and marketplace changes. He has been able to demonstrate how self-managed groups experience higher rates of productivity (F. Emery, 1997, p. 3).

During early work at the Tavistock Institute, new work from Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1950) emerged that further developed OST. This is how Fred Emery recalled the developments in his introduction to Volume 3 of the Tavistock Anthology (Trist, F, Emery, & Murray, 1997):

> In 1952 the Institute had welcomed von Bertalanffy's (1950) concept of open systems. Up to then the Institute's main concerns had been with intra-organizational problems and we had blithely gone along with the closed system thinking implicit in even the best of the social theorists.
>
> Von Bertalanffy's concept replaced the boundary problem with the graspable, and much more measurable, transport equation deriving from the inputs and outputs between a system and its environment. The notion of boundary was shifted from a structural concept to a functional process ... We gradually realized … we had to discard the assumption that systems or individuals could not know their environments and the unipopular focus on the system, or individual as system. (F. Emery and Trist, 1960, Origin of the Concept section, para. 3).

In the context of the community cases, closed system thinking would be analogous with treating the project organizers as independent of and not influenced by the community environment in which they carried out their task.[15] The closed system perspective would conceptualize groups of community-based actors as if there was a fence between themselves and the community, with neither influencing the other.

OST helps clarify the application of theories from other domains related to the thesis, including child development. A brief look at the work of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) can establish the point. Vygotsky's (1978) theories have become the foundation of much research and theory in cognitive development. His work focused attention on the central role of the environment on an individual's development. He believed that to understand social development one cannot separate it from the social and cultural context of the community in which it is embedded—F. Emery and Trist's (1965) system and environment perspective.

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[15] Case Story: 41. "A blow from the extended environment diverts the attention of the project" (p. 347).

Youth drift in changing seas. OST recognizes the individual as a living system, interacting with a number of systems throughout the various parts of our lives—be it home, school, work, or in a group of friends. Each of these systems has it's own culture that makes up the environment that encircles our lives. We do our best to adapt each day. The co-evolving of system and environment if you will. The more adapted we are to our environment the greater our capacity to achieve our best.

The environments young people interact with are changing as fast as their own development. Their transition from youth to adulthood is a complex and uncertain one; they experience many things, face many challenges, and explore many opportunities. The life of a Jellyfish is an apt analogy for the life of young person in this millennium. Jellies are drifters. They drift with the currents for thousands of kilometers on an ongoing search for environments that provide the right combination of water temperature and food. Wherever we encounter a jelly, it has been places and seen things we can't even imagine as it adapted to one environment after another.

The lives of young people in the new millennium are also ones of constant change and adaptation. Youth go through a number of life transitions in preparation for adulthood; events such as getting a drivers license, leaving school, getting a first job and getting married. However, today's youth are growing up in a time of complexity and uncertainty that has rearranged the milestones that once marked a transition from one phase of life to another. Each of the major transitions is delayed from what they were even thirty-five years ago. Statistics Canada reports that on average, a 25-year-old in 2001 had gone through the same number of transitions as a 22-year-old in 1971, and a 30-year-old in 2001 had made the same number of transitions as a 25-year-old in 1971 (Clark, 2007). (For this chapter the term *youth* designates those between ages 16 to 24). The path of new responsibilities that has always marked a passing to adulthood is no longer a straightforward Point A to Point B. With the transitions taking longer to complete and being spread out over more years there tends to be more youth taking a more circuitous route to completing the journey of transition (Clark, 2007). Youth are in a state of flux more than any other segment of the population, drifting like the jellies from one daily occupation to another, one place to another, and community of reference to another.

The work of Victor Turner (1969) provides a helpful perspective to better understand the state of flux that youth experience and the drifting that results. Turner was a British cultural anthropologist best known for his work on symbols, rituals and rites of passage. His 1969 work, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* was the result of his comparison of African ritual and cross-cultural processes. His study looked at the African practice of releasing tribal members from their normal routines to take part in rites of passage rituals. Turner's work acknowledges the need that individuals have at various times in their lives to break out of normal structures and into new community. Turner's two concepts of *communitas* and *liminality* are useful in considering youth drift and their search for space to feel whole and to engage. Turner explains communitas as, "a society of unstructured or rudimentary structured and relatively undifferentiated commuinitas, community or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual leaders. The value of the communitas is in the community of shared experience" (p. 96).

Turner (1969) suggests, "communitas breaks in through the interstices of structure in liminality" (p. 128). Liminality he describes as the transitional state between two phases, individuals in his study who were "betwixt and between," they did not belong to the society that they previously were a part of and they were not yet reincorporated into that society. Liminality is a limbo, an ambiguous period characterized by humility, seclusion, tests, sexual ambiguity and communitas. With young people drifting in a state of flux and transition from youth to adulthood, along with their ongoing search for ways and spaces in which to engage, they are in what Turner refers to as a period of liminality seeking communitas. It is the conceptualization of young people being "anti-structured liminal beings" that makes Turner's ideas interesting to the thesis.

Considering the, or drifting, of young people and their search for communitas, an apt question for community projects can be, What is it that local project conveners could do to contribute to success? In less successful community projects, the question might be, What appeared to be missing, or constraining efforts to foster youth engagement?

Research by Steven Tipton also provides a helpful perspective on these questions. Tipton (1982) studied youth in the 1960s who were living on the fringes and who joined alternative religious movements. His work suggests that youth were attracted to these groups because of how they

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changed their social situation and, "to make moral sense of their lives" (p. xiiv). Tipton spent significant time in each of three movements he studied to understand why the youth were attracted to these movements. Through participant observations and informal interviews, Tipton observed that the movements provided a space where youth could be whatever they needed to be at the moment, somewhat removed from the pressures of the outside world. The movements provided a space and culture that the youth felt part of while trying to grapple with issues of values, societal expectations and their individuality. The alternative religious movements offered what Tipton referred to as a, "kind of institutional capsule or pocket which contains the germ of future social developments, of societal change" (Tipton, 1982, p. 45).

Ironically, Tipton (1982) believes that what attracted young people to alternative religious communities were that there *were* limits and controls, albeit sometimes quite radical. Turner also noted a related observation, "Those living [together] in community seem to need an ultimate authority sooner or later" (p. 129). The religious movements provided young people with a sense of safety and a sense of boundary in a life otherwise full of changes and uncertainty. The religious movements provided the young people a sense of unified private life, work and interpersonal relationship within a single system of moral meanings (Tipton, 1982).

Later work of Kenneth Keniston provides a further perspective to consider for the thesis. As introduced earlier, Keniston is a respected social psychologist interested in the relationship of technology, personality and culture. In *Youth and Dissent* (1971) he has drawn together a collection of essays that span the 1960s he examines distinct subgroups that made up the *counterculture*. He suggests the, "youthful dissenters reflect previously unrecognized contradictions within technological society" (inside cover, 1971). In speaking about alienated youth he refers to them as post-adolescence, and claims that human development is not solely determined by biological causes but rather a variety of factors in culture (i.e., educational, social, familial, economic, political circumstances). His use of the term *youth* was defined as the period between adolescence and young adult and conceptualized by the idea of change, movement, freedom and ambivalence towards society as a whole. He describes this period as a time of experimentation and a time to wrestle with the questions of vocation, social role and lifestyle. These characteristic are reflective of those Turner used to describe conditions during a period of liminality.

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Keniston's (1965) work provides a further clarification of what young people are searching for beyond their normal routines. In close alignment with Tipton's findings, he states that youth were looking "to enhance experience, to structure and organize it in new ways that will not obscure its meaning, to order the chaos of sensation with personal form" (p. 183). His observations also reflect what Turner (1965) described as communitas, "These young men search for more direct and immediate contact with reality, for more immediate and genuine expressions of feeling, and for human relationships in which all separateness is blurred" (p. 189).

Spaces That Attract Youth. As well as conceptualizing a system and its environment, OST suggests important assumptions concerning human behaviour. The kind of self-directed searching of young people that Turner (1969), Tipton (1982), and Keniston (1965, 1971) describe is clarified further by a central premise of OST, a conceptualization of people as systems in their own right. At the heart of open social systems are purposeful people (M. Emery, 1999, pg. 12). Fred Emery (1977) provides a robust theoretical conceptualization that clarifies what characteristics and conditions people, and in this discussion young people, seek for their engagement. The long-term practical purpose of OST is cultural change (deGuerre 2000).

It should be clear from Turner's (1969) offering of the concept of communitas and liminality, that "no man is an island."[16] It is not simply a matter of what youth are seeking internally but also in association with others. F. Emery (1977) describes individuals "acting 'purposefully and wise' [as an] ultimate striving for ideals" (p. 69). He labels the first of the ideals as *homonomy*, a sense of belonging and interdependence (Angyal, 1969). The second is *nurturance*, which means cultivating and using means that contribute to the health and beauty of the whole and all its parts. The third is *humanity* to express what is appropriate, fitting and effective for us as people, speaking to the collective goodwill. The forth is *beauty*, that which is aesthetically ordered and intrinsically attractive (M. Emery, 1999, p. 15-16). The ideals, Merrelyn Emery suggests, ignore dominant hierarchies and apply across a spectrum of engagement.

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[16] Original quote attributed to John Donne http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/29901.html

The work of Turner (1969), Tipton (1982), Keniston (1965, 1971) and F. Emery (1977) helps to clarify not only what it is that youth in contemporary society are searching for but also how their search might inform new roles for youth in community development. On one hand a community development intervener might consider the drifting of young people as an opportunity to work with youth, if given favourable conditions. On the other hand, as the community cases will demonstrate, with youth being less associated with familiar and conventional community structures and institutions during their liminal phase, a community development intervener might be at a loss as to how or what to offer as a pathway for youth engagement. The case studies are instructive for this challenge.

Various *enterprising spaces* are introduced in the case studies, including: a community planning event in Nain (Search Conference[17]) and other examples with a more concentrated characterization of community, in the HW, QC4H, and PEI YERC cases, and the Victoria and RDP YouthScape cases. The conditions in the spaces at first attracted youth, and as time went on, they eventually become engaged and enterprising. There are other examples in the community cases of less successful attempts to attract and engage youth where it appears the conditions of the space did not appeal to the youth.

To better understand the enterprising spaces highlighted in the community cases we must first realize that the projects were imbedded within local convening organizations. Though it is popular in the literature to talk about youth engagement *in* the community it should be clarified that most youth engagement interventions are based out of community organizations. As stated earlier,

> Culture is among the most complicated words in the English language. It refers to the processes by which the symbolic systems (e.g., common sense, "usual way of doing things"; traditions and rituals, frameworks for understanding experience, etc.) characteristically shared by a group of people are maintained and transformed across time. Despite the appearance of stability, culture is a dynamic, historical process (Gale, 2003).

community is not an organization. There is little evidence that addresses how the culture of community organizations, in an intermediary role between the community and youth, impacts community development outcomes.

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[17] "A community search conference is a carefully planned and designed event in which a community plans its own future and takes responsibility for making it happen. The community may be geographical such as a town or a region. It may be a community of interest brought together by the need to plan for an industry or a policy area" (M. Emery, 1977).

Focusing on the criteria and conditions of the culture can aid a fuller analysis of spaces that foster engagement, and eventually enterprising. Leading youth engagement researcher, Barry Checkoway (2006), offers a useful perspective, "Although participation studies often assess activities in terms of their scope—such as their number, frequency, and duration—quality is their most significant measure" (pg. 2). Turner (1969) spoke of the characteristics of the space. The idea of transforming group spaces into spaces alive with enterprising is a central theme of the thesis.

OST provides an important contribution to understanding the various qualities of these spaces. Emery. M. (1977) identifies six important determinants of productive activity that have been researched and validated around the world – the intrinsic motivators. The first three concern the individuals and their relationship to the task at hand. These are: adequate elbowroom or autonomy, chances to learn from the task, and an optimal level of variety. The last three motivators concern the social climate of the group: respect from the others in the group, a sense of contribution to a social good and a sense of future in the group and with the task (M. Emery, 1993, p. 100). They are the building blocks for designing an effective enterprising space and are at the heart of OST and its participatory design methods.

The evidence on determinants of youth engagement provides similar themes: a sense of connectedness and commitment, a web of supportive relationships, meaningful contribution and continual learning (Gambome, 2006; Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem & Ferber 1996); Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1995; Jennings et al., 2006, Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Stoneman, 2002; Strobel, Kirshener, O'Donoghue, & McLaughlin, 2008; Pittman, et. al, 2003). Researchers working alongside HW conducted a study of rural-based youth action teams[18] that offers a complementary summary. The youth interviews described the following as important to their engagement, "opportunities to follow their passions, connecting with other people, and making a positive difference" (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond, 2003).

Organizational structures that influence engagement. In Turner's (1969), Tipton's (1982) and Keniston's (1965, 1971) research, although with different subjects and forms of

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[18] youth action teams – combine youth-adult partnerships based on mutual learning, teaching and action (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes & Lorens, 2001).

organization, the structure provided in their spaces of communitas were as important as the freedoms they provided. The structure was such that it allowed members a period of time free from their normal lives. The work of the three scholars provides a perspective that the youth introduced in the case studies may have been searching for more fulfilling structures and roles than what was usual for them.

Naturally, the local convener organizations introduced in the community cases had their own structures that the projects were slotted into. In some circumstances, the structure helped to foster conditions for engagement with conveners providing a level of support and freedom that encouraged groups to be enterprising. In other circumstances, conveners provided ample freedom but little support. And in still other cases, there may have been an overbearing amount of support but little in the way of freedom to create.

The predominant response by community organizations in the western world to what is perceived as the need for youth services is a programmatic one to provide services *for* youth. The vast majorities of youth development resources and projects are needs based and have a mandate other than youth engagement. These same organizations are struggling to meaningfully involve young people in the work of their mandate (Langlois, 2010b; Bynoe, 1998; Sinclair, R. 2004; Innovation Centre for Community and Youth Development, & National 4-H Council, 2003). The struggle is evident in the fact that young people, while interested in working on stubborn social issues, are not interested in taking up leadership positions in voluntary sector organizations (Toupin, 2008).

To create the quality of conditions for engagement and enterprising that YERC and YS called for, and the evidence presented suggests, the flow of power and resources, and patterns of authority come into play (Schorr, 1997; M. Emery, 2000). It is the manner in which organizations structure everything from their meetings to governance that alienates youth and is more difficult to alter (Burgess, 2000; UNICEF, 2001; M. Emery 2000; Morgan, 1997). There are numerous efforts to include youth in established organizations but like the community cases in the thesis, they run the risk of fitting young people into previously defined structures that fail to provide meaningful roles (Tolman & Pittman, 2001). Reviews of numerous initiatives attempting

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to involve youth found each were finding the need to reconsider their traditional practice, structure and relationships (Camino, 2000; Zeldin, Petrokubi, & MacNeil, 2008).

The robust evidence from OST addresses the limitations of attempts to establish a space and conditions for enterprising within a conventionally structured community organization. OST refers to this type of structure—based on principles of competition and positional authority—as *Design Principle #1* (DP1). Design principles in the OST world are viewed as genetic makeup such that when you change the structure, you change everything. The evidence generated by OST theorists, argue that pilot projects— such as YERC and YS—are a compromise that will fall well short of the kind of system change that can occur from changing the design principle of the organization to be more participatory and democratic. The temporary nature of pilot initiatives nudges some people within the system to make an exception and bend the usual ways of operating—so for a period, things look good. "The problems arise when the successful pilot program is to expand and thereby threatens the basic political and bureaucratic arrangements that have held sway over the decades" (Schorr, 1998, p. 19). To create real change, a host organization must address the flow of power and resources and the patterns of authority in a particular system (Schorr, 1997; McLeod & Crutchfield, 2007; Cabana, 1997).

Much of what the thesis discusses in the findings concerns constraints to enterprising from the activities and decisions of the national and local conveners. In almost all cases, the local convening organizations had their work cut out for them, just to change their own operational reflexes so they could engage with marginalized young people, let alone lead an initiative that encouraged others to do the same.

The cases unveil multiple examples of constraints to the creation of group organizing spaces with conditions conducive to engagement. Stories are told of that seem to point to conventionally designed structure in the way. Most decision-making regarding planning and control of the projects were centralized, either with the executive directors of the local convening organizations or their designate – the coordinators. As with most bureaucratic decision-making structures, control for planning and action at most of the community sites was removed from those doing, or experiencing, the work on the front-line.[19]

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[19] Case Story: 39. "A desperate bid to establish an enterprising space" (p. 342).

People who work in these kinds of structures are predisposed to feelings of isolation. Merrelyn Emery elaborates, "Simple acts of caring and constructive feedback are discouraged by a structure built around functions rather than group efforts" (1999, pg. 6).[20] Each of the community cases shows attempts at youth inclusion and organizational change without a supporting structural change.[21] In Emery's words, "The structure sucks them in like quicksand because it is taking place in a competitive, adversarial organization where everything is a potential battleground, and that is what it will become."[22]

There were exceptions. There were some situations in the community cases where the structure seemed readily conducive to engagement and enterprising. These extraordinary situations seem to have there factors of leadership, policy and the quality of youth and adult partnerships at play. The QC 4H case and the YS HRM case provide examples of this more open structure. In the HW case—the national convener—we hear about how not only did staff work within a structure that fostered their engagement, when they worked with community partners they were in a position to establish a distinct, albeit temporary culture conducive to engagement and enterprising.

Though pilot projects in general, like those followed by the research, may establish a space for innovation and enterprising within the host organization, and the actors may be provided with more than the usual control of planning and action, it is the degree of control for planning and action that is the question. The community cases provide a deeper look at this paradox. The host organization controls the conditions for the actors involved in the experiment. Functions controlling planning and action are often central to the tension in organizations that attempt to involve young people. Jessica Bynoe (2008), a program officer at the Association for Educational Development in the US put together a wonderful report on youth engagement based on case studies from five years of the Youth Innovation Fund and interviews with young people, adult allies, community organizers and supporters. Bynoe points out, "when the formal systems are dominated by adults, an inherent tension emerges as to how young people can and should use

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[20] Case Story: 47. "Coordinator feeling unsupported by the executive director (p. 350).

[21] Case Story: 38. Looking for space for youth inclusion within the local convening organization (p. 341).

[22] Merrelyn Emery: personal correspondence with author, e-mail, 30/12/08

their informal power to pursue increased formal power" (p. 9). Bynoe's report tells of a recurring phenomenon of young people hitting a glass ceiling, "The glass ceiling appears when young people begin to ask for more change and push harder on the current operation, policies, or culture of the targeted institution" (p. 12).

Approaches to youth and/or community development from the field

Four established approaches to community and/or youth development provide a reference point form the field:
- • Community Youth Development,
- • Asset-Based Community Development,
- • Comprehensive Community Initiatives,
- • Collective Impact Initiatives.

These are *approaches* to community and or community and youth development. What they are not are models or frameworks. When considered a model ready for replication, or a framework with many answers provided**,** limitations, or soft spots, are quickly revealed in real-life applications in complex environments. This was the circumstance I observed repeatedly during the research. The soft spots that surfaced in the community sites provided rich learning to inform later parts of the thesis. When each of the four approaches are treated as an approach to strategy as opposed to well-defined frameworks or models, their real value lies in the quality of guidance they provide for execution of their tenets. It is for this reason the literature review ends off with important ideas about application drawn from the literature and cases.

I weave two other branches through the discussion of these four approaches. The first introduces Lisbeth Schorr's work on *attributes of highly successful programs*. The second references an alternative framework I have developed based on the research and outlined in full in Chapter 15.

While Community Youth Development has obvious implications for youth engagement, the second approach reviewed—Asset-Based Community Development—is intended as a broad citizen engagement approach that reaches into the diversity of a community and intentionally

speaks to the need to engage youth. The last two approaches are intended for applications that are collective and comprehensive community collaborations, not necessarily for or with youth.

Lisbeth Schorr's highly acclaimed work on attributes of highly successful programs has produced two well-researched books that inform my work: the first in 1989, "Within our Reach," and the follow-up book in 1997, *Common Purpose*. The first, a review of successful community development pilot programs, raises concerns about the fact that successful programs rarely expand or are sustained. In, "Common Purpose" Schorr reports on the original programs of her study and others that demonstrate impressive results when working with disadvantaged children. Her observations of what makes for successful programs provides further clarification about the conditions and associated criteria necessary for effective spaces for engagement enterprising.

Schorr's (1997) list of program attributes is a useful lens through which to look at the case studies. A paraphrased summary of what Schorr (1997) refers to as the *Seven Attributes of Highly Successful Programs* is that they:

      1. are comprehensive, flexible, responsive and persevering

      2. see children [and youth] in the context of their families

      3. deal with families as parts of communities and neighbourhoods

      4. have a long-term preventative orientation, a clear mission and continue to evolve over time

      5. are well managed by competent and committed individuals with clearly identifiable skills

      6. have staff who are trained and supported to provide high-quality, responsive services

      7. operate in settings that encourage practitioners to build strong relationships of mutual trust and respect (p. 5 -7).

    Community Youth Development. There has long been a concerted effort by advocates who recognize the wisdom in approaching child and youth development by creating more positive community environments (Stollea & Dietlind, 2004; Borden & Perkins, 1998). One notable result is the development early in the new millennium of *Community Youth Development* (CYD), coined by the United States-based National Network for Youth (Curran &

Hughes, 2000). The original architects of CYD considered it a framework more than an approach. Here again, I believe more guidance can be found in its ideas when considered an approach. The concept first surfaced in the '80s from the *Positive Youth Development*[23] movement during a decade when many youth organizations were struggling to adapt to greater demand for services for at-risk youth as well as more preventive measures. It was a collective effort to raise awareness that optimizing the healthy development of young people required youth-serving organizations and community institutions to change their ways of operating and begin to work together to alter the community environment (Benson, 1997; Bogenschneider, 1998; Lerner, 1995).

CYD assumes the involvement of young people in both their own development and that of the community. It espouses the principle that when youth are enlisted as active agents of community building, they contribute positively to both youth and community development. It also encourages development of healthy environments in which children and youth can thrive. The approach honours youth, not only as leaders of tomorrow but also as agents of community development today. While encouraging the gifts and talents of individual young people, CYD places equal focus on the investment of these assets in formal and informal community systems (e.g. neighbourhoods, schools, organizations, associations) (Curan & Hughes, 2000). CYD provided some important conceptual scaffolding that supported the development of the thesis. CYD is the conceptual foundation of the work of the YERC national convener and CYD principles were reflected in the objectives of most of the community sites in the case study.

CYD's assumption that communities must develop community-wide initiatives is consistent with the principles of the alternative framework developed in the thesis and the other three approaches reviewed in this literature review. CYD also argues that context is a critical factor that must be developed to promote positive youth outcomes.

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[23] Positive Youth Development - Positive Youth development programs share the following three characteristics: (1) program goals promote positive development even while seeking to prevent problem behaviour; (2) program atmosphere conveys the adults' belief in youth as resources to be developed rather than as problems to be managed; and, (3) program activities provide formal and informal opportunities for youth to nurture their interests and talents, practice new skills and gain a sense of personal or group recognition (Roth, 2004, p.4).

In a theme that resonates across all four approaches reviewed, CYD is defined as purposely creating environments that provide constructive, affirmative and encouraging relationships that are sustained over time with adults and peers. Schorr too speaks of encouraging practitioners to build strong relationships of mutual trust and respect (1997).

Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCI). CCIs draw community organizations and citizens together with a mandate to co-generate community. Community development organizations are defined here as those with a mandate to empower individuals with the skills and knowledge to build collective capacity to effect change in their community and improve individual and community well-being. Such organizations are uniquely positioned to engage youth in addressing a genuine and captivating need in the community. Paying attention to community assets and needs is what they do. However, unlike youth development organizations, it is not assumed that community development organizations have the mandate, experience or resource capacity required to integrate young people into their service delivery or decision-making within the organization (Butler & Wharton-Fields, 1999).

CCIs attempt to strengthen the capacity of participating organizations and neighbourhood residents to address a wide range of issues and to bring about change. This has proven successful in a number of CCI-model programs (Gardner, 2010). These initiatives focus on building leadership among local residents and organizations, and collaboration among a wide spectrum of neighbourhood residents and institutions (Pitcoff & Winton, 1998). CCIs are based on principles of community-building, local ownership and local action. The approach is tackling some of the most challenging social issues, including poverty reduction, illiteracy, adolescent mental health and active living.

The community project at the centre of the secondary study, YouthScape, was a CCI; and though not articulated as such, also YERC, the project of the primary study. The YS funder encouraged the local conveners to consider elements of the CCI approach. Consistent with the approach, the sites were asked to map out youth issues within the context of larger economic and social issues. They were also encouraged to connect small-scale projects to larger systems with an objective of transforming neighbourhoods rather than just completing a single project (Cawley, 2010). The funders of both projects, YERC and YS, also mandated steering committees, with the

intent of practicing the principles of being a CCI. Though various forms of steering committees are a common element of CCIs, the research revealed significant downfalls to this structure. The alternative framework for comprehensive community youth development I offer in a later section of the thesis addresses the need to be clear about function before placing potentially restrictive forms of structure in place.

Vibrant Communities (VC)[24] is one significant CCI in Canada that has valuable lessons to share. VC is a pan-Canadian poverty reduction CCI of the Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement[25] in partnership with the Caledon Institute of Social Policy[26] and the J.W. McConnell Family foundation[27]. Building on the experience of their first phase (2003-2011), Cities Reducing Poverty launched in the spring of 2011 with plans to engage 100 Canadian cities by the year 2016. At the request of stakeholders involved in VC, the Wellesley Institute (for advancing urban health) published a literature review on CCIs (Gardner, B., Lalani, N., Plamadeala, C., 2010).

The researchers presented a list of some defining features of CCIs. They are: comprehensive, innovative, analytical and intentional, multi-sectoral, asset- not deficit-based, collaborative, adaptive, long time horizons and community-based (Gardner et al, 2010). Though the researchers tie the time horizon dimension to the question of sustainability, I consider it important to also consider it from the perspective of clarifying phases of development. The framework for comprehensive community youth development (CCYD) I use in the thesis clarifies stages of project development. The phases help to reduce the work contextualize the project activity in.

Being community-based is another dimension of CCIs that the thesis explores further. CCIs recognize the need to clarify not only a geographic community but also the group of community actors – the change agents. This is also a central tenet of the framework introduced in this thesis. The community-based dimension speaks to a practice of project activities being guided by the interests and voices of community actors, building capacity at every turn and recognizing the importance of individual empowerment. This agenda is expanded upon in the thesis with

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[24] Vibrant Communities: http://www.vibrantcommunities.ca/
[25] http://tamarackcommunity.ca/
[26] http://www.caledoninst.org/
[27] http://www.mcconnellfoundation.ca/en

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the concept of conditions for engagement and enterprising spaces.

Gardner and associates' work clarifies the wide variety of programs considered CCIs. Gardner et al.'s (2010) work clarifies the wide variety of programs considered CCIs. Their literature review characterizes the themes of these differences as follows: focus, scale, origins and orientation, purposes, and style and process. Of these themes, it is the style and process theme this thesis explores further. The researchers describe the theme as having to do with how CCIs collaborate and organize themselves. I propose that the activities that fall under this theme may represent the best leverage points for systems change—role clarification, organizing language, communication infrastructure, action plan, partner agreements, steering committees, etc. There is a lot of room for interpretation of the activities that fall under the theme that also come with a lot of ambiguity, potential tension, steep learning curves and opportunities to turn constraints into supports for engagement and innovation.

This points to one of the potential soft spots in the use of CCI as a framework for community projects—lack of clarifying in practical terms *comprehensive* and *community.* These are ambiguous terms that risk causing a project to wander aimlessly in the complexity of the tasks environment. The thesis gives considerable attention to clarifying the theme of how community actors collaborate and organize themselves.

A number of VC's lessons had to do with how the projects organized their support infrastructure. The Caledon Institute reported some important lessons gathered from VC when it was only one and a half years into the first four years of its project. This was a wonderful time to capture lessons about the way the project was organized. The lessons included the importance of building relationships, making time for learning, being conscious of the potential for information overload, the value of organizing local action-focused initiatives, working across levels and sectors and the important role of a convener. A number of these themes are addressed in the framework for comprehensive community youth development offered later in this thesis. These and other lessons from VC can help a group build a successful CCI while staying sensitive to potential soft spots when applying CCI as a framework rather than an approach (Leviten-Reid, 2004).

Collective Impact Initiatives (CII). The authors of a popular article on collective impact define CIIs as long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem (Kania & Kramer, 2011). What is distinct about CIIs as opposed to CCIs is the focus on the collaboration of professionals as opposed to citizens and professionals coming together. The authors tracked lessons from a successful CII in Cincinnati dealing with improving education in relation to a student achievement crisis. Here is how the authors introduced the project and its level of success.

> "Against daunting odds, a remarkable exception seems
> to be emerging in Cincinnati. Strive, a non-profit subsidiary
> of KnowledgeWorks, has brought together local leaders to
> tackle the student achievement crisis and improve education
> throughout greater Cincinnati and northern Kentucky. In
> the four years since the group was launched, Strive partners
> have improved student success in dozens of key areas across
> three large public school districts. Despite the recession and
> budget cuts, 34 of the 53 success indicators that Strive tracks
> have shown positive trends, including high school graduation
> rates, fourth-grade reading and math scores, and the number
> of preschool children prepared for kindergarten."

The five conditions of collective success the authors reported from their research are common agenda, continuous communication, a backbone support organization, shared system of measurement and mutually reinforcing activities (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

While it is easy to sing the praises of collaboration and partnership, it is often difficult to acknowledge their challenges (Caputo, 2000). Jane Cooke Lauder (2005), from her extensive research on community collaborations, describes collaboration as "…not a process but a noisy, complex, unwieldy and unpredictable situation where the competing interests of different parties are always present, and where the resulting tensions and ambiguities need constant attention" (p. 16). Partnership can be difficult. The community cases in this thesis introduce numerous struggles with partner collaboration (Langlois, 2010a).

The most obvious attempt at multi-sector collaboration was in the establishment of steering committees. A number of the community projects started off with a steering committee but after it was found they consumed a great deal of time and energy to establish, most fell apart during the first or early in the second year of the projects. With a growing trend of strategic partnerships and collaboration in community initiatives (Johnson-Lenz, 2009; Le Be & Branzei,

2009), these challenges are given considerable attention in Section III—Analysis of Case Studies. Given the complex environments of CII and CCI, latter parts of the thesis address the need for adaptable and responsive project structure that keeps pace with the needs of fast-changing project activities.

A feature of CII distinct from CCI is the intent to create the necessary infrastructure as a critical design feature. Though there is little guidance on the particulars and nuances of a support role with CCI, Kania & Kramer clarify support activities for CII under a role they refer to as backbone support.This role will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter and throughout the thesis toward a final practical recommendation in Part B. As part of that discussion the framework introduced in this thesis explores the backbone support role in some depth.

Asset-Based Community Development. Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is an approach increasingly applied in contemporary community development strategy. The approach was popularized by John Kretzmann and John McKnight (1993) based on extensive inquiry into the characteristics of successful community initiatives in the U.S. McKnight is a professor of education and social policy at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research in Illinois. He has become one of the most acclaimed community organizers in North America.

Like CYD and CCI, fundamental to the philosophy and approach of ABCD is the assumption of asset- and capacity-focused development rather than the common needs-driven approach. An asset-based approach releases individual capacities and the power of the *associational* life of a community. The growing interest in the approach is in keeping with a noticeable shift in international development agency practice to asset-based and developmental approaches (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002; UNICEF, 2001). The latter focuses on developing a young person's assets and protective factors.

ABCD addresses the first four attributes from Schorr's (1997) framework that relate to context, comprehensiveness and prevention. One of the earliest steps of ABCD is to complete a wide-ranging map, or inventory, of the assets in the community, ranging from public spaces to skills. Communities that adopt an asset-based approach for their development have footing from

which to establish the broad level of engagement Schorr (1998) suggests as necessary to achieve community and systematic transformation. Such communities are in good stead to bring young people into the heart of community-building activity, with a focus on imagining practical ways young people can be an asset in the community, rather than focusing on youth as an issue. The framework introduced later in this thesis similarly approaches youth engagement by first addressing an objective that serves the collective good.

John McKnight, (1989, 1995, 2010) suggests that the period of growth of professional human services began a separation of the common citizen from our responsibility for helping our neighbours. McKnight (1995) argues that, "Care can never be produced, provided, managed, organized, administered, or commoditized. Care is the only thing a system cannot produce" (p. x). As the case studies and McKnight's work suggest, there is reason to be concerned that the conventional methods of convening and facilitating community and youth development may actually be a constraint to the engagement of the youth and citizens they seek.

McKnight (1995) speaks to the general concern with what he refers to as a *serviced society*; a reference to our rigid reliance on the social sector (pg. 37). What McKnight adds to Sennett (1998) and B's (1985) focus on the need for society to express more caring and connection is a deeper look at the role of the *helping* professions. McKnight laments society yielding responsibility to look after even the smallest of our neighbours' needs to professionals in overburdened community service agencies. "This culture which replaces community with management, stories with curriculum and care with commodities is the serviced society; a careless place dominated by impotent institutions and burgeoning social pathology" (p.xi, 1995). Maverick social critic Ivan Illich adds, "As the power of professional and service systems ascends, the legitimacy of community descends" (1976).

If we consider the evidence, introduced earlier in Chapter 3, of members of a society drifting apart from one another (Marshall, 2010; LaRochelle-Côté & Dionne, 2009; Burton & Phipps, 2010; Bryant, 2006; Sauvé, 2009; Krull & Sempruch, 2011; Williams, 2000; Sennett, 1998; Bellah 1985), the significance of a community's sense of caring being consumed by professionals seems even more compelling. Bellah (1989), McKnight (1995), and Emery & Trist (1965) each share the concern that individuals are being stripped of responsibility for what is an intrinsic need—to

express caring for others. Engaging the collective will of the citizenry to be enterprising will always outperform relying on professionals alone.

A new term - Comprehensive Community Youth Development. For simplification, the principles and intent held in common between Community Youth Development, Comprehensive Community Initiatives, Collective Impact Initiatives and Asset-Based Community Development, along with the objective of youth engagement will be referred to in this thesis as *Comprehensive Community Youth Development* (CCYD) throughout the rest of this document. Together the concepts represent not only communities supporting the development of young people but also building capacity for broader community engagement capable of transforming communities to places of well-being and resilience.

The term *comprehensive* is about connecting deeply and broadly and being inclusive; *community* is a group of people connecting with a shared organizing principle; *youth* is self explanatory; and, *development* can be broken down from its Latin roots as "the process that frees us from those factors that hold us down."

Considerations for the design and organizing of CCYD

For the third of my organizing themes for the literature review I organize around the following sub- themes:

> Youth engagement as social innovation,
> The skills and positioning of project coordinators to expand engagement,
> The role of adult volunteers,
> Backup support for community and youth development projects.

These themes are important steppingstones for better understanding attempts by youth and adults to make change in spaces-in-between. There are other important themes touched on only lightly in the literature review but explored in greater detail in later chapters. These include the role of a convener, how the governance of projects is structured, the importance of relationship building, and some indicators of an organization's readiness to succeed as a convener of systems change.

The environments of CCYD initiatives are complex and emergent. The four approaches reviewed in this chapter ignore for the most part that community organizers must constantly adapt their activity to ongoing changes in their project environment. The alternative framework I offer later in this thesis explicitly guides the user through an integration of planning, action and reflection. That calls for ongoing characterization of the changing planning and action environment. With OST as the theoretical underpinning, the interplay between groups of organizers and their environment is central to the framework.

Considerations for the design and organizing CCYD projects

Youth engagement as social innovation. To explore this theme and make conceptual links to other parts of the thesis, I draw upon leading-edge work in the grassroots bestselling book "Getting to Maybe" (Westley, Zimmerman, Quinn Patton, 2007). The authors weave together their experience, stories of successful social innovations and complexity theory in what has fast become an important guide to those trying to make a difference for the collective good.

Though there has long been recognition of the need for collaboration amongst community service providers and key stakeholders, the call for change is growing with the realization that isolated service organizations dealing with needs-based issues are not positioned to address complex social issues. At the same time, there are rapid changes taking place in the environments faced by community agencies, including financial cutbacks and the growing complexity of community needs. Westley and associates speak about how "isolated service providers are destined to become encumbered by a fortress mentality, enveloped in a fear of the world's larger, uncontrollable and uncomfortable forces" (2007, p. 158). Each of the four approaches to community and/or youth development earlier reviewed encourages service providers to work in spaces-in-between.

Westley and associates speak about how *multiple information targets* to focus a project's attention on those areas that are developmental for the system (2007, p. 158). Change systems that successfully navigate complex landscapes have done so with access to tactical information from multiple points in their task environments. The smart project convener recognizes the value of having at least one of these information targets pointed at the need to learn from

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intended service recipients. This underlines the importance of youth engagement. Youth who drift from one system to another are actually part of the generation going and the one coming. The space-in-between is where we have been and where we are going. The observations of youth—and children for that matter—offer the kind of on-the-ground insight essential to imagining new solutions to complex social issues. The idea of multiple information points is reflected in suggested practices of a community facilitator and developmental evaluator presented in a later chapter of the thesis.

In systems that alienate youth, it is not uncommon that difficulties stem from the manner in which collaboration and shared decision-making is structured (Langlois, Blanchet-Cohen, & Beer, 2013; Langlois, 2010a, Bynoe, 2008; Ferber & Pittman, 1999, Pittman et al., 2003). Getting to Maybe describes decision making in a culture of engagement. "We need to provide people the time and security to experiment, to connect ideas and explore adjacencies—in a word, to drift" (Westley et al, 2007, p. 54). The authors describe the characteristics that lead people to engage together: nurturing learning, shared problem solving and celebration. Henry Mintzberg, a Canadian leader when it comes to strategy and systems change, talks about the importance of a learning culture for the development of strategy responsive to complex environments. "They [responsive strategies] take root in all kinds of places, wherever people have the capacity to learn, because they are in touch with the situation" (Minztberg, 1987).

The informed discourse on models of community collaboration recognizes the importance of starting off with a objective that is well-bound, that is, clear to all stakeholders in its language, and focus. It is known that in Comprehensive Community Initiatives, "If the objectives aren't clear, partners over commit or underperform, or if the process is poorly managed things can be very difficult" (Makhoul & Leviten-Reid, 2010). The thesis explores this idea further in later sections. With a clear objective in place, a group can establish a shared foundation of guiding principles, clear role dimensions, and framework for action (Westley et al, 2007, p. 48). Clarifying a systems change objective is at the heart of the framework I present later in the thesis.

The need to build relationships is a theme that resonates with each of the community development approaches reviewed earlier in the chapter. For each of the social innovators

introduced in Getting to Maybe, their stories started with relationships. Whether a scientist, priest, musician or another from any walk of life, in all the stories of innovation relationships helped navigate new environments and in one way or another informed a path to go forward (Westley et al, 2007, p. 95). "The energy of others is your most important resource" (Westley et al, 2007, p. 159). The framework presented later in the thesis characterizes a *pre-entry phase* of project development. The phase highlights the early design thinking that takes place before a community development project enters the community with a clear objective, a clarified concept and call for action. The activity in this phase is built around the leveraging of relationships that are a catalyst for the innovator finding the courage to start things rolling. "If an innovation is to transform from an idea to a reality, it needs to draw on human resources. Innovation is fueled first by the energy, time and skills of people…"(Westley et al, 2007).

A convener has much influence on the development of project's learning culture. For the vast majority of community projects, the responsibility for convening rests with individuals under the authority of community organizations. There is an inherent risk in undervaluing the importance of a convener's ability to empower its people and establish a culture of engagement around a project. The importance of this capacity-building work was emphasized in the ABCD, CYD, and CCIs approaches. In Getting to Maybe, in one story after another social innovators demonstrate their ability to build people's capacity. In one example, Ulysses S. Seal, a leader in the species conservation movement, "made the volunteer scientist who worked with him feel that their capabilities were connected with huge possibilities; that what they did made a huge difference" (Westley et al, 2007, p. 105).

A project's culture is determined to a large extent by the organization that a project's authority rests with. As the community cases will elucidate, it takes a particular set of competencies and skills to convene and facilitate successful participatory and strength-based community development. If a convening organization has yet to internally achieve a culture and have services that reflect a commitment to learning, innovation and distributive leadership, it has far less chance of instilling those practices in a community development project. The managers of the local convener organizations may have been committed but in most community sites they were without what Schorr refers to as "clearly identifiable skills necessary" (p. 9). Nor did the managers in most cases oversee a work culture reflective of an engagement space that "builds

strong relationships of mutual trust and respect" (p. 10), as Schorr suggests. On the contrary, there were a number of sites where the frontline staff felt disempowered by their managers, and some left the positions.

A convener needs the capacity to build consensus with stakeholders. A project's objective, the convener and the agendas of stakeholders outside the convening organization are not always easily aligned. Mary Gordon, another of the social innovators introduced in Getting to Maybe, spoke of the divide she navigates with her project "Roots of Empathy," "….When you get to the level of the two main social institutions in the world, families and schools, that's where we have to teach consensus building" **(**Westley et al, 2007 p. 109). It is these spaces-in-between that Gordon navigates that the thesis explores in depth: spaces-in-between individual community actors; community actors and a project coordinator; funders and conveners; youth participants and project conveners; and, a number of others.

The skills and positioning of project coordinators to expand engagement. The space-in-between is rich territory for the work of an effective change facilitator or, given the structure of most projects, a coordinator. The 5th and 6th attributes listed in Schorr's framework (1997) have to do with the competency, commitment and skills of frontline staff and managers. In the community cases, the frontline people of the local convener organizations did not have sufficient training to provide what Schorr states as necessary: high quality and responsive services (p. 10). As the cases reveal, a great deal of responsibility and authority is bestowed on these positions and have significant influence on the direction of the activity and culture.

As introduced earlier, the work of Turner (1969), Tipton (1982), Keniston (1965, 1971) and F. Emery (1977) clarifies not only what it is contemporary youth might be searching for but also how their search can inform new roles for youth in community development. If we better understand the drift youth are experiencing and the conditions that invite them to engage, we can begin to better understand new roles for frontline project coordinators.

There is a broad range of literature that informs the role and skills necessary for the type of role the site coordinators in the community cases had. From community development literature a list of other relevant role titles include: community facilitator, animator and *mobilizer*. Across the

literature, regardless of the academic discipline or applied domain, the descriptions of the roles share a priority of engagement and building interrelationships in a community (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003; Leiterman and Stillman, 1993; Sirianni, 2005; Kiser, 1998; Hogan, 2000).

Schorr's (1997) 5th and 6th attributes also relate to Trist's (1950) early work on a social-technical systems perspective. This perspective addresses the culture of a group in relation to its interface with their skills and competency regarding the "technical" aspects of the work-at-hand. The technical aspects in the community cases has to do with the skills required to organize people to address a particular systems change objective.

Trist looked at relationships between work groups and technical systems—what he referred to as the social-technical systems perspective. He and his colleagues had done significant research in the coal mining industry in Great Britain in the late 40s and early 50s. Observations of the way one independent work group organized began their development of the social-technical systems perspective. The coal miners group working on the new seam, the Haighmoor, had organized as a self-managed cooperative team and were experiencing high productivity, personal commitment, low absenteeism and infrequent accidents. Here are Trist's, (1993), comments about the discovery:

> The idea of separate approaches to the social and the technical systems of
> an organization could no longer suffice for one such as myself who had experienced the
> profound consequences of a change in social-technical relations such as had occurred in
> the Haighmoor development. Work organizations exist to do work that involves people
> using technological artifacts (whether hard or soft) to carry out sets of tasks related
> to specified overall purposes. The social and technical systems were the substantive
> factors—the people and the equipment. (Trist & Murray, Origin of the Concept section,
> para. 9).

The social-technical systems perspective is a useful lens to consider the roles of the project coordinators and other primary interveners and their use of practices, tools and resources. Each of the community projects had a site coordinator, or a small group in the case of QC 4H, to

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coordinate and engage others in the project. This group of community actors[28] is analogous to what Trist describes as the social system, or people in the work organizations of the socio-technical systems perspective.

The site coordinators and other remunerated community actors also had what Trist refers to as *technological artifacts* of a soft nature, in this context, such as practices, tools and resources (e.g. program events, small grants, team-building processes, facilitation techniques and planning methods). The technological component is said to have a mediating influence on the environment. The interface between these technological artifacts and the actors is the socio-technical perspective.

In converting inputs to outputs, the technological component plays a major role in determining the self-regulating properties of a project or any other enterprise. Trist states, "It functions as one of the major boundary conditions of the social system in mediating between the ends of an enterprise and the external environment" (1993). From the cases, we see that for HW the task of training and coaching coordinators from a distance and the accompanying use of the "technological artifacts" were new to them. They had little experience or infrastructure to communicate virtually or provide appropriate resources. Their influence was mostly limited to in-person field visits; a very limited interface between their expertise and the community actors.

At the community sites, the project execution was left in the hands of coordinators with insufficient experience with practices, tools and resources—the technological component—that would help them carry out the work with community partners and youth actors. By way of example, though the site coordinators wanted to draw in more involvement from youth and adults, they were without the technical artifacts to know how to accomplish it. Though the case studies do not reveal adequate support for the coordinators from HW, nor did the coordinators generally reach out to ask for guidance when it was required. From the social-technical perspective, HW as the national convener and their project consultant, as well as the local conveners with their site coordinators were maladapted. Parts of this thesis will describe the practices of an *intramediary* with a focused intent on strengthening the technological component of community and youth development and having the artifacts and the experience

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[28] See Legend for clarification of community actors, versus participants p. xv

to apply them ready at-hand.

McKnight's (McKnight & Block, 2010) work on the role of a community guide and connector provides a valuable perspective with which to consider the role of the site coordinators, and in the QC 4H case study, the community actors. A significant expectation of their roles was to connect and draw in the participation of greater numbers of people. McKnight argues that these kinds of community connector roles should not be paid positions as that risks, "losing the role to the system" (p. 132). By system McKnight is referring to the professionalized service provider system in a community. McKnight believes the intention to enhance the spirit and culture of connecting is the key to building an abundant community and this function should not be built around hiring someone to make connections (p. 133).

With the Nain and PEI cases, you will see that each site coordinator grew up in the community, positioning them better as community connectors than their counterparts in the other sites. In both cases the coordinators' relationships helped to move forward pockets of engagement with youth in the community. However, as only one person working in communities with long-set patterns of neighbour relations, extending connections to others seemed to be limited to previously established relationships. Neither site experienced the degree and diversity of relationships that could inspire broad citizen engagement.

A lack of connections in the community can be seen in the Futures Association case. Each of the multiple coordinators who cycled through the job was without community connections of any significance. The lack of associational or organizational networks to tap into may have contributed to the fact that their project switched to an internal focus with the local convener organization.

At the QC 4H site, they were without a formal site coordinator role but had a small group of young adults who animated the project and had been part of the organization for many years. Though this activity had an internal focus, club members were established in various communities within the region. With the small group team approach and well-established relationships with members in all the community clubs, this site had easy access to engage others in the project activity. Within a particular agency, this case is a good example of the

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benefits of connectors.

The role of adult volunteers. In the discussion that follows I draw from literature and the case studies that address the role of supportive adults in youth development and youth engagement initiatives. Evidence has clearly established the value for young people of having supportive adults in their lives. The role cited most often is that of mentoring. It has established that mentored youth make measurable gains in relations with peers and parents, and in school achievement **(**Brook, Brook, Gordon, Whiteman, Cohen, Goodenow, 1993; Lonczak, Abbott, Hawkins, Kosterman, & Catalano; Lansdown, 2005).

Less represented in the literature but important to the thesis is the idea of *team mentoring* where one or more adults work with a group of young people in a mentoring, advising or coaching capacity. Youth/adult relationships built on this foundation have a culture more like a partnership (Camino, 2000; Gambone et al., 2004; Grossman, J.B., & Bulle, M.J., 2006; Warner, Langlois, & Dumond, 2003; Watson, 2002). Literature on youth engagement and community youth development also underlines the importance of supportive adults and other frontline facilitators (Caputo 2000; Zeldin, 2004; Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Warner, Langlois, & Dumond, 2003). Though these kinds of roles are more often associated with supporting individuals than group engagement and mobilization, HW's youth action team program had a significant supportive adult component.

In the HW case study, you will hear about youth action teams that often got their start because of a motivated adult who stepped up to become a team mentor. A study of the youth action teams in rural Nova Scotia points to the important role supportive adults can play in a CYD initiative. The research included 28 interviews of randomly sampled young people from the teams, aged 14 to 19, all of the 17 key adult mentors and nine community agency representatives who had supported a team or received service from one. The researchers found that the adults had three significant roles in the successful development of youth action teams: 1) make connections to community resources, 2) facilitate healthy team dynamics, and 3) provide initial structure (Warner, Langlois & Dumond, 2003).

Warner and associates' summary of the role of the adults as bridge builders for youth provides a

conceptual link to John McKnight's ABCD approach introduced earlier in this chapter. McKnight and Kretzmann's early work was captured in the popular 1993 guidebook for practitioners, "Building Communities from the Inside Out." This book was based on his research on intensive grassroots work in an inner-city Chicago neighbourhood. In this early work, the role of the frontline person in community development was mostly left out of his discourse. The one exception can be found in an essay he included in his 1996 book, "The Careless Society, Community and its Counterfeits."

In the essay he introduces a role he describes as a *community guide*. His ideas about this role came out of ongoing research he was party to. The research involved people who were excluded from mainstream community life and the extraordinary individuals who found ways to guide them back into mainstream life. He describes the role of these community guides as "not to just introduce one person to another but to bring a person into the web of associational life that can act as a powerful force in the person's life" (McKnight, 1996, pg. 119). He goes on to describe a characteristic of the community guides as "generally well-connected in the interrelationships of community life, trusted by community peers, and that believe strongly that the community is a reservoir of hospitality that is waiting to be offered" (McKnight, 1996, p. 121).

McKnight's (McKnight & Block, 2010) early exploration of community guides is explored further in his recent book collaboration with Peter Block, a well-respected organizational development expert. In the book the concept of *community connectors* is introduced (p. 132) and as with his earlier observations of community guides, McKnight observed the important role of individual citizens who had a natural capacity to build multiple connections between others in the neighbourhood. In the HW case, you will be introduced to adults who were community connectors who stepped up to be mentors for youth action teams. These bright lights in the community had the characteristics of what McKnight described as community guides and community connectors.

Backup support for community and youth development projects. A significant component of comprehensive community initiatives are the backup supports provided to frontline workers, and the quality of the collaboration between partners. "The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons

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why it fails" (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 40). Having reviewed a number of success stories of collective impact, the authors of the earlier cited article on CII, advocate for a separate organization to plan, manage and support CII. Kania & Kramer suggest this support can be accomplished through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and by handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for a CII to function smoothly.

Backup support is analogous to what a base camp might provide to a group in a wilderness outpost: supplies, maps, communication with external resources, first aid in the case of emergencies, and extra food and supplies if things take longer than expected. A base camp allows those leading the wilderness experience to keep their focus on the important work of getting their group safely through the journey.

In the HW case the organization's early success we will hear about had been due in part to the significant backup support they had consistently provided for their frontline staff in the form of resources, training and administration. Though the national conveners were meant to provide similar backup support to the community sites, because of distance, unclear direction and no established relationships, this support was nowhere near what the national convener had provided their frontline staff in the past.

An important aspect of backup support is the provision of a shared framework to guide project activity (Watson, 2002; Butler & Wharton-Fields, 1999). Without a plan to guide the process, comprehensive efforts at making change are vulnerable to being disjointed and unfocused. It is not that a process plan is intended to ignore the inherent emergent qualities of a comprehensive initiative, rather, a shared plan for moving forward can accelerate the generative nature of an initiative (Dozois, Langlois, & Blanchet-Cohen, 2010; Torjman, 2004; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Auspos, 2006). None of the YERC or YS sites had a shared framework to guide the project. The resulting lack of clarity on targets, process and measurements contributed to partners and youth disengaging.

Section II: Case Study Summaries

Introduction

The story of the research has been captured in six case studies. The first of these is about HW, the national convener for the YERC project responsible for the applied dissemination. The four YERC community site cases follow. In this section of the thesis the cases are presented only in a summary format. The intent is to orient the reader to the context of the research. The case summaries provide a sense of the communities, the local convener and the focus of their project activity. The final case concerns YS, the project that was the subject of the secondary study. It is also presented in this chapter in summary format and in fuller format in Appendix A. There are five community sites discussed in the one YS case.

More substantial information on each community case appears in Appendix A in thematic story format. There are elements of these stories sprinkled throughout the remainder of the thesis to illuminate findings, insights and emerging findings. As well, there are footnotes throughout the case analysis, and findings and insights to direct the reader to specific stories in Appendix A that will elucidate a point being discussed.

Chapter 4: Case Study - The National Convener For Youth Engagement In Rural Communities (YERC)

An Overview Of The National Convener's Applied Dissemination. Established in Halifax, Nova Scotia (NS) in 1989, HeartWood (HW) has maintained a focus on engaging young people as partners in building positive futures for themselves, communities and society. For its 23 years, the organization has been a strong advocate for youth inclusion, youth leadership, youth/adult partnerships, and as time went on—comprehensive community-based approaches to youth development. The organization earned a reputation for high quality programs and services and as a centre of excellence for youth engagement practices in the province of NS. It also came to be recognized as one of the most innovative organizations in Canada working with youth and their communities. After 23 years and 30,000+ youth and adult actors, HW has gained a distinctive skill set, experience and knowledge with multiple levels of youth-serving systems. Their work has led to the development of hundreds of innovative programs, strategies, partnerships and collaborations in their home province.

The Design Principles Of Their Program Activity. HW's foundation and reputation have been built on creating dynamic, interactive youth leadership programming using an experiential learning approach, that is, learning by doing, with a process of reflection on the experience. Its program areas have included: leadership development, environmental education, community outreach, professional development, youth forums, research, and student engagement initiatives. One thing it was clear that HW knew over the years was how to draw together young people and a few adults and, with good facilitation, help them create an engaged and enterprising group culture. It has always been their first focus with a new group.[29] From a strong group space they knew anything was possible.

There are five design principles that guided the standard for HW's program activity:
- Youth-adult partnerships
- Peer support
- Adventuresome learning
- Meaningful contribution

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[29] Case story: 29. "The national convener's consultant leads a camp program" (p. 328).

• Empowering culture

HW has come to have a deep appreciation for the value of designing program experiences reflective of these principles that they refer to as *Tools for Growth*. Though as *tools*, they leave a lot of room for interpretation by a practitioner, they do provide a framework for the design of programming spaces. HW's front-line facilitators excelled at creating program spaces rich with experiential learning activities reflective of the five principles. Their work came to be popularly referred to in NS as the *HW approach*. It was this approach that marked the success of HW in their work directly with young people.

From Youth Development To Youth And Community Development. After a decade of working in isolated programming environments, HW's approach evolved from successful youth leadership programs to the engagement of young people in the renewal of neighbourhoods, schools, agencies and organizations.

Up to that point, HW's responsibilities commenced and ended at the gates, doors and trailheads of their program sites. Too many youth graduates of HW's leadership programs were returning to communities and institutions that were neither prepared nor interested in their taking any leadership. No matter how empowered young people might have felt during their leadership programs, HW became aware that once the youth were out of the empowering space HW's skilled facilitators helped to create during a program, their support, motivation and sense of direction back home dissipated.

In isolated program settings HW had mastered how to advance the design principles that empowered youth and supportive adults. They now sought to discover ways to apply those principles in group spaces for youth and adults in a real world context. HW knew that the best chance for youth to continue to grow their leadership capacity was for them to become engaged in the communities and organizations they were associated with. In addition, they were aware of the potential for organizational and community development that youth engagement represented. HW's orientation shifted to a new focus on applying its expertise in youth development to community development situations.

Figure 4.1 is a depiction of the changes to HW's orientation. There were basic elements of HW's youth programming – service experiences, adventure, leadership challenges and outdoor experiences - that remained in place as a catalyst to youth engagement. HW built on that foundation, with a focus on long-term relationships between young people and their communities, and on supporting youth and community action on the local issues important to them.

Experiential Learning Approach

Original orientation of youth development programs in isolated settings		New orientation of supporting youth engagement in communities – CYD approach
Youth participants in programs		Youth engaged in communities
Focus on healthy individuals to nurture healthy communities		Focus on healthy communities to support and nurture young people and vice-versa
Professionals direct local change initiatives		Facilitating change from the grassroots
Making a difference mostly involves individual acts		Making a difference often involves collective action and links local issues

Act   Reflect   Plan

Figure 4.1. Summary of changes to HW's approach from youth development to community youth development and their experiential learning approach

This shift in their orientation advanced their commitment to youth engagement and initiated a decade of organizational learning that kept them at the forefront of CYD in Canada. By the time the YERC project commenced, HW was supporting thirty-five community and agency-based youth development initiatives. They were providing training, coaching and resources for youth and adults to support youth engagement in communities and organizations. It was HW's development of youth action teams (YAT) in the late 90's that had caught the attention of many, including the funder of the YERC project.

Youth Action Teams – a successful approach to Community Youth Development. In the late 90s HW helped fifteen communities initiate YATs. A team typically involved 6 -10 young people, ranging from age 14 to 18, 2 or 3 supportive adult or young adult volunteers, and a sponsoring community association. Although each team was unique, they shared common characteristics such as: team-structured meetings and activities, a youth-driven culture, and a commitment to community service. These groups were involved in a variety of activities including: educating (e.g. theatrical presentations about the effects of societal violence towards women); advocating (e.g. working with municipal politicians on skateboarding policies); creating (e.g. starting a community garden); and providing service (e.g. cleaning an estuary, running a community youth festival). A past HW youth board member contributed the following story about a YAT.

> "In Ship Harbour, NS an old bachelor named Mr. Sitemen watched wearily as a group of youth walked in to the shop he had run for seventy years. He had reason to be worried - everyone knew that young people were getting involved in more drugs, alcohol and crime those days, and many a sensible person would take the opposite side of the street if they saw young people coming. And these kids had sinister plans indeed…They wanted to throw him a birthday party."[30]

As part of HW's first YAT the young people in Ship Harbour were doing a lot to change people's assumptions of what they were capable of. The youth were brought together by a local adult volunteer who wanted to see what could happen when youth are given the chance to contribute. HW offered their experience in making the learning of leadership skills cooperative and fun. The first YAT was an experiment for them too. This was their first program that worked right *in* the community. The results made a big difference and fast. The volunteer that started the program recalls, "In the first group there were a couple of live wires. Good kids, but a little on edge, and if that group hadn't been there they would have been in a lot of trouble. The YAT provided an alternative."

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[30] Clevland, Tristan (2007), Short Story About HeartWood's History. Branching Out Campaign, HeartWood, Centre for Community Youth Development, retrieved from: M. Langbo, past campain chairperson personal files.

The group started by renovating the community centre, and soon they were going door-to-door asking people how they could help. They stacked wood for elderly people, threw Halloween parties for younger kids, but the most important difference was just letting people know that there were youth they could call if they needed help. When the team heard that the now late Mr. Sitemen had never had a birthday party, they knew exactly what to do, and over a hundred and twenty people came to that celebration of a life. It was the YAT approach that became a signature of HW's new work in communities.

The role of HW's front-line facilitation. As with HW's other work, it seemed that their greatest contribution to the YATs was executed through their role of facilitating the group space shared between youth and a few supportive adults. In that role, they could make a significant contribution to the group, building a culture based on HW's design principles. It seemed the longer HW was able to maintain that contribution, the higher the probability of the youth engaging in the community. A program component consistent across all the YATs and HW's other ongoing community youth program interventions was a multi-day, usually a weekend, residential camp-type experience early in the group's formation. The community partner (individuals or organizations) would convene a group of youth and adults and HW would facilitate the group in activities that were reflective of the design principles. Almost without fail, by the time these camps were over the group had an empowering culture established. HW also discovered that the longer the YAT maintained their group membership of youth and adults and an empowering culture, the less frequent was HW's involvement required.

A Framework For Community Youth Development. A research study looking into the youth motivations to be part of a YAT, and the teams' impact in their communities, brought further clarification to HW's approach. Using an appreciative inquiry method, in-depth interviews were conducted with fifty-four community actors from twelve YAT's across NS. An equal number of male and female youth, mainly from rural areas, were interviewed. Participants included twenty-eight young people, seventeen adult support people, and nine community agency representatives who had supported or received service from a YAT. The mental map of HW's community youth development processes is shown in Figure 4.2 (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003).

From the OST perspective, the description in Figure 4.2 of conditions described as *Working together*, are those conditions HW believes to help a YAT (system) navigate and adapt to the community (environment). The research of the YAT helped HW understand that, for the youth involved in their programs, engagement only occurs when they have the opportunity to act on their *core values*, and the supportive adults recognize these values as they help create opportunities for action. During the research, young people said that what they valued in their engagement was: following their passions, connecting with other people, making a positive difference and finally, taking concrete action. With the findings of the research in hand, HW blended their youth development approach and their work in community-based settings. They communicate the blended approach visually in the form of a CYD Framework (see Appendix B, HeartWood Community Youth Development Framework).
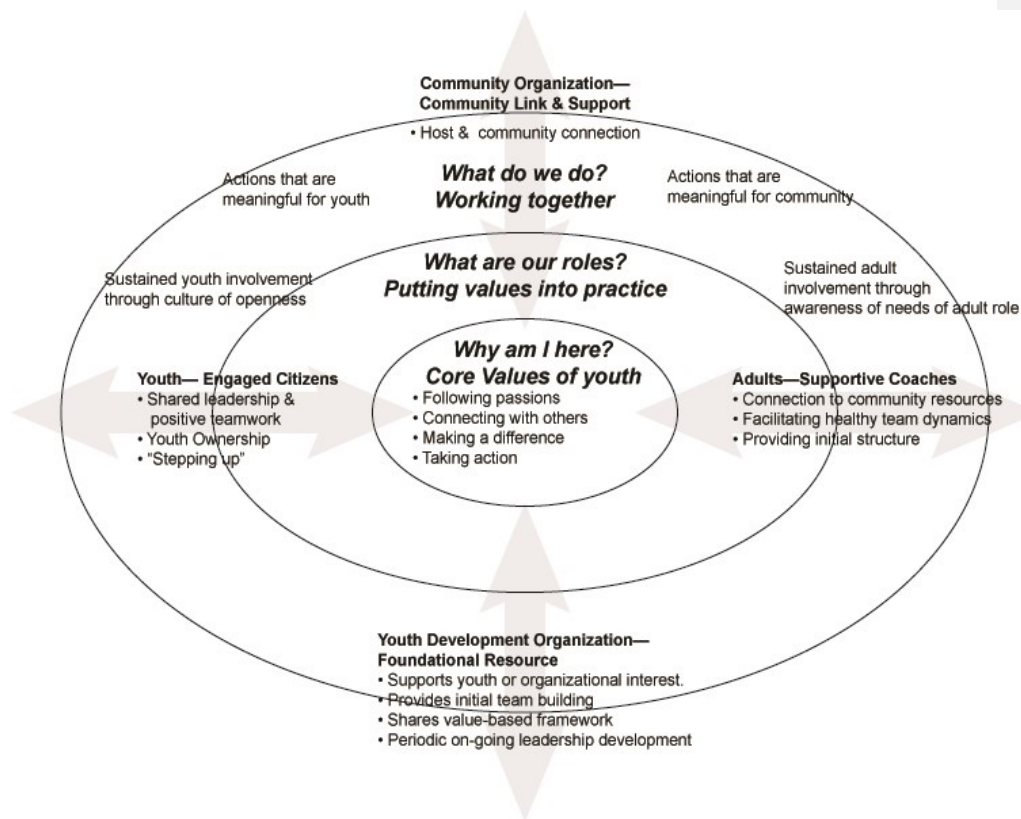
Figure 4.2. A mental map of community youth development processes on youth action teams.

The centre circle, *Core Values of Youth*, are intrinsic motivators for youth engagement. The second circle moving out from the centre, *Putting Values into Practice,* identifies the need for activities that help actors and front-line facilitators advance conditions that engender a culture of engagement. (HW's Framework, Appendix B, describes design principles referred to as *Tools for Growth* that elicit the core values). The outside circle described as *Working together,* describes conditions for community actions (community enterprising) that advance engagement of youth and adult partners. Located at the compass points of the concentric circles, is a description of four individual roles and tasks to manifest community youth development. At the top*,* the role of *Community Organizations* is presented to be as navigators for YAT, to make links and host opportunities. (In HW's Framework, Appendix C this is referred to as a *Community Web*). On the bottom of the circles appears *Youth Development Organization,* and an indication that this is a foundational resource—generally a front-line facilitator—to help shape an empowering, safe, and engaged culture (Warner, Langlois, Dumond, 2010, p. 100).

While the core values communicated by the young people exert a powerful draw to get involved, they can be very challenging to translate into action. In the context of YATs, HW's front-line facilitators constantly created varying ways to apply HW's design principles to help groups build a culture reflective of these core values. These individuals had years of experience, and proven skill and competencies to facilitate a group space so that it would advance the core values in an experiential way. During the YERC project, the role of facilitation of youth and adult group spaces, transferred primarily to site coordinators, became problematic in a number of circumstances.

The skill, experience, and confidence of the HW staff may point to a critical flaw in their approach to the applied dissemination. The reader will recall from the literature review, the introduction of Trist social-technological perspective. The technological aspect of the work that was applied aptly with HW's early work in NS, and to a lesser but still proficient degree in the QC 4H case, was not executed well in the other cases. With the original HW work in NS, their front-line facilitation had developed a good reputation for providing high-quality programming. They were well-trained facilitators, coordinators and program managers who worked as part of a strong work team. However, during YERC, HW's role as national convener transferred the front-line work to site coordinators in the community. HW's role became trainer and occasional coach of the front-line people.

Perhaps not enough credit was given to what their ability to facilitate groups of young people in emergent circumstances contributes to applying the design principles. It seemed as though

there was an assumption that the site coordinators would know what to do.[31] There was next to no training for the front-line facilitators in the community sites on how to execute the design principles. It is also important to note, that the national convening organization and their program consultant had a very demanding schedule that had impact on the design time that went into YERC. This theme comes up again in a review of the assessment of readiness of conveners, be they for a national or local context.

In addition to the facilitation role, one key to success identified by the YAT research was the nature of the youth and adult roles within the team. Young people articulated clear, practical role expectations for the work of supportive adults that are reflective of a coaching role. The ideal youth role identified through the research is one of full engagement and commitment to the team. The elements of the youth role are described as, "youth ownership, shared leadership and positive teamwork, and ultimately stepping up to take on more responsibility in the partnership" (Warner, Langlois, Dumond, 2010, p. 100).

      Youth engagement in rural communities, an applied dissemination opportunity. In 2004 when the YERC opportunity arose, the timing for HW seemed good from a learning perspective. Whereas the earlier YAT research project clarified the HW approach and identified the core values central to young people's participation, the YERC research was an opportunity to better understand how to catalyze youth engagement in diverse and distant organizations and communities. However, it would prove to not be great timing from a management perspective.

      The Project Consultant Role. The HW project consultant responsible for the YERC community sites was a senior staff member with over six years experience in the HW organization. She had proven herself as a passionate and skilled professional, very familiar with HW's approach. Her task was to navigate in the gap between the known HW approach and what the YERC sites would need from them. In all of its work to that point, HW had relied on the skills and instincts of its front-line facilitators to navigate the complexities of any given program circumstance. She was a skilled facilitator that knew how to apply HW's design principles in the form of numerous customized activities. She determined what level of emphasis to put on the

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[31] Case story: 53. "Fuzzy coaching from the sidelines" (p. 357).

different design principles at any given time, and how best to locate and integrate the community resources suggested by the Framework.

The project consultant's first priority was to create ways of connecting with the various YERC local conveners, and to better understand their context. HW believed that deep listening and discovery with the local convener would establish a foundation from which they could discover ways to support local youth engagement, based on an appreciative and asset-based assessment. The consultant established a good collaborative relationship with all of the site coordinators and most of the supervisory staff of the local conveners. In the early months of YERC, the sites came to trust that what they said to HW would be listened to. The community project staff spoke of, "feeling from HW a real sense of appreciation for the possibilities of youth engagement, and a lot of encouragement."[32] This early stage relationship building was something HW had always held as a priority in its community work.

A Framework Not A Prescriptive Model. Though the funder was interested in testing the YAT approach as a promising model to disseminate, HW maintained that YATs were just one good example of a program strategy that embodied their approach. What more, HW was resistant to going into a community with what could be described as a model. Knowing their work took a different shape in each context, they felt referring to their approach as a model suggested an unchangeable and prescriptive way of working. HW's intent was to have the activity at each site guided by but not dictated by the Framework. This, HW suggested, would require them to embrace an emergent approach, learning and making adjustments as things evolved. HW's Executive Director at the time spoke of the principle behind this approach, "We don't know the communities so we certainly cannot at this stage impose what we will do with them." The conceptual gap, between a model ready to replicate and HW's desire to go slowly and contextualize their approach, came to define the area of creative tension in HW's role as the national convener.

As introduced earlier, HW's work centres around the idea of establishing empowering spaces from which to engage with youth and adult community change-makers. The fact that HW did

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[32] All quotes and reference to the field research in the paper that are not directly referenced, are drawn from the authors field notes and he has an record of all material.

not have a prescriptive model to disseminate on how to do youth engagement, in itself was not a problem. HW offered experience with group facilitation, design principles for activities and a framework to guide strategy development that would encourage youth engagement. Taken as a set, the dissemination of experience, design principles and a framework presents some challenges, particularly when you add in the complex task environment of distant and unfamiliar sites and culture, limited on-site time, and no prior relationship with the local convener. HW had a very steep and slippery mountain to climb. How might they do what they were proficient at in the YERC sites and, in doing so, not only involve the community but engage them in deciding how to do so in their own particular community?

From The Local Conveners Perspective. Unfortunately the positive feelings and appreciative approach that started things off on a good note wore thin in one community, and left all the other sites wondering what to do next. The project organizers all the sites required clearer direction on how to move their project forward than they were receiving from HW. A year into the project, some of the sites had lost most of their confidence that HW knew how to help them. In some sites, the site coordinators sought more clarity, in others the administrators, and as time went on, in some sites it was both. The sites were dealing with complex circumstances of how to involve young people in previously adult-only territory. They were unsure of how to manage the gaps between the project expectations and the knowledge and skill necessary to carry out the change required. One YERC site coordinator shared that, "We didn't always have the tools or direction we needed when we needed them." There were questions of structure, form, process and strategy. Ironically, HW's fervent belief that they should assume a role of encouraging and coaching and let the community decide what immediate direction the project should take seemed to be holding back progress. As the cases advanced the project organizers had a sense of confusion and uncertainty about which way the project was heading.

The Journey From HW's Perspective. For HW, their role was like trying to guide a group through dark and unfamiliar woods by phone, without a map, a faint light and all the while being chased by a big hairy deadline.

Very early in the project's lifecycle, HW struggled to effectively communicate their approach in a way that could provide clarity on how to move the project objective forward. The nature of HW's approach and Framework provided no clear steps or phases such as a model might have had. After returning from a conference with other organizations being funded by the YERC funder, the HW project consultant spoke of a difference, "Our model is not very easy to share. It is not concrete. One model I learned about on life coaching was 15 sessions in and out. That one was easy to communicate, and easy to measure."

It wasn't that HW wasn't present and putting in the effort to guide the community actors. They were, but they, also, were searching for answers in mostly unfamiliar territory. Exchanges with the sites were defined by working at a distance by phone and e-mail with community groups that were unfamiliar with HW and unclear on their destination or strategies for improved youth services. With a site coordinator at each site and deadlines looming, there was also an ongoing sense of pressure at HW to move the initiative forward. In two of four cases, HW's and the site coordinators' push to move forward was stronger than the local conveners' and communities' preparedness to respond.

For the program consultant, the Framework provided her little guidance in organizing her work in the real-time complexity unfolding at the sites. The challenges in applying the Framework were similar to those the consultant had experienced in the past, but now they were coming in multiples, quickly and from a distance. The project consultant commented, "It is a blend for me between frustration with what we could do and is possible, and what I can do with them now. I'm cautious not to impose on them." As a result, the process of discovery between HW and the YERC community sites was emergent. For all parties concerned, the two and a half year journey had, at various times, the characteristics of being easy and free flowing, complicated, difficult, frustrating, unclear and exciting.

A Comparison Between YERC and HW's Earlier Work In NS. In the first year of YERC, the nature of HW's task contrasted sharply with all of its previous community work – contracted close to home, where the agencies were familiar and strategies clearer. In those times, when the objectives of community actors or project staff required clarification, there were the luxuries of time and close proximity to establish working relationships and achieve clarity together. The

familiar operating conditions for HW program activity in NS can be characterized as a spiral design process. Their process includes at least a couple of exploratory conversations before objectives are identified and some form of community-based asset mapping is carried out. Table 4.1 below shows how different, and how much more complex, the YERC project was for HW.

Operating conditions familiar to HW in their applied dissemination activity in NS	NS-based work in organizations	NS-based work in communities	YERC community sites
Long lead time to clarify things with partners	√	√	X
Established relationships with youth and/or adult group members	X	√	X
Clear project objectives and strategies	√	X	X
Agency partners invested in youth inclusion	√	√	X/√
Familiar with HW	√	√	X
Culture-building immersion activity	√	√	X
Long periods of time between direct HW activity	X	√	√
Level of complexity	low	medium	high
Asset-mapping to identify community resources at the outset	not applicable	√	X
Time period	2 – 5 days	ongoing	2.5 years
Training for Adult Leaders	√	√	X
HW directly facilitates group space with youth and adult partners	√	√	X

Table 4.1. Operating conditions familiar to HW in their applied dissemination activity in NS versus those it faced with the YERC project sites.

The Activity. Though some small preliminary actions, in the form of program activity with youth, took place in all four sites in the first year, getting to the core of the action phase took much longer than anticipated. The original project plan forecasted that the communities would be well into tangible community action by July 2006. As of September 2006, the sites had spent a considerable amount of time grappling with what to do with YERC's broad mandate. Most sites began to discuss or implement plans for a much more concentrated action phase.

Despite the challenges, together HW and the local conveners did accomplish some successful community projects and from these enterprising group spaces much could be learned. There were also a number of failed attempts to get something going and from these, too, there was valuable learning.

In addition to the small enterprising projects that took place in each site, the project appeared to produce some worthwhile learning outcomes, including the value of: an appreciative approach in dealing with community actors and partners, strength-based assessments, real-life stories of youth engagement to promote its value, and finally, convening organizations leveraging internal and community-based activity that is already in motion.

Division Of Youth Elders And Recreation, Nain, Nunatsiavut, Newfoundland/Labrador
A Remote Inuit Community And A Recreation Department For Youth And Elders

Abstract. This case discusses an experiment undertaken by HW, an established youth development organization, to disseminate its method of working with young people and communities in Nain, a remote northern Canadian community.

HW received a call for help from Nain in response to a string of suicides over the previous few years and persistent social issues.[33] At the time, HW was respected for its youth programs in rural and urban communities in Nova Scotia, Canada. HW was invited to participate in Youth Engagement in Rural Communities (YERC), to test its approach in communities outside the province. Following an assessment visit by HW's Executive Director, the community was selected as one of the four YERC sites.[34]

The call to HW coincidently came only weeks before they were encouraged by the project funder to seek a community site in northern Canada. It was not HW's way to go into communities and cultures with which it had no previous experience, unless invited. This would be HW's first time working in a northern community.

The Community Project Objective. The objective of the project at the site was to engage young people in building a brighter future for the community.

Overview Of Case. Nain was the YERC community site that represented the steepest learning curve for HW. They had to learn quickly how best to support a community with a very unfamiliar culture thousands of miles away. The emergent nature of the task at hand had the HW project consultant and the small team in Nain making quick decisions with little infrastructure to allow for measured responses and collective process.

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[33] Case Story: 19. Initial signs that attracted the national convener to consider the site (p. 322).
[34] Case Story: 20. The assessment (p. 312).

Soon after the beginning of the project subtle but important challenges surfaced and the site became overly reliant on the skills and experience of the site coordinators. To make matters worse, there were three different site coordinators over the length of the two and a half year project, and HW had inadequate and significant misinformation from the site assessment that was influencing the project strategy. As a result, there was a number of unexpected turn of events, including a complete lack of involvement from the community committee that had committed to oversee and guide the project, and from a youth-led group expected to be central to the strategy.

Nevertheless, there were also some highlights thanks to the commitment of the first site coordinator, the second RA and some talented young adults that stepped up during the summer months. A significant highlight was a Search Conference, a participatory planning process that was held to try and get broader involvement in the community, and that for half of the project period provided an infusion of energy and direction.

With all said and done, the overall level of engagement in the project fell well short of HW's and the funder's expectations. HW's hope was that their experience with involving young people in community development would be enough to help Nain step beyond its significant community issues. However, from all accounts though the people of Nain were quite pleased with the YERC project little sustainable change with the objective occurred. Despite no tangible indication of change, the approximately forty or so community members associated with the project expressed appreciation for the project and considered the Search Conference in particular, an important first for Nain. It seemed the national convener's participatory nature and the ability to make some degree of progress with citizen involvement was cause for their appreciation.

The Community. Nain is the northern-most municipality in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, approximately 230 air miles north of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. With a population of just under 1200 mostly Inuit, the community was established in 1771 by Moravian Missionaries and sits at the end of a beautiful natural harbour surrounded by sparsely treed hills and lakes.

Nain is an administrative centre for Inuit organizations and coastal activities. It is also a base for developments associated with mining development, and as a springboard for the north - the community of Hebron and the new Torngat Mountains National Park. The community has a small variety of businesses including: a 26-room hotel, diving company, bulk fuel storage facility three retail stores, and numerous small contracting companies offering home office services, construction, heavy equipment, heating, plumbing, electrical, trucking, long liner charters and other services.

There are many positive aspects of Nain, not the least of which being its friendly people. The project consultant from the national convener team and the researcher felt welcomed by the children, youth and adults. The friendliness of the community is one of the things Nain's citizens consistently reported as a positive element in their community. It's citizens also show a real appreciation for the land. Their eyes sparkled whenever they spoke of going off (going out on the land), and they frequently visit their camps (cabins) as a family. When asked, "What do you enjoy about Nain?" a small group of young adults shared this list: self-government, beautiful ocean-front scenery, wildlife, kind people, sports, traditional and contemporary arts and crafts, boating, snowmobiling, dog-team racing, four-wheeling, two local music bands and lots of agencies that are determined to help Nain become a better place. A group of mothers added that they liked Nain because of its "…family way of life, the land and we know all the people." The mayor, having moved back to her birth place of Nain from years living in the Canadian south, said for her what Nain offered was, "The people… they are wonderful here. They are willing to share. I can talk to the people. The connection is so strong."

Though YERC focused on the hope and possibility of leveraging the assets of the community, the community is pre-occupied with a number of struggles. When young and old local citizens were asked about what they felt was impacting their community, their answers included: concerns about the impact of stress, that drugs and pills are a default solution to many emotional concerns, an excess of relocation money in the community, and the prevalence of instances of sexual assault without any legal ramifications. They also spoke of a disproportionately high rate of youth suicide, adult alcoholism and family violence. One community member shared in frustration, "There are so many suicides the residents are almost numb to it." Drugs and alcohol

are reported as a serious issue in a high majority of households (Tusatet Report, 2000).[35] An officer with the local RCMP detachment suggested: "The biggest issue is alcohol, if you could only deal with that it would change Nain tremendously."

There were sixty-two suicides in Nain over the previous thirteen years; three during the research period. Each left a veil of deep sadness and discouragement over the community. There were approximately ninety children on the local children's aid society's caseload during the research period, two-hundred and forty suspected cases of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and sixty-six confirmed diagnoses. The Tusatet Report, identified eighty-one percent of the population reported that alcohol and drug abuse is a serious issue in the community. Statistically, drugs were less of an issue than alcohol; of 850 arrests in 2005, only one involved drugs. A number spoke of the loss of influence of their traditional cultures as an underlying problem. The 2004 income for every man, woman, and child (personal income per capita) in Nain was $15,600. For the province, personal income per capita was $20,600. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was $10,300 for Nain.

With good reason the Nunatsiavut Government is very interested in what is happening with their youth. The 2001 Census reported fifty one percent of the population of Nain was less than 20 years of age, and seventeen were between fifteen and twenty-four years of age. Those between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five made up thirty-nine percent of the population, and ten percent were over fifty-five. The 2006 census reported forty percent of those between the ages of twenty and thirty-four did not have a high school diploma, certificate or degree.

At different times during the research in Nain, tragic events occurred that touched the emotions of the small community. Snowmobilers fell through the ice and perished, unattended children burned to death in house fires, children were involved in accidental gunshot deaths and suicide. In one report from the RA, she shared some of the pain related to a suicide, "This has been a very difficult week in Nain. A twelfth grader from Nain, while intoxicated, hung himself. He played on the men's hockey team and taught young children skills in hockey. There is a blank,

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[35] Tusatet Report, *Crisis in Nain*, (2000) was created by a group known as the Tusatet (listeners). The group went out in the community and spoke to children, youth, adults and elders.

tired feeling." Her report also gave a sense of her own determination, "At first, from the faces in town, I thought this crisis would weaken the Search Conference participants drive for Nain, that it would put us behind due to bereaving. I think we have to try even harder now to reach as many people as possible for life changes." As the project moved into its final year, this sense of determination though uncommon, appeared in others working to better things in Nain as well.

The Local Convening Role. Initially there were three organizations in Nain that were meant to be HW's primary connection to the community:
- Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD),
- Ulapitsaitjet (Ulipit) Committee,
- Rising Youth Council (RYC).

Of these, only the RYC would have any ongoing and direct role with the project, and even that was sporadic. The DHSD were the administrative body that negotiated the contract. Once that work was complete they had limited involvement in the project. Early uncertainty of who was to assume the role of administrative and program liaison was the first sign that the snapshot of an assessment taken may have been out of focus. After a few months of bouncing around the role or local convener, settled in with the Division of Youth Elders and Recreation (DYER). This proved to be a good choice. The DYER had a mandate to provide recreation services to youth and elders, and bring the two population groups together for events. The Division also supported beneficiary[36] participation in the National Youth and Elder Summit, as well as, other national initiatives of the National Inuit Youth Council.

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[36] Who and what are beneficiaries? The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement sets out the eligibility criteria. Generally, an individual who is Inuit pursuant to Inuit custom and tradition and is of Inuit ancestry and is either a permanent resident of the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, or connected to the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area is eligible to be a beneficiary. The criteria are broad enough to include a small number of non-Inuit who are accepted as Inuit according to Inuit custom and tradition.

Quebec 4H

An Experiment In Applied Dissemination To An Established Youth-Led Organization

Abstract. This case of the Youth Engagement in Rural Communities (YERC) project discusses an attempt by the national convener, HW, to disseminate its method of working with young people and communities to the Quebec 4H (QC 4H). The QC 4H organization is one, if not the longest- standing conventional youth-serving organizations in Canada that is also youth-led.

The community project objective. The goal of the project at this site was to improve the engagement within the organization of the local convener organization's senior youth members. Growing the organizations capacity to engage adult leaders was identified as a secondary strategic priority, and to be a resource to youth and adult partnerships within their organization and to external community organizations in the SE region of QC.

Overview of case. Though the organization had a youth-led governance model at the provincial and club level, things were not always as the organizers hoped for. The intent was to support youth leaders in the organization with supportive adults in the background. Unfortunately, there was a shortage of adult volunteers at the club and board level to help out with things like completing government grants and general advising. As the Board Chair at the time reported, "At 15, I pushed my Dad away from 4H saying let me do it on my own, now I badly want him back."

The number of young people involved in leadership roles for the local convener organization was decreasing. For those who did stay through 14 yrs. of age and up, the organization was concerned that they were 'burning them out' and therefore, losing them as potential organizational leaders for the future. They sensed they were asking too much of their young leaders (age 14 to- 15) at the club level and age 16 and up at the provincial level. As one senior youth leader said, "There are a lot of hard decisions for 16 - 21 yr. olds. I've been there [the Board of Directors] for 4 years and I'm just starting to understand what is going on."

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The greatest need of the organization and interest of the youth was for the senior youth to continue some mentorship involvement with their original local club. Most 16 yr. old members dropped out unless they lived near the provincial office and got involved with the Board. The QC 4H office was on a main campus of the QC college system that offers an agricultural focus. A small number of senior youth 4H members attended this campus. For these youth, being involved with the Board was a viable option; for those others away from home, their continued involvement in the organization was difficult. Travel distances and time demands to attend their home clubs on any regular basis was difficult. A contributing factor to the disengagement was that an annual 4H Provincial Rally that had traditionally been a highlight for all members was beginning to lose its appeal for the senior youth. The organization was ready to explore new options and saw that YERC might provide a vehicle to accomplish that.

The organization was facing other challenges and changes but the Board and Executive Director believed strategic action that better engaged senior youth members would address the other challenges. These other challenges included: a growing number of 6-8 yr. olds involved at the club level, problematic decision-making at the Board level due to great distances between where members' reside, a desire to recruit more members, and an interest in introducing a school-based component.

A small group (6 – 8) young adult QC 4H Board Members, also long-time youth members of the organization, created Building Outstanding Partnerships (BOP) as a strategy to achieve the YERC goal for this site.

The QC 4H Board also saw the potential for farther reaching impact from YERC. A hoped for outcome was that by improving their own youth engagement practices they would be able to act as a resource to other groups in the community going down a similar path. The Chair of the QC 4H Board also suggested that there could be interest at the national 4H level in the lessons learned through YERC. "I think there is definitely an appetite for more involvement [with the YERC initiative in QC 4H] and I still believe that the Canadian Council [4H National Board] would benefit from a workshop on partnerships between youth and adults."

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The community (system) – a youth organization. The QC 4H is the Anglophone branch in Quebec of the national 4H organization. The organization has five clubs located across mostly-English speaking areas in the southeast region of QC known as the Eastern Townships. There are 14 other Francophone 4H clubs in the province of QC operated by a separate organization. OC 4H is a small organization with one full-time Executive Director (ED) and part-time office assistance. The organization promotes the personal development of youth aged 6 to 25 in agricultural and rural communities. With fun activities and learning that provides opportunities for the members to the develop leadership and life-skills. With the talents and energy of their members, volunteers, and staff, they weave new activities with their successful traditional agricultural-based ones. Members can choose from projects such as from raising rabbits and livestock, to square dancing and board involvement.

The Local Convening Function. The local YERC convening activity was imbedded at a senior level of the QC 4H organization. BOP was envisioned as an alternative option to a Board position for senior young people wanting to stay involved in the organization.[37] Though some would refer to BOP as a new program, it was more than that. BOP was established as an informal organization within QC 4H. Those youth that created and executed the BOP agenda also had decision-making authority over its direction.

Front-Line Project Facilitation. Unlike the other 3 YERC sites, this site did not receive funding for a site coordinator position. The BOP team members shared the leadership and front-line project facilitation equally. In this way the BOP team were intrapreneurs[38] within the QC 4H.

The BOP group came up with the following vision and goals for their work together:

>*Vision:* To help build stronger relationships within 4-H Clubs, communities and other organizations.
>
>*Goals:*
>
>• To help improve youth and adult relationships in at least one 4-H club,
>
>• Be involved in the 4H Leadership Conference and Canadian 4-H AGM as a resource on youth- and- adult partnerships,

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[37] Case story: 11. "Youth-led group" (p. 305).

[38] intrapreneurs: entrepreneur within company (Microsoft Word 2008, Dictionary).

• To help improve the youth- and- adult partnerships in at least one outside organization.

This was the point at which the youth came up with the name Building Outstanding Partnerships (BOP) and began to imagine its future as a program or informal internal network. Though there was heightened expression of passion for goals identified by the group, the level of confidence amongst the senior members to take action on them was mixed, "oh.… f_ _ _, now we have to do it." However, once the group understood about the national convener's experience and the resources available for training adults to work with youth, the BOP group was encouraged and their commitment to work with HW was established.[39]

> It is interesting to note how in this situation the fear of one or two group members could have derailed a promising initiative. Equally as interesting, is how the right kind of support from the national convener at the right moment kept things on track and even built the motivation higher. This *intersection* in BOP's development was a noteworthy moment in the research.

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[39] Case story: 21. Training and coaching for community participants – BOP team (p. 320).

Youth In Action, Prince Edward Island

Youth Action Teams For Two Rural Communities

Abstract. This case of the Youth Engagement in Rural Communities (YERC) project discusses the attempt by the national convener to disseminate its method of working with young people and communities to a youth development program in rural Prince Edward Island (PEI). The project was hosted by a regional community development organization. The central component of the YERC PEI case was starting two YATs as an attempt to build stronger relationships between two communities, break down negative youth stereotypes, and foster new growth between youth and adults.

Youth in Action (YIA), the primary YERC community convener, was a one-person organization which, like many small rural recreation departments, operated various childrens' and community programs. The YATs were a natural extension of youth programming taking place at YIA. This site was successful in creating a YAT in each of two adjacent communities, and executing a number of one-time community and youth-focused activities. However, there were ongoing challenges caused by group dynamics within the Teams, and the role of the coordinator as a Team facilitator. The story of YERC at this site reflects its dependence on the YIA coordinator, who was also the YERC coordinator.

The community project objective. Those involved with the experience in PEI hoped it would leave the youth with a desire to be active members of their community in the future. The coordinator sums up the desire, "I hope in the future they still remember the fun times that they had and the things that they learned. So whenever they are called to help with whatever they're right there. Even if the actual group ends because the bonds weren't there like I would have loved them to be, with the good memories I hope they will be willing to come back to the community and say, How may I help out?"

The local municipal council and the HRADC developed a strategy to increase the activity and engagement of children and youth in community projects in the hopes of decreasing vandalism and other crimes in the area. The HRADC Chairperson spoke of how they had previously run two successful youth-at-risk programs for school dropouts after which the youth participants would return to school or enter the local labor union. The YIA initiative was a major component of the

new youth strategy introduced three years prior to YERC. The hope was that the YAT approach would help break down negative stereotypes about youth in the community. The site coordinator hoped to have team meetings, and then take relevant information to a committee of the HRDAC. Previously, there had been one youth on the board of the HRDAC, who described it as, "intimidating and ineffective."

The HRDAC Chair spoke about the decision to take on the YERC project, "There was a need for youth activity, places to go, after-school activities, as this is a small rural community. Vandalism and youth being in the street have decreased due to programs YIA is operating." He was of the opinion that youth must be kept involved in the community and be given a reason to stay. As with many rural areas, there was little programming for young people in the area unless parents took the initiative to make something happen. Community members described what usually happened, "…a handful of parents create the opportunities for youth to be involved. In Mount Stewart, the ball diamond and ice rink were created this way." The problem with this, as identified by community leaders, is that once parents initiate these programs they tend to cease their involvement as soon as their children are no longer participating.

In Scotchfort, the intent of the YAT was much like that of the one in Mount Stewart, to make their community a better place to live and to decrease the negative stereotypes of youth in the area. Though a large percentage of the Band population is made up of youth, it had been difficult to find opportunities for them to participate in programming and projects developed specifically for them. The YERC YAT plan was to run positive programming for youth that included service projects within their community.

A summary of the goals and objectives for YERC in PEI were stated as:
• host youth forum(s)
• youth engagement activity for senior young people
• to develop a Scotchfort YAT
• to develop a Mt. Stewart YAT
• to bring together the Scotchfort and Mt. Stewart YATs to develop community project(s) together

• to increase the numbers of youth involved in the YATs who live outside of Mt. Stewart and Scotchfort but within the Hillsborough River area

• to begin working with the Allied Youth Board of Directors and Youth Board to increase their youth inclusion in decision-making

• increase the HRDAC's capacity to support youth engagement

Overview of case. The young adult that took on the YERC site coordinator role at the site added it to the work she was already doing as director of YIA that had been established in the area almost three years prior to YERC. The site produced a number of one-time program events with the young people involved either as community actors, or as leaders of the events for the community. The site was a good example of encouraging youth engagement through community service activity. The highlights of both YAT's were connected to program events offered in service to the community and the groups' participation in a HW-led youth leadership camp.[40]

Many of the project objectives were achieved at this site. The primary objective of building two YAT's was moderately successful. At the nine-month point of the program there were two YATs meeting once or twice per week. In addition to the team in Mount Stewart, the coordinator was successful in starting up a team in Scotchfort.

The communities. The YERC site in PEI consisted of two main communities in the Hillsborough River area, Mount Stewart and Scotchfort, and to a much lesser degree their surrounding hamlets of Fort Augustus and Tracadie, all situated approximately 35 km northwest of Charlottetown, PEI's capital city. The YERC proposal for the site was to establish two Youth Action Teams (YATs)[41] that the YERC site coordinator would initiate, manage and facilitate. A team based out of the community of Mount Stewart was to be established first, and then another in Scotchfort one year later.

Mount Stewart. Mount Stewart is located in the north-eastern part of Queens County, PEI. It sits at the head of the once-navigable portion of the Hillsborough River at the point where

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[40] Case story: 32. A Weekend Overnight Camp to Ignite Involvement (p. 331).

[41] Youth Action Team – a group of youth and supported adults taking action together on personal and community development.

the river begins to narrow significantly. There are 315 residents with approximately 25% between the ages of 5 and 19 years; 38% between 14 to 20 years. Seniors are the other large part of the population (EB, Field notes PEI Site Selection). Single parent families make up 30 out of 100 families. Forty percent of all families live on under $30,000 a year.

The community was settled in 1790 and incorporated in 1953. In the late 1800s, the PEI Railway's mainline ran through Mount Stewart and played an important role in the early transportation history of the province. Mount Stewart was the site of a bridge over the river, along the route between the capital at Charlottetown and the shire town of Kings County at Georgetown. During the 1930s, the village became the centre of all railway service accessing eastern PEI. Mount Stewart also came to be referred to as Mount Stewart Junction. Historically, the economic life of the village remained much the same to present day: agriculture, fishing, shipbuilding, transportation and services.

Scotchfort. Scotchfort is an unincorporated rural community in northeastern Queens County, PEI, southwest of the village of Mount Stewart. It is primarily a farming community on the west bank of the upper Hillsborough River. It is also home to one of three reserves of the Abegweit First Nation, a small Mi'kmaq band. A Chief and his council currently govern the Abegweit Band. The population of the area is approximately 105, with 43 % between the ages of 5 and 16 years.

The local convening role. The municipal council that governs Mount Stewart works in partnership with the local development corporation to ensure future sustainability of the community. HRADC is the local development corporation component of this partnership.

HRADC became the community-based convening organization for the PEI YERC site but passed on all but the administrative responsibility to their YIA program. YIA, a program of HRADC, became the on-the-ground community-based convening organization for YERC. The program operated in the communities of the Hillsborough River area. Though HRDAC provided office space and moral support, they had minimal involvement directly with the youth. There were no changes made by HRDAC to increase youth engagement in their organization or in the region.

There was also next to no involvement of the national convener in helping to build HRDAC's capacity for youth inclusion practices.

The front-line project staff. As previously mentioned, the YIA Director also became the YERC Coordinator. She simply incorporated the YERC approach, funding and activity into the flow of the work she had already established in the community. The coordinator was the sole adult leader and decision-maker working with the teams, therefore, much of this case revolved around her actions. Essentially, YERC brought an extension of funding to the youth-oriented components of the YIA program, along with some coaching and training on community youth development. In addition, the youth got a new outlet to spread their leadership wings.

The coordinator had been hired by the HRADC Board to run the YIA program less than one year prior to the YERC funding being confirmed for their site. She remained in the role for all of YERC's two years in PEI. Having grown up in the area, the coordinator knew the area well and had a reputation of being a committed and passionate youth advocate. She was also on the HRADC Board until she accepted a paid position. Her awareness and sensitivity to what is going on with youth was influenced by her own local experiences as a youth, "when I was that age, if you weren't in AY or you weren't in other sports that were in your community or other neighboring communities, you weren't involved in anything. You were bussed to your community to go to school and then you weren't connected at all. You didn't know anybody in your community and you didn't really care because nobody really cared about you. So just to see a connectedness with the community is one of the big reasons why I want to have these kids involved."

The coordinator's work was well received by the community at the point she began YERC. As one community volunteer commented, "The community respects her work." The local School Principal added, "She gets out to talk to residents, and knows family connections, and her work has been well accepted." Another shared, "She is dedicated to the programs she runs, she contributes her free time, and gas, to youth programming."

Unfortunately, her acceptance by community members and parents did not stay unanimously strong throughout the program. Her confidence would be shaken. In her words, "It probably

doesn't help that I've been called 'whitey' more times than I would like. I've had a parent tell me she has no use for me, and a youth tell me she hates me." In addition, the dynamics within the YATs, and her interactions with the youth, caused the coordinator to feel uncomfortable in her role for much of the project. Though there were times when things seemed to resonate, she complained that the youth were not respectful at meetings; that they only attended events or activities when they felt like it, and that they expected opportunities to be given to them without working for them. The way things were developing affected her confidence. She admitted that she was taking things personally when youth stopped coming to meetings or showing up to help at events.

   The applied dissemination role & practices of the national convener. The national convener's primary support was provided by and through the project consultant, a senior program staff person who carried out this role for all the YERC sites. At the PEI site, she coached the coordinator, facilitated a youth forum, and led a workshop at a conference for Community Youth Development in PEI.

Community Futures Association

An attempt at youth inclusion within a community development organization

Abstract. This case discusses a 2.5 year experiment by the national convener to disseminate its method of working with young people and communities to an established community development organization.

Though there are a few highlight things didn't unfold as originally intended with this case and as a whole are considered to have not gone well. If one examines why the hopes associated with this initiative were not fully realized, there are three primary themes that shape the outcomes: organizational structure, leadership and culture, and the characteristics of the national convener's intervention.

The community project objective. The Community Futures Association (pseudonym), the community development organization hosting the project as the local convener, expressed interest in YERC in the hopes of learning more about how to increase youth engagement in their region, and as it would turn out, within their own organization.

The other key issues concerning the Association which they hoped YERC could address were: 1) the existing attitude that to be successful a young person must leave the region, 2) a dwindling community population, that dropped in numbers to just six per cent of the total for the area, 3) a community with a high proportion of seniors, and relatively few young adults, and 4) youth with lower levels of employment and income, on average, compared to their French-speaking counterparts.

An overview of the case. Together the national convener and the local convener, the Community Futures Association, seemed to have all the ingredients for a successful applied dissemination initiative. However, the project fell well short of its anticipated and hoped for outcomes. There are many barriers and challenges when an organization attempts to disseminate its method and approach to another group in a different community. Equally, there are numerous challenges when an organization that has limited experience with youth, such as

was the case with the Association, attempts to include youth as decision-makers internally and encourage their engagement in the community.

In the end, there was very little meaningful youth inclusion internally at the Association, and limited success with the effort in the community. Early on the project priorities got pulled away from what staff considered YERC's vague networking and capacity building objectives and toward Association-centred program activity with clear objectives. There was talk of new structures, youth action teams and cultural change but mostly, these ideas ended with the talk.

There are three primary themes that tell the story of why the hopes associated with this initiative were not fully realized. The first concerns that which will be referred to as structural limitations that were significant impediments to the objective of youth inclusion at the Association. The steering committee structure – referred to in the case as the Tomorrow Committee—in particular, created a great many challenges for the site coordinators in their efforts to include young people. Another element of structure that created significant limitations is related to the site coordinator role itself. The case can appear coordinator centric with numerous challenges referenced where the coordinator was at the axis.

The second primary theme concerns the intervention role that the national convener played. Various sub-themes arose from the role: how the national convener's reputation and experience gave a sense of assurance, the lack of clear direction from the national convener, and the experience of living with emergence. The dissemination was provided by a program consultant from the national convener, and seemed unsure and poorly considered throughout most of the project. The attempt to disseminate the national convener's approach, being very experience-based, to an organization more accustomed to established plans and processes and predictable outcomes, was difficult at best.

The third notable theme of note in the case was the existing culture at the Association, including its Tomorrow Committee and the leadership that shaped it. The Tomorrow Committee for all intent and purpose served in the capacity of a steering committee for the YERC project. Though the national convener encouraged an appreciative and strength-based approach, the culture at the Tomorrow Committee and relations between the site coordinator and this committee, and

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the Executive Director (ED) seemed contrary. The project was plagued by a constant push-pull between the Association's tendency to fall back to standard program practice and the desire from the site coordinators to try new things. The case also introduces the chair of the Tomorrow Committee as a significant actor in the story that unfolds. The coordinator's primary link to the Association was the Tomorrow Committee. It was on this committee that the Association pinned its hope for some internal YERC project legitimacy. However, the activity fell short of expectations. This committee already was responsible for some youth projects. YERC, or the "HW Project', as it came to be known at the Association, was simply added to the agenda of their meetings. The coordinator's exchanges with the Committee took on a reporting nature. She received little guidance or direction from them on how she might proceed with the project.

The community region. The Association and the region it operates within, Community A, has been given a pseudonym to protect the identities of the community actors. The region has an English minority and majority Francophone population.

The local convening role. The convening organization in this case was a mature organization in search of a new identity**.** The Association is a not-for-profit organization led by a volunteer board of directors whose mission is, "To promote the interests of the English-speaking community in its region, to strengthen the cultural identity of this community and to encourage the full participation of the English-speaking population in the community at large." The Association's head office is staffed by nine employees who work with volunteer committees to carry out various aspects of the Association's plan of action to achieve its mission and objectives. The Association currently has almost 4,000 members that receive a number of special benefits and play an important role in maintaining the Association's grassroots links. Any interested individual or group is eligible for membership.

Ironically, one long-time Association volunteer spoke of its history as coming from a youth-led social action group. That group later morphed into the English-speaking Association. A resident of the area described the Association as the, "squeaky wheel that just won't stop going on about English." One of the project organizers in the community spoke about the organization's image, "I grew up with the Association and the mindset that it was an organization for old ladies and their knitting needles, and arts and crafts projects they worked on following retirement."

The ED of the Association admitted a need to update their image, "Right now I think it's suffering with an image of being an English language rights group. We need to be seen as an agency that is really concerned about various, needs of the community and one that is more focused on community development rather than complaining to the government." The ED hoped that the YERC project and the new youth involvement it might engender, would help bring about a new image for the organization. Near the beginning of the project, the Chairperson of the Board also made it clear that he wanted to change the image of the organization.

As the project unfolded in the community, the site coordinator heard from a partner what he felt was a negative perception of the Association in the community. At the time comment caused the coordinator to worry about how to frame her relationship with the Association when speaking with people outside of the organization. It started her questioning the Association's ability to lead something as different as youth inclusion in the community and wondered if she should position herself to be viewed more independent of, or separate from, the Association.

The front-line project facilitation. The design of the YERC project placed particular dependence on the site coordinator role to initiate and oversee all action. The Futures Association site was particularly affected by this element. With three different people in the position over 30 months, the project never really got its feet on the ground.

YouthScape Project – Secondary Study

Abstract. YouthScape (YS) was a national Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI) with a vision to increase the resiliency of five Canadian urban centres by leveraging the capacity of marginalized young people in planning and implementing community development initiatives.

The YS partners, conveners, and funders embarked on the work of building YS with skill and commitment. The project included community grants and an extensive research and evaluation component. YS was a valiant attempt by all involved to not only create conditions for engagement but also to create sustainable social change.

An overview of the case. YS was envisioned as a multi-sector initiative that would stimulate systems change with broad and more long-lasting change than singular youth engagement projects. The final YS report described the project focus as such,

> "Over the past 4 years, YouthScape has been trying to "change the landscape" of Canadian municipalities by creating a "community based, youth paced" movement that puts youth, especially those with fewer opportunities, at the centre of community life by reaching out to inspire and involve them in approaches to nurture long-term change" (IICRD, 2010, p. 1).

Though most considered YS to be predominantly about youth engagement, it could equally be framed as the work of systems change, community organizing, community development, youth development, youth activism and organizational development. Ultimately, the hope for YS was that it would find innovative ways to create long lasting and meaningful change. It was unique in Canada. The vision was bold, the work complex and the challenge significant. With its path forward seldom clear, conditions of emergence were the norm.

The Foundation that funded the project identified the following principles of youth engagement to guide YS, which they presented as largely characterizing the field in Canada and elsewhere:

• Support youth-led organizations (and the organizations that
support them);

• Focus on action-oriented projects, which have an impact now, and

develop capacity for the longer term;

- Support local place-based projects;

- Promote leadership development in the community;

- Encourage inter-generational relationships;

- Build social networks;

- Practice inclusive engagement; and

- Effect systems change.

These principles were intended to guide the way the project was structured, its evaluation and the assessment of the applications from organizations to become a YS site.

The nature of the project called upon the organizations in a local convening role to re-invent at least part of their operations. There was a need for their willingness to reconsider their traditional practices, structure and relationships. However, policies, procedures and culture continued to surface as obstacles to YS's objectives. There was a gap between re-invention and the willingness and ability of the convening organizations to implement change. From it's beginning, YS operated in this gap between the vision that was proposed by the Foundation, and the real-time attempts to engage young people in the work of system change. For much of the first half of YS the gap resulted in tension within the collaboration. In the second half of the project there was less of a gap and some creative actions and projects were spawned.

As the project moved towards its mid-way point the majority of the YS sites were without a sense of direction and vulnerable as an initiative. At the time, the national convener and the Foundation were increasingly uncomfortable with the lack of progress towards involving youth and partners in the communities. These conditions made this period one characterized by difficult communications between the national convener, the sites, and the Foundation. The sites were sensitive to gratuitous input from the national convener, while at the same time the national convener was dealing with more overt prompts from the Foundation.

The objective. The specific objectives of the YS project were to:
- create more opportunities for youth to participate in and shape the development of communities where project partners were located;

• expand the number of Canadian communities actively pursuing comprehensive initiatives with a focus on youth engagement;

• link these communities in a process of collaborative learning;

• test and assess the efficacy of a variety of approaches to conducting comprehensive community initiatives and youth engagement strategies; and

• distil and document lessons learned from the initiative to share with other relevant stakeholders and to positively influence attitudes and policy that affect youth engagement.

The communities and their local systems change objective. The five communities selected were: Halifax Regional Municipality (Halifax), Rivière des Prairies, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay, and Calgary. During the first year of YS, Saskatoon would drop out of the program, and Victoria, one of the original seven short-listed groups, was added.

Centering on a common concern to create a space and place for, with and by young people, the proposals from the local convening organizations addressed a range of issues, including in:

  • Rivière des Prairies: an interest in strengthening relationships amongst young people of Haitian, French, and Italian heritage;

  • Thunder Bay: a focus on creating community amongst Aboriginal young people given the migrating flux from Northern communities;

  • Calgary: an interest in strengthening community and intergenerational relationships in the context of an economic boom;

  • Saskatoon: a need to establish bridges amongst Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, with a focus on social entrepreneurship; and

  • Halifax: an interest in strengthening the youth service sector [Blanchet-Cohen, 2008].

The local convening roles. The five local convening organizations were selected because of their management and experience in the youth field and potential to network and convene multiple stakeholders in their community. Each convening organization was given a substantial grant from the funder to be matched with cash or in-kind resources. Each site had a site coordinator and a developmental evaluator working for the project.

The applied dissemination role & practices of the national convener. As it did with a number of its national initiatives, the Foundation decided to work with a national convening organization to help with YS. After scanning the landscape of youth engagement activity in Canada, the Foundation contracted the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) to work alongside the Foundation on grants management, provide coaching to local convening organizations, connect YS to other youth networks, and document learning. The national convener's role was to increase the communities' capacity to facilitate sustainable change, create a learning community, produce a body of knowledge to inform and leverage policy and practice at the level of local government and across provincial and federal governments in Canada, and finally, provide overall coordination and support to the initiative. .

The national convener played a significant role in shaping YS through coaching, training and facilitating. At times, they followed tightly the mandate the Foundation had created for YS. At other times they assumed an intermediary role and leveraged where they thought there was room to negotiate parameters and co-create. They also found delegating and mandating were sometimes required. They were in a support role for the community-based convening organizations, as well as acting as an intermediary between the convening organizations and the Foundation. They identified and shared learning between sites and provided strategic advice. Their support was issued through learning calls, site visits and one-on-one community support calls. They also provided communities with ideas of new approaches and tools for capacity building, programming, collaborative decision-making and putting youth at the center of systemic change.

As initiatives evolved, the role of the national convener and the skills that were required changed. Throughout the process, the national convener had to adjust their actions to best serve what the local convening organizations and their site coordinators, required for support at any given time. Their role called for sensitivity in understanding what level of guidance, authority, and encouragement was called for at any particular time in any particular situation.

The national convener had a number of early storms to manage that reflected wide gaps between expectations and demands. There were some in the project who argued that having all seven short-listed sites at a pre-launch gathering set a tone of competition between the sites

from which it was difficult to recover. Other problematic issues were: a perception of conflicting messages from funders, the time it took to become familiar with each convening organizations' skill sets, and the sites having an unclear understanding of the project mandate.

> These are the same kind of issues with lack of clarity, and the national convener being unclear about the skills sets of local conveners that surfaced in the YERC cases.

Section III: Analysis of Case Studies

Introduction

Starting out with a strong vision and plenty of resources, there was hope that YERC and YS would stimulate comprehensive and lasting change at various levels in organizations and systems that could impact youth and communities. The resources, mandate, and many of the skills and competencies were in place. Although most stakeholders considered YERC and YS to be predominantly about youth engagement, the projects could also be framed as attempting systems change, community organizing, community development, youth development, youth activism and organizational development. Ultimately, the hope of the projects was to find innovative ways to create long-lasting and meaningful change in nine community sites, with youth at the centre of the action. The visions were bold, the work complex and the challenges significant.

At a personal impact level, youth shared many stories about increased self-confidence and learning through their engagement with YERC, and YS (IICRD, 2010). With YS, over 1000 marginalized youth were involved in the design and implementation of small community-focused projects (Cawley, 2010). The small number of adults involved with the YERC activity reported being inspired by the involvement of the young people. In YS, adults reported that positive experiences helped improve and sustain motivation in their challenging profession (IICRD, 2010).

At a municipal level, YS catalyzed network building between community organizations that continue to build, and it was successful in addressing misconceptions about marginalized youth (IICRD, 2010). Most of YS's partner organizations have become regional leaders in creating spaces for meaningful youth participation (IICRD, 2010). At the international level, the YS national convener has applied the findings to other projects, a leading US philanthropic organization showcased the use of developmental evaluation as a model for evaluating social innovation, and academic articles have been published by YS stakeholders on direct granting as a viable approach to empowering marginalized youth (IICRD, 2010). At the national level, YS stakeholders have been consulted by a number of national bodies (IICRD, 2010).

The success reported for the most part, had to do with temporary change at the organizational level and short-term projects in the community for the period of time the funding lasted. At this level there were successes to celebrate in both projects. Following are some of the highlights. YERC saw three YATs organize at two of the four sites, and a number of other small youth- and adult-supported groups in the other sites convened for one-time programs and small projects. At the 4H organization, a new program was established to engage senior youth, and a group of senior youth facilitators designed and led a workshop on youth and adult partnerships. The Futures Association initiated a loose network of youth centres. In Nain, there was a facilitated dialogue between the youth-led Rising Youth Council and ministers of the Nunatsiavut Government.

At the level of broader and more sustainable systems change the funders had hoped for, both projects fell short of their potential. Although the goals of YERC and YS to contribute to youth engagement in community development were accomplished to some degree in all sites, no one site accomplished what could be considered the kind of comprehensive system change the funders hoped for. The findings explore how the actions and context of the national convener, funders, and local conveners contributed to the outcomes.

Context Of The Findings

It is important to consider the many systems and the many environments that came into play for both projects. Things began with the funders as the catalyst and flowed from there through various project staff to eventually in most cases, touch down with community actors, both youth and some supportive adults. For a complete picture of the lifecycle of both projects and its many contexts, the research considered the flow of organizations and individuals that carried various parts of the project at various times. The list of stakeholders that had a hand in the project include the national and local conveners, site coordinators, steering committees or their equivalent, and youth and adult community actors.[42] Carrying the program responsibility can be likened to being a runner in a relay race passing a baton to the runner on the next leg. Not only do the runners change but so do the environmental conditions for each leg of the race. When one runner's section of the race is over, he keeps his head and heart in the race until his

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[42] A complete list of the stakeholders can be found in the Legend (p. xi).

teammate crosses the finish line. Likewise, although the funders had a vested interest in what and who would eventually cross the finish line of the project they had started, designing and managing how specifically to accomplish the activity in the community was not their responsibility.

Each of the findings discussed in this section help to characterize one of the primary systems of interest to the research, the intermediaries: national and local conveners, front-line facilitators, project consultants, and funders. In turn, the findings discussed help to characterize the task environments of one or more of these systems.

Phases of the Project Lifecycle

Where relevant this section introduces a chronology of phases of the project, or their lifecycle, characterized by a pattern of distinct characteristics. Four phases are identified: Pre-entry, Entry, Mid-Term, and Enterprising. The phases provide a useful comparative perspective between the community cases and the two projects.

Pre-Entry Phase. The period of time during which preparations take place prior to commencing the projects in a community, including the assessment of potential sites, overall design of the projects, selecting and granting to national conveners, and selection of the community sites and local conveners.

Entry Phase. This is the period local conveners commenced the YERC and YS projects in the community sites. This phase included the local conveners establishing the project structure, recruiting staff, clarifying partnerships and beginning to plan their project activity. There was creative tension during this phase between a sense of the possible, and anxiety that comes with emergent processes and funders' expectations. This was also the phase in which the project staff tried to clarify the objective and, by association, the system(s) and environment that would be the focus of their activity. The length of time the Entry Phase covered ranged from the beginning of the project to 1.5 years into the project.

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Mid-Term Phase. This phase was characterized by a thirst for action and frustration with inactivity. The thirst drove a number of internal developments in an attempt to get things moving, including reinventing various elements of the program structure and personnel changes. Much of the original structure was reinvented as the steering committees failed to materialize as effective vehicles for networking or advisory support. The length of time the Mid-Term Phase covered ranged from 1 – 2.5 years.

Enterprising Phase. At all community sites late in the projects, there was a convergence of certain conditions of culture, structure and focus that resulted in community projects breaking through what was otherwise limited tangible action**.** During this phase new action initiatives emerged that caused the local conveners to adapt and determine how best to support the new enterprising. During YERC, there were pockets of community projects in each of the sites, some led by youth and others by youth and adults. With YS, the small grants strategy rescued most of the sites from falling into an abyss of inactivity in the broader community.

This chapter pulls back the curtain on some of the behind-the-scenes factors that seemed to be especially decisive in their impact on the outcomes of the projects.

The findings are organized under five themes consistent with the working theory:

- A group space with conditions that foster a culture of engagement and community enterprising
- The knowledge, preparedness and quality of practice of conveners and front-line facilitators
- The challenge of engaging within staff structures with positional authority
- The quality and breadth of intergenerational relationships a convener maintains in the task environment
- Real-time, service-oriented and knowledge-rich support of community actors, front-line facilitators and conveners

Chapter 6: Group spaces with conditions for engagement and community enterprising

Examples Of Community Enterprising

There were long periods of things feeling flat at the sites with little forward progress, the sense was of wheel spinning and things being flat.[43] "Oh, there are so many times I felt discouraged. But each time we would have a little program, or something like the Music Festival, a little negativity goes down." It was the contrast of the up and downs that first turned me to deepen observations of the *ups*. In a number of the community sites there were stories of successful small community projects. At these times during the projects, there was a different look and feel to what was taking place. The people behind these projects seemed to come together easily and the flow of their work created new spirit and energy. Though there aren't many of these examples, they proved very informative to the core of this inquiry. Each is an example of community enterprising. I became quite interested in the conditions that led to these exceptions. When considered in the context of the other findings in this chapter, they provide part of the answer to what actions community groups, youth-serving organizations and supportive adults might take to foster youth engagement.

The groups leading these projects discovered the power of designing something important together and developed their own culture, distinct from that of the rest of the project happening in their community. The manner in which they organized tended to be more democratic, cooperative and participatory. These groups, community organizers that learned, planed and acted together, are henceforth referred to as *design groups*. Considerable attention is given in the thesis to the concept of design groups and a characterization of the enterprising spaces they animate.

The design groups during the study had ideas, clear objectives and motivation. They also experienced support, encouragement and informal permission from the local convener to carve out their own space amidst the established structures, roles, policies and procedures. Over the years of my work in the field I observed similar circumstances, when youth and adult groups

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[43] Case story: 42. A second attempt to focus on an internal youth inclusion focus (p. 345).

realize they can accomplish something beyond what they thought possible, and beyond what they could have accomplished as individuals.
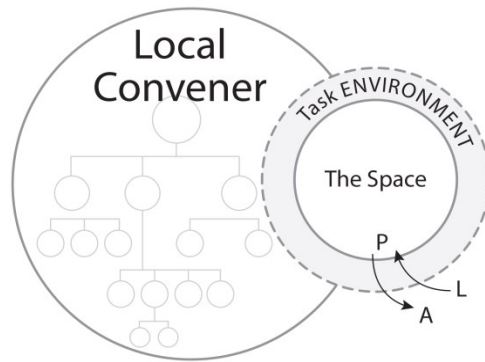
Figure 6.1. *An Open Systems Theory portrayal of the space created by and for the design groups, (P: Plan, L: Learn, A: Act)*

The stories of the enterprising spaces from the cases include:

    • in Nain, the music festival, Search Conference, Graffiti Project, Random Acts of Kindness newsletter, and Brass Band,[44]

    • in PEI, the Halloween Haunted House event,[45]

    • at the Futures Association the BOP training,[46]

    • at the 4H, the Board meetings and mediation support for youth and adult volunteers at a local club,

    • from YS, the small grant recipients that worked in collaborative groups to design and carry out their projects.

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[44] Case story: 13. "Some successful youth-led enterprising" (p. 306).

[45] Case story: 34. Peaks in energy. Peaks in energy (p. 333).

[46] Case story: 22. Workshops and interventions by youth to build strong youth and adult partnerships (p. 321).

Conditions For Building an Enterprising Culture

The cultures evident in the enterprising spaces were reflective of what the two national conveners had hoped to encourage and facilitate at the outset of the projects. The YERC national convener took their direction from the core values communicated in their Framework: following passion, having fun, connecting with others, making a difference and taking action. YS had a set of guiding principles that were created collectively with the national and local conveners. The HW case introduced the idea of *group standards* were established and agreed upon by the youth and adults (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003). The YS guiding principles were: accountability, systems change, learning community, youth leadership, diversity and a strength-based approach. The desired core values and guiding principles for YERC and YS were reflected in the enterprising spaces.

Each enterprising space had similar and reoccurring conditions that characterized its culture: supportive adults that worked alongside youth and children; a supportive group of peers; and, a sense of newness and adventure to the activity. Each also had a clear action focus that frequently leveraged a group member's passion. The action became an organizing principle for the group and a contribution to the collective good. The conditions that characterized the culture of the enterprising spaces were observed in both the YERC and YS YS project.

> **Youth friendly is people-friendly**
>
> I often heard during the research and also in the field over the years how important it is for organizations to be *youth-friendly*. The phraseology suggests certain ways to run group processes, such as meetings, forums or training events that make them more engaging for young people. Though I agree with the basic premise, I suggest the youth-friendly phraseology creates a limiting mindset. The conditions at the core of what makes an interaction youth-friendly are also at the core of what can be considered adult-friendly. People are people.
>
> To focus attention on creating youth-friendly practices carries a large assumption that youth and adults are looking for different things from their engagement. Serious discourse about youth engagement gets off track by focusing on how to execute youth-friendly practices instead of what is at the core of such practices. I argue for a focus on what and how to create more engaging spaces of interaction for everyone - youth and adults. People of all ages have the same intrinsic motivation that leads them to engage. I give attention in this thesis to conditions of an enterprising culture—for all ages.

The *YS Final Report* reported the following conditions for establishing a learning community:

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• A sense of safety and support – created through relationships

  • A knowledge and experience base from which to share (once communities had projects going they were much more actively engaged)

  • Passion for the topic (choose wisely and build on what is important to the actors now)

  • Shared ownership and responsibility (IICRD, 2010, p. 5).

Following is a list of *conditions for enterprising* that foster a group culture of stepping up and taking action for the collective good. These conditions draw together my observations from the research, the evidence-based design principles earlier reported in the HW case, and literature cited in Chapter 3: Literature Review (Emery F., 1977; Angyal, 1969, Emery, M., 1999; Gambome, 2006; Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem & Ferber 1996; Warner, Langlois, & Dumond, 2003; Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1995; Jennings et al., 2006; Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Stoneman, 2002; Strobel, Kirshener, O'Donoghue, & McLaughlin, 2008; Pittman, et. al, 2003, Westley, 2013).

The conditions for building an enterprising culture:

  • Elbow Room with Support and Direction
  • Meaningful Social Contribution
  • Supportive Peer and Intergenerational Relationships
  • Ongoing Learning with Reflection
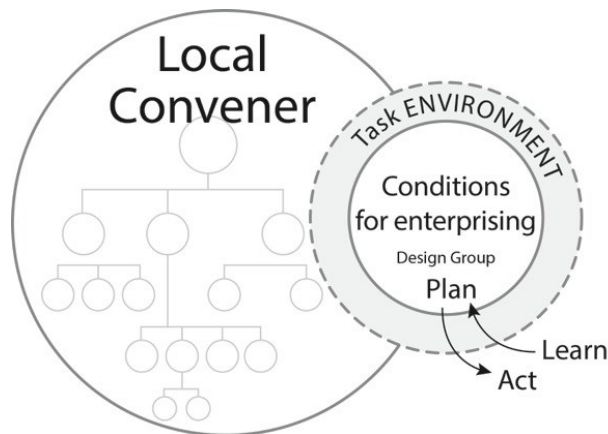
Figure 6.2. *The space created by and for the design groups within a local convener organization and its conditions for enterprising*

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Citizens that step up to address stubborn community issues, face a complex, fast-changing, and challenging environment. This too was the case for the project organizers during the research. Evidence has demonstrated that the conditions for enterprising will foster an empowering culture that encourages group members to step up to take action for the collective good. It is this culture that provides a design group their best chance of adapting to their task environments. "In turbulent fields active adaptation requires a group response in that the field is too complex for any individual to deal with alone" (de Guerre, 2005, p. 9). Leading social innovation researcher and educator Frances Westely draws together resiliency theory, complexity theory and social-ecological systems. "Part of building resilience in complex systems is strengthening cultures of innovation. These are cultures that value diversity, encourage the kind of communication and engagement that allows disparate elements to meet and mingle, and that allows for experimentation and support rather than blame" (Westley, 2013, pg. 6). When the conditions for enterprisng are not present, individuals and design or organizing groups, seem unsettled and out of balance.

Elbowroom with support and direction. People that come together with a vision of community enterprising are looking for a sense of freedom, and room to create in their own way so they can put their mark on the work at hand. Elbow room or autonomy means, "to act as an independent moral agent," and "to act from inside" (MSWord 2008 for Mac online dictionary). It is important that autonomy does not mean the absence of support, such that individuals in a design group have no sense of what to do next. One young person involved in a HW YAT reflected the balance between freedom and support, "[It's important that the] whole group gets to make the final decisions, but if you go off and kind of do everything by yourself, then nobody else knows what's going on so if you do your little piece, and bring it back and get everybody else's opinion on what you've been doing, then it works out fine." (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003, p. 101).

As discussed earlier in the thesis with evidence from Turner; Tipton; Keniston; and Angyal (1969; 1982; 1965; 1969), the condition people intrinsically seek is a fine balance between elbowroom

to be enterprising and support that provides direction and boundaries.[47] Too much direction and interference can shut down the creative process. Too little direction and support can leave an individual feeling overwhelmed—particularly in the complex work of youth engagement and community development. The YS national convener addressed such a circumstance, "We falsely assumed that lack of structure would support innovation. Rather, it led to paralysis. It was only when actors felt safe and had something to work from that they felt able to innovate" (IICRD, 2010. p. 4).

In the 4H case the BOP group enjoyed a level of autonomy, with support from the Executive Director that worked well for all concerned. Though they desired more involvement from adults in their board work, the balance of autonomy and support they had contributed to their productivity. In the Halifax YS site, the coordinator felt she had a good culture in which to learn and explore project strategies with a group of youth, and experienced colleagues in the work of CYD.

Across the YERC and YS sites various community actors, including the front-line facilitators, struggled without balance of autonomy and support. In Nain, though the program director of the Division of Youth, Elders and Recreation (DYER) had ample autonomy while operating in her own community, she had little useful support from the Division's director, two hours and many worlds apart from her reality in Nain. In PEI there was a similar dynamic. The site coordinator had the support of a small group of young people but there was little in the way of supervisory support from any other adult. She had a real sense of isolation that had her on the edge of quitting more than once. At the Futures Association and the Thunder Bay site of YS, the support from supervisors was overbearing. In each of these sites the feeling of being watched was too much for the coordinators, resulting in consecutive staff in both sites resigning from their position.[48] In PEI and the Futures Association site, with the staff on the front-line working alone most of the time, and in the latter case also micro-managed, the sites were challenged to accomplish any significant community actions. What was completed was done on the back of

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[47] See Table A. 10. Comments from site coordinator after she resigned about what worked well about her job (p. 348).

[48] Case story: 44. "Coordinator quits when the chance of an enterprising space disappears" (p. 298).

the coordinators—meaning extra hours and individual perseverance that came with a cost of increased stress.

There is also the question of the degree of autonomy provided to the community actors in the community sites. The greatest balance of autonomy and support took place in the spaces for enterprising. The young people involved in these spaces had the elbowroom to carry out activity in the manner they felt was right for them. They experienced a sense of responsibility and control over what happened. However, they also had support when they needed it from adults associated with the local convener. Observers of the community enterprising led by youth through YS commented, "Families and community members have been impressed by the responsibility shown by the young people in managing money and carrying through on commitments" (Cawley, 2010, p. 2).

Supportive peer and intergenerational relationships. This condition for building enterprising culture speaks to the need to express respect and care in relations with one another. When this condition is present, there is active cooperation, and celebration of individual contributions. As well, feedback is present, to help recognize personal attributes, meet learning goals, and learn from convictions. Listening is the art that cuts to the core of this condition.

During the YERC study I found supportive relationships at play in each of the enterprising spaces. The young people who formed the nucleus of the action at the QC 4H had known and worked with each other since they were children. With only minimal support this team of youth made impressive progress on their YERC objectives. With YS as well, there were numerous examples from the small grants strategy that drew together groups of supportive peers and adults for community enterprising initiatives. The long-established supportive relationships at the QC 4H built a culture open to possibility. The original HW YATs also reflected this condition, "The perception that youth lack skills to make real differences is challenged when the focus is shifted to youth and adults connecting and building each other's capacity. The synergy that occurs when youth and adults embark on a journey of adventurous learning results in both partners gaining and using skills to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Deficit thinking is

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replaced with building on each other's assets and positive energy to take action in the community" (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003, p. 98).

There is ample evidence that supportive relationships with peers are an important condition for engagement. Peer support is essential in the positive development of self, as one moves from dependence to independence, and then interdependence (Strobel, Kirshner, O'Donoghue, & McLaughlin, 2008; Eccles, Appleton, Gootman, 2002; Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2002). Strong peer groups celebrate their diversity, allowing the gifts of each individual to have a place, supporting the learning and growth of all. This is an atmosphere in which individuals feel connected, appreciated and supported by others.

The need for supportive relationships extended beyond the design groups and out into the community. In Nain, at the end of the study, participants from the Search Conference spoke about the importance of the new connections they and others had made with youth. They also spoke about how it had drawn together people who, though they knew one another, were not accustomed to creating things together. The HW case concurs, "We were in a group, that was what was so great, and we were doing things" (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003, p.98). The design principles of *meaningful contribution* and *intergenerational relationships* guided staff to seek service experiences for youth that connected to their passions, dreams and hopes, and to encourage adult partners to establish the necessary connections (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003).

There are other examples from the cases of a shortage of supportive relationships—and in some circumstance, negative relationships—at play. In Nain, there was disappointment that the initiative was, in the words of one community actor, "left to the youth" as the adults abandoned the actions. Supportive relationships during that community's Search Conference ceased soon after the event. As a result, diffusion of the ideas and action in the community stalled, and design groups (referred to in the case as *action groups*) lost their motivation.

In the Futures Association case, where no prior relationships had been established with young people or youth-serving organizations, the organization failed to gain any foothold toward establishing a youth and adult design group in the community. As the case study reflects, the

project adapted and changed its focus to internal youth inclusion efforts. At the QC 4H, despite the strength of the BOP youth-led design group, they too reported that a lack of supportive relationships with adults associated with the local 4H clubs inhibited the potential for youth engagement in the organization. In PEI, limited involvement of supportive adults beyond the site coordinator hampered the amount of community enterprising they could take on. The PEI experience is reflective of similar circumstances with two struggling HW YATs in NS, where leadership responsibility rested with only a few young people. In one of these struggling teams, leadership was built into the team structure through elections for president and secretary (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003). Warner and associates expressed concerns with this approach, "This approach is not consistent with valuing 'equality' and may discourage other youth from feeling invested in the team" (2003, p.102). The BOP team shared a related concern, having observed the limitations of elected leadership within the 4H local clubs.

Meaningful social contribution. Our self worth is defined in relation to our skills and our capacity to make a difference. Meaningful social contribution means taking action to meet a genuine need. It is about contributing collaboratively and creatively to community enterprise that advances collective wellbeing. The sense that one's work is part of something greater than the individual can be the fuel for inspired and passionate work (Tolman & Pittman, 2001; Hart, 1998). Groups working together benefit from some form of tangible action that comes from their shared efforts. Young people tend to mobilize around specific community issues, such as having a safe space to skateboard, creating a music event, reducing racial profiling or cleaning up a local river. As one young person from a HW YAT noted, "I think we need to be committed to the youth action team and committed to doing stuff. What's the point of being in a youth action team if you're just going to be a youth team, you need to actually do the action and be who we are and just have fun at the same time" (Warner, Langlois, Dumond, 2003, p. 101). Not only does sharing a meaningful action deepen personal relationships and commitment to the task-at-hand, new networks are created—a critical element to community development (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2005).

The youth associated with HW's YATs articulated values that challenge deep-seated misperceptions faced when trying to carry out CYD. As was discussed in the Literature Review, Chapter 3, there is a widespread perception that youth lack motivation to get involved in issues

(Tolman & Pittman, 2001; Boyte & James, 1997; Burgess, 2000; Tolman & Pittman, 2001; Curnan et al., 2002). However, young people may see traditional opportunities as unrelated to their passions. As was discussed in the Literature Review, youth want to make a difference, and are motivated to get involved when they have or can create exciting opportunities to act as change agents (Gambone et al 2006; Warner, Langlois, Dumond, 2006).

The defining feature is not only that the community enterprising is meaningful for the community but also that it means something to the design group members. In the HW case, organizers noticed that successful YATs chose and developed community work that leveraged the passions of the young people (Warner, Langlois, Dumond, 2006). One youth described helping a team member explore her interest in photography through creating a youth-issues newspaper saying, "there's got to be some way we can offer a few more opportunities for people to explore what they think they might be passionate about" (found in Warner, Langlois, Dumond, 2006, p. 103). The final report of YS reported a similar finding, "Young people and adults alike need something that they are passionate about to rally around. Whether the environment, social justice or self expression, young people as well as adults need to see how their involvement is going to make a difference and what they can DO before they engage" (IICRD, 2010, p. 3).

Meaningful community enterprising is something design groups can organize around. Without such a focus beyond the self, attempts at organizing or mobilizing either adults or youth can be hampered (Caputo, 2000, p.14). In the early stages of CCYD initiatives, long-term visions may serve to inspire project organizers but can be too vague to provide a sense of clear direction. Clarity on even a small step towards a bigger vision can go a long way toward helping design groups adapt to the complex environs of CCYD. Even a small community enterprising initiative can provide an important rallying call to organize around. At a number of YS community sites, energy was stalled until the funder, late in the project's lifecycle, pushed through the small grants project. It is quite remarkable how actions by young people across all sites moved the project to a new level of energy and community outcomes (Cawley, 2010).

Ongoing hands-on learning with reflection. We all want to learn; it is an intrinsic need and a capacity we all have. Learning is crystallized when there is: an experiential component,

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identified goals, reflection and feedback. In meaningful social contribution, the learning is real because the action is real. When the individual in a design group is learning, the group's capacity grows.

Real-life, hands-on experience offers a sense of adventure to learning that challenges individuals to step outside their comfort zones. Young people are attracted to learning that is action-oriented. They seek to test new behaviours and explore their world (Warner, Langlois, Dumond, 2003). They are drawn to learning experiences that offer challenge, adventure and variety. Equally, they are anxious to tap into their passions and be supported in pursuing them. Hands-on learning can satisfy these learning interests.

At the QC 4H, the BOP team capitalized on learning opportunities that came their way, and quickly incorporated what they learned. They offered workshops for others, and mediation support for youth and adult volunteers at a local club. The group's overall capacity grew along with their learning, as a result of active and guided reflection and strong peer learning support. In Nain, the youth-led RYC also benefitted from a hands-on leadership training experience, preparing them for their role as a political voice for the youth of Nunatsiavut. They directly applied what they had learned in a formal lobbying effort with government ministers. In all sites, youth spoke about the learning component of their work together as a highlight of their time involved with YERC. Youth in PEI, and at the Future's Association, experienced a peak in their engagement at separate training events facilitated by the project consultant.

For the site coordinators, when on the job learning wasn't embraced and supported by their supervisors, the projects suffered. In the early months of the project, at least one of the three consecutive site coordinators at the Future's Association lacked the level of support for the learning she required and requested. It left her feeling inadequate and alone. She left the project after only six months on the job. The coordinator in PEI experienced a similar situation of low support and limited learning. Though she stayed with the job, her frustration was at times high when she repeatedly sought out guidance that was not forthcoming in a useful manner.

Chapter 7: The Knowledge, Preparedness And Quality Of Practice Of Conveners And Front-Line Facilitators

Introduction. The research identified important factors convening a CCYD initiative. The findings will be of interest to funders seeking to select local partners, and local organizations attempting to evaluate their readiness to convene and/or develop strategy to execute a project. The findings regarding the selection process and the stage of readiness of the local conveners help to explain some of what did and did not take place during the projects. In the words of the Knowledge Officer from the YS funder, "Having the right organizations and people on board can make a difference."[49]

Deeper Probe Required To Assess Starting Gate Readiness Of A Potential Convener. As was discussed in the HW case, there was a big difference when comparing their preparedness to work with the YERC sites and their previous NS-based work. Previous to YERC, before HW would design a program, a staff member would have a good understanding of the environment they were to work in, the mandate and leadership qualities of the host convening agency, the task at hand and the resources available. With the NS-based YATs, each community intervention was uniquely tailored to meet the needs of the actors and their communities. The front-line facilitators were like cartographers mapping the landscape and its people. This activity is consistent with the ideas presented in the Literature Review, Chapter 3, by John McKnight (1993) on asset-based community development, and David Cooperrider on appreciative inquiry (1990).

With YERC, the process of assessment was a different story. Though the approach of the national convener went a long way toward building a relationship for working together, it did little to establish a clear path forward. The national convener gained little knowledge of the skills and competencies of the local conveners or assets in the communities, until well into the project. All of the national convener's familiar processes to determine the type of support a local convener might require were flipped on their heads by the tight deadline to select sites, the distance, and the projected duration of the projects. [50]

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[49] personal correspondence with author, e-mail, 15/04/13

[50] Case Story: 6. "First field visit by the national convener" (p. 298).

Events prior to the community sites being selected helped to explain certain occurrences during the projects. When the projects commenced, the national convening organizations knew little about most of the local convening organizations, and the communities they would soon come to work with. The PEI YERC site and HRM YS site were the exceptions. The research suggests that, had the national conveners known at the beginning of the projects what they learned as time went on, they would have altered their intervention at a number of sites. The information the national conveners made their early decisions upon proved, in a number of cases, to be incorrect and/or misleading. At the completion of YS, the national convener reflected back on what it learned about partner selection and made the following recommendation: "Clearly delineate the strengths and gaps each partner is bringing to the project (i.e. leadership, reputation, risk taking history, experience working directly with 'client group' etc" (IICRD, 2010, p. 3).

In YERC and YS, the primary decision makers during the pre-entry phase were the funding organizations, and then as time moved forward, the national convening organizations. The latter had the job of leading the assessment of potential community sites. For both projects, there was an on-site assessment with key informant interviews, and pre-established criteria based on accepted youth-engagement practices. At the time seemed comprehensive. To make the final site selections, both projects incorporated a review process with a group of youth and/or community development professionals. The YS process included funding for seven short-listed applicant groups to complete a fuller proposal and then compete for one of five final spots to become a local convener. The intent of the final stage was to allow the applicant groups to complete a proposal in collaboration with community stakeholder groups.

The intent and principles of the assessment process designed by the funders and national conveners was sensible and better than many I had observed. Nevertheless, the research suggests that once the assessments were completed, neither national convener knew enough about the competencies, capacities and cultures of these organizations to make fully informed decisions about selecting them as a site, or how best to support them going forward. A particular area of weakness with the assessment processes was that the culture and operating environments of the convening organizations were largely overlooked. Little information was provided about the wellness of the workplace at the convening organizations or the leadership

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competencies of those individuals with decision-making power for the projects. There was also an important unknown factor – the yet-to-be-hired site coordinators, who were to have responsibility for the day-to-day development of the projects.

One critical guideline, used to consider the readiness of potential conveners, was related to their capacity to engage young people (Table 7.1). This guideline was explored with questions that, at first glance, might seem to be more about organizational development than youth engagement but the national conveners were well aware of the interrelationships of these two variables. The clarifying questions for the guideline included: How strong is its management? How much does the convening organization reflect the values of the initiative? And, Does the organization have the capacity and respect to involve stakeholders from a variety of sectors? The findings suggest that the direction these questions were pointing was very appropriate. However, it also seems the probe didn't go deep enough. Neither national convener obtained information that might have helped them design a custom approach to supporting the capacity of individual convening organizations to meaningfully involve young people.

A deeper probe might have included a good look at the potential convening organizations' core values and how they aligned in practice to the themes addressed in Table 7.1 below. There was other more specific themes of inquiry that the findings suggest could have improved the quality of the assessments, including: What is the organizational practice for building their learning capacity? Do they have any community organizing expertise? What ability have they demonstrated to meaningfully involve marginalized young people? What is their usual style of facilitating groups? and, How do the projects align with the organizations' strategic directions and their current phase of development?

The findings also suggest that the assessments required more information on areas of vulnerability, such as staff buy-in, teamwork and the level and type of support the potential conveners would provide the coordinators. Though teamwork was an underlying principle of a number of the assessment themes (see Table 7.2) for both projects, there was very little effort to determine the quality of teamwork at the applicant organizations. The furthest the assessment went was YERC's national convener asking in their questionnaire, "How strong is its management?" Addressing a similar theme with YS, one DE shared the following perspective, "If

we are to go with this model, you better be damn sure you have the commitment of the boss!"

In a hierarchical organization the boss has significant influence on culture.

Assessment theme based on national convener's Framework	Elements considered important signs of readiness to convene CCYD that either did not materialize, were incorrectly assessed or had circumstances change during the project
Futures Association	
Empowering Culture	"General feel of the working environment is not very positive. It feels as though people are there until they can go somewhere else or because they can't go somewhere else."
Innovators, Initiators, Connectors	Two of four primary informants who were to take significant leadership roles during the assessment were not involved with the project by the time it was launched. One of these was a strong, young-adult chair of the committee who was the anticipated entry point for youth inclusion.
Empowering Culture	"The leadership of the organization is not appearing very democratic."
Supportive Adults	A database of adult volunteers originally thought to be an important resource for recruiting supportive adults was deemed not so, once the initiative was launched.
	Based on the perspective of the local convening organization, relationships between the Futures Association and other regional development organizations and community groups were positive and collaborative. As it turned out, there were mixed reviews about the organization in the community, with some feeling they got more than their share of the available funding.
Community Web	The membership base of the organization did not include youth in that community, and regional development opportunities never emerged.
	No significant issue or opportunity for youth to engage in the community or organization was ever identified.
Youth	There were no significant relationships established with youth-serving organizations prior to, or during, the project.
Nain	
Community Web	One of the two community committees focused on community development and health in the community was to be the steering committee for the project but this did not materialize.

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Youth	Although the Rising Youth Council was originally thought to be a key component for youth leadership in the project, it provided the project only intermittent access to a small group of youth leaders. As a whole, the RYC was not a significant component of the project.

Youth in Action

Engagement of supportive adult partners	Community support in the form of supportive adult partners to work with the youth did not surface as the site coordinator imagined it would.
	Although the site coordinator adopted HW's YAT approach, it was an approach designed for older community youth than those the PEI site worked with. The younger age group seemed misaligned with the approach much of the time. Difficult group dynamics were a constant at the site.
Youth Engagement	

Table 7.1. Signs of readiness to locally convene comprehensive community youth development (CCYD)

The YERC assessment process was informed by the national convener's Framework. Those conducting the assessments used the themes of the Framework to form principal-based and resource type questions. There were a number of elements the national convener considered important signs of readiness to

convene CCYD that did not materialize, were wrongly assessed had circumstances change, or negatively impacted the project outcomes. Examples from three of the YERC sites appear in the chart below.

The focus of attention during the assessments was on determining the capacities of the potential convening organizations to carry out what the funders and national conveners imagined for the projects. This included operating based on the stated guidelines. Table 7.2 provides themes that were assessed for both projects, and which proved to be less helpful than expected.

Themes by which the proposals from the research sites were assessed and selected	Disappointing application of the themes*
YERC & YS	
Youth involvement	7 sites
Clarification of the change objective	6 sites
Capacity and positioning to convene	6 sites
Supportive adult involvement	8 sites
Potential for systems change	6 sites
YS only	
Creativity and innovation	5 sites
Readiness to be comprehensive	7 sites
YERC only	
Understand and practice principles of engagement	2 sites
Capacity of potential coordinators	5 sites

*based on 10 sites (included one that dropped out in the early stages)

Table 7.2. Themes used to organize the assessment and selection process and disappointing application of the themes per site

As Table 7.2 indicates, at most of the YERC sites, application of many of the themes was disappointing, if a factor at all. The many reasons for this will be explored throughout the chapter.

Characterizing The Task Environment. There is a constant back-and-forth between a system—an individual, family, organization or community of interest—and its environment, and they cohere over time (Emery & Trist, 1965). The local conveners were constantly learning about, and adapting to, the project environment[51] and in turn, their actions created ripples in that environment. The primary project environment for the Department of Youth, Elders and Recreation was the community of Nain; for the 4-H BOP Team, the local 4-H clubs; for PEI, the local communities and their youth population; and for the Futures Association the English-speaking, youth-serving community of the region. As stated earlier, HW's Framework proposes that community resources they refer to as innovators, initiators, connectors, supportive adults, community web and youth are important elements of the task environment to consider. There

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[51] Case story: 43. A blow from the extended environment diverts the attention of the project (p. 347).

was no similar conceptualization of the themes to consider in the project environment from the YS project's national convener.

Neither national convener did more than a cursory assessment of the project environments the potential conveners would be interacting with. Nor is it usual that such a mapping would have been done under similar circumstances. However, the *Final YS Report* recommends a change of process for future initiatives, "Provide initial community consultation and mapping support as part of project development" (IICRD, 2010, p. 3). In the Nain, 4-H, and PEI sites, supportive adults and youth were identified through the assessment but no innovators, initiators, connectors, or community web were identified at any site. In Nain, only well into the *mid-term phase* did the project consultant and RA begin to get a clearer picture of the mandates and activities of the many community service agencies. The local convener admitted, "We have had some information about these agencies but mostly about the personalities of those running the agencies and only a real skeleton of what they do." It is from this collection of community agencies that the national convener hoped a community web would materialize.

The research suggests that, had more than a cursory assessment of the project environments of each potential local convener been completed, it could have had significant impact on the direction the project took. Case in point, in Nain there was an unhealthy political dynamic within the Ulipitsait Committee—the steering committee for the project. The committee had little democratic decision-making and when there was a coherent process, it was heavily dictated by personal influence, including by a representative of the committee's corporate funder, as well as family and class influence. It also became clear that there was a prevailing attitude in the community of waiting for somebody else to do things, what the mayor called "the whole attitude of 'Oh, that's not going to do any good. I'm not going to bother'." Though the local convener was aware of this circumstance, by the time it was made explicit to the national convener, the project was into the mid-term phase, and much water was already under the bridge. Had the information come to light earlier, the local and national convener, together, could have strategized other options to attract support in the community.

As another example, in PEI, the young people whom the local convener's application was built around already had significant involvement in a similar youth program that would limit their

involvement in the YERC initiative, and the site coordinator was leading the other program. This information did not become clear until well into the *entry phase* of their project. In the QC 4H site, there were large physical distances between the young community actors who got involved and the clubs they intended to serve. This factor became a critical element that impacted the design of the project but was not accounted for in the pre-entry phase. And finally, at the Futures Association as indicated in Table 7.1 none of the community resources that HW considered important to CYD strategy materialized. The lack of receptivity of other community service and youth-serving agencies to being a resource for the project had not been assessed and only came to light during the entry phase.

It Is Worth Considering An Investment In Existing System Change Activity. None of the YS local conveners, and just two of those with YERC, used their project to further develop systems change activity they already had going. In the case of YS, the funder mandated that anything they funded had to be new activity. They would later come to regret that decision. Based on findings from both projects it became clear to the Foundation that there might have been greater value in a funding strategy that threw tinder on embers of systems-change activity and then supporting its fire-keepers. The Foundation's strategy of funding local convening agencies to start fires proved time-consuming and expensive, not to mention a gamble – it often takes a few tries to get a fire going and even that depends on the condition of the resources at hand. PEI and QC 4H built upon existing initiatives and/or clearly identified needs and people resources to take action on those needs. These two sites experienced the least amount of wheel spinning during their entry phase.

For instance, in some YS cases there were small grants directed toward actions and relationships that pre-existed with the convening organizations. These small grant projects were evaluated as having significant impact. It is reasonable to surmise that had HW's YS activity been directed towards their existing work with community services agencies, more impressive systems change results might have occured than were accomplished.

> *Researcher's Reflection:* Does a mandate that the activity of new granted projects needs to be new activity limit innovation and systems change? What might have transpired if local convening organizations were recruited that were already invested in particular systems in which they were leading a change effort?

A Critical Leverage Point For Support – Hiring Front-Line Facilitators. The local convening organizations were left to their own devices to shape the site coordinator's role, job posting and job description. Assessment of the skills required for these roles was left to the executive directors or their designate(s) at the local convener organizations. In many cases, people deciding what the roles should look like and who should be hired to do the work, had no obvious community engagement experience; nor was there any knowledge exchange between the sites, the national convener or the funders to strengthen the understanding of what this position could represent.

As was established earlier in this chapter, the nature and structure of the coordinator position had critical influence on the projects' strategies and the eventual outcomes. The research suggests that support for hiring the site coordinators would have been a critical leverage point for intervention from the national conveners. At three YERC sites and three YS sites, the chances of success with this position were further diminished due to a very small pool of suitable candidates. Some sites reported that the pay scale and the part-time basis of the job made it difficult to find a suitable candidate. One YS site went through two separate job postings and three months, before finding a suitable applicant.

Potential Impact On A Convening Organization, and Their Openness To Support. The assessments for YERC and YS did not provide any indication of internal effects the projects might have on the potential local conveners. In addition to determining if there was any organizational space for youth inclusion, the findings suggest that it would have also been advantageous to determine if there was any space for new activity in general. If nothing else, determining what other emergent or significant activity was taking place at the potential local convener organizations would have been advisable.

Almost any workplace will be impacted by a significant new project coming into its mix. YERC and YS were large projects that caused a new level of stress for employees at the local convener organizations. Not only did these projects create additional administrative work, they brought with them a new kind of program activity. The local conveners were being challenged to do things differently and to do so with youth, a population that in some cases they had not directly

worked with before. It was these kinds of challenges that brought the importance of the culture at the local convening organizations to light. The research suggests that an assessment of the anticipated learning curve, and capacity to take on new work, could have helped determine the vulnerabilities of the potential local conveners.

Along with a sense of the learning curve, the findings suggest that a sense of the potential conveners' level of receptivity to interventions by a national convener would have been informative. This type of information could have been helpful in at least two YERC sites and three with YS. One of the initial YS sites, Saskatoon, left the project having experienced a significant internal roadblock, and resistance to any interventions by the national convener.

Clarifying The Objective And The Implicated Systems. With the original YAT's in NS, HW's multi-year commitment to support was contingent upon the community initiating the request also making a the case in the YERC sites. teams preceded the degree

> …observers considered the period of wheel spinning during the entry phase a lot of talk and not much action.

commitment. Such was not The decision to support the of commitment HW looked

for in NS. To make matters worse, in six of ten sites (three YERC and three YS), it was identifying and agreeing upon a system change objective that caused significant wheel spinning and frustration. One community actor shared their perspective, "We went into this systems-change work without having an issue to coalesce around" (Dozois, 2009). A number of observers considered the period of wheel spinning during the entry phase a lot of talk and not much action. Some believed that if an objective had been clarified first, less time would have been spent trying to attract marginalized youth and keep them showing up. Instead, they argue, the time could have been spent creating a culture of hope and action that would have attracted and kept young people engaged. As one astute community actor pointed out, "Youth engagement is not the end. It is a means. Would you get involved in something that was about adult engagement?"

Not only did the project staff and community actors not know what stone to pick up and toss into the water, they were far from being able to agree on where to make the first toss, or what barriers might be in the way of making contact. For both projects, the term *community* was used to frame the task environment. During the search for local conveners, YERC's national convener

used questions like, At what stage of development is the evolution of the community? What are the community's aspirations and visions for youth? and they organized their search for local conveners with statements like, We are looking for communities that are stronger in these areas [youth inclusion and desire to engage]. For YS, the questions included, Is the community ready to take on a comprehensive approach? Is the community invested in agreeing on a vision and committing to making some change? and as a framing statement, We are asking communities to do things differently. Organizing an assessment based on the traditional concept of a community as a place not only is ambiguous, vague and misleading, it can lead to an overwhelming question for local organizers of where to begin. The result was considerable uncertainly regarding what particular systems should be assessed. What people? What community of interest? What organizations? What need? and, What opportunity? For example, one of the guidelines asks, Is the community ready to take on a comprehensive approach? Though there is merit to these probes, the ambiguous concept of community leaves too much room for surface-level responses.

The way the funders conceptualized community in the application process appeared to contribute to surface-level responses from applicants (potential conveners) about their objectives for systems change, the implicated systems and environments, and who were likely to be the community actors. The key issues YS potential conveners proposed to address are rated for their clarity in Table 7.3.

The key issues the local conveners said they would address	Rated for clarity (5 high) *
	2
Strengthening the connections between youth and adults	
Youth and adult connections will be critical in addressing key social issues identified through the community consultations, such as drugs, stereotyping, racism and youth homelessness.	
Our strategic goals are Supporting Youth-Inclusive Spaces/Places and Developing and Strengthening the Youth Service Sector.	2
To build a new style of citizenship where young people know about their rights, and responsibilities and are able to claim their rights and exercise their responsibilities for themselves and as advocates for other young people.	1
Limited availability of youth spaces that provide a sense of belonging and offer input from adults and the community.	1
The second interrelated issue is safety. Youth are facing exploitation, incarceration and victimization stemming from violence and harmful effects of alcohol and drug abuse and related gang involvement.	1
	3
The geographic area of focus for the first stage is the Simpson Ogden/downtown South core neighbourhood in the first year.	
We will focus specifically on the lack of connectivity and ongoing fragmentation between youth services, resources and community allies that is impeding youths' abilities to access information for both acute (such as immediate needs for shelter, emergency mental health services, and food needs) and long-term needs (dysfunctional family relationships, alcohol and drug abuse, and sexual health information).	2
Joining youth and adults together in community development projects.	2
Creating spaces where youth and adults can make decisions together.	2

* Clarity is considered to be a group of people organized around a shared and tangible system change objective.

Table 7.3. Key issues or objectives YS's candidate local conveners proposed

The ambiguity and vagueness around both the systems being targeted for change, and the appropriate objectives for a change strategy, continued once the local conveners were selected. This led to fundamental flaws in the way the national and local conveners organized in two YERC sites. For most of the entry phase at the Futures Association and in Nain, the national convener directed its attention to the coordinators. In PEI and with the 4-H, things were more clearly

defined. In the case of PEI, the youth group was the primary focus of attention. At the 4-H, the objective was to increase the engagement of senior youth members, the primary system implicated was senior youth members, the community actors were the BOP Team, and the environment they interacted with was particularly characterized by the Board of Directors, and local 4-H clubs.

Nain and at the Futures Association lacked clarity on an objective and the national convener was at a loss for where to direct their attention. The Futures Association straddled two options. The first was the Futures Association itself, and the second, the groups they associated with in the community. The difficulty with the second option, as addressed in Table 7.3, is that there was no specific objective clarified in the community. The Futures Association proposed, "To build a new style of citizenship where young people know about their rights and responsibilities and are able to claim their rights and exercise their responsibilities for themselves and as advocates for other young people." The vagueness of this system-change objective sent this site down many external and internal dead-ends.

In Nain, the findings tell a story of how, in the entry phase, it became clear that the national convener was limiting the impact of its support by working only with the site coordinator. As a result, the important task of clarifying the objective for the project in the community was left to the site coordinators. As discussed in an upcoming chapter, the national convener was without a process to support the task of clarifying an objective. Instead, they invested their time in building a relationship with the YERC site-team that initially they believed to be the gateway to the community and its broader involvement.

Pay Attention To Ambiguity. In fairness to the organizations that applied to be local conveners, the initial call for proposals from the national conveners lacked the kind of clarity that might have helped get the applicants on the right strategic track of thinking about specific systems change objectives. The early communications from the national convener and the funders from both projects created far more questions unanswered than answered, and contributed to wheel-spinning and sporadic action during the entry phase at the local sites.

For YERC, though the funder was under the impression that the project focus was about establishing YAT, this is not what was communicated to the sites once things got rolling, or what the national convener directed its action towards. Those from the national convener doing the assessment and early work at the sites were non-committal that a YAT approach would be implemented. The description of the project given in print to the sites stated, "This research endeavor tests the potential and transferability of the YAT approach in rural and remote communities across Canada." Although this clearly states that YATs were to be the central approach, the verbal communication to the applicants was not so clear. This was one of the first signs of missing clarity in the messaging and focus of the action. The national convener's reasons for this are discussed in a later chapter. The difficulty was not so much that the national convener did not pursue a YAT agenda; it is that they did not replace it with any other clear pathway for moving forward.

There were other conditions contributing to a lack of clarity in project focus during the pre-entry phase. In Nain, the project was negotiated with an administrator, who at the time was the Director of the Department of Health and Social Development, in an office in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, a two-hour flight from Nain. Once the negotiations were complete, this individual had no further involvement in the project.

There were also generalizations about comprehensive systems change from the YS funder. A letter from the Foundation to the short-listed local convener applicants provided this picture of what the project was about, "We want to see vision, innovation, imagination and a clear indication of how this initiative will *bump up* youth engagement to the next level in your community and across Canada! The overall objective of the initiative is to increase the resiliency of communities by leveraging the capacity of young people in the process of planning and implementing community development initiatives focused on excluded or disengaged youth."

Although this may have been an inspiring call to action, it did little to nudge the local conveners towards clarifying an objective. In the Foundation's defense, they, like the national convener for YERC, were attempting to respect the knowledge and expertise they hoped to find amidst the local conveners. The lack of clarity between the funders, national convener and the local conveners may have been complicated by a decision by the YS national convener not to have a

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representative of the Foundation come to the YS opening event, where the local conveners came together for the first time. The decision was made in an effort to encourage team building at the community level. However, looking back, the research begs the question, "If the Project Officer had participated at that crucial time of passing the baton when clarity was of paramount importance, would some of the ensuing ambiguity and tension on things such as the small grants fund, reporting, the concept of comprehensive, and what was meant by youth-led have been avoided?"

Chapter 8: Adaptable Structural Components That Serve Function Regardless Of How Emergent, and That Impose Positional Authority Judiciously

Introduction. YERC and YS were envisioned as comprehensive efforts that would generate innovative responses to their goals. To address the project visions, the two funders mandated certain elements of structure: 1) local convening organizations, 2) national intermediary organizations, 3) steering committees, 4) site coordinators, and 5) that funded activity had to be new activity. However, there was more room for the local conveners to make adaptations, than what some decision-makers at the community sites perceived. For instance, although there were working assumptions presented by the funders and/or the national conveners about a coordinator position and steering committees, they were open to alternatives.

With working assumptions such as they were, the YS local conveners, in particular, felt little flexibility regarding the uses of resources or macro strategy. DEs reported that YS staff at the sites felt hemmed in on many of the important strategic decisions by the structure of the funding, staff make-up and the national convener. The ambiguity about what was negotiable and what was not underlined the importance that those in a convener or intermediary role communicate to project organizers with exacting clarity.[52]

In addition to the aforementioned elements of structure imposed on the projects, the Foundation also imposed the small grants fund for youth-led, or as it became in some sites, youth-infused projects. The small grants fund unquestionably shaped the projects' direction and demonstrated significant merit (Cawley, 2010; IICRD, 2010). Ironically, although it was imposed, it was the small grant fund expectation that gave some project organizers a sense of freedom in decision-making.

Whether mandated or perceived as mandated from the outset, all aforementioned elements of structure greatly influenced the project. With complex initiatives such as YERC and YS, structure is multi-layered. There was the external context—the formal overarching structure at a national level that included the funders and national convening agencies, and at the community level,

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[52] Case story: 65. "Poor communication about structure that shaped the project" (p. 371).

the internal context that included the local conveners with their own management structure, steering committees and community actors. Though as a emergent initiative, the implications are that the structure called for constant revisiting, in most YERC and YS cases the structure was static. Those that tried to adapt found it a challenge, "This has involved risk-taking for us and we are not used to this. We have had to stay flexible. Usually with us policy comes first and then the program is developed. This has caused us to look at it the other way around."

In this chapter attention is drawn to the implications of design choices that impose structure prior to there being clarity of function. The general question explored in this chapter is, "How have the project's formal elements of structure, whether mandated or adopted, impacted the project's progress?" The elements of structure most relevant to deeper exploration are formal decision-making structures, and more broadly, the culture of decision-making. Four elements of the project's structure will be further discussed:

- front-line facilitator (site coordinator role)
- steering committees
- staff-driven decision-making, and
- autocratic executive directors.

The Vulnerabilities Of A Front-Line Facilitator-Driven Structure.

"Having one coordinator try to take this on [the project] has not achieved the impact that we had first hoped for. This work required many more hands."
Thunder Bay
Executive Director
Local Convener

Late in the project the manager of the local convener in Nain commented, "It is clearer to me that we should be increasing the points of contact between ourselves and the youth-serving system. With the complexities of the community service system here, both in terms of characteristics and number, a broader stance in the community may have led to more sustainable impact. With the proposed SC and trainings emerging, the opportunity for a broader stance has presented itself."

The position of site coordinator for the projects was an element of structure that left a great

deal of activity, and decision-making responsibility, to one person. These were the front-line facilitators that had the greatest contact with the project activity on the ground. It became clear early on in most sites that the potential of this structure to foster broad knowledge transfer was limited. In seven of ten sites the coordinator role was problematic. One of the other sites, QC 4H, did not receive funding for a coordinator, nor did their project impact seem to suffer for it. They, and two other sites, adopted a more evenly distributed leadership structure. The coordinator role was meant to organize the project and engage a broader community in the aims of the project. Unfortunately, it resulted in a bottleneck to the flow of knowledge and learning, and as such, compromised the hope of a generative project culture.

The findings present a compelling case of the vulnerability of projects relying so heavily on a single staff-driven structure to foster quality knowledge-transfer in CCYD. Figure 8.1 is a portrayal of this vulnerability. The finding begs the question, "Did these front-line project facilitator roles, and other staff of the local convener, inadvertently block the flow of critical information, relationship building and knowledge exchange?"

Figure 8.1. A portrayal of risk to quality knowledge-transfer and collaboration of CCYD projects relying on a single front-line facilitator-driven (site coordinator) structure

In addition to the authority the structure conferred upon the coordinators, there was also a heavy reliance on their skills and competencies. During the entry phase, staff of the local and national conveners began to question the potential of the coordinators to get the job done. Although the coordinators had a wide range of skills and experience in youth and community development, by the latter part of the entry phase, growing concerns were being expressed related to the skills, professional practice and leadership of some coordinators. A great deal of time from the national conveners and the YS DEs was consumed by these concerns.

The skills that the coordinators brought to the projects at any given time were often mismatched with what was needed, but for that they are not solely responsible. The expectations placed on the coordinators were unrealistic, and the position not fully conceptualized. One ED, who had significant challenges with the coordinator position, spoke to their frustration, "We needed someone with the people skills of a facilitator, the thinking skills of a strategist and the organizational skills of an accountant. Those things aren't usually found in one person" (Dozois, 2009). The underlying assumption was that the coordinators would be adept at working with youth and adults – that proved not to be the case in two YERC and two YS sites. Although seven of the ten coordinators demonstrated a proficiency working with young people, asking them to coordinate the involvement of adults was outside of their comfort zone and/or ability. "She was not able to facilitate youth leadership, nor was she good with adults. She was just not a people person. She alienated many people in the community."

At two YERC and two YS sites, vague direction for the community projects, and loose supervision and support, created a space for coordinators to assume a great deal of autocratic authority over the direction of the activity at their site. These sites reflected the character and personality of their coordinator. One administrator of a convener organization reflected, "They [coordinators] can run everything out of their back pocket." One coordinator quipped that she felt her project "was seventy-five per cent coordinator-driven."

It is reasonable to surmise from the research that these circumstances contributed to the considerable turnover with this position in YERC and YS. Across ten sites there were seventeen coordinators during the life of the two projects. Three sites went through three coordinators each. These positions were critical to the project. Only one YERC site and two with YS retained

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the same coordinator throughout the duration of their projects. The high community project staff turnover laid bare the structural design flaw that left the site activity, and all of its relationships dependent on the individual in the coordinator position.

The vulnerabilities were not in the coordinator position itself. The root of the problem was that the coordinators were hired prior to the project having a clear and collective purpose. Based on the findings, the researcher suggests CCYD projects would benefit more from a coordinator being given a mandate to facilitate a participatory planning process, have the skills to execute it and be supported with a structure designed to cultivate broad involvement in decision-making and action. As the projects moved forward, it became obvious that the sites built around one service provider had limited potential to foster a quality knowledge transfer or participatory culture.

The research also suggests that for the national conveners to share their knowledge and experience effectively they required a broader and more diverse relationship with leaders in the community than they had. Attempting to transfer the national conveners' considerable experience through one representative, to primarily one community actor (site coordinator), was a weak knowledge transfer structure, at best (see Figure 8.1). In two of the four YERC sites and in all of the YS sites, there was a great deal of re-thinking old ways of doing things at the local convener organizations. It is well documented that in situations such as this requiring complex change, the more channels of open communication and understanding, the better (Wheatley, M. Frieze, D., 2006). An example of a more open design was the search conference in Nain, that increased the channels of communication and understanding considerably. The result was a broader footprint for the project in the community, and increased capacity for the community to seek solutions together.

 Blinders About The Participatory Value-Added Of Steering Committees. The steering committee structure was mandated by the YERC funder and perceived as mandated with YS, in the hope of assuring participatory processes at the community level. The committees were conceived as integral to the comprehensive community nature of the initiative. However, they became another problematic element of structure for both projects. Concerns about the committees included that, "they were redundant," "there was an identity crisis," "they were not

youth-friendly," "there was a disconnect between the convening organization, the steering committee and the youth they were suppose to represent," and "no one really understood the role of steering committee" (Langlois, 2010a).[53] The research suggests that the steering committee structure had adverse effects on the effort to engage the broader community in the comprehensive community youth development initiatives. Seven of ten sites disbanded their steering committee structure and searched for alternatives during the entry phase. The steering committee structure, as it was applied, was neither effective with the objective of guiding the project, nor as a means to engage a broader community.

In three YERC sites there was a pre-existing community committee that promised to fulfill the steering committee function. However, the Nain committee never materialized and neither of the other two provided significant support to their projects. In one of these cases the committee held the project back from making progress on its objectives for youth engagement. The fourth YERC site – QC 4H – adopted an alternative structure that was more in keeping with their youth-led and cooperative culture. Results from the 4-H structure were much more positive than those of the other sites. Table 8.1 elaborates on the nature of the steering committees in the YERC sites.

Site	Steering Committee Structure	Characteristics	Rated (1 - 5)*
Nain	Based on this site's application for YERC, an existing community committee with a funding and leadership mandate was to assume the steering committee function. The committee met only once during the length of the project when the researcher drew them together.	• There was no engagement from the committee as a group. • A few members of the approximately 12-person committee used their influence to provide some informal support. "The steering committee showed a lot of heart in the very earliest stages but the bottom line is action and they are not stepping up to the plate." "Based on what I have been told by the convener staff, It seems there is very little effective democratic process with the community committee as far as making decisions and when there is a semblance of process, it is heavily influenced by who is who, contract's potential, family influence, class influence, etc."	1
QC 4H	A group of youth who	• The BOP team was youth-led and action	4

[53] Case story: 58. "Steering committees - a structure of disengagement" (p. 365).

		focused.	
	called themselves the BOP Team formed the basis of this site and made the decisions on the activity of this site. They reported to the QC 4-H Board of Directors. Some BOP members were also on the Board of Directors.	• The Board is also youth-led with adult support. "Instead of having a youth committee, let's just form youth action groups to get things done; more informal this way, structure can be added later but action is at the forefront." "The relations of BOP are to be member to member, member to leader and leader to leader relationships."	
PEI	The Hillsborough Region Area Development Committee assumed the function of being an SC for PEI's YERC project. They kept a spot on the agenda of their monthly meetings to discuss the YERC project.	• Advisory in nature, no youth participant involvement. • YERC was only a very small component of the primary purpose of the community committee. • The committee was established prior to YERC's commencement. "They provide ideas and suggestions to help with certain activities. They also know that they can ask the group to help with fundraising efforts and at local events." 'Two HRADC board members and trained individuals in the First Nation community have been extremely helpful over this quarter to discuss problems that have arisen within the Youth Action Teams. The help from these individuals has provided me with insight into the lives of some of these youth." "The board is seeing that the Youth Action Teams are here to help within the community and that they are a valuable resource at events and activities."	2
Futures Assoc., QC	Steering committee function for YERC assumed by an existing committee with the general function of running some youth programs for the convener organization.	• "Not very effective committee." • "Non-participatory practice." • "Dry and 'boring' meetings." "The general format of the committee is to have reports or updates from paid members of staff; there is very little discussion about the reports. To say the resources within the room (the volunteers) are not, to say, 'being fully utilized' would be an understatement." "It appears the chair believes that if she allows youth on-board or to have a voice, nothing will get done." Committee chair. "Unfortunately though, I wondered if the	2

		committee would be a good ambassador and support for the coordinator right now. She feels the committee is weakening and that with the young adult leaving as chair, that the committee is left without a strong chair.	

*Rated 1 - 5 (5 high) for youth participation and participatory process

Table 8.1. The structure of the steering committees and their characteristics

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Steering Committees - a structure of disengagement?

The Request for Proposals from the Foundation stated, "It is a working assumption of this project that each community initiative will have a steering committee comprised of young people and adults from diverse backgrounds and sectors." The principle behind the working assumption was to establish a broad footing in the community through strong relationship with diverse community organizations and youth and adults working together. As a working assumption the sites had some room to be creative with the way they structured their governance but most failed to recognize it, or understand any alternative option. One site did establish a more creative forum-type approach that proved very successful and helped other sites re-invent their own approach.

For all the other sites, the steering committee structure proved problematic. The partners that came to the table fell into their usual patterns of organizing. Four of five YS sites encountered problems with their steering committees within the first year of the project. In site after site, potential partner organizations either drifted away, or never came to the table in the first place. The project seemed to lose momentum before it ever really got moving.

Comments regarding the steering committees included, "they were redundant," "there was an identity crisis," "they were not youth-friendly," "there was a disconnect between the convening organization, the steering committee and the youth they were supposed to represent," and, "no one really understood the role of the steering committee." As one YS actor reported, "We spent lots of time building a city-wide steering committee. Now we know it was a damn waste of time."

Box 8.1. The difficulties encountered with the steering committee structure

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The Weak-Side Of A Structure That Empowers Autocratic Decision-Making. The importance of dealing with the challenge of shifting ownership from the local convening organization to the broader community cannot be underestimated. A number of the sites found it difficult to find a balance between participative decision-making with an advisory function, and the expediency that comes with decisions made by staff. In three of the YERC sites and four YS sites, most decision-making remained with the local convening organization.

Regardless of the participatory principles promoted by the national conveners, the local conveners in three of the four YERC sites continued to follow their hierarchical methods of decision-making, defined by positional authority of committee chairs and senior staff. Bureaucratic structures such as this are characterized by responsibility for coordination and control of day-to-day work being located at least one level above where the work is actually being done (Cabana, 1997). The question is, How to shift ownership from the local convening organization to the broader community? On a regular basis, decisions deemed operational in nature were made by only one or two staff people, or senior volunteers of the local convening organizations.[54] The site coordinators and/or executive directors of the local convening organizations made most of the decisions on what items should go forward to a management team or a larger group such as a steering committee or its equivalent. In a number of cases, it was the coordinator alone who made important strategic decisions.

In some YS sites, small groups of staff and/or key community stakeholders formed management teams to address more elevated or strategic decisions. In HRM, Calgary and Montreal, management teams were created in the hopes of encouraging more ad hoc and expedient decision-making. Some people felt that some of the decisions made by the management teams should have gone to a larger group. One DE described the management team as, "redundant and too bulky." The ad-hoc nature of the management teams limited their participatory quality. One DE reported that, as a result of the autocratic nature of the leaderships, "stakeholder voices were being lost." Without open channels of exchange, tension and anxiety could often fester below the surface until it found its way out into a more national forum, such as a national conference call, and in a manner difficult to deal with effectively.

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[54] Case story: 40. A volunteer leadership change closes down space for youth inclusion and participatory process (p. 343).

The Challenges To Participatory Culture From A Structure That Empowers Autocratic Gatekeepers. One of the primary concepts YERC's national convener communicates in its Framework is the importance of creating an empowering culture. The project consultant described it as, "an approach that guides the other four tools." Although the national convener presents the concept to guide their own and others' work with young people, its principle is a useful lens through which to consider the work culture at the project sites.

The research found three sites where the committee chairs and/or executive directors negatively impacted the attempt by the coordinators to establish empowering cultures. The senior administrators (executive directors and others in authority) assumed authority over much of the project at these sites. M. Emery argues, "A small select or elite internal team with an agenda for changing or directing everyone's job is rarely able to generate enough excitement and sense of ownership to drive adoption throughout an entire organization" (Cabana, 1997, pg. 2). The research findings point to some of the same negative impacts on project culture as found in the circumstances when a coordinator primarily dictated the activities. However, in the circumstance of an autocratic leader at a site, the coordinator, instead of the other community actors, felt the suppression first and most directly. A similar finding was reported, related to two of the 4H local clubs. In those circumstances, leadership responsibility rested with only a few young people. The clubs were structured through elections for president and secretary. BOP members reported, "This approach is inconsistent with how we value equality and we fear it may discourage other youth from feeling invested."

Three coordinators reported that the lack of support and/or the autocratic nature of senior staff at the local convening organization led to their decision to leave their jobs. Between three YERC and YS sites six coordinators left their positions in under three years. One of these coordinators commented, "When I am on my own with her, she is like, 'It has to be done this way (structured).' It seems like she has to defend the honor of the organization." In other circumstances, chairpersons of committees charged with overseeing aspects of the project created an issue for the coordinator and project aims, "She [the chairperson] is coming from a different perspective than the youth." Another reflected, "Perhaps the most challenging part for

me was feeling that I was given the responsibility of the project but not the authority to carry it out in the way that I was trained to do."

The impacts of a disempowering work culture become clearer when considered in contrast to sites where things were more positive. In Nain and QC 4H, the staff that was responsible on the front-line had the elbowroom and support necessary to help them embrace the project's emergence. In both cases, a dedicated team responsible for YERC worked in an informal setting with collegial peer support. Also in both cases, the supervisor was part of the team and easily accessible. It can be argued that these two YERC sites of the four, executed the most ambitious project strategies with the broadest community impact. Within YS, that same collegial support with autonomy and support for the coordinator and other project staff to do their job, could be found in HRM, Victoria and Montreal. It is worth noting that these sites were also the ones with the least coordinator turnover, and as with the aforementioned YERC sites, some of the broadest and best execution strategies for community projects.

Adapted Designs Of More Participatory Structure That Showed Promise. Had the local conveners been more fluid with their structure, a number of the concerns related to non-participatory practice and constraining structure may have been minimized. There is a lesson in the adaptable structure of the original YATs where, though adults may have taken more initiative with the initial organizing, as the group built capacity, they would step to the side to encourage youth leadership. The support and adaptable structure helped the teams bond, connect with community resources, and gain leadership skills (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003).

The QC 4H and their BOP team is another example of function taking precedent over form. Despite having no funding to hire a coordinator, being accustomed to participatory processes, YERC's QC 4H site recruited a small team of senior youth members that formed the BOP Team. This group of youth leaders carried out the kind of program activity and decision-making work that at some of the other sites was done by coordinators, management teams or steering committees. Although other sites also had groups of volunteers making decisions on committees, the BOP team was fully youth-led, participatory in its decision-making, and had no sense of a limiting structure. An informal, high-performing, youth-led participatory process was

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also found in two YS sites, where grant selection committees made decisions on the distribution of small grant funds. It is interesting to note that two youth-led or youth-infused small grants committees remained in place at the YS sites beyond the end of YS.[55] The Futures Association had a progressive youth wing in the works behind the scenes, championed by the Board chair.[56] Though it did not get off the ground during YERC, it did take shape after the research completed.[57]

A number of sites searched for alternative structures that could encourage more participatory forms of decision-making and strategy development. Table 8.3 provides a summary of these experiments. In a number of cases, the search was driven by the collapse of the steering committee structure and ineffective use of the coordinator position. In the words of one DE, "We were striving to create a more balanced structure." The new structures had a variety of functions and form. For the most part, the changes were designed to encourage more democratic and cooperative principles. At YS's HRM site, the *Marketplace* was created as a, "space that would encourage people to talk more freely about what they wanted." The hope for the Marketplace was to create more of an exchange and highlight how young people were engaging in the community. The forums were also designed to be an information collection point, including giving and receiving feedback.

> *Researcher's Reflection*: It is interesting to note that at the two sites – one each from YERC and YS – where they retained their committee structure throughout the duration of the projects, that the formation of these committees predated the project starts. This raises the question of whether pre-established relationships were a contributing factor to these committees sustaining their operation.

Though some of the alternative structures survived for the duration of the project, others, such as in Saskatoon and Thunder Bay, lasted only for as long as whoever created the structure remained involved. The chart below outlines alternatives that the local conveners created to the conventional steering committee-based decision-making and advisory function.

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[55] Natasha Blanchet-Cohen (e-mail communication with author, 10/ 2/2004)
[56] Case story: 53. "An attempt to create an enterprising space post project - a youth wing" (p. 348).
[57] Case story: 54. "Post project effort to sustain a youth-led structure (p. 360)."

Experiments with alternatives to conventional steering committee structure for more participatory decision-making and inclusive advisory functions

QC 4H
A group of senior youth 4-H members led program activity and YERC strategy with a participatory decision-making process.

Nain
A youth-led group (Rising Youth Council) established prior to YERC was to serve as the youth voice for the site but their sporadic meetings and geographically diverse membership made this strategy untenable. Attempts were also made to establish youth action teams but none of these took hold.

Futures Association, QC
An existing adult-led committee with a youth-services mandate was the governance structure chosen to champion the YERC agenda within the Futures Association. With the non-participatory and adult-led culture pre-established, youth membership and voice was very limited. The style of leadership of the chairperson also limited wider participation by committee members.

Thunder Bay
Circle of Partners – Instead of having organizations and young people coming together around the general YS idea, several decision-making structures were planned to be located around projects. These were to function as project teams and would be more fluid and responsive.

When presented at the gathering of communities in November 2007, the idea created ripples, inspiring Calgary and Halifax in particular to revisit their structures. The idea originated with the second of three coordinators who was hired at the site. She left the position after only two or three meetings with the new format.

Saskatoon
Young people requested holding sessions amongst themselves and met on their own over a period of two months to discuss their vision for YS, as well as covering some management questions. This site did not successfully re-integrate the youth and adult visions for the project that came from the separate meetings. From this and other leadership challenges, the site disbanded early in the project's life.

Montreal
This site created a forum joining a consortium of adults representing community agencies. The issue of representation of young people rose to the surface.
The committee was established prior to the project's commencement and continued afterwards.

Calgary
A management team was created for day-to-day issues. A steering committee meets less regularly and provides input strategically. Youth were consulted and they chose to call themselves consultants. The issue of making the youth more representative of marginalized youth was still being addressed well into the second year of the project. It was considered resolved once the small grants projects were issued.

Halifax
While decisions were initiated by youth, both youth and adults describe the decision process as liberating, with youth being particularly vocal. The steering committee was replaced by a small management team composed of 50% youth and 50% adults, representative of agencies, and by the Marketplace, which is facilitated by young people around topics of interest to the community.

Table 8.3. Experiments with alternatives to conventional steering committee structure

While community stakeholders were not claiming their experiments with alternatives forms of structure for decision-making and an advisory function were perfect, most agreed that they were an improvement over the traditional steering committee structure. Based on the findings, the research suggests that before adopting a conventional steering committee model, leaders of comprehensive community development initiatives, regardless if they are youth-focused or not, first consider if the chosen structure may in fact limit community participation and the exploration of other, more effective, forms of accountability. The findings also suggest that the YERC funder's insistence, and the Foundation's working assumption, that a steering committee structure be created as an early step in a project's life, disregards the emergent characteristic of CCYD and unduly limits the breadth of relationships a community development convener can establish.

Chapter 9: The Quality And Breadth Of Intergenerational Relationships A Convener Maintains In The Task Environment

Introduction. This section will report findings related to the role of the YERC and YS interveners in building relationships that support generative and dynamic interactions between actors. The list of interveners included: 1) YERC's project consultant, 2) site coordinators, 3) YS national convener's program manager and a youth work consultant, 4) YS developmental evaluators, and 5) the YS funder's program officer.

These findings were often informed through exchanges between two or more intermediaries. The most robust findings came to light during exploratory exchanges between the national conveners and the site coordinators. These exchanges were at various times easy and free flowing, complicated, difficult, frustrating, unclear and even inspiring. Most of the observations about the intervener role took place during the entry phase, with all its uncertainty. In three of four YERC sites and all five YS sites, once the projects got past the starting gate, they faced a myriad of obstacles and opportunities. Actions and decisions taken during the entry phase had weighted impact on the directions of the projects.

The projects' interveners had a responsibility and ethic to contribute to the creation of conditions that encourage innovation and a sense of a safe harbour for those going through the stress that comes with complex and imposed change. As discussed earlier, a big part of creating a safe harbour is the quality of relationships within spaces occupied in common—common spaces. These are the places, moments and virtual spaces that draw key actors together – like intersections for interactions. The projects' formal common spaces included meetings, phone calls, national forums and workshops for planning, education and team building.

Examples of informal or virtual common spaces from the projects include one-on-one conversations, e-mail exchanges, project language and a discussion forum on a project web page. As with most CCYD initiatives, YERC and YS's potential was in its collective that brought together diverse community stakeholders around a shared ideal. In both projects, there were the inherent cultures of academics, researchers, youth, private foundations, seasoned and young-adult youth-workers, evaluators, not-for-profit professionals, activists, students,

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Aboriginals, Francophones, Anglophones and others with their own cultures and ways. Everyone had a distinct role, language, practice and bias. The projects' common spaces were fertile ground for co-creation, learning and innovation, but they were also where tension mounted and relationships challenged. Complex and difficult challenges were to be expected. Overcoming the challenges required quality interactions between people in the same organization and with others outside their organizations.

Table 9.1 indicates some of the intersections of interaction that various intermediaries influenced in their work to build generative and dynamic culture in the common spaces.

Common Space	What the intervener heard	Interveners work to build generative and dynamic culture in the common spaces
Design team of pre-launch event (YS)	• Need for more interaction and time for practical questions	• A re-design was implemented for the second day of pre-launch event (N)
The formal and common language of project (YS)	• Some unclear terminology (N)	• A component was added into the design to deal with the term 'comprehensive' and other vague terms
35 per cent budget mandate parameter for small grants fund (YS)	• Sites seeking clarity	• The parties concerned at a national level were brought together to clear up ambiguities and agree on a spectrum of acceptable strategies. Although this meeting helped to move the grants strategy forward, this particular 'knot' required more ongoing attention and follow-up from the DE than what it received
YERC site coordinators getting to know one another	• Need for more interaction	• project consultant hosted them for an evening and day prior to their participation in HW-sponsored conference
Relationships between national convener, foundation, and local conveners (YS)	• More time required to get grants out • A sense that the delay in approving the conveners caused a breakdown of community participation	• Relationship-building necessary between national convener and one site in particular • A suggestion was made to Foundation to extend the deadline for granting and reporting (N). • A meeting was convened and facilitated that resulted in strengthened relationships between national convener staff and the site concerned (S)
National convener and site coordinator	• New coordinator hired with necessity of additional training and coaching	• National convener arranged some one-on-one training and coaching with a mentor. • Requested the new coordinator journal weekly and used this writing as a basis for ongoing coaching

Interactions between national and local convener	• Administrative delays with contract signing and payment to local convener	• project consultant and administrator spoke directly with local convener's executive director to service concerns
Local convener and community	• Lack of a broad base of community involvement	• National convener facilitated the introduction of the Search Conference methodology
Local convener and youth	• Difficulty at some sites on how to link with marginalized youth for the small grants fund.	• More attention from all DEs to support decision-making and processes related to the small grants fund • The YS Program Manager and DEs shared ideas with the sites and facilitated strategy sharing between sites (NS) • After a difficult national gathering, the lead DE encouraged youth worker of national convener to reach out to new youth voices • Site coordinators and DEs facilitated and guided the selection of youth for youth grant selection teams
Local convener and community organizations	• Sense that the delay in approving the final sites continued to contribute to limited community participation • Uncertainty on how to facilitate partner participation • Lack of sense of direction for YS in some sites • Steering Committee breakdown and partner disengagement	• DEs gathered perspectives and shared findings with the organizations • The DEs encouraged an exchange of ideas between sites on methods of engaging and recruiting partners • A strategic meeting was arranged between a city politician and staff of the national convener during a site visit that was instrumental in securing a funding partner for one site • The DE spent an extended period focused on coalition-building amongst community partners. • The DEs concerned assisted in the creation of new decision-making process in two sites. • The DEs assisted with bringing voices back to the table • New approaches to processes for meeting facilitation, vision-building, and group planning were executed
Relationships between the funder, national convener, local convener (YS)	• Anxieties directed at the 35 per cent budget parameter • Misperceptions, misunderstandings, discouragement, disengagement	• The DE conducted short check-in interviews to clarify the situation then summarized the findings to the Foundation and national convener • A suggestion was made to JWM to directly communicate with the sites to clear up ambiguities and misperceptions
Youth and Adults	•The need for improved youth and adult partnerships in the organizations	• Conducted educational and training workshops, coaching and interventions

Relations between national convener and local convening organizations	• Limited impact of one national role • Poor exchanges between sites and person responsible for communicating with the sites	• Short check-in interviews were conducted to clarify situation. • A meeting was convened with key personnel of national convener to pose questions regarding their roles.
Local convener and youth	• Some uncertainty as to where to direct attention for the small grants fund and support of grantees	• Some of the DEs were repositioned to support decision-making and processes related to grant support. • Coordinators and DEs encouraged sharing stories between sites about experimentation taking place.
National convener, local conveners and CYD sector	• IICRD and some sites have desire for involvement in the collecting and telling of stories	• A new context-specific role was articulated for each DE in cooperation with the EDs and IICRD program manager. • Coordinators facilitated community stakeholders being involved in the storytelling function.

* N(national) S (site specific); YERC – Youth Engagement in Rural Communities; YS - YouthScape

Table 9.1. Examples of interveners' efforts to build culture in common spaces

An Appreciative Approach. If the focus of a common space is directed to what is possible, it will generate far more energy and community-building potential than focusing on barriers and problems (Cooperrider, 1990). YERC's national convener had long prescribed an *appreciative approach* in its work - that is, to focus on strengths, potential and possibilities. This approach increases capacity in individuals, organizations and communities by identifying resources they already have, including their own knowledge and life experience, and building on those. YS's national convener had a parallel approach they referred to as *strength-based*, as well as YS's Guiding Principles (Appendix C) to encourage a certain quality and type of interaction. The approaches and guiding principles were manifested in various ways including: how meetings were run, the decision to create youth-led selection committees and to actively listen to the coordinators' perspectives. As an example, in the sites that had trouble recruiting young people, the YERC project consultant and the DEs redirected the local convener's attention to focus on building upon existing relationships, no matter how small in number, rather than be overwhelmed and discouraged by relationships they did not yet have. At the Nain site, the Futures Association, Thunder Bay and Calgary, this re-focus helped the local conveners successfully move forward to involve youth.

The appreciative approach was well received in the early stages of the project in all YERC sites. The project consultant and the DEs, as a matter of course, would reframe things to explore the possibilities of a situation rather than focus on the barriers of a situation or someone's deficits. The approach caught on with coordinators and community stakeholders at a number of sites. There was an evident shift in mindset, language and practice amongst coordinators. The appreciative approach helped the youth chair of the board, and member of the BOP team, change course and form better strategies for his work building stronger youth and adult partnerships in the organization. A small action team of young people from the SC19 took the appreciative approach to heart, "We need to be more proactive than reactive, focus on celebrating life rather than focusing on suicides. Work to re-engage them [vulnerable youth] before they get to the early steps [of suicide]." The appreciative approach was also helpful at the point where things were getting discouraging in Nain when the SC19 began disengaging following the Search Conference. The Nain team flipped their perspective and began to look appreciatively at who *was* stepping up outside of the SC19 rather than focus on who was not. They were able to bring some new community members into the dialogue to see what could they do to keep the spirit alive.

The Challenge Behind Establishing Collaboration Between Local Partners. At YERC's Nain and Futures Association sites, the local convener made little headway, during the entry phase, in building quality common spaces with the broader community.[58] For YS, three of the original five local convening organizations had their credibility as a convener questioned by community partners. They were significantly challenged in their effort to bring together other community agencies, let alone do it in any sort of generative fashion.[59] These circumstances made it unrealistic to even begin the process of building collective purpose. Over the first half of both projects, tensions at many levels overwhelmed the possibility for successful collaboration. The funder acknowledged the challenge, "Local partners have been stretched to connect with different sectors and youth with whom they had little previous contact (Cawley, 2010, p. 2). The local convening organizations' lack of success resulted, at least in part, from extending their usual and conventional internal group processes to their work with external community

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[58] Case story: 10. *"*Seeking a solution on how to broaden the base of community participation" (p. 303).
[59] Case story: 59. "The challenge of transferring ownership from the local convener to partners" (366).

partners. In two YERC and four YS sites, traditional approaches to convening and facilitating had a detrimental effect on the hope of dynamic and generative group spaces.[60]

In the YS's *Request For Proposals*, the national convener wisely asked the question, "What will be your approach to link and engage the diverse partners to work as a team?" Though an important question, a review of the proposals and further findings from the research suggest it was not satisfactorily answered. Lacking knowledge of more participatory processes during the entry phase, most local conveners fell back on methods of relating based on positional authority, and membership on committees drawn from agency representation. The most pronounced of the impacts were during the entry phase. In Nain, PEI, QC 4H, Montreal and Calgary, program agendas established prior to the projects commencing dictated early conversations and activity. Some complained that the meetings lacked, passion, energy, vision and opportunity for input. The meetings did not generate much in the way of creative alternatives to conventional approaches to youth programming. In the early stages, things seemed to go in the direction of established service mandates versus what might have come out of a more generative process.

The national convener responded to the situation of wheel-spinning and limited citizen involvement, with a rescue intervention in the hopes of stimulating wider involvement and broader actions in Nain . The Search Conference was introduced as a way to clarify objectives and systems to take action upon, and to stimulate broader citizen involvement. As a result, Nain, for a short period, reached out into the broader community – beyond community service agencies – and achieved broader involvement in their projects.

With four other sites, although the broader community wasn't included, groups did manage to clarify and take action on a shared objective. In the YS sites concerned, the enterprising came about as a result of the small grants fund. The other YERC site that found traction, the QC 4H site, not only had a clear project objective, the BOP team as the community actors were very familiar with the task environment—the local clubs and their Board. At the Futures Association and the Calgary YS site the static and singular nature of the common spaces went well into the late stages of the projects. One DE reported, "They [the convening organization] at this point are

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[60] Case story: 62. "A not so deep slice of the community" (p. 368).

on their own." "People are talking about damage control. There are few bridges that have been made" (Dozois, 2009).

Various intermediaries stepped into those sites with concerns around need for broader collaboration. In Nain, it was the national convener's introduction of the Search Conference, and at the Futures Association, the national convener provided extra coaching for the Tomorrow Committee chair and coordinator. Taking a diplomatic risk, the executive director of YERC's national convener called the Futures Association executive director to suggest she give the site coordinator more autonomy. In four YS sites the DEs introduced various participatory processes, and in some circumstances, stepped in as facilitators. Some of these interventions met with success, while others did not.

It is interesting to note that in early communication from the YS funder, local conveners were encouraged to use the services of an external community facilitator for the initial process of designing the project collaboratively with a group of community partners. They also suggested that two different agencies based on skill sets, could take on the convening and administrative roles for YS. The suggestions were not heeded. All of the sites that were successful in receiving a grant from the Foundation also assumed full responsibility for the convening role, and only one site picked up on the Foundation's suggestion of an external facilitator for the early visioning phase. In retrospect, it appears a number of sites could have benefited from adopting the idea of an external facilitator with a special skill set for drawing out collective wisdom, vision and action.

   The Importance Of Establishing Effective Collaboration Between A Local And National Convener. The findings underline the importance of a national convener building strong collaborative common space with local conveners. YERC's national convener invested a great deal of time in building good working relationships with each of the site coordinators, and in some cases, key community stakeholders. The executive director of YERC's national convener spoke to why this was important to them, "Without that trust and confidence in who HW is, if that's not there, then we can't go deeper with that partner." During the entry phase the project consultant shared this reflection, "Taking the time to get to know each other, learn each other's interest and begin to build a more personal relationship is invaluable in terms of communication

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and working alongside the youth, as well as being able to work through challenges at later points with the partners."

The importance of establishing these strong collaborative common spaces is not to be undervalued. It became clear, as the research progressed, that in order to understand the complexities of introducing a CCYD approach to new communities, slow and careful attention to the development of quality relationships was required. The project consultant shared this reflection, "It is so simple, but seems necessary to state as a purposeful step. Something we take for granted perhaps." This finding was most clearly discerned in Nain where the national convener developed broader and deeper relationships than at some of the other sites. The project consultant and the research team there worked directly with youth, human service professionals, youth workers, government ministers, elders, small business owners and general citizens. Residents of Nain and community service professionals spoke often about the good fit between the national convener's approach and the community. It was as a result of relationships and mutual understanding established by the researcher and the project consultant with the local convener, the Rising Youth Council, town council members, youth-serving professionals and a number of Nunatsiavut government ministers, that the opportunity for significant involvement of the national convener became available during the project. It was this kind of work during the entry phase that created the right conditions for the SC.

However, it was only as the project reached its later stages in Nain that the project consultant and researcher felt they had finally developed the level of relationships and knowledge about the community that was necessary for fuller success. This following field note from my journal tells the story, "After three years of visiting this place it is clear there are lots of serious problems; nevertheless, I've gown to love what it has to offer, and its people. I was just beginning to understand how lasting social change might be accomplished but my time was up."

With YS, things didn't get off to a positive start for the national convener in the effort to build quality collaboration spaces in the local context. In 4 of the original 5 sites there were significant tensions between them and the local conveners. They faced storms in the entry phase at these sites on a number of occasions. The research suggests the cause of the tension was rooted in

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perceptions of conflicting messages from funders, a lack of familiarity with the local convening organizations' skill sets and a foggy understanding of the project mandate.

The national convener made a concerted effort to support local conveners and build stronger collaborative common spaces with them but what they offered didn't resonate. With staff changes at the national convener, adjusted reporting expectations and clarity on the small grants fund, things did improve significantly in YS's final year. Nearing the end of the project the national convener achieved a new level of credibility as they showed leadership on shared documentation and dissemination of learning. This was an area of expertise in which they were well experienced and the local conveners seemed happy for their guidance.

The influence of pre-established relationships. As stated earlier, the projects' funders expected the local conveners to reach beyond their usual community partnerships. Options ranged from simple collaborations with other community service agencies with committees taking action on a specific issue, to a full-scale comprehensive community mobilization that included community associations, individual citizens, small business and corporate groups. However, only in Nain during the Search Conference and in two YS sites, did the local conveners reach out broadly for more diverse community stakeholders. As a result, the directions taken by most sites were largely determined by the quality and quantity of the local convener's existing relationships. Though these pre-established relationships weren't broad or diverse, they did allow the local conveners to leverage the working history they had with other agencies.

In Nain, the local convener leveraged its relationship with the youth-led RYC, a few members of which were responsible for accomplishing some of the most significant community projects of YERC. During Nain's enterprising phase the convener's relationship building would continue to pay dividends. Case in point, it was discovered that some elders wanted to speak more often to the youth, and in turn that the youth would like to hear more often from the elders.

The QC 4H accomplished their project impacts with no wheel-spinning or internal strife largely because of strong pre-established relationships amongst the key actors, with the local convener organization and the recipients of BOP's service projects. In PEI, the site coordinator knew the youth who got involved as community actors personally for a number of years before the

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project got started. In each case, where the conveners leveraged a good reputation and quality working relationships with community partners, the results were positive impacts for the community that aligned with the project goals.

However, not all of the local conveners had existing relationships to leverage that could directly help their project achieve its intended goals. As a community development organization, the Future Association had limited relationships established with youth or youth-serving organizations. During their entry phase, they were at a loss as to what first steps to take for their project. The coordinator cast a wide net in the search for community partners with whom to build. At one point, they even put out a call via the local radio station and newspaper looking for any community groups or individuals interested in youth involvement in community leadership and service. For a number of weeks, the coordinator responded to a few inquiries and networked broadly but faced significant challenge in shaping anything tangible. By the time they were in the mid-term phase of their project, the executive director began to steer the coordinator internally towards other community projects operating at the organization that could incorporate youth, even when these were only loosely aligned with the YERC goals and the national convener's approach.[61]

In YS, the national conveners reported that the process of selecting local conveners prevented them from working within pre-established relationships and that as a result it, "set up an interesting 'us and them' dynamic rather than a sense of reciprocity and mutual interest in working together" (IICRD, 2010, p. 3). The national conveners also reported the, "importance of building on existing relationships or at least, taking the time to build these relationships before asking for commitments" (IICRD, 2010, p. 4).

   The Importance Of Pre-Established Relationships For Youth Inclusion. Local conveners building generative and dynamic common spaces was of particular importance to the youth inclusion agenda. Considering the evidence presented earlier in this thesis (Stollea & Dietlind, 2004; Zeldin, 2000; Campbell, 2002), it is reasonable to reflect on the question, "Would the common spaces have been more dynamic and generative had there been more youth

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[61] Story: 37. "Prospecting for partners and participants" (p. 340).

leadership?" In the research of the original HW YATs, the importance for successful youth and adult partnerships was recognized, "Many people were encouraged to share in decision-making responsibility. In this way, specific young people take leadership of aspects of projects that are appealing to them, and work with the team to get things accomplished" (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003, p. 101).

Although the funders expected community projects to include significant youth involvement, in five sites during the entry and mid-term phases, there was not only limited diversity in partnerships, there was very limited involvement of young people.[62] Again, it was the existence or non-existence of pre-established relationships that dictated the progress, or the lack thereof, towards the youth inclusion goal. The research found that local conveners that had pre-established relationships with young people were also the ones that had the most success in engaging youth. QC 4H, Nain and PEI with YERC, and HRM, Montreal and Victoria with YS were each able to leverage pre-established relationships with young people. Although each had their share of delays in the entry phase, these sites made quicker and deeper progress with community projects having a youth infusion element than three sites - Futures Association, Thunder Bay and Calgary - that did not have pre-established relationships with youth.

The Foundation believed the problem at some YS sites was more than a lack of relationships. "In addition to their bureaucratic culture and procedures and lack of expertise with youth, is a lack of will to make it so." These statements from local conveners illustrate the uphill climb, "We have never worked with youth," "That will never be our core piece of business" and, "We need people who are passionate and committed to youth engagement; it is tough enough with that commitment."

The Futures Association with YERC, and Calgary with YS, had the least success in engaging young people, each for different reasons. With the Futures Association having tired of the effort to look for external partners, the coordinator began to wonder if youth inclusion shouldn't first start at home – within the organization. "We need to start by building relationships and a welcoming environment for them to explore. They [Futures Association] are stuck because they

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[62] Case story: 63. "Challenges with youth involvement" (p. 369).

have not busted open the potential yet." There were knowledge and confidence gaps on how to include young people, and resistance to the idea from the chair of the Futures Committee and, some claimed, also from the executive director. "I think she [executive director] wants youth involvement but not youth engagement." Meanwhile, the executive director was beginning – similar to other sites – to leverage pre-established relationships to satisfy the thirst for action. But in this case those relationships were based in community development projects and the youth-inclusion agenda had to take a back seat. By the end of the project, the Futures Association had no more than three young people involved in project decision-making, and at that, the organization's volunteer and paid leadership limited the level of their contribution.

In the Calgary YS site, the attempt to engage youth considered marginalized brought about a steep learning curve. Although they were a well-established youth-service agency, they had limited experience with youth-led initiatives, or working with young people considered marginalized. In particular, they struggled with how to identify marginalized youth to apply to their small grants fund. "Standard marketing techniques were not attracting many potential grantees." Like the Futures Association, two YS sites had their work cut out for them just changing their own operational reflexes to engage young people, let alone lead an initiative encouraging others to do the same. Inaccessible and negatively oriented use of language and patronizing exchanges with youth contributed to their challenge in engaging youth. Although similar barriers were found in other sites, they were most prevalent in those sites unsuccessful in attracting any significant youth engagement.

 Though the local convening organizations in PEI and Nain did attract a small number of young people to their projects, they found the process more challenging than they expected. The same can be said about YS sites in Saskatoon and, initially, in Thunder Bay. Other than the QC 4H YERC, HRM and Victoria YS sites, there were no young people involved in meaningful decision-making roles until late in the mid-term, and in the enterprising phase for a number of YS sites. For YERC, approximately thirty-three youth were engaged between all sites. Only in Nain during the SC and with the QC 4H's BOP team did the findings indicate young people had any significant influence on organizational culture. Table 4.2 below describes the involvement of young people at the YERC sites and characterizes the type of involvement.

Site	Duration of engagement	Activity	Youth Engagement Spectrum	Number of youth
QC 4H	All of project	Senior youth trainers to serve as a resource to 4-H clubs and Futures Association on building youth and adult partnerships	youth-led	6
Futures Assoc.	During 10 - 24 month phase of project	Tomorrow Committee Youth and adults	Adult-led Youth consult	3
Nain	Four two-month periods	Program activity and event leadership Leadership camp Youth evenings Search Conference participation	Youth/adult partnership Youth-led actors	12 (average across various projects)
PEI	20 months	Youth Action Teams YATs	Community actors	12
Total				33

Table 9.2. youth involvement at the YERC community sites

From the funders' inception of the projects to their final days, the intent was to see their investment going beyond the local conveners and into tangible action, with young people engaging in community-building activity. In a move the YS funder hoped would assure more community-based youth activity, they mandated that thirty-five per cent of its funding was to be directed towards a small grants fund for youth-led, or at a minimum, youth-infused community projects. The program officer reiterated the mandate, "The youth-led projects are an integral part of the initiative design; they are not one dish on the buffet table."[63]

Among the six YS sites approximately fifty-four youth were involved in some form of decision-making role related to project activity. With a high expectation from the Foundation, youth involvement at some level of decision-making was attempted at all sites. "There was a steep and sometimes difficult learning curve, but the community partners have responded to the challenge of genuinely involving youth as decision-makers, as controllers of money, as voices for change, and as emerging leaders deserving respect and support. HRM and Victoria had youth involvement in their entry phase, Montreal later in their entry phase but still during the first

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[63] John Cawley, Director of Programs and Operations, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation (e-mail, 23/12/09).

year, and the remaining sites not until the enterprising phase when the small grants were issued. However, Calgary, Thunder Bay and Saskatoon struggled with youth involvement at an organizational level for the length of their projects. Those sites that did involve larger numbers of young people did so for between eighteen and twenty-four months of the three-year project.

Limited Adult Engagement. With the mandate and strategic importance of youth inclusion for the projects, it stands to reason that the local conveners had a role to play in creating common spaces that reflected youth and adult partnerships. This was another of the design principles communicated through the YERC national convener's Framework, and encouraged through YS's guiding principles. HW speaks to the approach, "There are unexpected benefits that arise in terms of the adult who becomes inspired or energized by the young people. The same thing goes for the young person, where they become inspired by the work that an adult is doing or they see a new way of doing something, and they want to mimic that in some way." One of the adult leaders from Nain spoke to the inspiration they receive from young people, "Young people give me hope."

For another perspective, a QC 4H BOP team member underlines the importance of establishing partnership between youth and adults, "They [adults] have too much to say. Adults can just make it a whole lot harder, it takes so much longer." Although youth participants at Nain's SC demonstrated the most significant action of all the community stakeholders, they were left without matching adult partners. One of the coordinators from Nain commented, "To know that a year ago the atmosphere was so strong and willing to make a difference in Nain among youth and adults. It saddens me to see what it has come down to. It has now been passed down to the youth and youth only." Throughout its project, the PEI site also suffered from very low adult support beyond the paid site coordinator position. In QC 4H, although the BOP team members were very competent leaders, they too were left wanting more adult support of their learning and actions.

Why the lack of adult support? Earlier in this chapter the research introduced findings related to organizational structure as having the potential to enhance or impede progress towards achieving the objectives of the projects – including strong common spaces for youth and adults. The limiting structures the research discussed included the steering committees, the

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coordinator position and staff-driven decision-making. The findings raise the question, "Did these structural elements also impede adult engagement?" If that was the case, then why in circumstances where youth were involved were there still an insufficient number of adults stepping up beside them?

All the YERC sites had a lower involvement of supportive adults than they had hoped for. Some community leaders argued that it was apathy. Others believed there was a general lack of faith in what young people can do if given the opportunity. It was those times when there was a meaningful action or way to contribute that young people in various sites got involved. This finding raises the question if more adults also would have gotten involved if had there been meaningful action identified for them to get involved with.

Chapter 10: Real-Time, Service-Oriented And Knowledge-Rich Support Of Community Actors, Front-Line Facilitators And Conveners

Introduction. At first look, the support task of the national conveners seemed a reasonable challenge for two well-respected organizations with more than fifteen years of community youth development experience. Many similar initiatives have set off with less to build on, and less experienced guidance. Both national conveners demonstrated particular strengths. The YERC national convener showed strength in building appreciative-based relationships in the entry phase and adapting to the coaching needs of the coordinators. YERC represented a number of firsts for the national convener: convening a national project, testing the dissemination of their Framework and overseeing a multi-year, multi-site, community-based project. The project, for them, represented a significant learning curve and caused a great deal of stress in the organization. The work of YS's national convener in the areas of resource development, coordination, administration and research design was well received.

Project findings have been discussed thus far related to the role of the national conveners in the site assessments, working within the established structure and supporting common spaces. The area left to discuss from the findings is what is commonly referred to as backbone support, and I have chosen to use the term *base camp* to stake out some new territory for the role. The term was popularized in a 2011 article on collective impact in the Stanford Journal for Social Innovation (Kania & Kramer, 2011). The authors suggest a separate organization to provide some infrastructure to help "plan, manage and support initiatives through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly." Both HW and IICRD provided the backbone support for their projects.

The study suggests that the following are key to effective base camp support for CCYD:

  • development of a strategy for youth engagement,
  • assessment of a community or an organization's readiness for CYD,
  that includes the clarification of the objective and therefore, the system being targeted
  for change,

• ways to create shifts in organizational practices i.e. workshops, hands-on tools, story

telling, grant making, youth-adult partnerships, communication with their communities,

• use of practical resources and clear processes,

• timely and specifically directed feedback and coaching,

• methods to identify key community resources (people and other),

• responsive action-oriented research and evaluation.

The following section highlights findings under the general theme of base camp support.

The Empty Space When There Is No Process Plan. The national conveners faced

extensive organizational and community development challenges, once the projects got started.

They spent three-quarters of their time in unfamiliar territory. Although YERC's national

convener was successful in building relationships through an appreciative approach, this alone

was not enough to sustain important relationships once the complexity of the project increased.

A lot was unknown, and there was a lot of searching.[64] For the national conveners it was like

trying to lead a group in the wilderness without a map. To further complicate matters, local

conveners that were thought to know their way forward in the work of CCYD, didn't. To add to

the challenge there were various service providers with their own ideas of which way to go with

the projects, and how to get there.

With YERC, it became clear within months following the start of the project that YERC's national

convener's Framework was insufficient to guide the work with the community sites – it left too

much to the imagination. A similar theme was found with the original YATs discussed in the HW

case, "Teams struggled at times to work in partnership with members of the broader

community. For instance, some of the youth action teams said that it was difficult to know what

to do, "we just do what we thought the community wanted, but we never really asked them

what they wanted" (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003, p. 101). Focusing in on a particular

system, and then strategically organizing, is the foundation of comprehensive change methods.

One DE described the problem as being, "a lot of little disconnected things. Unfortunately, at

the other sites any serious attempts to embrace CCYD happened too late in the project to take

hold." Still another site-based DE wrote, "The comprehensive intent of YS is compromised

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[64] Case story: 4. "A call for help from the front-line project staff" (p. 296).

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because they [the convening organization] do not have the capacity to hit the ground running." At those times, later in the project, when some of the sites did successfully communicate a direction and demonstrate action projects, they enjoyed larger and more engaged numbers of community partners and youth.

The national convener's Framework did not stand on its own, nor did the project consultant provide sufficient guidance on how to formulate specific strategies to activate its core values and activities. What little guidance was provided, for the most part, the coordinators did not find instructive. The coordinators entered into complex projects full of competing dynamics and vague direction. None of the local convening organizations or national conveners provided them with a model to guide their work. Although both projects did have guiding principles, and in the case of YERC's national convener their Framework, these only suggested a way of working; they did little to map out a clear path forward. The coordinators, in most sites, were left on their own to find their way through the complex world of CCYD.[65]

YS's national convener was caught unaware of the need or appropriateness for imposing their methodology. They, too, were under the impression that the local conveners didn't require a map through the wilderness. They, like the YS funder, believed the local conveners wouldn't require support to go about their youth engagement work. Like YERC's national convener, they were also staying in the background, doing what they thought was the respectful thing – letting the sites find their own way. "We wanted to keep it wide open and our understanding was that our role was to let the sites with apparent expertise do their thing." That assumption certainly obscured awareness of what support and training might have been helpful to the sites. In their final report, the YS national convener spoke about the level of support local conveners required from a national convener, "ensure that you are resourced and motivated to anticipate next steps allowing you to assess learning and resource needs along the way and execute quickly to support them" (IICRD, 2010, p. 4).

The lack of a coherent working model and a set of proven practices and tools for community engagement was a barrier to achieving the goals of both projects. Where both national

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[65] Case story: 27. "Unsure direction, no map, no direction" (p. 325).

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conveners faltered, was in not providing a clear process that could establish a project direction. Rather than empowering the site coordinators and the local convening organization, as they had hoped, the lack of guidance at times had the reverse effect.[66] Although three YERC sites expressed this concern, it emanated most clearly from the Futures Association. In this site, in the early part of the entry phase, a lack of clarity and guidance from the national convener chipped away at the site's trust that they would receive any worthwhile guidance. "Maybe this is the other side of having a lot of creative scope, that when you try to explain details of the project they [national convener] weren't – when we want to know details – they were not so clear, so there was a lot of generalities and what my executive [board] keeps asking me for is for specifics." The ED of YERC's national convener was aware of the challenge, "That personal relationship is really important but what we're missing is, again, a systematic way to answer questions."

Without a process or model provided by the national conveners, the local conveners, for the most part, incorporated their own, unproven processes for community engagement. They did so without the level of confidence in application that comes from experience. One staff member of a local convening organization shared this observation, "I think we were missing a method to help us understand how we organize. What do we know about how you organize? What are community capacity building processes? Building organizations for change is where we got stuck. We got diverted. What was missing was how you do systems development."

There were some unanticipated and unmet needs for resources and communication support for the community actors. Requests from project organizers suggested they were searching for a form of communication assistance from the national conveners. "She [site coordinator] would usually call me and say, 'You need to call so-and-so on the Ulipit. committee and ask them for such-and-such,' but really, it was my opinion that someone from the site should have been mediating that process." This type of request for support for communication between community stakeholders is an important function for comprehensive community development projects.

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[66] Case Story: 9. "National convener not able to keep up to local demands" (p. 302).

Occasionally, the project consultant provided program tools and resources to the site coordinators to help them with a specific question, program challenge or to communicate an idea. Most common would be a website link to an example of a program, or something HW had written about its practice for practitioners. There was also a successful logic model session at the Futures Association site that is an example of how a little help with planning could go a long way.[67] The YS national convener was more intentional on this front. They regularly provided resources and tools to the sites based on their particular areas of activity and interest. There were two areas identified for which resources and/or tools to help the sites were lack for both projects: recruiting and engaging young people, and assessing the readiness of potential convener organizations and/or community partners.

Communication Challenges Between The Administrations And Local Conveners. There was one individual employed by each of the national conveners that, at first glance, might have seemed to have only a secondary influence on the overall project goals. The research uncovered a different perspective. There were periods of significant communication and relationship breakdown, between the administrative assistants working for the national conveners and various community actors. The findings are important for how they inform the practice of establishing strong working relationships as part of a backbone support function. The administrative assistants handled a great deal of distant communication with community actors. They often had the most current information from the sites.

These were also the individuals who made many of the requests for information from the sites and therefore, received the first feedback and impressions from these requests. Requests for reports and other submissions were the most frequent tension points between the national convener and the local convener. During the critical relationship-building time of the entry phase, there were a number of exchanges with negative overtones – sometimes overt, sometimes not. The administrative assistants were on the front line of that push-and-pull tension.[68]

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[67] Case story: 41. "Logic model session" (p. 345).
[68] Case Story: 7. "Concerns expressed by the national convener about the local convener" (p. 300).

The YERC administrative assistant spoke about tension with one site, **"Most of my frustration has come from decision-making and communication that needs to come from the Ulipit Committee. We don't have any one contact there that is aware of all the interaction that happens between us and the LIHC [1st formal local convener] nor that seems to understand how the whole project is progressing."** The administrative assistant's comments shed the first light on the chaotic nature of the project at the Nain site as the leadership of the project changed hands a few times during their entry phase. The administrative assistants lacked a firsthand view of the context the local conveners were working within. Nevertheless, it was they who first reported to the national convener, concern with what appeared to be a disjointed approach in Nain. "There is no single project rep/liaison that goes regularly to meetings, so the information exchange seems inconsistent and incomplete, if there is an info exchange at all." For the national convener team what the administrative assistant flagged caused them to realize that if they were to effectively share their knowledge and experience, it would benefit from having a broader base of contact, beyond just the site coordinators and steering committees.

The leadership of the national conveners underestimated the degree of influence the project assistants would have on the projects' cultures. Whether it was considered their official role or not, in the words of one administrative assistant, she considered it her job to, "gently nudge and keep things rolling along." From the perspective of some of the coordinators, the request and nudges from the project assistants sometimes felt like demands, with the power balance tipped towards the project assistant. In two cases there was some significant tension that required intervention between the project assistants and community actors.

As the projects evolved, so did the administrative assistant position and personnel. The emergent nature of the projects, steep learning curve, and ambiguous objectives, was not an easy soup for the administratively inclined individuals hired for these positions, to jump into. The research highlights the importance of hiring people with not only the skills to accomplish the job at hand, but also the ability to do so with a character and personality that complements the intent to build strong common spaces. The administrative assistants needed an inclination for teamwork and the ability to communicate appreciatively and with clarity, tact and efficiency, at all time. As YS sites moved into their mid-term phase, a new person more appropriate to the needs of the project was appointed to the administrative assistant position.

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Unclear Role Definition Of Intermediaries Can Consume Valuable Resources. The YS national convener created a *community youth development* position as part of their support for the sites. The position was created with the intent of building a strong youth leadership component. With YERC had a similar, though broader, responsibility. Both were to be available to respond quickly, as a resource for the sites on youth engagement. As needed, they were to coach and/or source appropriate resources and examples of practice. The principles behind these positions had merit based on the projects' goals. However, neither of the two individuals who held the position during the YS project, nor the YERC project consultant, achieved clarity on how to execute their work. Though given a great deal of latitude they were handicapped by having no process plan or formal means to influence the involvement of youth or the program approach generally at the sites. For the individual in the YS community youth development position, any ideas for strategies they proposed or tried, failed to find traction. The position was an impotent one. YERC's project consultant also made a number of suggestions for various approaches but most didn't resonate with the community actors.

Ironically, with the valuable time and money these postions consumed, the positions may have restricted, more than helped the building of CCYD. At YS, the youth community development position was eliminated during the personnel restructuring that replaced the administrative assistant in the mid-term phase.

Straddling The Chasms Between The Funders And The Local Conveners. The national conveners were accountable to the funders. The research suggests that the positioning of the national conveners between the funders and the local conveners was awkward at best, and the degree of stress they faced as a result, negatively impacted the quality of their work as conveners. They took care of all the contracting, and managed the administrative functions with the sites on behalf of the funder. They chased after and compiled reports, administered and monitored contracts, and in the case of YERCs national convener, distributed grant payments to the sites. It was, for the most part, a thankless part of the national conveners' job.

With the national conveners managing the relationship with the funders, the local conveners were freed of a considerable amount of time and stress. Unfortunately, that stress was transferred to the national conveners. The national conveners stood between the expectations

for clarity, timeliness and accountability of the funder, on the one side, and the unpredictability of the projects at the sites, on the other. One community partner shared this observation, "I think one of the issues with them [national convener] is that they played a dual role. They were helping the Foundation [funder] make the funding decisions and they were supposed to be a support to the community. Those roles don't necessarily go well together and it definitely didn't work in this case." Others with YS were concerned that site visits from the national convener seemed more like the site visits that a funder would make, to determine if all was going well and funding was in the right place, rather than a coaching, supporting, partner visit. "I don't think anyone could do this dual role, unless they were already in the community and had previous positive relationships/reputation."

For the national conveners, straddling the gap was difficult. For YERC's national convener, their sense was that directives coming from the funder were unpredictable and caused more upsets than necessary. The senior staff member with the most contact with the funder shared some of her perspectives, "The management of the relationship has seemed very hierarchical. And though they [funder], as an organization seem in a high chaos mode right now – they are operating with strict controls." The exchanges with the funder left the YERC national convener feeling uncertain whether the funding would continue if things did not go the way the funder expected. "There is no notion that they [funder] will bear with us – when of course if the activity shifts, as it invariably does in the early building stages – there are new partner possibilities."

For YERC's national convener, one of the first points of tension with the public funder came up around the funder's mandate of forming steering committees as a first step in the communities. The YERC national convener was against mandating, or in any way forming, steering committees as a first step in its engagement process with the community sites. They believed in first establishing community relationships that respect the distinct character, assets and challenges of each circumstance in which they will engage together. This is consistent with the earlier finding regarding form following function. They did not feel mandating a steering committee was reflective of this principle. The position they took on the steering committee issue became one of a series of items of contention with the funder. Table 10.1 outlines the tension the steering committee mandate created between the national convener and the funder.

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Expectations of the Funder	Assumptions based on national convener's Framework	Concerns from the national convener
Steering Committee should be established as a very early step in the communities.

Partners should be identified early on in the process.

The needs of all project staff to be identified in advance and accommodated to the greatest extent possible. | Look for the opportunity to partner with existing associations, committees and other community structures as a strategy to build capacities for sustainable youth engagement activity.

There is great value in developing project committees that boast good youth and adult relationships. Building effective community committees, especially with youth and adult members, takes time. To rush the process is to compromise the outcomes.

The national convener's research has identified that young people and adults will engage when there is an action to engage in, a means to connect, meaningfully contribute and feed their passions.

A one-committee steering structure is inclined to be static. The national convener's framework encourages group-work at all levels of community youth engagement activity. | "There have been many, what I will call, 'previously unspoken expectations.' These have often been about [recruiting] other government partners. These previously unspoken expectations have also included threats of withdrawing funding."

Various committees and groups will emerge throughout the project duration with a focus on a specific action theme, and not always focus at the beginning of an initiative.

These groups will often be informal, highly emergent circles of action and learning. The evaluation process will follow the learning that takes place in these groups. |

Table 10.1. The disconnect in understanding between the YERC funder and the national convener

There were a lot of other, what the national convener referred to as, "previously unspoken expectations." These were often about bringing in other government funding partners. "They seem to feel that the more government partners that are 'bought in,' the more community is bought in. These previously unspoken expectations also included threats of withdrawing funding. The financial piece seems clearly to be the lead influencer in their work with us."

The relationship between YS's funder and its national convener was more productive and positive than it was with YERC. The Foundation understood the landscape of emergent projects and based their expectations for reporting on that understanding. As an example, they adjusted their expectations from the original proposals, when faced with a disappointing gap between what they had hoped for and what the local conveners were proposing in their submissions.

The most difficult chasm to straddle was the different perspectives regarding the small grant fund. The parameters for the money being granted to the sites needed to be clearer between the Foundation and the national convener at the beginning of the process. The combination of

what was perceived by the national and local conveners as inconsistent messages on use of the funds, combined with frustration from the funder on the relatively slow movement towards tangible program action at the sites, seemed to contribute to YS spiraling into a period of disenchantment during its entry phase.

Reporting For Learning And Discovery. During the entry phase of YS, the local conveners expressed significant concerns about the reporting expected of them. The primary concern was the amount of time required of the local conveners in reporting to the national convener and the Foundation. "This [reporting] cost a lot of money. It is surprising how much the linking [to partners and other sites] really cost – maybe 20 to 25 per cent of time spent on this project." "Keeping in touch with national has been too time consuming, and not reflected in the cost." "Due to the number of communities involved, the brevity and generality of reports and the widely varying stages of the initiatives, most local conveners found these updates to be more tedious and time-consuming than helpful." Based on feedback from the sites, the Foundation directed the national convener to shorten and simplify their requests for information from the sites.

The Foundation and the national convener communicated their desire that the reporting process include as much about what wasn't working at their sites as it did about what was. The Foundation's hope for the reporting process was that it would inform not only the national convener and the Foundation, but also serve as a process of reflection and learning for the community sites. Nevertheless, it seemed to be difficult for most sites to share with the Foundation what are commonly considered mistakes. In formal written reports and verbal exchanges, reports to the Foundation fell into the practice of making whitewashed blanket statements.

The YS national convener made significant strides in developing an innovative and integrated reporting process meaningful to all parties concerned. One of the DEs spoke to the refined method of gathering information from the sites, "I thought the requirements for the year-end report were well structured – particularly the questions around mechanisms, guiding principles and connecting the dots. They helped surface things that might not have been captured otherwise." With encouragement from the DEs as well as their involvement in constructing and

writing reports, skillful nudging from the YS program manager and increased confidence at the sites, the gap between what was being asked for in reporting and what the sites were ready to talk about, got narrower.

Section IV. Insights

We have come to the place in this thesis for reflection on what has been learned through the research. It is the, So what? part of the writing, a time to discuss the primary insights. This section builds upon the findings in order to examine some emerging ideas that inform practice, operational policies and strategy. With a theoretical foundation, it concludes with a discussion of the limitations of embedding a convening role for CCYD initiates within conventionally structured organizations with a youth-serving or community development mandate.

The insights have been drawn together under three themes:

- Criteria for convening an enterprising space for community builders
- Creating space for enterprising within community organizations

The chapters in this Section begins by associating the insight being discussed with a design principle drawn from the working theory and findings.

Chapter 11: Criteria For Convening Space For Community Builders

Relevant Design Principle: The knowledge, preparedness and quality of practice of conveners and front-line facilitators have a significant impact on the direction and outcomes of CCYD.

The local conveners faced a monumental challenge during the research. Mobilizing citizens around a common goal for the benefit of community, by itself would be a significant accomplishment. Including community groups and social service agencies clearly increases the challenge. Further, for funders to appeal to conveners to collaborate with the private sector—each of these demands truly requires distinct skills and competencies. Finally, and perhaps most important to the YERC and YS funders, was the expectation of meaningfully involving young people in the process. Though these challenges can be met, it underlines the importance of choosing a convener that can manage the complexity that lies between routine and innovation. A Mi'kmaq elder told a small group I was in a story about his time as a boy walking with an elder to find the right tree and branch to make a paddle. He spoke, "We went to forty-seven trees before choosing one. That one was offering itself. It had to be ready to reinvent itself to become something else." The story reflects the careful craft of selecting a convener. Based on the findings and my years of practice in the field of youth and community development, I suggest that in complex environments, the prevalence of certain criteria is a measure of the potential success of a convener, be the convener an organization or individual. Those criteria are that the convener demonstrate:

- the leadership to build a healthy learning culture,
- established relationships in the task environment,
- ability to navigate the task environments of the intended beneficiaries of the activity,
- capacity to facilitate a participatory and democratic process,
- the ability to provide and lead a clear action planning process, and
- capacity for responsive and ongoing backup support.

Leadership that establishes a culture for learning

Top among the criteria is that the culture of the convening organization reflects the conditions for enterprising. If an individual is being assessed, it is a matter of considering the culture of initiatives they have had leadership influence upon in the past. To assess an organization as potential convener, an assessment of the workplace culture for employees and community volunteers is the right starting point. If the leadership and individuals in the organization cannot create and support a healthy workplace culture, it is unlikely they will know where to start to encourage the conditions for enterprising when things get more complex in the community work. What's more, considering the stress involved in convening a complex initiative, the healthier the work conditions are before launching, the better. As the cases established, the predominant inclination is to protect routines when things get difficult on the edges of innovation.

The convener also has a critical leadership role, if a project is to maximize learning that can occur at the edges. Leadership is necessary to manage in the *space-in-between* the enterprising spaces and their objective. Whether it is individuals protecting routine and resisting change, or ambassadors for change, both require attention. The senior employee of a convening organization, a front-line facilitator or a developmental evaluator could carry out the intermediary leadership role. The YS funder noticed adult allies managing in the space-in-between, "In the process of bumping up against organizational structures, municipal policies, and adult attitudes, some young people, with the help of adult allies, were able to influence system change." The space-in-between is analogous with the ecotone of CCYD.

> Ecotone is a term used in botany and ecology to designate the transition zone between ecological communities such as marshland and better drained ground. Ecotones are therefore borderland places where ecologies are in tension, where the interplay of resources and nutrients contain the characteristic species of each ecological community. These overlapping communities are places of complexity and dynamism, generating rich possibilities for change. Where the two ecologies interact, environmental conditions change abruptly as the ecotone regulates the exchange of energy, material and conditions (Linds; Goulet; Sammel (Eds), 2010, p. xiii).

The leadership challenge of a convener hosting a design group is like that of a white-water river

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guide leading a group of paddlers through an eddyline.[69] An eddyline marks the ecotone between a river's fast-flowing currents and its calm back eddy. The eddyline is akin to the line between the quick and emergent nature of the enterprising space and more stabilized operations. Paddling through an eddyline is difficult, and comes with moments of tension and exhilaration. The river guide like all leaders in an eco-tone must be facilitator, intermediary and navigator leading a group between the known and the unknown. Once safely into the back eddy, there is a chance for reflection on what was learned from the last set of rapids, and preparation for the next challenges. It is in watching a design group paddle through eddylines, where lessons for local conveners are rich, and their leadership critical.
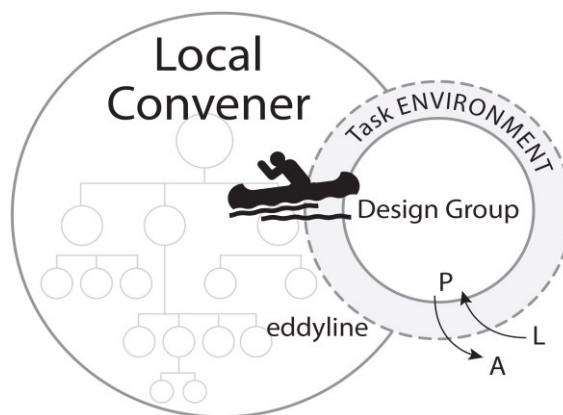
Figure 11.1. *The role of leadership at the precarious eddyline between a design group and the normal and routine operations of a local convener (L: learn, P: plan, A: act)*

Established relationships and activity in the task environment

I became aware during the study, of a significant gap in the effort to engage community members in the projects. It is difficult enough to get citizens involved in community volunteer

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[69] "An eddy line is a current differential between the upstream current of the eddy and the downstream current of the main flow of the river."
http://www.adventuresportsonline.com/glossary.htm

"Eddy-lines are 'squirly' sections of water to cross in and out of."
http://paddling.about.com/od/whitewaterpaddling/a/Advanced-Whitewater-Kayaking-River-Feature-Terminology.htm

efforts, let alone engage to create change. The vision of the YERC and YS funders was to engage with a deep and broad slice of the community to enact systems change. To even start this work required local conveners to have relationships in a defined system being targeted for change. Leiterman & Stillman (1993) speak to this need, "The efforts we refer to as community-building, the building of and cultivation of relationships, are severely undervalued and underfunded" (p. 68). Pre-established working relationships create better opportunities for conveners to understand the system they are hoping to affect and mobilize others in the change effort.

The funders' vision for YERC and YS called for mobilization strategies to go beyond working with the usual community agencies that do youth work. However, at most of the community sites this is where the collaborations occurred—in the known territory. Within a framework of CCYD, the strategy options available to the local conveners ranged from collaborations with other youth-serving community organizations on a specific issue, to a full-scale cross-community mobilization with multiple foci. With the YERC cases, although broad community engagement wasn't formally mandated, the funder implied it. In the sites where little community engagement occurred, the opportunity for longer-term impact was significantly diminished. In the case of YS, it was a significant side-step from the original vision, that most conveners never seriously attempted to mobilize individuals or organizations beyond the traditional community service agencies and institutions they were already in relationship with.

One YERC convener had pubic relations issues in the community before the project even began. A community member spoke openly about the executive director of the convening organization. "She is not very well respected in the region and/or by the people who relate directly with her." And regarding the convener's culture and approach, "YERC may be the first real grass-roots initiative at the [convener organization]" Similar concerns were shared during the site pre-assessment by a staff member of a provincial agency involved in community economic development, "I feel that they [local convener] will do what they need to do to get the money—they do a lot of what they call consultations, and that is it. There is little action and questionable consultations." In this case, the local convener was obviously starting off with some relationship challenges in the environment.

A HW story underlines the importance of working relationships, and the time it takes to establish them. It took HW more than ten years to accomplish a reasonable level of two-way dialogue about youth engagement at a government agency responsible for youth-in-care in Nova Scotia. It was ten years of at times difficult relationship building, as HW navigated the inner workings of the agency and its programs and services. Once a foundation was established, HW was invited to participate to talk about strategies and lead a new program. The eventual results were some of the most innovative youth inclusion programs the government agency had been part of.

Many years after that earlier work at HW I am involved in a similar circumstance with a design group of young people in foster care at another children's aid society. The group, known as Beyond Boundaries, has a systems-change objective of developing improved child- and youth-centred practices at the society. The convener is the Children's Aid Society, and some of their staff and young people in care have formed a design group. This group obviously has significant relationships and knowledge of the task environment—the agency itself. The progress the group has made within a year of launching this systems change initiative is advancing far more rapidly than what we experienced in the NS case so many years ago. Change moves quicker with established relationships. Applying a methodology of action-oriented research, one agency staff and I paddle the eddyline of the change initiative together.
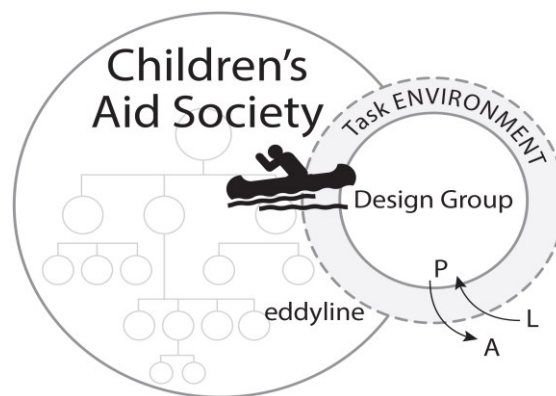
Figure 11.2. A depiction of the role of leadership along the precarious eddyline of the Beyond Boundaries program example, hosted by a Children's Aid Society, (P: plan, A: Action, L: Learn)

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With relationships already established in the environment in which a systems change activity is to take place, a convener has a heightened level of awareness, and capacity to navigate. In Nain the site coordinator knew how much it meant to families to get out on the land and the depth of the pain that drugs, alcohol and spousal abuse had caused in the community. Her insider view gave her a sense of what might be possible. "There is a lot of money that comes from drugs and alcohol. I think there's a lot of people who would want that to change." She also knew of specific people in the community who she felt had what it would take to change things. "They just need to be organized—it's a matter of them getting together and have them listened to." The Nain mayor emphasized the importance of navigating the task environment and finding leadership throughout the community, rather than from a convening agency or people from away, "It has to come from leadership within the community, like myself or the ministers that are here or the servitude elders." Having lived long in their communities, the coordinators and the on-the-ground local convener in Nain and PEI were able to reach beyond the boundaries of their official position and mandate. They not only knew the other organizations, but they knew the personalities of the people who worked at these organizations. These relationships allowed them to quickly identify organizations and staff who were important to collaborate with.

In summary, a strategy of supporting conveners already invested in relationships engaged in systems change is recommended. As such, the role of a local convener becomes one of a fire keeper—supporting the organizing of other community actors. The research suggests this to be a sound investment for a funder hoping to catalyze citizen engagement. It is also the more respectful approach to working with potential conveners, as opposed to asking that they establish new relationships in a task environment they may be less familiar with.[70]

The ability to navigate the environments of the intended beneficiaries of the activity

A convener benefits from pre-established relationships that create a means to navigate the environments of the intended beneficiaries of CCYD activity. If, for instance, you had a job to improve the system and work environment of migrant workers picking tomatoes, what would you want to know? Perhaps about the workday of a tomato picker, how they do what they do,

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[70] Case story: 14. "Visitors succeed with a new approach" (p. 308).

what they deal with while they pick, what time of day is best to pick? Perhaps how body posture impacts efficiency, the best technique for getting the tomato off the vine, and so on. And of course, you would need to speak their language or you wouldn't even get started. That is a lot to consider. And that's for tomato picking—though hard work, a fairly straightforward task. The work of engaging young people, through a CCYD initiative, is far less straightforward.

The mandate of YERC and YS was to engage with young people, marginalized and not, in community development work. The beneficiaries of the change initiative were to be young people first and then through their engagement, the community. No one understands tomato picking better than a tomato picker. And no one knows the life of a young person and the environments they live with better than a young person.

As reported earlier, the local convening organizations that had a pre-established network with youth, and those organizations that serve youth, had a significant advantage in carrying out the work at hand. Unfortunately, most of the local convening organizations lacked pre-established relationships with youth, and in some cases, with agencies that serve youth. With little or no experience working with young people in general, let alone those who are marginalized, a number of the sites faced a steep learning curve. The DE from one site shared this perspective: "They [the local convening organization] have never been able to engage the kind of youth they are supposed to be engaging."

A young person recently introduced me to her life living with a drug-addicted mother. Not only were the words she used to talk about her mother's life new to me, so too was the descriptions of what their lives were like. I would have no business convening much of anything in her mother's world. This young person on the other hand, could operate in that world quite well. She could navigate the language, the people, the risk and the opportunities—good and bad. She was an expert on the life and daily task environment of an addict and the life of someone living with one.

YERC and YS represented a new kind of activity for both the local and the national conveners. It was also new, therefore, to be coaching others to find CCYD strategic pathways. To find these pathways, it was advisable, at a minimum, that the conveners had established significant

relationships with a cross-representation of young people. If those relationships were established through shared decision-making at the organization with young people, the organization was in a better position to be in a convening role.

For a funder, or other catalyst, to pledge a project investment to an organization, based only on a stated intent to include young people, creates a long-term prospect with a weak foundation. At the Futures Association, the existence of the Tomorrow Committee was considered a promising indication of a structure through which there could be new youth engagement opportunities and practices. Time was taken during the project assessment to meet with the chair of the committee, who was a young business leader and previous recipient of a Tomorrow Committee award. This increased confidence that the Association had interest in, and the ability to convene the YERC project, and to involve young people in decision-making. The committee chair spoke of the role he believed youth should have on the committee. "Youth should play an equal role to anyone else voting and with the work to do, don't give them a minor role. They should play as large a role as anyone on the Committee." Unfortunately, this intent and the position of authority that went with it, disappeared when the chair resigned before the project got off the ground. And the Tomorrow Committee, a group chaired with a design principle of positional authority, was void of any conditions for enterprising and failed to engage any youth meaningfully during the term of the research. Any significant pre-established relationships with youth and/or young adults were missing at the convening organization.

Regardless of the intended beneficiaries, having them intimately involved in a co-design process of a change initiative, significantly increases the chance of its success. For CCYD, the benefits are clear. Youth are problem solvers able to rise to community challenges, unbridled by traditional thinking or established patterns; they bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas and inspired action. As introduced earlier, youth encourage hope, value-based service and relationship-building—critical elements to community enterprising (Stollea & Dietlind, 2004; Zeldin, 2000, 2003; Warner, Langlois, & Dumond, 2003; Zeldin, 2003).

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Capacity to facilitate a participatory and democratic process

A gap identified in the local and national convening role, in the case of YERC and generally in the work of CCYD, is the shortage of expert, ongoing guidance for the practices and support of community organizing. There is a commonly held belief that non-profit organizations are, by nature, participatory, democratic and relationship-based. This generalization did not reflect the reality at the community sites during the research.

As I have established, the culture of a local group, convening a change project, has a big influence on how well things proceed. During the research to achieve the comprehensive community change the catalyst hoped for, the local conveners were called upon to facilitate the building of a project culture that espoused conditions for enterprising. In the original HW YATs, young people explained that, "successful adult support people help youth work together effectively, deal constructively with conflict, and take time for play and bonding. As one young person noted, 'she [adult support person] kind of just keeps us civilized and makes sure we don't all talk at the same time and everybody's opinions get heard.' Youth expect supportive adults to be familiar with group processes and sklilful facilitators of group dynamics" (Warner, Langlois & Dumond 2003, p. 100).

Amidst the hierarchical structure, and the policies and procedures of a project, the importance of a collective space for learning and making shared decisions can get lost in the busyness. Unfortunately, this occurred in a number of instances with YERC and YS. For the first half of the projects at most sites, the quality of relationships was not what was hoped for at staff and committee levels, nor between the local and national convening organizations. In those sites where the local conveners didn't facilitate a participatory process, things fell back to the more conventional forms of process, with positional authority and coordinator-driven decision-making.

The lack of participatory processes extended to local conveners' practices with community partners. As was earlier reported, the local convening organizations were significantly challenged in their effort to get other community agencies to plan together. DEs from the YS sites reported, well into the second year, "Partners that were at the table have become

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disengaged. The local convener at this point is on their own." Another DE reported that at their site, "People are talking about damage control. There are few bridges that have been made."

The need for a clear action planning process

Though the Framework of YERC's national convener is evidence-based and well received in the field in NS, as discussed earlier, it is still only a framework. It communicates important design principles and community resources, but not a clear action planning process. The project organizers were without a map to guide them through the complexity they were dealing with. With the highly emergent nature of the activity at the community sites, both the national and local convener organizations were on their learning edge and often outside of their comfort zone.

The fact that the YERC and YS journeys were difficult and complex has been established. For the local conveners to be on, or leading, the journey without an action-planning framework to move the systems-change objective forward, made life even more difficult. There was no rigorous and shared framework to make sense of all that was unfolding. In the beginning, those on the journey were focused on the destination—a vision of contributing to building more resilient communities through youth engagement. The vision and resources for the projects served the purpose of getting things started, but early in the projects' lifecycle, progress was compromised. It was almost a constant struggle, as national and local conveners searched for routes to identify opportunities, and deal with obstacles.

Only one of the local convening organizations demonstrated the confidence to lead a process that would identify a common purpose, map the systems concerned, and engage individuals and agencies to take strategic action to accomplish the desired changes. The other local convening organizations lacked the necessary knowledge and experience to guide the change process. Vague system-change targets and unclear entry points hampered the involvement of community partners. One DE commented, "Going into this project, we didn't have a well developed understanding/model of systems change."

In lieu of a community development model, most community sites resorted to their usual

methods of developing strategy, based on positional authority and pre-established relationships in the community. As one YS DE reported, "The comprehensive intent of YS is compromised because they [local convening organization] don't have the capacity to hit the ground running." One year into the project, the national convener had more questions than answers on how they could best support the sites. None of these questions were simple. The YERC project was the first time the national convener had funding to be involved in a multi-year period to focus on any one particular community initiative. They were challenged to take their work further than they had gone before. An action-planning framework and clear process would have alleviated a great deal of anxiety.

There are time-tested processes of high-participation systemwide change ranging from the popular Open Space to Search Conference[71], that can dramatically increase channels of communication and understanding in a group (Holman, Devane, Cady, 2007). OST is a, "foundational method" for many of these methods. (Holman, Devane, Cady, 2007, p. xiii).   The methods help to establish a broader footprint in the community for a convening agency, and significantly improve a group's ability to seek solutions together.

Capacity for responsive base camp support

I recently spoke with a friend and colleague, one week before her facilitation of a big multi-day planning event to address an important community issue. With an anxious and tired voice, she shared, "Logistics … I'm always in logistics." Though she has exceptional skills as a facilitator, convener and host, to juggle all of these roles simultaneously is more than anyone can do effectively. The time she spent on logistics for the event was at the expense of time to refine the design of the experience, and to be rested for the important and demanding task of facilitating. For her, there was no backup support.

> The research revealed that when backup support is held by an organization that also has authority for the expenditures and reporting, the line between serving and interfering gets very thin.

The absence of backup support for front-line project organizers in community development projects is not uncommon. Backup support can be compared to that which a base camp might

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[71] Case story: 15. "Search Conference - a whole-systems community planning event" (p. 309).

provide to a group on a wilderness journey: supplies, maps, communication with external resources, first-aid in the case of emergencies and extra food if things take longer than expected. A base camp allows those leading the wilderness experience to keep their focus on the important work of getting their group safely through their journey. In the context of a CCYD project, backup support can be focused on things such as maintaining a learning community network, report writing, training, and evaluation. Whether it is a separate organization providing the backup support, or a local convener, it is important to recognize the unique needs, competencies and mandate that come with the role.

The research highlighted the often-overlooked influence, in the backbone support role, of those responsible for the administration of a project. In the case studies, the individuals in this role were the primary contact, communicating expectations to the community sites from the national convener, and indirectly from the funder. Like the receptionist at an office, a customer service representative or a sales clerk, the tone of their communication establishes the impressions people have of the entire operation.

In the case of YERC and YS, attempts by the assistant administrators to get reports and other submissions from the sites created tension between the national and local conveners. It became clear, from observing this tension, how important it is for personnel in base camp to communicate appreciatively, even in the face of the storm. Strong base camp support removes distractions from those facilitating group spaces, so they can more completely immerse themselves in navigating the complex world of CCYD.

Chapter 12: Creating Enterprising Space Within Community Organizations

Relevant Design Principle: Adaptable structural components that serve function regardless of how emergent, and that impose positional authority judiciously

Many of the findings I discussed in the previous chapter concerned the opening, or space provided by the local convening organization for youth inclusion. The opening reflected the convening organizations' culture. As has been established, when certain conditions were found in common spaces, they contributed to a culture of engagement and enterprising. Conversely, when these conditions were not present, there was limited engagement, and in turn, less community enterprising. How can the findings be applied in designing project structure? There is always some form of structure at work; design group members just need be clear what it is. And when useful, adapt the design to maximize the space to roam, so members can find their place while exploring the task at hand, and get to know the abilities of other group members along the way.

The private sector practice of creating a space for a group of people to experiment, apart from the distractions of the rest of the business operations, provides some direction. The space, sometimes referred to as a *skunkworks*[72]*,* can be likened to a space established for a design group. Uninhibited by the usual ways of operating, a design group can operate within their own *eco-niche* analogous to a learning environment (Johnston & Turvey, 1980, p. 26). For CCYD, it is important to learn from alternative structural designs such as these. Enterprising spaces, whether intentional or not, foster experimentation by operating more cooperatively and democratically than the norm within the host organizations.

How might a community organization increase enterprising, while burdened with a conventional structure based on a hierarchy of positional authority and principles of competition? Open Systems Theory (OST) provides a theoretical foundation to explore this question. As earlier introduced, OST suggests that there are four parameters to open systems and that we must know something about each of the four parameters to be able to characterize any system or any

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[72] skunkworks project - typically developed by a small and loosely structured group of people who research and develop a project primarily for the sake of radical innovation (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition on dictionary.com).

environment. In other words, one cannot define a system separately from its environment. Again, the four parameters are: a system or, for this discussion, a design group; an environment; the system learning about its environment; and planning to change it (Emery, M., 2000a).

As discussed in the analysis of the cases, the way the local conveners structured their projects made it difficult to achieve much in the way of enterprising. However, the enterprising that did evolve at some of the YERC sites, and related to YS's small grants fund, offer lessons about the way spaces might be structured, managed, led and positioned to support enterprising design groups. The examples also provide valuable feedback for conveners, or host of the space. The stories from the enterprising community projects demonstrate an alternative form of organizing than the usual practice at the local convener organization. In some cases, as the confidence and action of the design groups grew, so too did their questioning of the standard ways of operating. This posed a creative tension that was either suppressed or embraced by the host organization is leadership.

In all examples of community enterprising discussed in the cases and highlighted in the findings, those in authority had created space for new forms of organizing within their midst. Granted, the boss was still the boss—their position on the hierarchy gave them authority—but these spaces had a sense of being separate from the usual, and project organizers were given more freedom to experiment.

Overall success at any of the community sites depended upon the local convening organization adapting to inputs from the project task environment. For a design group, the task environment includes many systems in the community that are in constant flux. When environments change, the reason people organize in any particular way also changes. People attempt to adapt to what the environment sends their way—both constraints and opportunities. This ongoing attempt to adapt, places a design group in perpetual cycles of novelty and change.

The arrows in Figure 12.1 depict the exchange between the system (design group), and its task environment. The environment of immediate concern to a system or for our purposes, a design group, is referred to as its task environment (M. Emery, 1999, p. 173). The Learn arrow indicates a design group's capacity to learn from its environment, and then Plan to take action to make

desired changes, and Act to execute changes and better adapt to its environment. No matter how the system is characterized, e.g. as an organization, individual, family or design group—its resilience is dependent on how well it adapts to its environment. The *Act* arrow is a depiction of the enterprising response from a system to the environment that changes both the system and the environment.
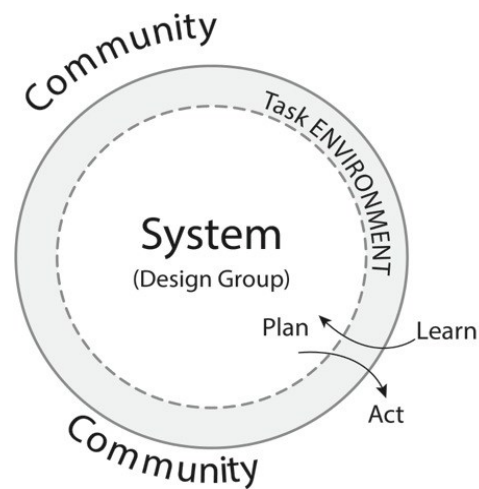
Figure 12.1. Portrayal of OST, system (design group) and task environment (L: Learn, P: Plan, A: Act)

Boundary riding with space for enterprising

A structure within a community organization that maximizes enterprising can increase its chances of resiliency. In Figure 12.2 a space for a design group is conceptualized as straddling the permeable boundary between the host system (local convener) and its environment. In this depiction, the design group shares elements of its environment in common with that of the convener. This positioning implies an opportunity for the convener to increase its learning about the environment as a result of the activity of the design group. The BOP team at the QC 4H community site can be depicted in this way. There were elements of the task environment of the BOP team that were shared with the QC 4H Board. As the result of BOP's work, the 4H Board learned a great deal about ways in which they might engage senior youth members, and offer new services to their membership and the community.

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The positioning of an enterprising space, as depicted in Figure 12.2, can provide valuable learning from the environment for a host organization—a local convening organization in this case—that it may not be party to otherwise. With this *boundary-riding* positioning, the design group is better equipped to focus on building a directive correlation with the environment, rather than simply focus on the development of the host system.
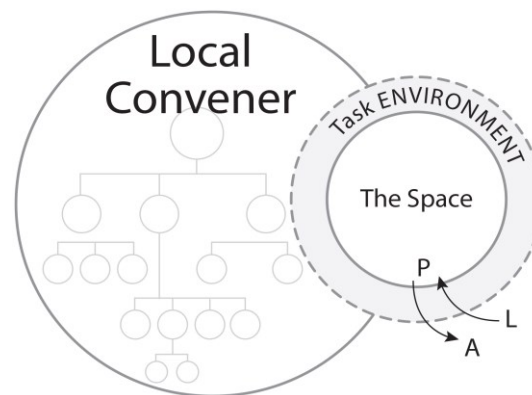
Figure 12.2. Boundary-riding positioning of an enterprising space within a community organization *(L; Learn, P:Plan, A: Act)*

The culture of the enterprising space and the *affordance level*, or room, provided it by the host system, could result in valuable interpretations, including new perspectives that can inform innovation. "Cultural change can be powerfully accelerated by amalgamation of different traditions" (Sober and Wilson, 1998). YS's funder recognized that the impact of small enterprising-type projects should be considered in the context of any organizational learning or change that occurred. The funder spoke of this learning, "many of these projects were of short duration and only benefitted small groups of young people; a conventional cost/benefit analysis might lead people to question the greater value of these projects. This focus on the outcomes of the projects needs to be complemented by an appreciation for their impacts at institutional levels and for the development of knowledge and tools…"(Cawley, 2010, p. 1).

The boundary-riding positioning for a design group is much more adaptive than, for example, expert interveners from outside the system or community, or control by only senior administration of a community organization hosting an initiative. An organization with an enterprising space will increase its potential to become what management guru, Peter Senge (1990), refers to as a learning organization. An enterprising space with its boundary-riding function can help an organization begin to experience what it feels like to be a learning organization. Resiliency experts Fikret Berkes and Carl Folke (2002) share this assertion, "creating small-scale disturbances can build social-ecological resilience, thereby increasing the adaptive capacity of a system to deal with larger-scale disturbances" (p. 146).

The value of a boundary-riding positioning for a design group is of particular relevance during times of upheaval and renewal in an organization (Holling & Gunderson, 2002). For a community organization, demands for adaption can happen quickly. The catalyst might be losing a key funder or client group, the lifting of a central policy, or even the infusion of unexpected financial resources. At such times, an organization is likely to be dealing with the creative tension between destruction and opportunity. The resolution of the tension is at the heart of resiliency. Ralph Stacey (2012), a leading researcher of complexity for organizational learning, describes this learning edge as a *zone of complexity*, a time that contains high uncertainty and little agreement in an organization. Stacey (2012) argues that traditional approaches to solving problems will not be very effective here, as it is a time of high creativity, innovation and breaking from the old ways of doing things.

Senge (1990) writes about how mastering creative tension throughout an organization leads to a profoundly different view of reality" (p. 357). Positioning an enterprising space at the eddyline can be an opportunity for rich learning. This places the design group not *inside the box,* or better said in this context, not inside the host organization—where there are too many rules and constraints—and not *outside the box* or in the environment where there is no support structure or association with the core. To maximize the learning for the convener, and to encourage engagement and conditions for enterprising, the design group needs to live on the edges of the system. The edges hold the possibilities for transformational change. Mintzberg (1998) confirms, "The interaction between established routines and novel situations is an important source of

learning" (Mintzberg, H., Ahlstrand, B., & Lampel, J. 1989, p. 185). It is on the edges of an organization's learning that the boundary-riding function can be most valuable.

Space for youth engagement

The enterprising spaces were an opportunity for the convening organizations to experiment with young people having more involvement in planning and action decisions than those in authority might otherwise have been comfortable with, at the core of their operations. The success of the convening organizations in adapting was determined partially by how well they did in meaningfully involving young people in the change effort. Companies operating skunkworks projects, and other forms of research and development units, do so for the potential of harvesting new ideas. The enterprising spaces were an opportunity for the local conveners to introduce new ways of involving young people in their organizations. The YS national convener reported the importance of this opportunity, "It is in changing policies and establishing structures and practices that young people are better able to navigate the systems that affect their lives (IICRD, 2010, p. 6). The spaces for enterprising had potential to generate ideas that, if harvested and integrated, could contribute to the local conveners' organizational renewal—or at least, help it understand a way to engage with youth, and challenge traditional stereotypes. This was the observation of the original HW YATs.

> "Young people confirmed the transformative effect of youth action on negative adult attitudes toward young people. Through the team context, youth actions become highly visible events that challenge damaging stereotypes and highlight youth roles in building communities. Adults who get to know youth through the teams speak of the domino effect on community attitudes toward youth. In one instance, after hearing a team give a skilled presentation to high-school students about sexual health issues, the school's administration requested that the team help them develop a plan to raise awareness about issues of racism. In combination with youth actions, adults champion youth as community builders, and the word spreads creating more opportunities for youth impacts" (Warner, Langlois, & Dumond 2003, p.99).

The idea of carving out space for youth and adult engagement within community organizations brings me to a question.

> Reflective Question: Are there ways for conventional adult-controlled organizations, with a structure designed with positional authority, to attract the kind of engagement

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and enterprising from young people that youth-led organizations often seem able to accomplish and was witnessed in the spaces for enterprising observed in the cases?

The *Final YS Report* explored the need to consider alternative structures for convening and organizing. The report recommends, "Look at more youth-led organizations and structures as convening organizations and providing them with support to link to other systems to scale their innovation up and out" (IICRD, 2010). Though I understand the attraction to the energy of youth-led organizing, I suggest the quantity and quality of engagement, and the enterprising it can lead to as enjoyed by many youth-led organizations, has less to do with it being youth or adult-led, and more a result of the ability and inclination of an organization's formal leadership to nurture conditions for enterprising.

Part B. Innovations for Community Enterprising

Introduction

The next three chapters advance the discussion of convening CCYD initiatives outside of conventional youth-serving organizations in search of a new pathway that can release community compassion and caring in the form of community enterprising. The discussion in Part B begins with an alternative proposition to the common approach of locating a youth development or community development project space within a conventional community organization. The discussion is a theoretical conceptualization of the need for the democratization of solution-seeking spaces in communities. As with YERC and YS, current local convening roles are carried out by organizations with a needs-based orientation. The result is community engagement and enterprising taking a far back seat. The proposal is that an enterprising space be associated more directly the community, and organized, governed and structured as a participatory and democratic organization. Moving forward from that foundation, and the design principles for enterprising spaces, Chapter 14 & 15 introduce practices for community building intramediaries, and a model for CCYD that embraces them.

Limitations of convening for CCYD in conventional ways. Though CCYD assumes the involvement of the broader community, the reality the study revealed is that the activity resided almost entirely with public and private community organizations. Community is not an organization, yet the strategies and processes used for projects like YERC and YS are designed as though it is. Projects intending to involve citizens need to be designed such that they are more *people friendly* than *organization friendly*. As has been discussed, the skills, knowledge and networks of the national and local conveners in the case studies were assessed for their collaborative work with other community organizations rather than the community as a broader system of individuals. Other than their volunteers, the local conveners in the case studies showed little capacity to engage with citizens in their community to address the project mandates. In addition, the decision-making authority reported in the case studies wholly rested with the local convening organizations, and only in rare moments during the lifecycle of the projects, did it filter down to citizens as individuals.

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The cases, tell stories of coordinators making most of the decisions; in others a management team of two or three staff members had decision-making authority. As earlier introduced, the community sites also had various levels of input and authority practiced by steering committees. The study reveal plentiful examples of opinions being suppressed due to packed agendas, voices that were too passive or assertive, negative underlying personal dynamics and autocratic leadership. Similarly, I have observed in a number of organizations beyond the context of the research, new members of a board of directors trying to make change only to find they cannot because the structure and culture are resistant. This centralized decision-making with little room for collective process is incongruent with the principles and intention of CCYD, and as a concern for future projects of this type.

John McKnight, (1989, 1995, 2010) suggests that the period of growth of professional human services began a separation of the common citizen from our responsibility for helping our neighbours. McKnight (1995) argues that, "Care can never be produced, provided, managed, organized, administered, or commoditized. Care is the only thing a system cannot produce" (p. x). As the case studies and McKnight's work suggest, there is reason to be concerned that the conventional methods of convening and facilitating community and youth development may actually be a constraint to the engagement of youth and citizen it seeks.

If we want to involve youth in helping find innovative solutions to today's difficult and complex social issues, we can no longer rely on the business as usual approach of most established public and private organizations. Based on the researcher's thirty years as a practitioner, and the thesis findings, it is clear the time has come to fully embrace the difficult and complex path of working in new ways.

The ways we organize caring services in a community have had a very long shelf life. Even Twinkies ended its eighty-three year run, a new company is taking over and reinventing the iconic cream-filled sponge cake. The research suggest that if CCYD is to live up to its potential to transform communities as places where young people thrive, yet also guide a chain reaction of community caring and goodwill, it requires radical shifts in the way solution-seeking spaces are convened and facilitated by community organizations. Time to re-invent the Twinkie.

A new way to organize in the community. Knowing the limitation of DP1 organizations, and the effort to engage youth and adults in community enterprising, leaves us with a question, "How can we best organize to catalyze community enterprising with citizens of all ages?" What OST describes as Design Principle 2 (DP2) organizations, provides part of the answer. DP2 organizations are structured as a hierarchy of functions rather than positions, as in a DP1 organization, and have cooperative and democratic principles (Emery, M., 1993). In practice, that means that different people, throughout the hierarchy focus on different aspects of an initiative. In the democracy that is foundational to DP2 organizations, it is not that there are no rules or consequences, rather it is that these are determined by the people doing the work on the front line. That means no more micromanaging others' affairs, and the people on the top not making all the big decisions. In a democratic system each individual, no matter their place in life, has an opportunity to contribute their particular gifts, skills and perspectives for the collective good. Frances Westley offers a valuable link to these characteristics from resiliency theory,

> "Of course, "managing for emergence" is easier in some cultures than others. Some cultures allow ideas to move freely and quickly, combining with other ideas in the kind of bricolage necessary for innovation. Studies of resilience at the community, organizational, and individual levels suggest that these same qualities characterize organizations and communities that are resilient to crisis and collapse. The characteristics that these organizations and communities share are low hierarchy, adequate diversity, an emphasis on learning over blame, room for experimentation, and mutual respect. These are all qualities that support general resilience. If they are attended to, the capacity for social innovation will also increase, creating a virtuous cycle that in turn builds the resilience of the entire society (Westley, 2013, p. 10).

The same human qualities of group creativity that produce innovation that Westley advocates for are available in DP2 organizations, which produce psychological satisfaction for the individual (F. Emery & Thorsrud, 1969; M. Emery, 2000) and a culture of empowerment for people. These structures create conditions that foster self-motivation by providing individuals with as many functions and skills as possible, keeping responsibility for learning and planning with the people doing the workOrganizations designed with DP2 can most readily foster conditions for enterprising.

What about an alternative, initiated and convened by citizens, and governed in a participatory and democratic manner that embeds space for enterprising more directly in communities?

Figure B.1 is a depiction of this proposition that invites more direct opportunity for community involvement. The type of organizational constraints experienced at all levels of YERC and YS that held back engagement could be irrelevant if the front door of entry for citizen involvement—young and old—was community, and not a DP1 organization. If the space was hosted by a group of citizen social entrepreneurs, and that group of citizen were organized with a participatory and democratic structure, the possibilities of propagating community enterprising and restoring a community's caring reflex, are indeed great.
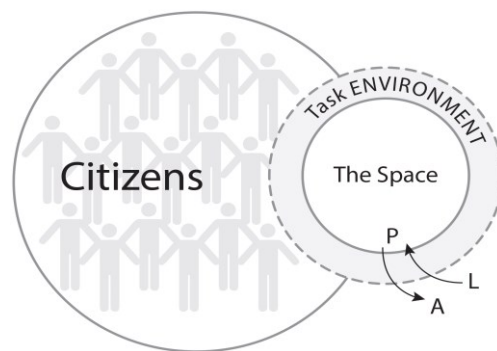
Figure Part B.1. An enterprising space associated more directly to the community rather than a conventionally structured organization, (L: Learn, P: plan, A: Act)

Chapter 13: The Practices Of Community Building Intramediaries

> *Relevant Design Principle:* The knowledge, preparedness and quality of practice of conveners and front-line facilitators has a significant impact on the direction and outcomes of CCYD

A DP2 space for enterprising, embedded in the community, encourages and nurtures the restoration of a caring reflex. This section advances the discourse, from citizens convening a space and creating structure that fosters conditions for enterprising, to practices that animate common space for learning, action and system change.

The study found animation examples associated with the work of developmental evaluation, action research, education, community organizing, convening, hosting and coaching. To maximize engagement and enterprising is to craft interventions such that the core of what a group is searching for is made explicit and celebrated. During the research various front-line interveners including site coordinators, the HW program consultant and developmental evaluators, animated common spaces. Observations of their practices, and a reflection on my own past experiences, has informed the conceptualization of a set of practices to facilitate, convene and evaluate community building.

Observations during the research lead me to conclude that the term *intermediary* is no longer an effective characterization of the best practices of these individuals. Intermediary suggests someone that is *in between* group members, like a mediator or conciliator. The term suggests an interruption of a group's natural flow. Rather than interrupt the flow, the principle I believe to be important relates to reading the currents of the group and practicing in a manner and at times that the intervention is a subtle, yet effective, nudge. Here I am guided by the brilliant simplicity of the work of community economic development innovator Ernesto Sirolli. He recognizes that the role of what he refers to as *enterprise facilitators* is not to initiate projects or promote good ideas, but to respond to the interests and passions of self-motivated people (1999). I chose the term, *intramediary* to describe this role—one that is with the community builders in a distinct role, but not standing between. In Latin intrā means on the inside or within, media means the middle of. An intramediary is *within the middle* of the community builders, in service to them and their systems-change objective. For the role of convening, hosting,

facilitation and evaluation of CCYD and community building in general, I offer the term *Community Building Intramediary* (CBI).

A CBI, in service to community builders and their systems-change objective, has two landscapes to watch, the system and their task environment. The CBI must constantly monitor changes that occur in both landscapes as the community builders adapt to their task environment. The work of a CBI requires patience, diplomacy and skilled use of tools, to help the group move forward. When executed well, the role can have significant impact on helping a design group develop a culture, rich with the conditions that lead to individual and community enterprising. The Latin root of culture refers to cultivating and nurturing somebody or something.

The intramediaries adapted their various practices throughout the lifecycle of the projects. They were called to use situational leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969), that is, understanding the level of guidance, authority and encouragement called for at any particular time, in any particular situation. The following practices epitomize the soul of service by a CBI, in support of CCYD, and community building in general. The practices are divided into four distinct themes: foundational, convening, facilitation and evaluation. Given considerable practice and support it is conceivable that one individual could carry out the roles of convening and facilitation but it is preferable that separate individuals assume these roles and that of evaluation. With effective training and support any design group could live by the principles, adopt the roles and learn the practices to open pathways for community enterprising for the collective good.

Practice # 1: Foundational Practices of Servant Leadership and an Appreciative Approach

Go to the people
Learn from them
Love them
Start with what they know
Build on what they have
But the best of their leaders
When their task is accomplished
Their work is done
The people will remark: "We have done it ourselves"

Two thousand year old Chinese Poem

There are two foundational concepts that underpin the practices of a CBI and help them support the culture-building of design groups—servant leadership and an appreciative approach.

Appreciative Approach. Appreciative approach was introduced earlier in the thesis as a principle for a convener, to establish relationships in the community. The approach reminds community builders to look at the positive side of situations and to interact gratefully in our exchanges with others. Appreciative thinking is particularly useful when looking back on pilot projects, or prototyping, times when on the surface things may not appear to have been successful. If you stand in the aftermath of a forest that has been clear-cut, as devastating as the scene is, if you adjust your vantage point and look closer to the ground you will notice new life reaching upwards as forest life begins to adapt to the new conditions of sun and nutrients available to them. An appreciative approach encourages a CBI and design groups making evaluative inquiries into a system's characteristics, to give attention first to what is working rather than what is not.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an organizational development methodology that adds a methodological rigour to the appreciative approach. It can be used to help an organization focus on what it does well, rather than what it does poorly (Cooperrider, 1990). AI has been defined as, "the study and exploration of what gives life to human systems, at their best" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. xii). As introduced in the HW case study, the staff often spoke about, and practiced, an appreciative approach. This is the way the organization describes the approach, **"**It does not mean problems and issues are ignored. Rather, by starting with what is working well and what we have going for us, it creates a different perspective, a different stance.[73] Like climbing to a high point to see beyond the trees, an appreciative approach can help a design group rise above obstacles to find the path that holds the most potential. The story below, shared with me by a Mi'kqmaq elder in NS, captures the essence and power of looking at people and happenings from an appreciative perspective

> Ledge kid
> He sat there on that ledge for three years. Then one day, with talk of a birch bark canoe being built in town, he awoke. The last one was built by his great grandfather. He perked up and said he wanted to be part of that. Once built, he wanted to launch it downtown.

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[73] HW Appreciative Approach resource - http://www.heartwood.ns.ca/ourresources.html

The council and elders wanted to do it in the beautiful wilderness. They didn't like his launch route but they acquiesced.
Many in town watched him paddle it proudly through town and said – "hey, that is the ledge kid."

Servant Leadership. A philosophy of servant leadership as developed by Robert Greenleaf (1976) is a complement to an appreciative approach. Greenleaf's ideas can be helpful in sensitizing a CBI to the subtlety of their role. At the heart of the servant leadership philosophy is the idea that the act of leading must always be in service to a group achieving its goals and living its principles. A CBI, as servant leader, supports the work at hand, and does not drive their agenda or claim the spotlight (Greenleaf, 1970). A CBI whose first orientation is to serve, has a far better chance of helping an initiative move effectively past difficult points in the path. Greenleaf describes a new moral principle of leadership, "the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader" (1977, p.10). Drawing a link to the conceptualization of system and environment, at times the CBI will the intervener and the design group the led; in other circumstances the design group will be the intervener and the community actors the led.

A CBI who follows the philosophy of servant leadership and applies an appreciative approach, is well positioned to help release group energy that uncovers pathways for system change, rich in compassion, creativity and innovation.

Practices 2 And 3: Convening Community Builders

Practice # 2: convene with purposeful intent. Convening, that is, calling people to come together, is a strategic choice that can be exercised throughout a CCYD initiative. The function or purpose of convening can vary, e.g: team building, designing, planning, evaluating, celebrating. In all its forms, convening needs to be taken seriously, as an important strategy to move a CCYD initiative forward. Convening collects a CCYD's greatest resource, its people, to think and create together. There is no breakthrough product or amount of money, no one idea or particular program that is going to make any greater amount of difference than the people hired, and/or stepping up as volunteers, to lead a CCYD initiative. It is, in the end, the people who get behind an initiative that that will create positive change. Therefore, when project organizers gather to

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think and create, it needs to be all it can be. Drawing people together into a common space has wonderful potential to create new generative progress for a group with a shared objective. Whether the convening is between two people or a large group, if done well it has the potential to create multiple breakthrough moments.

To improve a meeting from being ordinary to a generative enterprising space is partly a factor of the care that goes into the process of convening. To uncover what it means to convene with purposeful intent the question is, "What guidance can help a CBI discover why, whom and when to convene?"

For starters, the reason for convening needs to be clear—full of purpose. This may seem obvious, but often people are called to a meeting out of habit or routine, when no clear purpose for coming together has been established. Though an initiative's objective and direction may at times be, the reason for convening should never be. Calling people together without a clear purpose, coupled with a fuzzy initiative, is not only a waste of people's time, it drains energy from the possibilities of the collaborative process. The meeting purpose and design needs to be in sync with the stage an initiative is at, and no more. To convene around what could be, rather than what is, can be counterproductive. Both YERC and YS experienced detachment from staff, committee members and youth actors, as a result of convening without clear purpose.

The more explicitly the purpose of convening is communicated, the better. To inform people you are calling them together to plan is one thing, but to really leverage people's time and creative energy, it is worth drilling down to a more refined framing. A CBI can assist the process by asking questions that help identify what specifically needs to be explored or accomplished by a convening. These reflective questions can help determine what kind of meeting should be designed and when, why and who might be convened at any particular time.

Coming up with an effective question to convene and organize around, can create openings, expose assumptions and apprehensions, push thinking, surface values, highlight common

ground and reveal differences. An explicit purpose for convening allows the CBI to help the design process, by encouraging a directed scan of the initiative's task environment and network. This helps identify those individuals most strategic to bring together at any particular time.

Those identified may only be part of the obvious system, or there may be people outside the system, and in the task environment that could add a valuable perspective. There may be others whose perspective may seem of limited value, but they offer something else that the convener senses would be a valuable contribution to the culture. It might, for instance, be their positive energy, calmness or playfulness.

Because of the clear framing of the SC in Nain, and the gathering of youth centre coordinators in QC, both were convened with purposeful intent. In both cases the purpose was approachable and understandable; broad enough to allow the project organizers to discover areas of unexpected value, and narrow enough to make the topics manageable. A convening group may also want to include decision-makers from the system or task environment who will embrace the purpose of convening and have authority, and importantly, a history of innovation and collaboration. Without genuine buy-in from the formal leadership of those key systems implicated, chance of significant impact from convening is compromised. As discussed in the earlier section about the conditions of enterprising, the more meaningful the opportunity for contribution the more engaged the community actors.

Taking time to consider the complexity of a meeting can help determine the potential value of having a CBI involved at any particular time. When things are simple, such as a meeting with a very clear objective and task-oriented agenda, involving a CBI may not be necessary. However, if the reason, dynamics, or potential impact of a function has complex elements, it may be strategic to elicit support from a CBI. A convening function of this nature has the potential to provide the host system with valuable insights that may inform structural changes towards improved engagement of both youth and adults.

The timing of convening can help determine the function and value of working with a CBI. I have observed the practice, in the voluntary sector, of quickly drawing together potential partners to strengthen a grant application. Though this kind of quick courting of

partnerships is far from ideal, it seems to be a common occurrence. Having a CBI involved as part of the process could help project organizers surface the core elements of the potential partnership and the guiding principles for their work together.

When convening CCYD, it stands to reason that young people need to be significant contributors. As presented earlier, when youth are involved as decision makers, they bring something very necessary to group and community processes. Based on the evidence, having more youth leadership within YERC and YS may have resulted in more dynamic and generative workplaces for the coordinators, and increased community enterprising for the collective good.

Youth operate differently than adults; they see different things and imagine different possibilities. What young people and professionals see and understand, and with whom they network, are different and equally important. Those who have witnessed what engaged young people accomplish, understand the imperative that social change strategies leverage youth as a central resource (Makhoul & Leviten-Reid, 2010, p. 93; Gray B. 1989).

      Practice # 3: host with heart. During YERC and YS, the local and national convening organizations carried out various hosting roles. With CCYD, the hosting might vary from a simple conference call to a complex, large event. The hosting role might be ongoing, as it was for the local and national conveners, or it might be for a single function. The location for hosting will also vary. It might take place in a formal meeting room, a café, on-line or at someone's kitchen table. Whatever the reason or place for convening, there should be an explicit role for a host(s). Within work settings, the role of hosting is usually consumed by the logistics of a meeting. Putting our heart into hosting is not something we usually do with our colleagues. However, that is where the opportunity lies.

It is important to understand that those who join a CCYD initiative, whether self-selected or appointed, are asked to be part of a new collaborative space. Community actors and service providers coming together deserve to be treated as guests. Receive and serve them well to breathe life into a meeting. If they are hosted with the same care they would receive as guests in someone's home, the extraordinary nature of the hosting can set a tone for a wonderful group dynamic—often before anything formal in the gathering has begun. Whatever the

characteristics of the gathering, there are practices of hosting that can help it become an easy place to be.

The desired impact of hosting a CCYD initiative is the creation of a sense of entering a new space and new culture. Excelling at greetings can help. When someone enters a new group of people, it is important for the host to capture that moment as a distinct point in time, to honor the presence of every single guest. A quality welcome creates a break between the world the guest is coming from and the common space. Bells and whistles aren't necessary but some form of sincere acknowledgement is. You want community actors to feel as if they are crossing a bridge. That moment in time when an actor crosses the bridge should be treated as a distinct system in itself and planned for appropriately.

When we host a guest in our home we might consider important practical matters such as the food experience, appropriate music, scents, fresh air source, sunlight and the physical layout of the space. These components are equally relevant in a work setting. For example, with a little creativity, the placement of tables and chairs can complement a whole systems design—it could for example, stay fluid, letting the group self-organize the space, or be divided into separate arrangements to complement plenary and small group work.

CCYD initiatives with multiple partners and their diverse personalities can generate plentiful ideas and energy. However, convening partnerships does not always go as hoped. Sometimes opinions and ideas get suppressed with packed agendas, dominant voices and under-the-surface dynamics. It can be difficult to get out the best ideas and opinions. Over the course of an initiative a good host knows the importance of their guests taking breaks from the formal routine, both together and apart. These can be times to reflect and celebrate accomplishments, build deeper relationships, celebrate milestones and inspire new enterprise. Whether out on the town together, on Facebook, having coffee, or side conversations during meeting breaks, the value of relationship building time *off-line* should not be underestimated. These times can be likened to being in a *vestibule* before entering someone's home—not quite in but not quite out either. In the vestibule, though group members may be part of a bigger structure, they are removed from watching eyes. Vestibule conversations can have quite different characteristics than inside the home. With its relaxed formalities, people can put down their guard, be more

candid and be less worried about saying things with the careful diplomacy of larger group meetings. Recognizing the value of vestibule conversations and creating opportunities for them to take place is an important part of CBI hosting practice.

Practices 4 – 7: Facilitating Community Builders

At various times, the role of the CBI includes educating, coaching and training. Each of these practices is about putting information into the system to build capacity—sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. These three related practices came to mind as part of a CBI's practice as the researcher observed various exchanges between the national and local conveners and the community actors, and hundreds of other exchanges over the years between youth and adults involved in programs together.

Practice # 4: facilitating with presence. There are times during a CCYD initiative when a CBIs most important function will be to facilitate a group meeting in service to the community actors. The practice calls for the CBI to have full presence for the people they are facilitating. The facilitator must manage the flow of communication at the intersection of voices, ideas and questions. Their sense of presence and awareness will help the group members feel confident that a safe space has been created for the exchange.

Groups with conditions of enterprising will go into a productive working mode where they are carrying out their work independent of a facilitator or any other intervener. This is a time for the facilitator to work with the very lightest of touch. The metaphor *dampening down the flue*, contributed by a Café 12 design group member captures the artful work of

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Dampening Down the Flu
Tim Reeves-Horton, Café 12 Design Group

There are critical points in using fire to heat your home: the gathering and preparation of the wood for fuel; the maintenance of the stove, pipe, and chimney; the lighting of the fire and the clean-up.

One key stage that seems to be the sweet spot for this entire process is once the fire has been lit and is well on its way - dampening down the flu.

This action gathers all the random energy and focuses it so that the heat is produced as efficiently as possible. The fire spreads out into glowing coals, intensifies the heat and also creates a beautiful light. The fire can then be tended easily throughout the night.

There is something about this process that has great meaning for group process: the assembling of the team that will fuel the initiative; the choice and maintenance of the structure for the team; and then the careful marshalling of the energy of the participants so all their potential is realized without anyone becoming 'burned out.

facilitation and the idea of using a light touch— dampening down the flu, when the groups coals are established.

There is a fine line for a facilitator between intervening and interfering. I once cost a base runner, on the baseball team I was coaching, an extra base hit. When the player hit the ball into the outfield, I shouted encouragement from the first base coach box and waved him on to take second base. Lost in the moment of excitement and frustrated with what seemed his slow running, I gave the runner a gentle push on the back as he rounded first base to encourage him to pick up his speed. The umpire called interference and the runner was moved back a base. I had interfered where I was only supposed to encourage and direct the runner from the sidelines. The less a community facilitator steps in, the more effective their facilitation may be.

There are other times when it is important for the CBI, as facilitator, to step up and protect the common space—that sacred ground where the collective wisdom and objectives of the project organizers come together. These are the most important intersections the CBI will encounter, and can help to steward. The CBI has responsibility in service to the group to assure no one co-opts that space. There will be interruptions and disturbances, difficult moments and frustrations, but through it all a common space for enterprising must endure if the CCYD initiative is to endure.

To clarify group dynamics in a common space, a CBI can ensure some form of group standards are agreed upon. At various times during the YERC research, the national convener introduced a *community standard* exercise for groups, as a way to establish clarity around their ways of working together. The standards might include themes such as: listening respectfully to ideas, allowing time for others to speak, respecting differing opinions. During the research these were a useful reference point for the intermediaries when considering group process. Being aware of a group's community standards and the conditions for enterprising, can be useful for the practice of a facilitator. It is empowering for a facilitator to know that the more active the conditions, the more enterprising the group will be; the more engaged the group is, the more compassionate action will result. The knowledge behind the conditions for enterprising allows the facilitator to hold onto a vision of their role as servant leader and a belief in what the group can become.

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Practice # 5: educate with permission. I noticed during the research a tendency amongst adults to adopt an educating role when working with young people, and also those with less positional authority than themselves. This is not uncommon in what I earlier introduced as a DP1 organization. I have also 201noticed, all too often, the shutting down response from young people, and others, when this kind of exchange takes place. I'm quite familiar with the glazed over, "I'm not going to listen to you, you don't give a shit about what I have to say" look when youth are forced into a type of educator to student mode in community settings. Relationships between community partners, including between youth and adults, are meant to be a partnership with reciprocal learning. If one party assumes a role of educating, even for a moment, it is a sure way to shut down the possibilities of a generative exchange.

In the quest for new roles to support youth engagement, adults and community organizations would do well to simply improve the quality of their listening to young people. Engaged citizens, young and old, expect to be listened to (Kidder & Rogers, 2004). There is evidence that far too many young people are feeling un-listened to (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2000; Haid, Marques, & Brown, 1999). Young people are provided with few opportunities to engage in discussions about their economic, social and environmental futures (Matthews, Limb, & Taylor, 1998, p. 135). To be listened to, is more than simply being in a space together, asking young people their opinions. A community organization can demonstrate significant leadership by raising the bar on the quality of their listening. In his book, *The Muted Conscience, Moral Silence and the Practice of Ethics in Business*, Fred Bird (1996) takes an in-depth look at communication as a practice of ethics, and suggest that one's level of attentiveness is a suitable test for the quality of their listening. "Being attentive then means that we are ready to listen, comprehend, focus and take an interest in the messages addressed to us …" (p. 59). He also makes a counter point that we can be, "morally deaf to the degree that we are not attentive and thus not ready to listen, comprehend, focus and take interest in the moral messages addressed to us" (pg. 59). "The cement that holds the elements together in all human systems, is communication and language"(Benium, Faucheux, van der Vlist, 1996, p. 196).

The suggestion here is not that an educating role as part of a CCYD initiative is inappropriate. There will be times when it is necessary and appropriate. As was discussed earlier in the YS case,

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the national convener had a proven participatory action research process they had used numerous times with international communities. The convener didn't offer their expertise or the method for fear of imposing it on the community sites that they thought did not require the support. Though the principle of their action was well grounded, we learned from the uncertainty that transpired at a number of the sites, that the convener might have offered an outline of their method and allowed the community to choose whether they wanted to learn more about it. The YS national convener spoke about their awkward positioning, "We were in a challenging position of diplomatically suggesting and offering without imposing. This led to minimal uptake. For future initiatives we would integrate the establishment of collective outcome measures at the onset that would set the [national] convening agency up as a support to achieve these outcomes, rather than the external monitoring body. Motivation needs to be based in the passion to create change – not dictated by the dollars or outside approval" (IICRD, 2010, p.3).

I am suggesting that the intended recipients of the educating agree, before the education proceeds—*educate with permission*. This does not preclude anyone from a design group offering to educate on a specific topic and then the project organizers having the freedom to choose to participate. At times the exchange may be only a few minutes; at other times perhaps a full session on a particular topic will be warranted. The important thing to remember is if the education is imposed it is at great risk of landing flat and with little retention.

     Practice # 6: coach from the sidelines. The recipient-driven principle of educating with permission can also be applied to the CBI role as a coach. As was earlier introduced, the CBI needs to move into the group's common space slowly, being careful not to interrupt or dictate. Though the CBI may be considered part of a design group, at the same time he or she is in a distinct role. The positioning I'm suggesting is to *coach from the sidelines.* The use here of term *coach* comes from its contemporary use in the context of a life or executive coach, as opposed to a sports team analogy. The principles that guide the practices of a coach in the former context are: the one being coached chooses their coach, and the coaching is done with questions not answers. These principles position the coaching practice to be consistent with the servant leader approach.

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Reflecting on my practice during the research made it clear how carefully crafted questions, that apply an appreciative approach, can encourage transformative individual and group reflections. If a CBI pushes forward with what they perceive to be the answers, they run the risk of disengaging project organizers. Questions can also serve as a diplomatic reminder for the group about their initiative's principles and collective intent. The CBI can craft effective questions with the confidence that better answers always lie within the collective hearts and minds of the group.

An effective way for a CBI to establish their coaching role on the sidelines, and as servant leader, is to pause and think carefully before responding to any question directed their way. They may not be the best one to answer the question. If, in such instances, they redirect the question to someone else in the group, or to a resource person, they will build the capacity of the individual asking the question, as well as the capacity of the group. This is an important practice to keep top of mind, in particular with the tendency of some young people to defer to adult leaders in their midst.

There is an activity called the *listening post* I was fond of using as part of an environmental education program I led for elementary school students. In the activity, the *earthwalkers*, as we came to refer to them, chose a tree within earshot of where I stood, at a meeting place deep in the forest. Their task was to stay at their listening post and quietly listen and observe for ten minutes. The students then came back to the meeting place and shared what they heard and saw. It was always fascinating in the short distances they were spread apart, how many different sights and sounds they would bring back to share. The children in these programs went back to their listening post two or three times during a two-day program, each time staying a little longer and each time having more to share upon their return. It became so that they knew what they wanted to watch for and check out before they got back to their listening post. The sharing back at the meeting spot became a time of looking back, as well as looking forward and anticipating changes at their spot. The forest never stopped changing, our group of earthwalkers just dropped in for a series of visits to watch nature's dance.

A CBI might call his or her position on the sidelines the equivalent of a listening post, moving around for the best vantage point of any particular aspect of an initiative. For example, to

provide some coaching, one YS DE was positioned for a number of months to focus on the dynamics between a local convening organization, their staff, and the board of directors. In another instance, a DE was positioned to coach a steering committee, and in another, the relationship between a site coordinator and young community actors. The positioning of a CBI on the sidelines changes with the development needs of the initiative. The most effective positioning for any particular context is determined through careful ongoing reflection.

Practice # 7: train in real time. Though coaching is a form of training, this section discusses formal training to help project staff acquire specific skills for CCYD. The training that might be necessary can be determined by responding to the question, "What are the skills and knowledge necessary to do the task at hand?" For CCYD initiatives, this might include areas such as: IT, evaluation and planning methods, asset-mapping, leadership and collaboration. Unfortunately, training for CCYD initiatives can be out of step with what might be helpful and timely for front-line community actors. During YERC, early training of the site coordinators at the Re-Generation Conference in NS may have instilled a strong appreciation of the value of youth engagement and an awareness of the national convener's passion for the work but the coordinators left with more questions than answers regarding their role.

A CBI can have an important intramediary role between the trainer and the group, clarifying the specifics of training needs. They can also help to clarify the training, in terms of the audience and scheduling. A strategic use of a CBI is to assess the community actors learning needs, and design the subsequent event to suit. That is, *if* there is an assessment and design. Over the years the researcher has witnessed numerous canned trainings that landed with little resonance for the intended recipients. It is one thing to provide a broad sweeping training on youth engagement and quite another to zero in on the specific aspect of a group's work that calls for more training. It might be how to adapt a meeting format, set up a small grants fund, develop governance policies or any number of other aspects of youth and community engagement work.

With YERC, training provided by the national convener at the QC 4H sites is a good example of relevant training. The youth that formed BOP were very receptive and appreciative of training provided them. With a number of the team members also sitting on the Board of QC 4H, the impact of the training had immediate relevance for the organization. When the group later

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shaped the material into their own workshop, it became a meaningful way to share something of purpose with others.

With the nature of formal training being content-driven, it is unlikely the CBI will or should try to satisfy all the training needs of a CCYD initiative firsthand. Ideally, those who have the greatest expertise with the content of a training need should lead the training. However, the most experienced are not necessarily the best at sharing their expertise with others. Here again, a CBI can play an important quality control function, for training from an external source. Many of the skills and competencies of a CBI can help to improve the quality of training from an external source. I have observed far too many ineffective training sessions for adults and youth, because of a lack of ability by the trainer or facilitator to engage the learners. In these circumstances methods such as dialogue and group work are sidelined in favor of standard didactic methods.

During a training session, a CBI can be in service to the project organizers much as the DEs were during the projects, offering real-time clarifications that close the gap between the training curriculum and the realities the group is dealing with in their work together. This looping back function can have significant impact on the relevance of any particular training. During YERC and YS, DEs intervened during training for reasons such as: ambiguous and unclear language, non-participatory training approaches and adult-centric and education-heavy training approaches.

Practices 8– 12: Developmental Evaluation Of Community Building

The requirements of the methodology. There are many paths a CBI could take to explore the element of their practice known as evaluation. Stories from the cases express how the choices for a design group, at the trailhead of a community-building journey, can seem overwhelming. What more, questions about evaluation and outcomes stop many an enterprising young person, as well as other community builders, in their tracks, or at the very least, slow them down to a level of frustration that distracts them from the creative process (Langlois, 2010a). There are evaluation methods with formative and summative elements that may be familiar to funders and consultants, yet foreign to young and old enterprising individuals in the community with the motivation to mobilize. Each evaluation path carries its own directional signage, distinct features and vistas. By default, many CCYD initiatives choose, or

more often, have imposed upon them a conventional evaluation. What a missed opportunity that is. Evaluation can have the potential to feed the ripples of community enterprising.

Conventional evaluation is a poor fit for the uncertain and emergent nature of a space for enterprising (Conlin & Stirrat, 2008; Regeer, Hoes, van Amstel-van Saane, Caron-Flinterman, Bunders, 2009). As these methods are commonly applied, they fail to return data in a timely manner to design groups that need to better understand: 1) how their work is affecting them as individuals, 2) how their work is impacting the task environment, and 3) how well their group is adapting to the task environment.

For enterprising spaces, the appropriate form of evaluation would support learning through the developmental process. The CBI has an evaluation role in order to inform rapid development. The CBI evaluates to inform action. Evaluation processes that are fully participatory, transparent and consistent with the design process can best serve enterprising individuals (Langlois, Blanchet-Cohen, & Beer, 2013). Though social entrepreneurs that populate an enterprising space may have a good sense of their destination, they are likely unclear on the particular route they will take. When we paddle on a multi-day canoe trip towards a certain destination, we know where we are heading but we have no idea of the challenges along the way. The route can be determined from good questions. As we progress on a canoe trip we gather information about group capacity, water levels and weather and then determine the route bit by bit as we go. Likewise, an appropriate evaluation for a CCYD initiative will embrace uncertainty and help identify the best route for a design group's work, as events unfold. It will also keep the conditions that foster an enterprising culture in the forefront.

Developmental evaluation. Developmental evaluation (DE), the contemporary evaluation method introduced in the methodology chapter of the thesis, is a good match for the emergent work of a design group. Knowing the term *evaluation* doesn't always resonate well with practitioners and community actors, the term *process coach* could be used as an alternative. Nevertheless, there is an evaluative function to the role. There are other evaluation methods such as summative and formative evaluation that can be used when the landscape dictates. There is also great learning that can be garnered from participatory action research

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methods. However, it is developmental evaluation that is the most closely aligned method to complement the skills of a CBI and the context of enterprising in which they work.

The CBI's evaluation practice must both inform internal group work, and consider external impacts in the task environment. Their work must encourage integration at all levels of program development—planning, action and reflection. As a developmental evaluator (DE), a CBI will follow a design group, through the sometimes-tangled valleys of group process to help find better vantage points, and pause along the way to take in the sites and sounds of their work together.

The practice - the art of nudge. A CBI can step into a developmental evaluation role as a critical friend (Gamble, 2008) and guide on the journey. A condition of the CBI practicing developmental evaluation, is that he or she is given permission and full authority to conduct the evaluation work by the design group (Langlois, 2010a). The positioning the CBI is looking for is that of an intramediary—part of, but not in between. In this way they can provide real-time feedback that subtly supports shifts in policies, practices, resource flow and programming, in a way that is sensitive to context and the energy of the people involved. The phrase *art of the nudge* describes the unique skill required of an evaluator taking on a developmental approach: 'nudge' refers to the intentional yet subtle interventions that a CBI, as DE, employs to feed data and insights back into the system for consideration; 'art' refers to the well-honed sensibility and craftsmanship of deciding if and how to do so (Langlois, Blanchet-Cohen, Beer, 2013). The passage below from Trevanian's (1979) novel *Shibumi*, in which an elder defines Shibumi to a protégé, is an apt introduction to the art of the nudge.

> "As you know, Shibumi has to do with a great refinement underlying commonplace appearances. It is a statement so correct it does not have to be bold, so poignant it does not have to be pretty, so true it does not have to be real. Shibumi is understanding, rather than knowledge. Eloquent silence. In demeanor, it is modesty without pudency. In art, where the spirit of shibumi takes the form of sabi, it is elegant simplicity, articulate brevity. In philosophy, where shibumi emerges as wabi, it is spiritual tranquility that is not passive; it is being without the angst of becoming. And in the personality of a man, it is ... how does one say it? Authority without domination?"

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Evaluators as servant leaders listen deeply and actively to detect synergies, to identify decisions inconsistent with the group's stated intent and to understand when and how to intervene with an effective nudge. The servant leadership approach guides the CBI, as DE, to present feedback in a manner that leaves the individual and/or group feeling energized and ready to move forward. The YS funder spoke to the value of the developmental evaluator's practices, "It allowed us to modify program designs, provide training, convene partners and create spaces for airing concerns in ways that could never have been anticipated" (Cawley, 2009, p. 15).

Based on the experience of DEs in YS, in addition to practicing servant leadership and an appreciative approach, there are five practices that the researcher found central to the art of the nudge:

- Pause and raft up
- Sense program energy
- Untie knots in phases
- Pay attention to structure
- Support enterprising culture in common spaces

Practice # 8: Pause and raft-up. Amidst the challenges of a CCYD journey, moments need to be carved out for self and group reflection along the way. Time is needed to integrate, as a design group establishes a rhythm of action and reflection that generates continual learning. Reflection takes the individual—including the CBI—and the group, beyond the surface layer of busyness that can threaten fast-paced initiatives.

During a canoe trip there are times when someone might call out, *Raft-up*. When the canoes are farther apart, a paddle held straight up in the air signals the call to come together. To raft-up is to have each of the canoes on the trip break from their own path and come together. The paddlers raft-up, holding onto one another in whatever fashion works—a leg over a gunwale, a hand on a thwart, a painter under a foot. Knowing it is a break in the paddling rhythm, a raft-up is called for judiciously. The reasons for a raft-up might be to check on the map, or the energy

levels of the group, share a snack, make a group decision, or simply take time to rest, share laughter and build camaraderie.

Rafting-up is also an important safety practice. The times when CCYD initiatives move quickly are the times when important things are at risk of being dropped—most of all the group standards of good process. There have been tragic accidents in Canada's wilderness waterways when the leaders failed to recognize the need for the group to raft up. Rafting up is a time to determine if the next leg of a task environment can be safely navigated given the current capacity of the group. It opens everyone's awareness and intuition about how to proceed.

Ironically, to serve others well, a CBI also needs to serve the self. Practicing developmental evaluation as servant leader requires a great deal of presence and personal balance. In particular, it is the CBI's role as a DE that calls for a regular clearing of the mind, to take a refreshed look at the initiative being evaluated. With the fast-moving currents of enterprising, it is critical that the CBI keep his or her head clear, feet planted and avoid jumping into the fray of more difficult moments in the group's work in a reactionary way. If the CBI can keep a calm and aware state when evaluating, it will help sensitize him or her to the subtle nuances in a design group, like body language and glances between group members or language that seems out of place or ambiguous. If not feeling personally centered, a CBI risks compromising an intervention, his or her own credibility and the initiative's energy. It would be a most unfortunate misstep.

Some form of centering activity that is right for the individual CBI, e.g. journaling, exercise, meditation, play or simply taking any kind of deliberate break from the material, can help important insights come to light. The process may be as simple as naming, and holding in one's mind, a perplexing question from the initiative being evaluated, and reflecting on it—even for just a moment. If the CBI, as DE, maintains personal wellbeing it will help to discover ways to nudge with the softest of touches. If, when evaluating, the CBI and the design group maintain their sense of wellbeing, it will help uncover hidden synergies that can transform their lives and their work together.

During YS, the researcher/DE encouraged the funder to raft-up with the local conveners to pause and listen to their concerns about the amount of time it was taking them to complete the

reporting requirements. As a result of the DE's nudge, the reporting process was redesigned to encourage more reflection and sharing of stories, while also addressing the convener's concerns. The new reporting was embraced enthusiastically and resulted in the Foundation receiving more thoughtful reports rich with stories of the CCYD journey. This kind of interaction is generally outside of the role of a more traditional evaluator. However, a CBI, as DE, is well positioned to convene group members and gently nudge them to actively listen to one another in a manner that can provide valuable navigational guidance to carry forward.

Practice # 9: sense program energy. Given the fast pace and complexity of enterprising, the amount of information a CBI might need to consider, including the number of strategic options for the design group, could be overwhelming. A CBI could easily overload group members with too much feedback, like smothering a flame with too much fuel. To prioritize which feedback to emphasize, the YS DEs found value in focusing on the ideas and actions that carried energy—either the ones the community actors were most excited about or the points of conflict that were blocking forward motion. Program energy can be sensed in a multitude of ways, including the way a design group interacts, i.e. the quality of participation, tension, conflict, animated conversation, nervous laughter and body language.

Some will quickly dismiss these indicators as insignificant. At times they may be. At other times they may point to hot spots that, like embers of a fire, if fanned have the potential to fuel the group's forward momentum. As was observed at various points during the research, it is common for managers to suppress tension and conflict. The CBI must know that it's not always necessary or advisable to stamp out these sparks and not easy to douse embers. It is in conflict and tension that innovation may lay (Westley, Zimmerman, & Patton, 2007). As an observer who can stay outside the fray, a CBI is well positioned to identify an issue that may be blocking program energy, as well as opportunities ready to leverage. This becomes especially important when others may be unwilling or unable to voice such concerns.

While it is not the CBI role to mandate or even steer change, he or she can facilitate it by opening channels of communication and interaction. During a YS gathering, the local sites expressed frustration with the national convener's choice and imposition of an outside contractor for on-line-based communications—a concern at first mostly ignored by the national

convener and funder. The DE, recognizing that the tension was occupying the group's energy and creating barriers in other aspects of the project, brought the concerns to the surface. As a result, a dialogue between project staff generated more aligned options for the on-line support aspect of the project.

The CBI as evaluator can draw out answers, release hidden group assets and help name assumptions—all critical to understanding the mental frameworks underlying group dynamics and a group's capacity to enterprise. A diversity of people and mix of ideas and opinions is part of any good comprehensive community initiative (Fullbright-Anderson & Auspos, 2006) but in reality, personal dynamics, dominating and quiet voices, autocratic leaders and positional authority can suppress opinions.

Interpersonal dynamics are a realm of observation that evaluators often avoid or treat as background context in favor of the tangible activities of program implementation. The CBI recognizes that interpersonal dynamics are a key factor in successful multi-stakeholder innovation and transformative systems change. Misunderstanding, ambiguity and disagreement are part of the landscape of complex community initiatives (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003). As has been established in the thesis, the quality of group dynamics impacts the ability of a design group to make use of data and information for strategic decision-making. Effective questioning, with respect and compassion for the project organizers involved, can help a CBI nudge individuals and groups to tackle interpersonal issues that might otherwise block success.

Practice # 10: untie tangles and knots in phases. YERC and YS were no exception to the challenging dynamics that come up in comprehensive community initiatives. There was a wide spectrum of ambiguities, concerns and interpersonal dynamics that tangled and knotted. Some were simple and straightforward tangles that required little or no intervention, while others were more complicated knots. Untying the knots required an iterative, or multi-phased, approach with intentional pauses along the way.

Tangles and knots on the YS and YERC landscape included:

- unclear terminology,
- lack of partner interaction and relationship building,
- lack of skill in working with marginalized youth and partners,

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• misperceptions, misunderstandings, and discouragement.

YS's small grants fund, for instance, got tied up in a large and complicated knot that required a phased approach. As discussed earlier the problem concerned ambiguity about whether projects that received grants had to be youth-led, or if adult-led services for youth were acceptable. The knot was characterized by a combination of ambiguous communication and the funder's frustration with the relatively slow movement towards tangible program action at the sites. Getting the knot untied was very important. It contributed to a spiraling of YS into a period of disenchantment early in its lifecycle. To address the knot, first required recognition of the different perspectives of the individuals concerned. The DE spoke with the primary decision-makers, conducted one-on-one conversations with community actors, reviewed original documentation and finally convened the primary decision-makers to discuss ways of addressing the issue. Each step provided more information for the ensuing one and informed the final resolution. Large and complicated knots are difficult to untie. The way to approach it will not be clear at first. The details can be fuzzy and having all the details is not always necessary to resolution. As large knots can, the small grants issue left a kink in the line. Though the intervention helped to move the grant strategy forward, the kink required diligence from all concerned to avoid forming a new knot.

The experiences from YS suggest a phased approach for a CBI when addressing complicated knots: 1) identify what specifically requires more clarity; 2) consider how to collect information about the challenge and its potential solutions; 3) collect the information; 4) reflect on how to gracefully bring the information back into the system; 5) place the information back into the system; and finally, 6) follow up on the results of the intervention.

As many of the DEs discovered during the research, there can be many ways to approach tangles and knots. The CBI as evaluator may need to pause between interventions, to give time for the system to respond. There is temptation to continue nudging until change is evident. This can become an irritant and backfire, creating a much larger tangle than the initial one. At other times, a CBI may untangle the first layer of a problem and let the rest take care of itself. It is the CBIs careful reading of the pattern of the problem and challenge that will determine how best to approach tangles and knots.

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Practice # 11: pay attention to structure. With the complexity and high degree of stakeholder exchange that came with YERC and YS, it was reasonable to expect that conventional DP1 organizations and program design would be problematic. Early on it became clear that alternatives to conventional structures were required if the projects were to accomplish their goals. If a CBI is to be able to focus their work and positioning for effective nudges, he or she needs to understand how the structures the design group is operating with, and those they experience in their task environment, might be constraining or empowering them.

In particular, the structures associated with a convener or host of a space for enterprising needs to be watched diligently. With the CBI evaluation practice being of a participatory nature, community actors, too, need the space and opportunity to digest data, solve problems, generate ideas and make choices about next steps in the intervention. Constraints experienced might include: formal decision-making structure, culture, rules, routines and/or procedures. Empowering elements might include: distributed decision-making leadership, discretionary funds, meeting space, supportive board members or resources. During YERC and YS, each of these constraints and empowering elements surfaced.

One of the areas of inquiry this research has brought to the fore is the importance of how community organizations and initiatives are designed, structured and governed. The cases, literature and insights presented in the thesis suggests that at the very least, for enterprising to have its greatest opportunity for success, convening organizations require a willingness to change established organizational norms, rules, routines, relationships and procedures at a number of system levels (Camino, 2000; Zeldin, Petrokubi, & MacNeil, 2008). This need was referred to at one of the early meetings of the YS local conveners as the need to, "change organizational reflexes." The gap between the need for change and on-the-ground execution by the local conveners is where YERC and YS spent much of its time, and highlights the importance for a CBI to pay attention to structure.

With complex initiatives such as YERC and YS, the structural constraints were multi-layered. At the national level, there were formal structures including the funders, national convener and

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advisors. At the community level, there were local organizations with their own management structures, as well as steering committees and youth grantees. As a complex initiative, the relationships between these multi-layered structures were themselves evolving, as they adapted to the changing needs of the project. At YS, the local convening organizations at various times called upon the DEs to consider structural changes that felt constraining. The DE's role was not only to understand the structure, but also to bring observations about its challenges to the fore so that changes might be made to better meet program goals and assist the project organizers to adapt to their task environment. This was particularly the case during the first year of the YS initiative, when the structure itself was being built through trial and error. Understanding the structure meant seeing how its various elements shaped the project's direction. For instance, the DEs became aware that the local convening organizations felt hemmed in by the structures imposed by the funder, including steering committees, site coordinators and a small grants fund.

The impact on common spaces from the way a host organization is governed, and its programs are structured, is not to be underestimated. A diversity of people and mix of ideas and opinions is considered ideal for a comprehensive initiative. The nature of YERC and YS called for a structure that could cultivate a rich exchange of knowledge and learning on a number of fronts: 1) between the local convening organizations and community stakeholders, 2) within the local and national convening organizations, 3) between the project coordinators and community stakeholders, 4) between the local convening organizations, 5) between the funders and the national conveners, and finally, 6) between the national and local conveners. The more channels of open communication and understanding available the better (Wheatley & Frieze, 2006). With diligent attention to the way these relationships and exchanges are structured, the CBI can have significant influence on the success of community enterprising.

To pursue enterprising with serious intent, requires a new way to bring together youth-serving organizations, community organizations, community leaders and young people to talk, learn, plan and act together. To achieve greatness, CCYD initiatives require structures that support enterprising cultures to nurture learning, share problem solving and celebrate. To be enterprising means to also be enterprising about structures and constraints. CBIs, as evaluatos, can aid design groups, on an ongoing basis, to strategically evaluate every constraint and

opportunity for empowerment. Structures need to be designed to help the design group adapt to the task environment they are facing with each phase of their work.

Practice # 12: support enterprising culture in common spaces. The concept of common space, as earlier introduced in the thesis, is an important one to guide the CBI in his or her practice. Common space is a term the YS DEs used to conceptualize the physical places, moments in time and virtual spaces in which key project organizers convened. The common space concept served to identify observations and to prioritize interventions. Data collection and reporting in traditional evaluation often occurs through specially planned formal interactions, but for CBIs embedded in an initiative, formal and informal common spaces serve as organizing principles for their work.

CBIs have a significant responsibility to watch over the ethic of the common space. They can help to transform a conventional common space to one with a culture that reflects the conditions for enterprising. Amid the wide range of programming being carried out, it could be difficult for a CBI to know where to focus evaluation attention. Choosing from among the common spaces that exist in a comprehensive initiative can be a way to prioritize. During YS, the DEs found that by working with group spaces, both formal and informal, they could most easily observe a program's energy and locate fertile ground for co-creation, learning and innovation.

The group space concept can help a CBI place a practical boundary, or an imaginary perimeter, around people and their points of interaction, at any given time, for any given purpose. The project's formal common spaces included meetings, phone calls, national forums and workshops for planning, education and team building. The informal common spaces consisted, for example, of project organizers coming together over coffee, on Facebook, on a cell phone, over e-mail, in one-on-one conversations or in a discussion forum on a project web page. These informal common spaces tended to have a spontaneous nature; positional authority was downplayed and informal language moved freely. These spaces presented opportunities for interacting in ways that were different than in the structure of more formal spaces. The free flow of ideas and opinions in these spaces should not be underestimated for their value in helping a CBI find and understand the energy of an initiative.

With the front-line project facilitators (site coordinators) constantly changing during YERC and YS, the common space concept helped remind the RAs and DEs to keep a whole-systems view of the initiative. For instance, when the YS steering committees began to break down as a useful structure and partners began to disengage, the DEs needed a way to make sense of the reorganization. The concept of common space helped the DEs identify the next most fertile common space to pay attention to, which in the case of YS, became the youth-led grants as the focus of action. The DEs also extended this focus to the importance of the local convening organizations providing young people with the means for more control over the functions of planning and action in the grant selection committees.

Chapter 14: Framework For Comprehensive Community Youth Development

Introduction

The visual representation of the Framework , in Figure 15.1, is the final version of many that preceded it. One version of the Framework or another was a constant companion during my analysis of the cases. As the working theory evolved, so too did the Framework. It provided a useful lens, through which to consider the patterns, dynamics, chronology and findings. It is meant as a process guide through the complex work of community building. Though it has come about as a result of research of CCYD settings, it is equally relevant to any citizens group, of any age, that has an objective of designing some aspect of a new future for their community.

The thesis reported a great deal of mucking about in the community sites without a map of the wilderness of CCYD. The findings showed that none of the ten community sites had a model or framework sufficient to guide the work at hand. One DE shared the observation, "Going into this project we didn't have a well-developed understanding or model of systems change. A process model of how to navigate the complex world of CCYD would have helped the coordinators, steering committees, executive directors, funders and DEs. The YS national convener spoke to the importance of future initiatives to, providing, "initial community consultation and mapping support as part of project development (IICRD, 2010, p. 3)."

Had the local conveners had a map to offer, along with previous experience traveling the landscape being covered, then transformational individual and community enterprising might have been in reach. A map, or model of practice, has the potential to calm the kind of anxiety that was prevalent throughout much of the projects' lifecycle. Even more important, is if the design groups and the front-line facilitators had shared a map, it would have had the potential of catalyzing broader involvement.

Twenty years ago, when HW was trying to make sense of its own approach to CYD, Alan Warner, an insightful friend and colleague, was invited to observe HW's work during a private school leadership program. Based on his observations, he led the HW team through a reflection on their way of working. He drew models on a blackboard, as the group talked. The sketch that

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resulted from that session became the basis of HW's CYD Framework, and began a long period of more focused development of their practices. Now, approximately twenty years of experience, research, design and development later, it is time to sketch out a model that has its roots in that original work at HW. In particular, the Framework is a deep reflection on the outer circle of HWs CYD Framework. The new Framework I offer in this thesis is focused on the community aspect of CYD.

The Framework is intended as an aid for intramediaries – design groups members and CBIs involved in community enterprising. When topographical maps are shared between wilderness travelers, campsites are added to the map, the locations of portage trailheads clarified, and points of interest along the route noted. The Framework continues to be is a work-in-progress. It too is to be changed, adapted and clarified. Ultimately it is meant to be useful to the community-building traveler as a way to conceptualize their work as it progresses.

Included in the description of the Framework is a set of design principles, and a conceptualization of the enterprising space as a system, the design group and their objective, and a summary of the type of short- to long-term outcomes that could be expected from the use of the Framework. The design processes described, are a reflection on those things that went well during the research, and things that did not go so well. The learning generated by the projects was considerable. The Framework is offered as a reflection on that learning.
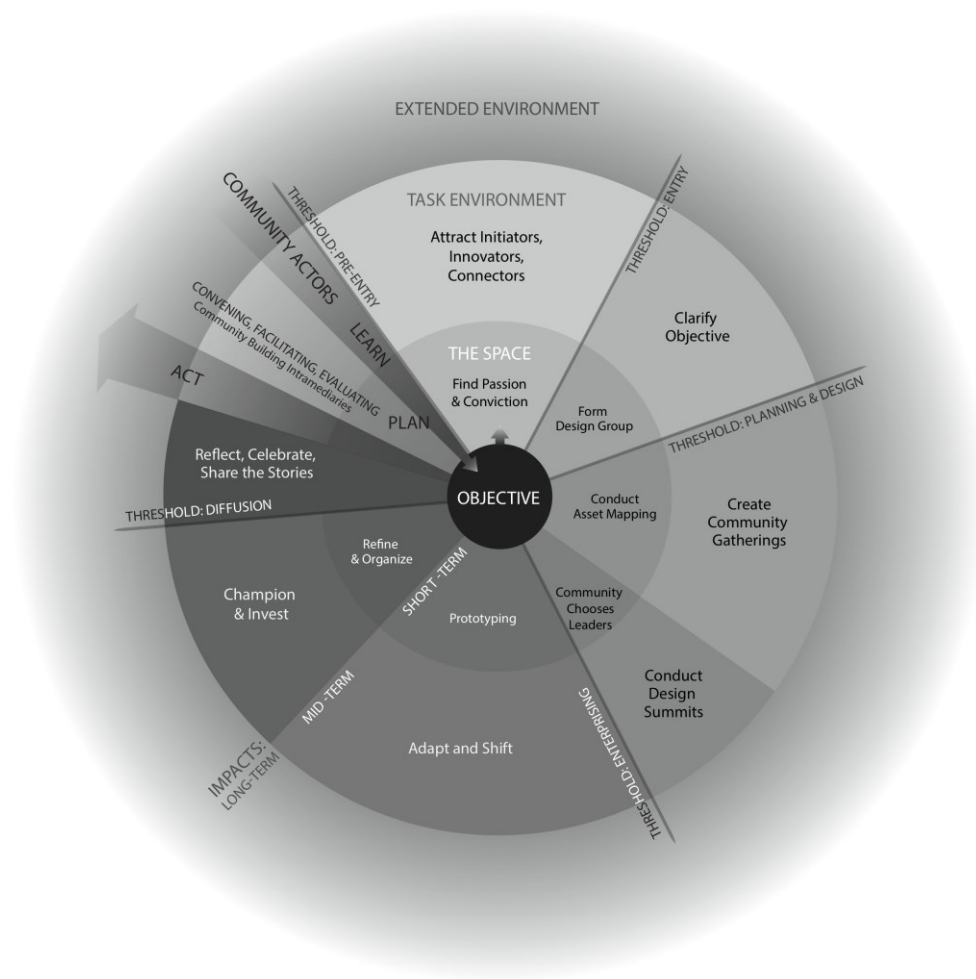
Figure 15.1. Framework for Comprehensive Community Youth Development

Components Of The Framework

Conceptualizing system and environment. OST provides theoretical scaffolding for the Framework with the fundamental idea that all systems or organizations, formal and informal, have boundaries that are permeable to the environment. OST reminds us to consider a system in its environment. Effective design and planning for community building requires that we consider both sides of the coin at all times. Design groups must know something about each of the four parameters to open systems to be able to characterize any system or any environment. The Framework (Figure 15.1) expresses the four parameters: a system (design group), the environments (extended and task), a design group learning about its environment, and planning and acting to change that environment to better suit the inherent needs of the design group, its members, and the community.

System in this description refers to a social system, defined as any group of people who interact long enough to create a shared set of understandings, norms or routines to integrate action, and to establish patterns of dominance and resource allocation (Holling & Gunderson, 2002, p. 107). The Framework is presented from the perspective of a design group and their enterprising space as the central system (inner circle) and their change objective as their organizing principle. We know that, not only does the external environment impact the design group, but also with concentrated effort it can, in turn, change its environment (Emery, M., 2000b).

The system and environment conceptualized in the introduction to the thesis, was youth as a system interacting with their environment, the community. For the perspective of the various local conveners, each as a system, a characterization of their individual task environments included in Nain: the Department of Youth, Elders, and Recreation; for the QC 4H: the 4H BOP team, the local 4H clubs, the local communities and its youth membership; for PEI's Youth in Action local convener: the youth actors and local community members; and for the Futures Association: the English-speaking community of the region, the youth center directors, and the Association's employees.

The extended environment is of less immediate concern to the system, but nevertheless has impact on their effort. This might be, for instance, things such as changes in technology, the national unemployment rate for young people, global climate change, etc. The characterization

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of the extended environment in Nain included decreases in things such as, people lobbying against seal hunters; influences seen as increasing such as: structured youth activities, men's role in the home, the cod fishery, closeness in families, fast-paced society, urbanization and court-induced consequences.

A task environment also contains many systems. As introduced earlier, a task environment is that with which the system interacts continually in a give-and-take mode, as it pursues its objective. A characterization of the task environment of the local conveners included, for instance, the steering committees and their equivalents, action groups, the national conveners, and in some YS sites, youth-led grant selection committees. For the project organizers (e.g. steering committees and equivalents, action groups, grant selection committees) the task environment included the local convener organizations, community members who got involved, organizations the various steering committee members represented, and recipients of the service the project organizers provided (e.g. small grants, forums, community events).

The open system theory undergirding of the Framework can help a design group clarify the forces at play in a community, that impact exchanges with young people. It will also provide a design group with a conceptualization to help manage the complexity experienced when community building. For community building with citizens of all ages, characterizing the task environment as 'community' as a whole, is not sufficiently clarified to help a design group effectively strategize. During the research, it was this kind of generalization that made it difficult for the project staff to know which way to turn. As I stated earlier, a community is not an organization, and should not be addressed as such in strategy development. Once an objective has been articulated, the systems within the community that immediately impact the objective, can be characterized and strategically managed. The systems in the community a design group considers a priority to engage with will change as they carry out their intervention. There is a constant back and forth between the system and the environment and they cohere over time (Emery & Trist, 1965).

In the Framework (Figure 15.1), the transition zone between the circles titled *The Space* and *Task Environments* is representative of the eco-tone (Merriam-Webster, 1977, p. 360) of a design group and its task environment in the community. It is also signifies the precarious eddy

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line (see Figure 11.1, p.173) that marks the transition from the calm and reasonably predictable design group in its enterprising space, and the faster moving and less predictable currents to navigate in the task environment.

Guiding principles. The evidence gathered during the research, combined with my years in the field, has informed the identification of eleven puzzle pieces to carrying out CCYD or any other community-based process for community building. The YS national convener underlines the importance of the idea of guiding principles:

> "In a complex initiative like YouthScape, we discovered the importance of working from common principles. The guideposts we collectively developed to guide decisions and program implementation became a much more useful tool than the traditional logic frame. This principle based framework allowed for emergence and ensured that each community site could follow their unique pathways without losing site of a common end goal. It also allowed for a platform of mutual accountability to be established" (IICRD, 2010, p. 6).

I suggest the following 9 guiding principles for applied interventions in community enterprising:

1. *Listen to children and youth*: Universally children are loved, inspire creativity and elicit compassion. Children create more often and with less inhibition than any other segment of the population. (It with this understanding that the welfare of children is the organizing principle for Café 12.) Youth express what children see but can't yet voice about concerns on the edge of convention, where the next great social innovations lay in waiting. Together, children and youth as catalyst for community enterprising are unparalleled.

2. *Quality relationships the highest of priorities*: To place the development of quality relationships as the highest of priorities is to establish a project culture built with care and respect that drives engagement, innovation and accountability.

3. *Notice and advocate for community enterprising*: Pay attention to community enterprising of all sorts and with all age groups. Don't co-opt, coordinate for, or try to motivate the individual behind the enterprising. Coach at no cost to the individual and in

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confidence would-be entrepreneurs as they develop their initiative and navigate community networks.

4. *Associate with networks*: Bring youth and adult citizens that gather around CCYD projects into association with networks in the project's task environment in the community.

5. *Recruit for passion and conviction*: While children provide the inspiration, it is critical to leverage the passion and conviction from self-motivated youth and adult partners as a foundation upon which to carry out community building.

6. *Follow a design, planning and action framework*: Recognize the complexity of the work of community building and the value of a *map* to guide the journey.

7. *Ensure adaptability in convener organization hosting a project:* Guide for judicious use of authority by position and encourage authority by virtue of one's role. Foster and build capacity for responsive structures and participatory and democratic decision-making, and responsive structures that serve the emergent nature of rapid prototyping.

8. *Support learning*: Create systems for self and group reflection, and ongoing project design for improvement. Create a learning community that embraces uncertainty and play, fosters laughter, and celebrates surprise and delight.

9. *Ensure facilitator expertise*: Whatever the need of the moment for the facilitator role: educator, coach, trainer or facilitator—the role moves in the space-in-between a design group and their task environment

Phases and thresholds of the Framework. The Framework conceptualizes a single spiral or cyclical design process[74] that advances in phases indicated by *thresholds.* The phases are intended to assist design groups and CBIs clarify specific citizens and systems in the environment

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[74] cyclic or spiral process – a process of design and action research that alternates between action and critical reflection (Dick, 1994).

that impact their objective at any given time. The phases are generally reflective of the chronology I witnessed during the research. The transitions across thresholds from one design cycle phase to another are illustrated as: pre-entry, entry, planning and design, enterprising, and diffusion. The phases are not time specific since the period of time it will take to move through a single design cycle will vary with different system-change objectives. However, the research and post research field-testing of this Framework provides some sense of timing. To engage citizens in community enterprising, once a design group is in place, a design cycle is estimated to take 1.5 – 3 years. As a comparison, the length of time the funders of YERC and YS hoped to have steering committees, action plans, partner engagement and small community projects launched was one year. As the research demonstrated, this period was stretched to 1.5 – 2 years in most sites. The design period conceptualized in the first design cycle is the period of critical laying a foundation for sustainable activity that can lead to the transformational change—an enterprising community.

Projected impacts. The Framework includes a conceptualization of short- mid- and long-term impacts, and is aligned with the various systems to be assessed: the design group, those in the community-based task environment, and or for longer-term impacts, systems in the extended community environment. Once a design group is in place and a systems change objective and a task environment clearly identified, the following are examples of outcomes that can be expected from application of the Framework:

Short-term (start-18 months)
- Design groups of (8-12) mixed generation social entrepreneurs are recruited,
- Design groups have developed a culture with conditions for enterprising,
- Characterization of the task environment completed, including assets,
- Partners (organizations and individuals) in the design process are identified, recruited and engaged.

Mid-Term (18 - 30 months)
- Increased and growing signs of social capital in the task environment,
- Public discourse on matters of local concern at new and multiple levels,
- Increased community gathering,

- Expert and ongoing guidance for community organizing,

- New forms of community enterprising,

- New and readily accessible ways for citizens to engage,

- Multi-generational partnerships,

- Participatory processes,

- New methods of support for community enterprising.

Longer-Term (30 months +)

- children's increased well-being in the community,

- youth as a central resource to community enterprising,

- networked community,

- enterprising community culture,

- service recipients becoming service providers.

The objective. The heart of the design cycle is the design group's systems change objective—the stone tossed in the water. The objective is the organizing principle for all project organizers allows the group to characterize the systems and environments they need to sensitize to, at any given time. An organizing principle can be as simple as, for instance, a group of people gathering to share a box of chocolates or as in the cases, more complicated. The organizing principle for the local conveners and other project staff was referred to as the objective of the project, at their community sites.

The Thresholds And Phases Of The Framework

Threshold: pre-entry. There is always some sort of a catalyst in community building initiatives that starts things rolling. It might be a frustrated citizen or recognized leader who steps up, a philanthropist or funder, an infusion of volunteers, or a crisis. At a national level, the catalysts in the cases from the research were the funders, as they put out a call for expressions of interest. At the local level, the local conveners were the catalysts, although the intensity of their catalytic influence was diluted.

The pre-entry phase is the period when a great deal of the behind-the-scenes work takes place for comprehensive community building initiatives. In a community context, this is the period prior to entering the community with a concept, a need or a call for action. It is the period prior to identifying a design team and entering the community with a clear objective, and therefore, a design challenge. Though the pre-entry phase is vitally important to setting initiatives on an effective course, in practice it is significantly undervalued. It was during YERC and YS pre-entry phase that checking each other out, a kind of flirting between the funder and potential local conveners took place.

Find passion and conviction. The focus of this first phase is a broad search to find pioneer convener(s) for an initial conversation in the community about the community-building objective. This process equates with a marketing effort a product supplier might undertake to locate community partners to carry a new product. Whether the catalyst is an individual, a foundation or a community organization, an early scan of the environment during this phase can uncover who is known in the community for doing quality work, and has a strong grassroots network. For the catalysts, the search is for the richest soil, in which to plant the first seeds of their vision. They are looking beyond best practices and passion; these are important but passion comes and goes. They are looking for those individuals and organizations that have demonstrated conviction, and as such, contributed to the community's resiliency. Finally, they are looking for a person(s) that can navigate the implicated system (neighbourhood and/or community issue).

Indicators that a community scan, or mapping, in this early phase might discover could include stories of best practices at work, pent-up hunger for change or promising innovations. Behind each of these there may be enterprising individuals and/or groups. If those conducting the scan listens carefully and connect the dots, there may also be signs of conviction that cut through the fog of competing programs and services in a community. Like a captain who listens for the foghorn on a night of thick fog, catalysts that pick up signals of conviction can feel assured they are on the right course. The individuals and organizations that have maintained a conviction to a particular systems-change objective for the benefit of community hold the stories of innovation, entrepreneurism and community building that will attract others to gather around them.

Once the catalyst has information regarding convictions and passion in a particular community, it is appropriate to get a sense of the people and organizations behind the stories. This phase is a time to move slowly and work through any established relationships the catalyst may have, while navigating the prospective community, its people, services and resources. The objective at this phase is for the catalyst to identify partners with whom to convene an early conversation in the selected, or candidate, community about the larger community-building objective. The role of these conveners may last only for the period it takes to convene and follow-up on the first public conversation. During the research, the first conveners were the national conveners, and then in the community sites, the local conveners.

Prior to reaching out to community, it is important to ensure that the messaging about an initiative is clear. Early in the YS initiative, the national organizers, including the funder, struggled with clearly articulating an explanation of the concept of 'comprehensive.' By extension, the local conveners also struggled to put legs under comprehensive strategies. Had the concept of comprehensive been fully clarified and grounded in practical examples at the beginning of the initiative, it may have been possible to avoid a number of strategic misfires.

The community organization or individual(s) recruited as the pioneering conveners of the initial gathering will impact how the broader community receives the invitation for involvement, and who attends the initial meetings. In the case of the Futures Association, selecting them as a convener resulted in attracting very few youth. In PEI, the same youth who were already involved with the convener are the ones who got involved with YERC. With the QC 4H on the other hand, youth members in community 4H clubs eagerly waited for news from BOP, from start to finish of the project. The search for pioneering conveners will start a better understanding of some of the dynamics, history, anxieties and hopes of the community.

Though, generally representatives of a formally incorporated community organization convene community projects and dialogues, the potential in having a group of citizens do the convening for a vision of community enterprising is great. When a community organization makes the invitation, other helping professionals are the likely attendees. When citizens do the inviting, people come as citizens or residents first, and in their professional affiliations second. In Nain, the greatest involvement of citizens, without ties to their day jobs, happened when a group of

youth and adults, acting as citizens, went door-to-door to invite other citizens to attend the SC.

To co-convene and host the initial meeting in the community with, or on behalf of, the catalyst is the extent of the pioneering conveners' role. To create more structure than that at the pre-entry phase may be beyond what is useful. To over-structure at this early stage may constrain the design process. Such was the case with YERC and YS, with the funder's mandate (perceived mandate with YS) requiring the creation of steering committees at the very earliest stage. As I earlier reported, most of these steering committees self-destructed within a year of their launching. It is important for those co-convening and/or facilitating the first community gathering to spend time together to design the event agenda, clarify roles and hosting logistics.

Attract initiators, innovators, connectors. The focus of this phase is for the catalyst and the initial-gathering co-conveners to invite a broader group to an event to present the community building objective and the opportunity to get involved. When you bring together people with like minds and hearts who are ready to act, it is a ripe opportunity to start a journey of comprehensive community change (Holman, Devane, Cady, 2007). As suggested by HW's Framework and its YAT research, a convener would do well to invite stakeholders that have the characteristics of initiators, innovators, and/or connectors (Warner, Langlois, Dumond, 2003).

With YERC at the Futures Association, their outreach into the community was drawn out and of a general nature. The methods included public service announcements on the radio, schools visits and newspaper ads. Ten weeks after the project started, their efforts attracted only a few inquiries. In contrast, the design of the first public gathering suggested by the Framework can be much simpler and concentrated in time—no more than two or three hours. The Halifax, NS based Café 12 design group convened and hosted a two-hour public gathering to invite people to get involved. They had over thirty people attend. Most signed up to be a design group member or an available contributor when needed.

Once community members are gathered, it is important to communicate the principles of the initiative, objective and vision or area of concern. The hosting and nature of the facilitation should reflect the Framework's guiding principles. The offer to community members is to be part of creating something new and innovative, with a people-centred process full of

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compassion and creativity. During the research, one of the site coordinators described her evolving role during this period of reaching out as, "a connector and bridge builder."

Threshold: entry. At this threshold the process of designing a response to the objective is about to enter into a deeper level. The designers will be those who respond to an invitation for a second conversation about the initiative. The core of the process forms—the first design group. It is important at this threshold to walk slowly into the next phase, remembering the Framework's guiding principles. It is also important that the second community meeting be convened soon enough to capture the initial excitement generated at the first public gathering. During YS, there was a delay between the first call that went out to the interested convening agencies, and a confirmation that their project would go ahead. From the perspective of the local convening agencies, that delay compromised their community engagement process. One convener shared this perspective, "The delay resulted in a sense of starting over." It is important to be ready for this threshold in order to avoid such delays.

The entry phase described below is the period during which local conveners establish structure, recruit primary volunteers and/or staff, clarify partnerships and begin to plan their project activity. The process outlined below was informed by the research but provides an alternative design path than was experienced with YERC and YS.

Form design group. At the centre of most successful community building efforts is a team of committed people with a vision. During YS and YERC, the fact that the work was carried out mostly by the site coordinators created a block to the potential energy for change. The groups that gave life to the spaces for enterprising during the research had something that drew them together e.g. an idea, a passion, a sense of need, an opportunity to grow and contribute. Together, they undertook to design something and carry it out for the collective good. Once citizens have stepped up to be involved in a design group, their passion, skills and interest can significantly enhance the generative and participatory qualities of a project.

Operating in a space bound by the community rather than a DP1 organization, design groups are central to the entry and the next phase of the Framework. Operating as an open and purposeful system, the design group is capable of transformational work. During YERC and YS, the kind of

group effort that could come from a design group was missing at most sites. Site coordinators, for the most part, had a sense of working alone—without others to reflect and celebrate with, "I have had a realization of this work being hard. There is nobody's energy to feed off of." However, the spaces for enterprising did reflect a number of the Framework's guiding principles.

The role of the design group is an alternative to the kind of mandates given to steering committees in conventional youth and community development projects. The beginning stages of the design group are a critical time for creating a solid foundation for effective group processes. Any work done to introduce the Framework, its guiding principles, the roles and practices of the CBI, and to foster the conditions for enterprising at this stage will serve the group well as they face the complexity of the design challenges to come.

Clarify the objective. The Framework suggests that the design group starts where things began with the spaces for enterprising during the research, that is, clarifying an objective and its relevant design challenges in the task environment. In the context of the Framework, once an objective is clearly articulated, the ensuing steps in the design cycle become clearer. A clearly defined objective will guide the design group's questions and help them stay on track throughout the process.

When the design group is clear on its objective, that is to say when it has a sense of boundaries, it can more confidently move forward. So too, they will then be clear on the immediate design challenges going forward. A clear objective and ongoing design challenges provide a natural boundary, or organizing principle, for a design group's work. The objective can be expressed in one sentence. This bounding of the objective, or perhaps simply a problem or area of focus, is critical to the group's forward momentum. Ideally, the challenge is broad enough to allow for the discovery of unexpected areas of value, yet narrow enough to make the focus manageable.

In the research sites, it was difficult in most cases to strike a balance between being broad with a sense of the possibility and being too vague, resulting in misdirected time and energy and unsure investment of financial resources. One site coordinator expressed frustration with the void created as a result of the vagueness of the project objectives. "The Executive Director keeps

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loading me up with other things and not letting me get at the YERC work in the way I think it should be done."

During the research, the process of clarifying and objective or a specific community-based challenge to focus upon was rife with creative tension from a combination of: the sense of the possible, unclear and emergent processes, under-equipped local conveners, and the funders' expectations for participatory and youth-led processes. The funders and national conveners hoped for a facilitated process from the local conveners to identify an objective that citizens and community groups might engage with. At a number of sites, the project service providers did attempt to clarify an objective as a way to organize, but these only crystallized late in the project, and only in a few sites. With YS, it was the small grants that made the difference by moving the process into specific design objectives and design challenges. However, these attempts were too little, too vague and too late to go beyond surface level systems change.

The energy and resources, during what could be considered a parallel to this stage of the Framework during YERC and YS, were consumed with making formal agreements, hiring staff, arranging partner agreements, clarifying designated funds and communicating the intent of the project to the public. These demands put the form (structure) as the priority, ahead of the community-based objective (function). By way of example, a community youth development position was created at the start of YS, but a clear need for the role never materialized. The position consumed important resources intended to address the youth inclusion agenda. This phase of the Framework prioritizes forming a design group of citizens prior to creating any sense of permanent or even semi-permanent structure.

      Threshold: planning and design. This is the threshold the design group crosses when they are ready to move deeper into their immersion in the broader community. As introduced earlier in the discussion about the CBI practice of hosting, this threshold can be compared to a process of walking up to, and then being in, the vestibule of the community. At the point of this threshold, the design group has established a culture that fosters the conditions of enterprising. They will know when they are ready for this threshold. There may be a sense of "lets get on with the action," or of being tired of the group work it took to get this far. Stepping out to take their message to the community can be an intimidating challenge. The group can draw courage from

the knowledge that the principles of the design process, they were initially attracted to, are based on universal, intrinsic needs (Angyal, 1969). If the group follows the Framework and maintains the conditions for enterprising, more people will be attracted to get involved in the systems-change objective.

Conduct asset mapping. As discussed in the thesis, most community-based problem solving is approached from a perspective of what's wrong. Service-based organizations are designed to respond to issues and needs. Once decision-makers head down the deficit-thinking path, asset-based strategic options are closed off, or certainly difficult to elicit. The mayor in Nain spoke with frustration to the need to flip the discourse, "there is a capacity-sucking attitude in this community—the result of waiting for somebody else to come in from the south and do things."

Rather than smother the flames of possibility and engagement, asset-based mapping places attention on what's working, what is possible and what strengths can be leveraged to build an enterprising culture in the community. It is generative, solution-focused thinking. Like putting more logs on a fire to build heat, the process builds enterprising culture outward, first with the design group and then radiating to others in the community. The design group, and those that they touch during this phase, grow their capacity to look beyond the threats and constraints that hold back innovation, and focus instead on ideas that fuel collective action and transformative change.

The practice of asset-based mapping assumes that the solutions and resources required to address a problem, exist within the community. With an abundance mentality, asset mapping uncovers hidden gifts. A colleague described the work of finding hidden community assets, "What a wonderful job, to find, open and share gifts around like chocolates!" I like the way McKnight (1995) puts it**,** "the community is a reservoir of hospitality that is waiting to be offered" (p. 121). Asset mapping and appreciative inquiry could first be directed internally to the design group's own networks and then expanded, if desired. The search could be directed towards finding particular skills, knowledge, interests, and passions that can be applied to the objective. It is very much a mindset that is human-centered, collaborative and optimistic. The

approach addresses problem solving with confidence that new and better things are possible, and that individuals can step up and make things happen.

When considering organizational partners, asset mapping and the complimentary method of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, 1990) reminds the design group to organize the mapping around assets, rather than issues in the community and organizations. During YERC, when this approach was applied at the Futures Association, it helped the site coordinator uncover common spaces of decision-making in the organization that were more cooperative and participatory with young people. In considering organizational partners, if any, an asset mapping and appreciative inquiry approach honors where an organization is, rather than where they are not, in their development of youth inclusion and participatory practices.

Create community gatherings. During the research, there was a thirst for action at a number of community sites that went on in some cases from 1 to 2.5 years. With YS, it was the youth grants and the resulting action projects that moved a number of things forward at various organizational levels. These small projects created various ways for community groups to gather, enterprise for the collective good, and then celebrate their accomplishments. The same can be said of each of the spaces for enterprising.

Tangible, community-based action with the potential for high participation is the focus of this phase of the Framework. There are two objectives to this phase, 1) for the design group to learn together through a hands-on project and build relationships as they create and plan an ignition type event, and 2) public awareness about the objective and design challenge(s). It is important that the event be scaled to a size appropriate for the capacity of the design group. The conditions for an enterprising culture are brought to life during this phase. Examples of activities might include a youth arts event, a community garden work party, a group meal, a random act of kindness walkabout, a community mural, a leaf raking project, a short music event, etc.

Community chooses leaders. Having immersed themselves in the community with an ignition type event or gathering, the design group and new recruits from the community will be ready to start preparing for a whole-systems planning event to address the overall objective. The focus of this phase is to select citizens to attend a design and planning event. A method

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such as the Community Referencing System (CRS)[75] is well suited to the task of helping the community democratically identify and recruit from the diversity of its citizens.

A diversity of community actors, representative of the community, is critical. There was frustration in Nain when, though youth were ready to step up to the community actions, adults were missing from the mix. One community actor shared, "We have gotten the attention of the youth but how do we get other people besides youth involved? It's the community's youth, it's our nieces, nephews, sons and daughters who are getting together to try and change things. Now we need our parents, our uncles and aunts, our next-door neighbours and the working community to listen."

The intent of this phase is not to invite as many people as possible to a general planning event on community development. At the Futures Association for instance, the site coordinator concluded that the wide-reaching search for partners she conducted was a waste of many weeks of her time. The directive she was given to find partners is commonplace in community programs. The common thinking is that it is important to connect with as many potential partners as possible in the hopes of comprehensive change. The objective and its design challenge(s) provide an alternative way to organize the community engagement process by reaching out directly to citizens. They then nominate other citizens they believe are the best ones to address the specific community challenge.

In Nain, as so often is the case, the hunger for change was not readily evident in the community, yet it took only a half-dozen key conversations for the YERC team to believe the energy was ready to be sparked. That energy, along with YERC's resources, required a simple way to come together and co-generate. A community referencing system (CRD) process identified the community leaders ready to step up for a Search Conference– a significant two-day planning event for the future of their community.

Conduct design summit(s). This phase begins to tap into individual and collective vision. By connecting people, ideas, and resources, new sources of energy are released to fuel the

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[75] Community Referencing System: A democratic method of citizens nominating community members to attend a search conference or other community-planning event (M. Emery. 1999).

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change process, and to guide strategic choices for action. Whatever the focus of the design challenge, the design group and project staff requires a good understanding of the different systems that must work together. With this understanding, the project organizers are in a better position to manage the complexities and create change. It is important to get to know the history, assets, ideas, fears and goals associated with the design challenge.

The Framework offers two foundational principles to use in selecting a method for the design summit: high participation, and a whole-systems approach to improvement. There are many proven whole-system change methodologies that reflect these principles (Holman, Devane, Cady, 2007). In Nain, the SC proved to be a turning point for that site, and for a while put the project at a much higher level of community engagement and enterprising. At the QC 4H a design lab process was used to create BOP and the workshop on youth and adult partnerships. The choice of method must fit the context. There may be one significant event or multiple shorter ones, as part of an intentional design process

> *Threshold: enterprising.* This threshold marks the transition from design and planning to community enterprising, with a structure to support communication between self-managed action groups. The original design group can dissolve at this stage since leadership will have been distributed to new design groups with new challenges spun off from the original objective.

Prototyping. An effective whole-systems planning event during the design summit phase, will identify strategic actions. At the very least, within the boundary of the design challenge(s), the event can determine where the energy is for change and community enterprising. The event can help identify individuals for new design groups, each with their own objective and new associated design challenges.

The new design groups will organize around more specific action than the pioneering first ones did. The new groups will be standing on the shoulders of the entrepreneurial organizing of the first design group. With most of their planning work completed at the design summit, the new design groups will be equipped to self-organize. Their next step is to create tangible community prototypes, or experiments. Prototyping is a time to move from ideas to a careful critical look at

constraints, opportunities, criteria and the task environment in which the idea will be carried out.

In Nain for instance, an alcohol awareness action group knew that although they had grand ideas for what they could accomplish, they were up against a environment that had many naysayers. When one mother, concerned about her daughter's drinking hung posters about the problems of drinking throughout the community, they were all torn down. In another case, one of the most active action groups (design group) was impeded when the town official vetting their recommendation was threatened with having his tires slashed if he executed them. These challenges were part of the task environment, and needed to be managed as they began prototype actions.

Adapt and shift. At this stage of the Framework, the task environment of the new design groups will be further clarified. In this phase, the design group prototypes and tests their ideas in the community, and with those individuals and organizations identified through their listening, learning and planning. It is one thing for a design group to prototype and launch an experiment or test an idea in relative isolation, and quite another to have those that will be impacted involved. They too can listen and plan for how they might adapt to help test, and possibly adopt, the prototype idea.

For a design group to have open doors to talk about their prototype can make all the difference in sustaining the action and encouraging broader citizen engagement. The board of directors at QC 4H, the mayor in Nain, and the board of directors of the local convener in PEI were all quite open to hearing ideas and suggestions that came from youth associated with the YERC project. As one community actor stated, "It helped me see the difference in dealing with people that get it [youth inclusion] and those that do not. When you are speaking with ones that do not, you are just hitting the wall all the time." Another community actor spoke about the need for more listening from the community. "The youth involvement is there. There is no doubt about that. It's the working community who doesn't get involved and don't listen."

The prototype phase has the potential to move a number of people into action and generate awareness of the objective. With YS, the small grants strategy moved a number of the sites into

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badly needed clarity of focus and action. Some of the youth-led grants started with a small experimental enterprise, and then went on to have more involved impact. A dream of a circus school began as an occasional gathering of young people who lived on the street and adults who practiced circus arts. Once the original experimentation was completed, the group offered performances in schools and community venues. In the Thunder Bay YS site, a group convened a call to action to bridge the gap between the voices of young people and the Thunder Bay City Council. With the success of an initial experiment, the group was invited to form a youth action council with the hope of influencing the city council, the United Way and a social planning council.

It became clear during the research that a great deal of ambiguity typically resides in an organization's policies and procedures—its routines. These routines become an easy default barrier to experimentation and the possibility of change, and they become constraints to youth inclusion. The YS external researcher described routines as, "plugs in a dike" holding back a system's generative potential (Blanchet-Cohen, 2008). In the context of CCYD, the possibility of change includes young people not just being more meaningfully involved, but also helping organizations adapt to changing environments with enterprising solutions. This means youth playing an active role in a space for enterprising, and helping implicated organizations interpret life on its edges.

Events held during the design summit phase are attractive to carry out because of their concentrated nature and clarity of task. Such events succeed in drawing together people and financial resources. Unfortunately, such events can also come in with a bang and go out with a whimper. The follow-up to these events must be planned with even more care than the event itself. Though a planning event may have high participation and democratic processes, these principles are vulnerable following an event. Established structures and routines are powerful forces to compete with, in the work of creating cultural change.

During YERC and YS, a number of new action initiatives emerged that required the local conveners to adapt, in order to determine how to best give their support. The systems in the task environment of change initiatives are not always so cooperative. In Nain, there were a

number of 'near-action' initiatives that did not quite make it out of the gates. Moving ideas to action can be difficult. The reasons for the loss of the opportunities in Nain, and other examples across the sites, are not entirely clear. What is clear is that there is a high probability for tension between people proposing new ideas and those who would prefer that things stay just the way they are.

The temporary nature of a prototype makes it easier for individuals who are resistant to change to make temporary exceptions. It also motivates individuals who are eager for change and enterprising to take action. In Thunder Bay, the city council adopted a youth action council. In Calgary, the transit system administration began to learn how to better consult with youth on core transit issues such as routes, schedules, safety and graffiti. On Montreal Island, the leaders of several mainstream institutions learned new ways to be more inclusive of cultural diversity among youth in their decision-making.

Refine and organize. Once their design is complete, the prototypes are carried out in the community. The music festival and Brass Band in Nain, the Halloween event in PEI and the BOP workshop in QC are all good examples of prototype activities. With YS, the youth-led activities that came about as a result of the small grants fund are each examples of prototypes. These are examples of relatively small experiments that can inform a design process as it moves closer towards the overall objective. To make the most of their prototype, the design group should garner as much feedback from as many people from different perspectives as possible. Varied methods could be used that might include conversations, surveys and storytelling circles. Change is not always welcome or easy, especially in well-established, mature community organizations and institutions. The beauty of the prototype is its tangibility. It provides an opportunity for stakeholders in the task environment of the new initiative to get a good sense of the possibilities.

The nature of community building is that the design challenges and ideas to address change, may be dealing with a complex environment, and may require existing organizations to adopt some form of systems-change commitment. For instance, the design challenge for a group of youth and social workers associated with a children's aid society was, "How might we increase the volunteer drivers available to youth in care?" Their community experiment was to first see

what they could do about getting new drivers to work just with their group, and then take that information to inform a bigger objective. The executive director of the CAS had a sense of the idea in its early form, before having to decide on the concept's implications for the entire agency. Though the staff that arranged for volunteer drivers had their systems firmly established, with a prototype led by a youth group there was no reason not to cooperate with the youths' initiative.

An important aspect of this phase is a structure to maintain communication between design groups, and facilitating continued high participation of prototype refinement. In Nain, all the promises and good intentions of citizens who stepped up at the SC to begin community enterprising, faded away within six months. A structure was set up for action group meetings and support from the local convener, but it proved inadequate for the task at hand. There was little structure for communication between the groups, when the young people headed off to school. And adult participation faded away. The structure for communicating between groups, bringing in new community members and channeling the support of the local convener and partner organizations was loose and not up to the task. Though community actors continued to speak highly of the event and their impact, the action teams that flowed out of the event were mostly inactive within four months of the event. A better means was required to maintain the momentum and increase contact between those that begin to get involved in community action.

With prototype(s) complete, a design group can reconvene to make refinements. Though the prototype and overall change focus will have evolved, this phase is an intentional period to interpret feedback and observations to further refine the initiative to better adapt to the changing and better-understood task environment. At the Futures Association, the executive director appreciated the principles of redesign to set a new course for the project, "This adaptability was refreshing and encouraging."

In this phase, constraints and strategies that were first visited during the design summit phase are re-visited. For example, if key stakeholders were identified in the task environment during asset mapping and appreciative inquiry, there may be obvious links to intrapreneurs, and others that help increase support and learning. If some of these support people have positional authority at the organization, they can provide the design group a clearer sense of how to

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navigate for the systems-change objective. With this feedback and their own observations in hand, the design group will have a better sense of the level of receptivity to their enterprising agenda. They would know for instance, more about potential supporters and obstacles in the task environment. They might know what policies need to be better understood, what knowledge they require and what a realistic time horizon is for implementation. Since things in complex environments generally don't go as planned, an ongoing action and reflection of the spiral design method is key.

As the Framework's guiding principles suggest, structure is best re-visited often to help enterprising initiatives adapt to their changing task environment. In multiple sites during the research, seemingly small things were able to slow fragile new initiatives. Nevertheless, change does happen, albeit at times gradually over the life of the design cycle. Even subtle signs of progress are important to note, since they inform new strategy. In Nain, the participants of the SC learned about the Strategy of the Indirect Approach to move their systems change objective out into the community (Emery, M., 1999). Based on the writings of Sun Tzu in *The Art of War*, the approach gave the project staff a framework for determining strategy when they ran into what seemed like a roadblock, and encouraged new ways of approaching the challenge.

Champion and invest. At this phase, the task environment that the design group was originally navigating will have changed. If at this stage the initiative has found its legs, organizations and individuals in the task environment will have begun to adapt. They may be ready to adjust staff roles or tasks, leverage their networks, or reallocate or identify new financial resources**.** If partners and collaborators from the environment were selected and engaged carefully, this is the phase for intrapreneurs to boldly step up, carry the embers of the lessons forward, and champion any necessary systems change. In PEI, Nain and with the QC 4H, the local conveners eventually succeeded in passing embers onto young people who took leadership of various small projects in their community.

As was addressed earlier, many of a community's physical resources are difficult for citizens to access for new initiatives. Intrapreneurs from community organizations in the task environment, who are also part of a design group, can help champion a sharing of resources to support innovative new approaches. Each of the previous phases of the design cycle contribute a better

understanding of structural barriers and the accompanying opportunities. This phase of the Framework is an acknowledgment of the need for concentrated and strategic action to identify and manage barriers in order to free up new thinking and resources. During the lifecycle of YERC and YS, much of the original project structure at a national and community level was re-invented to better fit the emerging project needs, free-up resources and manage constraints and barriers. At YS, the thirst for tangible action in the community drove a number of internal project developments in an attempt to get things moving, including reinventing structure, and personnel changes. Much of the original structure was reinvented as the steering committees failed to materialize as effective vehicles for networking or advisory support. At the Future's Association, to better accommodate the youth agenda, the executive director considered splitting the Tomorrow Committee into two committees: one that deals with education and transport and one for youth orientated items. However, in all sites more permanent structural change in the national and local convening organizations was minimal.

Threshold: diffusion. At this threshold, the first complete design cycle is nearing its end. The design group and those in the task environment will have changed and adapted to the needs of the enterprising agenda. The design process will continue, but leadership of the original change agenda will be more broadly distributed and new design challenges will continue to emerge.

Reflect, celebrate, share the stories. The Framework suggests that every design cycle end with a deliberate time to celebrate what has been accomplished, whatever the extent of the community enterprising. It is also a time to come together and reflect on the mistakes and accomplishments along the design journey. Though the emergent nature of the change initiative and changing leadership requires regular evaluation, this is doubly true in this the final stage of the first design cycle. During the research, when evaluation was not an active part of what was taking place at the sites, the vagueness and uncertainty of the action projects was easily set aside in favor of the status quo. At the Future's Association, the void created by uncertainty was quickly filled by the executive director loading the site coordinator with new tasks that drifted far from the original intent of the YERC project. This example underlines the importance, at this phase, of creating a new developmental evaluation framework to fit the new design landscape.

As a change initiative evolves in its new environment, the evaluation landscape, too, will change. New criteria for success need to be identified to guide and evaluate ongoing development.

Reflections from the design groups are important to frame stories to share with others on their own design journeys. It is important that stories are created in a participatory fashion and disseminated to the many different ages, languages and education levels of individuals who were involved and effected by the design cycle.

Chapter 15: A Social Enterprise Model for Sustaining CCYD

Introduction

Many of the practical ideas in Part B have been designed, created and field-tested for practical use with the support of two grassroots design groups over a 1.5 year period. A learning partner and I provided base camp support. As I stated at the beginning of the thesis, my motivation for undertaking PhD studies and the research was to inform practical strategies of intervention capable of releasing young people's creative energy, skill and drive for social change that builds community—and to sustain it for the long term it takes to transform communities. Café 12[76] is my response.

The thesis provides a suitable foundation of knowledge and experience for a practical response to the findings. Previous chapters looked at two alternative approaches to seed CCYD. The first was to embed an enterprising space within existing community organizations with a convener role, and the second, was to associate CCYD more closely with citizens in and in an organization with a participatory and democratic design principle. Café 12 is a response to the second option.

The Café 12 model, developed as part of this thesis has a new way to govern, convene and facilitate local organizing, support the development of local leadership, assure the quality of its process through evaluation, and to refine its approach to community transformation through the DARE methodology. Critically, because the model acknowledges that interventions for community transformation take time and well-established relationships, it has a new way to pay for its community development services to assure its long-term viability as an enterprising space.

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[76] Why the name "Café 12? If twelve year olds are cared for, so too is community. Twelve is the age of transition between being served and having the occasion to serve, and we know from considerable evidence, the optimal time to assure positive youth development. To engage citizens in surrounding twelve year olds with a circle of opportunities to learn, experience and give is to shape a thriving community for all. This is Café 12's organizing principle.

The research has made it clear that CCYD is complex, difficult, and long-enduring work. If we are to hope for more sustainable communities, we must recognize that it takes a long and carefully executed preparation phase (pre-entry) to build a foundation capable of carrying the weight of community transformation. Café 12 is designed to endure the long process of social transformation. Frances Westley, earlier introduced as a leading thinker in social innovation, offers this insight, "Resilience theory suggests that for the broader system (the organization, the community, or the broader society) to be resilient, it is not enough to innovate. Society needs to build the capacity for repetition—over and over again, forever (Westley, 2013, pg. 7).

This is a novel social franchise model that will catalyze community enterprising in an extraordinary way. Within a growing network of cafés, each shaped by their own community, the cafes will be gathering places for citizens of all ages; and a catalyzing hub for community enterprising. Its staff will be trained experts at inviting neighbours to get involved in community building in ways that encourage creativity, leadership and compassion. The results we are reaching for is a community where the children are thriving, the youth are mobilized, and the culture is one of enterprising for the collective good.

The research that informed Part A and B of the thesis has also informed strategy, governance structure, principles, and core practices that are central to the design of the enterprise. A discussion of these design cornerstones follows.

Two Organizations In A Symbiotic Relationship To Support An Enterprising Space

To promote conditions for community enterprising, Café 12 is embraced by an organizational structure that supports the distinct intramediaries' roles of convening, and facilitation, base-camp support; and the guiding principles for applied intramediary practices. Two organizations in a symbiotic relationship (Academy 12, and Twelve, Community Cafes) are established and incorporated with participatory and democratic principles to support the Café 12 Framework. Academy 12 is a registered charitable organization. Though each has distinct roles, the organizations come together around the set of nine guiding principles (identified in the Conclusion chapter) and a commitment to sustaining enterprising spaces in community. The culture of their collaboration is designed to be symbiotic and rich with the conditions for

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enterprising. Figure A.1 is a portrayal of the relationship between the two organizations.

Figure 15.2. A depiction of the symbiotic nature of the collaboration between Academy 12 and Twelve, Community Cafes, including the distinct roles and purposes of the organizations. (Graphic contributed by André Bouchard, Nova Scotia)

Academy 12 - base camp support. Sustaining a space for enterprising in a community will succeed rarely by chance and regularly in response to a catalyst. Following her earlier work, Lisbeth Schorr (1997) went on to explore why so many attempts to replicate successful programs fail. She set out to provide a thorough analysis of stories of successful community intervention programs in the US that were also successfully disseminated to other sites (p. 60-64). She found a number of examples of effective programs involved with transformational work in neighbourhoods, child protection agencies, and families and schools that have also successfully scaled up beyond what she calls the *hothouse* of the original program. She then focused on three highly successful programs that moved beyond the limitations of the programmatic Framework of replication to grow despite long odds. From her research she carefully outlines the elements of successful replications:

   • keep the core essence, adapt the components for a new setting

   • employ continuous backing of an intermediary organizatio**n**

   • recognize the importance of system and institutional context

- recognize the importance of the people context

- use outcomes orientation to judge success

- tackle directly the obstacles to large-scale change (p. 60 – 64).

These elements are reflected in the Café 12 and Academy 12 relationships. The Café 12 catalyst is Academy 12, entrusted with the ideology, body of knowledge and strategic competencies required to facilitate enterprising within a community. The Academy is mandated to stay at the leading edge of enterprising and catalyzing intellectual capital, and to foster aligned practices within a network of cafes. This role has been designed and created, based on the evidence presented in the thesis of the necessity for enterprising spaces to have base camp support. The role is an adaptation of the national convener role discussed in earlier parts of the thesis. Café 12 is trademark of Academy 12 (pending). Academy 12 is a registered charitable organization.

Employees and volunteers at a Café 12 will be experts at inviting neighbours to engage in community-enterprising – encouraging creativity, leadership and compassion. The robust and evolving formula that has resulted from the research and Café 12 design process will shape future employee and volunteer training on facilitating community engagement and café operations. Academy 12 will also provide evaluation, research and knowledge dissemination to support the work of these groups to develop, and to share strategic competencies with a broader network. The Framework presented in chapter 15 will be central to these functions as a way to organize evaluation, monitoring and research, and to design applied dissemination practices.

Following is a summary of Academy 12's functions:

For a Café 12 Design Team
- engagement facilitation
- enterprise planning
- fundraising

Ongoing
- Measure and document Café 12 impact upon local community building

- Develop and nurture strategic alliances locally and nationally – related to participatory community building practices
- Publish and distribute key learnings
- Evaluate community building practices and processes

Café 12 - the community catalyst. Café 12 has been designed to catalyze engagement and enterprising; with emphasis on building a capacity to support and learn from enterprising children and youth, and to engage in environmentally sustainable practices. Café 12 will be a gathering place for citizens of all ages; a hub that provides skills, knowledge and guidance in their quest to advance as individuals and as a community. Each café will employ highly skilled community building intramediaries (CBIs) to operate this social enterprise in trust for the community, and to involve volunteers in the café's ongoing design needs and operations. These CBIs will be experts at the practices of hosting, convening, facilitating, and evaluating enterprising space as described in Chapter 14 of the thesis. Café 12 is an adaptation of the enterprising spaces conceptualized in the thesis, the local convening role generally, and the front-line facilitator and developmental evaluation roles more specifically.

Twelve, community cafes (TCC) – the café network. The business of TCC is participatory community transformation as part of an original social franchising Framework. The TCC is an adaptation of the learning community network that existed between the community sites in both YERC and YS. TCC in an incorporated not-for-profit organization

Chapter 16: Conclusions

Introduction

The thesis concerns a broad area of study generally referred to in the field as youth engagement, that is —young people involved in the development of community. The study set out to explore what actions   community groups, youth-serving organizations, and supportive adults might take to foster youth engagement at a local level. More specifically, the inquiry took an in-depth look at the local and national organizing of attempts to carry out youth engagement projects in 9 nine remote, rural or urban communities. Though some of the projects achieved some of their objectives, for the most part most objectives were not met and all projects diverged from their original plan and design. However, the research did reveal exceptions where individuals did come together inspired by the possibilities of positive change. These stories of their engagement and the small community projects they carried out are an important part of the findings.

This chapter highlights the thesis' major contributions both, one, in relation to its analysis of what can be learned from the study of the efforts to replicate a particular approach to youth engagement in 9 communities and, two, in relation to an approach to fostering enterprising communities. The chapter begins with a discussion of the importance of the subject of study, prior to a synthesis of the findings. A discussion of implications for practice, and recommended future research, ends the chapter.

The Chapter 3: Literature Review reviewed four popular applied approaches to community and youth development including: 1) Community Youth Development; 2) Comprehensive Community Initiatives; 3) Asset-based Community Development; and 4) Collective Impact Initiatives. Though a great deal of knowledge can be garnered from understanding these approaches, I found them inadequate as a framework to describe the results of the research. From a foundation of the four approaches and the findings of the research, the thesis introduces

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a concept I refer to as: Comprehensive Community Youth Development (CCYD). CCYD serves as a backdrop to a discussion of practical applications of the findings in Part B. of the thesis.

As opposed to the term youth engagement, to better represent the research I also introduced the term *community enterprising*. My use of the phrase is intended to represent the dual recipients of CCYD outcomes—the individual and the community. It follows, that the definition of youth engagement relevant to the thesis is thus: young people involved in community enterprising.

Based on previous field experience and the literature review I developed a working theory that evolved during the research. Subsequently the working theory informed: a clarification of the problems associated with carrying out CCYD within community organizations; a set of practices and a framework for community building intramediaries (CBI), and a social enterprise model to create all-ages spaces for community enterprising.

Importance of the subject

With our downward spiral of social, environmental and economic conditions we can no longer sustain quality community life with an approach that relies on community organizations. Even if the staff and volunteers of most of these community organizations weren't already largely overwhelmed with the work load and demand for services they face, their training and mandate is to address problems and issues—a deficit-based approach. What they are not trained, resourced or set up to do is to grow community by leveraging the natural gifts, ideas and actions of citizens. This thesis argues that it is only *with* the leadership of citizens, youth and adults together that we can build solutions to complex social issues.

The emotional space in communities to care for one-another appears to be occupied by the well-intentioned people of community organizations. Citizens are lulled into believing that sufficient professionals are in place to find the necessary solutions to community problems. The extra-ordinary citizen that does step up to champion community-building, is hard-pressed to find support from established systems and is left to recruit help from under-resourced grass-root activists. The probability of achieving enterprising communities that are alive with

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compassion and innovation seems harder to imagine with each passing year. But we can hope and we can act at this at pivotal time in history.

The thesis addresses specific barriers to youth engagement in community development, including the shortage of expert convening and facilitation for the purposes of community building; and the overburdened nature of community organizations; and their focus on specific social needs rather than engaging citizens broadly. Unfortunately, the majority of youth-serving organizations are not up to the enormity of the task to shift their approach to strength-based and youth-infused approaches. Unfathomable amounts of money go into programs and services run by community organizations and public agencies and institutions for youth. Most do not attempt, nor do they attract the leadership of young people or grassroots community leaders in their operations and services. Most cannot be thought to be offering space for young and older adult engagement and enterprise. Many youth-serving community organizations focus on the character development of youth, yet ignore the need for shared analysis with youth of social structures and advocacy for social change. Youth may, for instance, be recruited to serve food at food banks but are ignored or downplayed is the value of community organizing to address food security issues or develop innovative neighbourhood solutions. It is time to suspend our assumption that current solution-seeking approaches focused on needs are sufficient to navigate the complex environments we are facing.

In later parts of the thesis, the focus is placed on an approach that puts young people in partnership with adults at the centre of community enterprising. A case is made that young people have what it takes to catalyze a new direction for community development that sparks local revolutions of citizen-based caring. Their passion inspires hope, their contemporary knowledge and creative energy helps us believe in the possibility of systems change. We can no longer afford to push youth to the margins of decision-making about critical community issues and opportunities. The impacts of youth engagement are is of great magnitude and far too compelling to ignore as a possibility for community transformation. If we are to uncover more sustainable pathways for communities, we must first transform the way we engage young people in solution-seeking spaces that foster community enterprising.

A Synthesis of the Findings

The thesis explored the roles of: convening, front-line facilitation or coordination, and administrative support for CCYD**.** It makes a case for the distinct nature of these roles, and suggests new dimensions for what I have referred to as intramediary roles, along with new associated practices, competencies and aptitudes.

A summary synthesis of the research findings is:

> If provided a space to create, and responsive intramediary supports, youth and adults that share community enterprising principles to inform their strategies will engage with each other and catalyze systems change.

The findings are synthesized under the following four themes:

- • Nine principles for CCYD strategy and development
- • Intramediary Role: Convening
- • Intramediary Role: Facilitation
- • Intramediary Role: Developmental Evaluation

Nine principles for CCYD strategy and development. The following suggested principles provide a game-changing framework for principle-based decision making for CCYD—both what decisions are made and how they are made. A convening organization or a citizen-driven project that embraces these principles has a far better chance to sustain broad engagement and resilience than what was experienced during the research and in most conventional community and youth development projects.

The principles suggest a wholesale redesign of the conventional approach to community and youth development strategy. For most interpretations of project mandates, these principles would carve a divergent path in design and organizational development. As an organizing

principle for projects, they inform strategy, operational policies and resource allocation. The decisions that result in turn, effects practices of human resources, professional development, evaluation and monitoring, planning, communications, fund raising and public relations.

However, the 9 principles are to guide CCYD projects within a framework. As discussed in the Chapter 3: Literature Review, a framework guides practice and policy it does not dictate it. There is a great deal of creative room to how a particular project or organization manifests the principles for specific context.

> • Listen to children and youth
> • Quality relationships the highest of priorities
> • Notice, and advocate for community enterprising
> • Grow your networks
> • Follow a planning and action framework
> • Recruit for passion and conviction
> • Follow a design, planning and action framework
> • Ensure adaptability when hosting a project
> • Support learning
> • Ensure facilitator expertise

Intramediary Role: Convening. The best candidates for a CCYD convening role are ready to reach out with purposeful intent to convene community actors, host them with heart, and provide them responsive base camp support (backbone, backup, administrative) for their activities. CCYD convening organizations should have clear sense of destination, and a strong intergenerational network along with the associated knowledge of resources to help navigate the project's task environment.

To host with heart, the convener assures stable base camp support, with highly responsive information, coordination, resources and evaluation to nourish the engagement of community actors and maximize community enterprising. In some instances, base camp may be located *inside* the convening organizations and in other cases, it may be another partner organization with the best capacity and competency to carry out the role.

Intramediary Role: Facilitation. To move community actors along a spectrum from their first steps of involvement to eventually, becoming engaged and enterprising is a byproduct of self-actualization. A skilled facilitator will bring his/her collective ideas and perspectives to the surface while nurturing conditions for community enterprising. Not only is the right facilitator a servant leader with an appreciative approach, they s/he has the experience, confidence and skills to steward common spaces where collective wisdom and CCYD objectives come together in the space-in-between conventional and novel solutions.

Intramediary Role: Developmental Evaluation. Developmental evaluation takes a bottom-up approach to capacity building for complex project environments such as those of CCYD. In these circumstances, to pre-determine outcomes is counterproductive. A developmental evaluator focuses on the community actors, on what they are learning and how to build their capacity to achieve their objective. For the community actors, uncertainty, adaptation and fast paced decision-making are the norm. They require elbowroom, nimble structure and real-time evaluative information to help them make wise decisions even as the project landscape moves beneath them. This is familiar territory for developmental evaluation.

Implications

Developmental Action Research and Evaluation (DARE). The researcher's blend of two distinct methodologies during the study—action-oriented research and developmental evaluation—provides a valuable foundation for further development of a distinct method. Though distinct methodologies they share a critical organizing principle—a focus on *development* as opposed to problem solving. Bit by bit, focused activities of CCYD actors impact systems change. While the developmental evaluation holds its focus on the group and what they are learning that builds their capacity, the action research keeps its primary focus on the results of their activity in the project task environment. DARE provides timely and actionable data both about how they doing with their work together and how their project is adapting to the complex task environment

The implication for community development applications is increasingly clear, and two-fold. The philanthropic and nonprofit sectors are investing in comprehensive collaborations and

innovative new strategies in hopes of tipping the scales on stubborn social issues—systems change. The emerging DARE method can help to address this need. DARE, along with the intramediary practices earlier introduced, represents new ways to democratize evaluation and research through meaningful youth (client) engagement in the process (Sabo, 1999).

Intramediary facilitator(s) for individual and group transformation. The recommendation of the thesis of placing group facilitator(s) with a design group, in some contexts may mean a partial redefining of the project coordinator role, and a corresponding redirection of resources. During the study, in most circumstances project coordinators and committee chairpersons carried out facilitation type roles with little regard for the intramediary approach to facilitation the thesis suggests.

Citizens that step up to address stubborn community issues face a steep learning curve and complex group and community dynamics. Again, just as DARE can democratize evaluation and research for CCYD, a facilitator can help a diverse group of youth and adults come together. By fostering the 9 nine principles of community enterprising suggested by the thesis, there is transformational potential for community organizers.

Re-distributed decision-making authority. Though the DARE method and a facilitator can help enliven the principles for CCYD strategy and development, community actors still require sufficient elbowroom to create, while in the shadow of the convening organization. They also intrinsically need sufficient structure to feel secure as they maneuver the complexity of a project's task environment. That support, the thesis suggests, is the role of the base camp. However, for the deepest and broadest possibilities for systems change, it comes down to whom has decision-making authority for project strategy and execution. The hierarchy and bureaucracy of conventionally designed community organizations and institutions are carried into their community projects. Though it is sometimes true that a project convener offers youth and other community actors with more than the usual control for planning and action, senior staff still control the scope and conditions of that involvement. The thesis has suggested that, unless formal decision-making structures are democratized, it is somewhat irrelevant how much youth voice there is in a CCYD project. Like a branch weighed down by winter ice that with the spring thaw springs back to its usual position, changes to organizational practices during a pilot

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are often temporary. OST suggestion of participatory and democratic practices for decision-making with a priority on role authority versus positional authority is instructive here.

New criteria to select the convener role. The selection of a project convener has major implications on how a CCYD project is carried out and what its impact will be. The findings from the research point to the unrealistic nature and ineffective approach of current assessment practices to select conveners. Conventional assessments that focus attention internally on the senior staff of candidate organizations leave out many other important fields of inquiry within the organization and in the task environment. The thesis recommends a whole-system perspective to determine the readiness of a candidate organization to embrace the distinct roles of the intramediaries introduced in the thesis.

The findings related by the assessment of a potential convening organization may be useful to funders looking for convening organizations, and board members of community organizations considering their readiness for the role. The type of assessment suggested can also inform a funder or national convener how it might custom design its support of a local convener to improve the potential of achieving project goals. The thesis suggests that those making decisions on a convening role for CCYD should know something about the organization's:

- abilities to lead an emergent initiative in a complex environment
- relationships and knowledge in the task environment
- interest in building a participatory and democratic culture
- capacity and experience with engaging with young people
- core values stated and practiced
- systems for organizational learning
- community organizing and management expertise
- ability to meaningfully involve marginalized young people
- approach to group facilitation
- a project's alignment with the organizations' strategic directions and, their current phase of development
- level of core staff buy-in for the proposed project
- workplace health
- type and level of support to be provided to frontline project staff

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• leadership style of chief executive officer.

For community organizations considering the role and funders seeking out potential conveners, there are two divergent paths to find potential conveners. The first approach is to throw tinder on embers of existing systems-change activity and support its fire-keepers. The second, is to invest in new systems change activity, in essence to start a fire and find the fire keepers. Though the cases in the study were primarily representative of the latter approach, there were 2 examples from the 9 nine cases representative of the former. The thesis suggests that initiating systems change activity (starting the fire) is more resource- and time- intensive than throwing tinder on embers of systems change activity already in motion. This has significant implications on how conveners for CCYD can be identified.

The Café 12 model to place intramediaries in communities. Primarily we rely on institutions to frame our response to a complex and changing world; and the result is widespread unemployment, youth underemployment, mental illness, poverty and segregation. The many services provided by existing community organizations are critical to the community— and Café 12 provides an alternative and complementary offer. Community organizations—such as the local conveners of the study—provide services directed toward those with specific interests or needs. The existing organizations have been designed to serve rather than engage. Those that call on volunteers for help, for the most part involve them in pre-established roles and programs. As discussed in Chapter 8, pre-established structures including roles with positional authority, can constrain innovation and engagement. As previously mentioned, an enterprising space is best served by a fluid structure to support a design group operating in the complex environment of community enterprising.

Café 12 brings an alternative to the usual ways of convening and engaging community actors in seeking solutions to community issues. It will not run programs per se. It will host, convene and facilitate in the enterprising space. At the heart of its approach is the seeking, encouraging and leveraging of citizens' gifts to create community good. The staff of Café 12 will be on the lookout, and advocate, for anyone of any age and ability that wants to get involved – in their own way and in their own time – in creating something for the collective good of the community.

Establishing spaces for enterprises that inspire engagement and social innovation for comprehensive change is a long-term prospect. It takes time to build the breadth of social capital across and between generations required to transform communities. Lacking the expertise to convene and facilitate in a highly participative and effective manner, coupled with tight grant deadlines and diluted objectives, community organizations placed in a convening role can put unreasonable emphasis on making things happen too soon. The critical role of encouraging quality relationships and nurturing the conditions of an enterprising culture are sacrificed. To facilitate that level of engagement, the intramediary needs to stay put in the community for the long-term. It is for this reason Café 12 is a social enterprise with a self-sustaining business model.

Recommended Future Applied Research

The research has raised a number of applied research themes deserving of further inquiry.

Barriers to Community Involvement: There are four themes to explore under this theme: 1) the shortage of sustained community-based expert facilitation, 2) the impact on innovation and engagement from stress in community organizations that convene, 3) the impact on community engagement strategy, execution and social innovation from organizations with a mandate and design to serve specific social needs rather than engage citizens broadly.

Decision-making structures, collaboration and innovation: Decisions regarding who controls planning and action are often central to the tension in community projects that attempt to collaborate and innovate. How do conventional decision-making structures that are based on positional authority impact the potential for innovation and the experience of collaboration?

Staff and/or committee-driven projects: For grant-funded community and youth development projects, how does the common practice of appointing a coordinator, recruiting a steering committee, and giving authority to management teams, effect broader citizen engagement? What other formal structures, whether mandated or adopted, impact a project's potential to engage others and innovate? Do any of the commonly imposed staff structures inadvertently block the flow of information important to innovation, collaboration and relationship building?

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Should the decision on which and how deeply to assess a particular system's readiness to convene a community-building project, be tied to the question of where the real power and influence on project decisions will lay?

Program Design Approaches – What general program design approaches by front-line staff, with a mandate to help engage youth, are most effective? Three primary designs choices to compare are those that: 1) maximize the time staff spend working directly with young people, 2) engage supportive adults to get involved with youth, 3) support youth-led organizing.

Request for Proposals (RFP): How can what is known about the effects of various RFP processes for youth and community development grants inform a process that results in an improved assessment process that is of greater service to the applicant and the funder? A new process might for instance, encourage and support applicant agencies to do a deeper self-assessment of systems-change activity they already have in motion, and those efforts with new allies, governance Frameworks and knowledge.

The Last Word

To build more resilient communities, we must build more caring communities. We can get there if we engage the gifts and experience of citizens - young and older - working together. To catalyze the degree of change in attitude, resources and creative drive required, youth engagement is an unparalleled strategy. Youth are at the age of searching for ways to feel part of something bigger. It's foolish to respond with anything other than encouragement and support of their leadership development and engagement.

The many wonderful community organizations working with youth and in community development are to be celebrated. Nevertheless, to fully leverage the potential of young people and adult partners for positive social change, we must suspend assumptions that conventional ways of community organizing and youth programming are the best and only ways. There is a growing disconnect between the personal values young people are seeking from schools, workplaces and programs and what these systems are providing. It is clear that, to involve youth

in helping find innovative solutions to today's difficult and complex social issues, we cannot rely on business-as-usual approaches.

Comprehensive Community Youth Development requires us to embrace emergence, methods for high participation, and youth and adult citizen-led enterprising. Raising the profile of the distinct roles and practices of convening, facilitation, developmental evaluation, and base-camp is a step in the right direction. It is with the support of these roles, and people-centred principles of compassion and respect, that youth will help us discover new pathways to caring.

Enlivening The Space-In-Between

The issues in communities are great,
people disconnected
many unheard voices
the planet suffering
many children left behind.

In the space-in-between ~ what is and what could be
time to shake free the kind side
find the compassion for change

In the space-in-between
tired people
entrenched attitudes, structure, and resources
many don't believe, their spark cold
bureaucratic knots, risk adverse, closed doors,
the chance for the creative suppressed
no clear pathway to engagement here

In the space in between
facilitator
presence, mindfulness, service
support and tools ready at hand
a leverage point worth investment
calling together human spirit
fanning compassion, the work of heroes

In the space in between – learning
Nine communities, lots of pain, resistance, little will last
reading, watching, fighting, hoping
they left us a map to carve a path
adjust it, adapt it, improve it,
enough to get started

Caring for others, must we ask, "What's your training?"
Whos turf is it?
Why don't we watch out for our neighbours' kids anymore?
the caring reflex needs exercise

In the space-in-between - community gifts
common community wisdom
embers are hot, the tinder dry

McKnight, Horton,
Highlander Folk School, Sentient Bean, White Dog Café
Women leaders went ahead of Martin Luther King

In the space-in-between - children
inspire compassion
endless creativity
common call of our hearts
inspire us to practice our humanity
never ignore a chance to skip stones

Mandela, "there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul
than the way in which it treats its children."

In the space-in-between - young people
they connect, hope, seek passion, play hard
risk often, hunger to contribute
so many never get a chance to show what they can do
provided the space to lead they will inspire engagement
Given a chance to contribute, all will grow

the space-in-between
a fifth space – not work, home, church, school
familiar, comfortable, gathering all ages
incubator, catalyst, enterprising, innovation,
care for people and planet

In the space-in-between - 12 year olds
blessings and imagination of childhood
yet without benediction from adults
the power of believing in the possible that can be
12, between being served and learning to lead
between inspiring us to step up and helping us mobilize

Café 12
boldly stepping into the space-in-between

Marc Langlois

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Appendix A. – Stories from the Case Studies

Introduction

In this appendix are fuller descriptions of the community cases from the primary research that were part of the YERC project. There is a case account for each of the four community sites, presented in this order: 1) Nain, 2) QC 4H, 3) PEI, and 4) Futures Association. There is a fifth case to take account of the YouthScape project that formed the basis for the secondary study that informed the thesis.

The cases are presented in a narrative style in the form of a series of short vignettes. The vignettes are formatted under themes that generally correspond with the primary findings of the research: front-line project facilitation, applied dissemination role and practices of the national conveners, community participants, local convening function, enterprising space, assessing readiness to convene, impacts, and afterward. Finally, to provide a clearer sense of the general activity at the sites and give a better context for the other vignettes in each case—*project activity in the community* was added. The order the vignettes appear within the cases vary case to case, as best complements the core of the activity.

Throughout the case studies, highlighted boxes of *Researcher's Notes* indicate those of my reflections, as I analyzed the cases, which would later contribute to the further clarification of the working theory.

The case studies can be located on the following pages:

     • Case Study: Division of Youth Elders and Recreation, Nain, NL

Case Study: Division Of Youth Elders And Recreation, Nain, NL

Local Convening Function

1. Changing leadership at the local convener organization. In response to mounting concerns and for convenience, the DYER director and their community development specialist made a unilateral decision to transfer formal responsibility for project supervision to DYER. The transfer of leadership only formalized what had already emerged in practice. The project office had always been in the same building as DYER and their mandates were complementary. The project staff was not consulted.

With the DYER director now officially part of the Nain team, a new dialogue started between the site and the national convener. Though up to the change, the program director was not formally the project supervisor, it became clear that she had had significant influence on its direction. However, unlike the community development specialist, she had not gone to the training in NS and so was without an understanding of HW's approach. The project was infused with the feeling of a fresh start, while still benefitting from some things already in progress. From speaking to all concerned, the researcher sensed the project needed to re-examine its focus using a broader perspective than from only those individuals currently involved.

One of the things the DYER director did in her new role as the project's supervisor was attempt to re-establish a connection with the Ulipit Committee. Though her initiative renewed hope of Ulipit's involvement and support for a short period, the committee would continue to have little involvement for the remainder of the project. By the end of the project, the DYER had grown

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from one to two full-time staff, the director and a youth coordinator. They worked in close quarters in the basement level of the Nunastsiavut Government building. Young people, project staff and various related children, wandered freely in and out of the cramped space. Program equipment was jammed into every square foot available in the small office and extra program equipment and files spilled out into the hall. Numerous pictures of youth on camp programs were lying on shelves or tacked up on the walls. Boxes of camp supplies were continuously blocking the doorway as they were moved either in or out of the office.

 For the project consultant and the researcher, having spent many years in various youth camp programs, this all seemed quite familiar and comfortable. The scene had a relaxed feel about it, friendly laughter, coffee and jokes always at the ready. It was out of this office, and with these two permanent staff, that the heart of the YERC project would ultimately rest. The same individual remained in the DYER director position throughout the YERC project. The youth coordinator hired halfway into the project also remained to the end. Though part-time coordinators were hired for YERC, it was these two permanent DYER staff who would keep the vision of the project alive long after it ended.

Front-line Project Facilitation

There would be three different site coordinators and two RAs during the length of the YERC project. The tasks outlined by the job posting for the site coordinator position included: "coordinating communication between community sponsoring organization, adult mentors, youth action teams and HW" and "working closely with youth and adults in forming and carrying out the work of the Youth Action Teams."

2. A breath of life for the project in the last quarter from a new front-line project facilitator. In the last quarter of the project, the young summer staff person left Nain to return to school, and the RA moved on to other employment. A new full-time youth coordinator position was filled at DYER by a member of the Search19 who had became a strong advocate for the YERC project. Later in that same month, a young adult from Nain was hired as the new site coordinator. This was the second time a young adult had been placed in a paid position of authority with the YERC project.

The new site coordinator started with great enthusiasm, determination and sense of direction. She seemed to feel most comfortable working directly with young people. As one of her first initiatives, she held a series of "the Jammin thing." The ingredients of her successful effort seemed to be guitars, an informal front-step setting, and a welcoming smile. She "…found out that the kids are hungry for a place and for community instruments. I had heard a few good comments, like, they're glad Nain can have something like this and they're eager to have more nights out with the guitars." In many ways, she was trying the approach used by the Gideon Youth group from Ottawa.[77]

The other priority of her early work was to convene a meeting for the Search19, as well as every one of the over 100 community members who were initially nominated as potential SC participants. Though she was pleased with the turnout at the first meeting, she was disappointed that there were only two people in attendance from the original Search19. Regardless, her actions seemed to breathe a bit of life back into the ideas and promise of the SC. When asked why she went back to the SC for direction she said, "I think it had opened some eyes and we opened up some hope for people. And because a lot of people, after it was gone, decided that it's too bad it's gone. Good thing to get things going and to get people together – it gave a lot more people a lot more hope of doing something."

Within two weeks she was holding her second meeting with the group. Seventeen people attended, mostly youth, and for the second time just two people from the original Search19. After the meeting the new coordinator spoke of her frustration with the lack of adult engagement, "For the adults, for a second time, I had no luck in getting anyone who wants to get themselves involved or continue to be involved." She also spoke of her disappointment with a loss of the energy that was once there: "To know that a year ago, I heard that the atmosphere was so strong and willing to make a difference in Nain among youth and adults, it saddens me to see what it has come down to. It first started with both adults and youth, but has now been passed down to the youth and youth only."

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[77] Case story: 14. "Visitors succeed with a new approach" (p. 308)

The new coordinator's comments were a reflection of the history of youth and adult involvement throughout the project to that point. It was the researcher's observation that in the case of the Search Conference, the music festival, the graffiti project, and other actions it was the youth who stepped up and showed the capacity to get things done, especially when supported by a caring adult(s). The coordinator was not alone in her hope for more engagement. She gathered together some of the new youth attendees and a few adults who were also hungry for some of the initial SC energy. In particular, they wanted to experience the type of interaction between diverse community members that was experienced at the SC.

The coordinator had great clarity about the need to engage youth as leaders for the changes required in Nain, "I've grown to think that the youth need to be heard and listened to carefully. For the past two meetings the growing number of people attending are the youth. Youth who want to see changes in the community for their future." For the first two of her four months in the position, she found her motivation in these youth. In the beginning, her enthusiasm was strong in spite of the lack of adult involvement. The youth wanted to form a youth support group that could meet on a regular basis, and if needed, go out to support other youth in any personal situation: "…a way to lift each other up when one is feeling down in some way."

As a result of having so many new people drawn to the new coordinator's efforts, a reorganization of the Action Groups from the SC took place. The four action goal themes were maintained as a focus but going forward, everyone was considered to be one group. With the few original SC19 members in attendance, along with the new people, the plans and calendars of the four original Action Groups were combined into one. Anxious to take some action, the group set up some volunteer activities in town: gathering scrap wood, cleaning, doing dishes, grocery shopping, picking up medication, or just sitting down with a cup of tea to listen to someone's stories. Sixteen youth signed a letter being sent to a few community service agencies in town, offering service support to families in need. It was the most significant number of youth that had organized to serve the community since the YERC project had started.

After one successful service experience conducted by this group however, things went downhill and the coordinator got discouraged. For the first months, a few people came to the events and gatherings but the numbers diminished quickly. Though the group was very keen initially, and

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made ambitious plans with sincere intent, efforts fizzled. Perhaps it was due to the lack of significant adult support, or that their efforts to help others were hindered in some cases by bureaucracy, or simply, a lost of interest. Whatever the reasons, the final flames of the YERC project had died out.

The new and last site coordinator had a marked influence in a brief period but time had run out. The YERC project funding had ended. Mid-way through her term the coordinator said, "I can guarantee them [the youth] that I will voluntarily work to see that they are heard and things are done. They are looking at the coming winter and spring. I will still stick with their hopes even if I don't have the title of Youth Coordinator." Unfortunately by the end of the project, the group she had attracted had fallen away. After the project ended she would have little further involvement with the youth or adults she helped organize just a few months earlier.

3. The first few months – no partners and a program-based approach. The YERC project got off to an enthusiastic start. For the first two months, the site coordinator and RA seemed optimistic and determined to help the project succeed. They went out into the community telling people about the project and developing various levels of informal partnerships with organizations. At times, the local team would report a partnership based on little more than an informal conversation establishing an agreement to cooperate. There were no formal or clear agreements established with other community organizations. This may have contributed to the fact that, going forward, there was little involvement from any senior decision makers from other community programs. The project was variously referred to as the "Nain Youth Adult Network," the "HW project," and more frequently by the first names of the coordinator and RA. The inconsistency with the name was also reflective of the inconsistency of the understanding of what YERC was all about.

In her initial few months, the site coordinator adopted a program-based approach to her work. She attempted to run youth program evenings, achieving moderate success with youth between the ages of ten and fourteen. A program-based approach is the usual fare offered through youth-services but is not what HW imagined for the YERC project. A programmatic approach to working with youth carries with it a fairly limiting structure of schedules, instructors or youth workers, facility needs, and content provided, compared with one generated by the youth.

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4. A call for help from the front-line project staff. By the fifth month the YERC project seemed to be on life-support. The coordinator, stressed about not getting any youth or adults to attend her gatherings, was considering quitting. There was very little actual program activity, with only one youth gathering since the Re-Generation Conference in NS eight weeks prior. The coordinator was no longer trying to interact with other community organizations. The RA suggested a lifeline, "I think she needs a strong helping hand, that is why I think she needs to partner up, either with the Child and Youth Network or the Recreation Department." The DYER director had expressed a similar concern that the project staff needed to be doing more networking.

In a call to the national convener's project consultant during this period, the coordinator admitted she needed help. It was this call, coupled with concerns about the Ulipit Committee, that moved the national convener into more expedient and deliberate action. The national convener responded to the challenges with a three-page memo and convened a follow-up call with the project coordinator. This is all the consultant felt she could do being so far away. Having been updated by this researcher, her primary suggestion to the coordinator was to, "spend the next two weeks speaking with as many young people and adults as possible." Sample questions were provided i.e.; "What needs to happen for Nain to be a healthy and happy place for youth to live? What is the top or most important issue to you?" She also suggested other actions and approaches such as: 1) adults sharing their skills with youth, 2) getting youth involved in Nain's Celebrate for Life program, 3) making a video, and 4) professional development for adults.

In the memo, the project consultant also asked the coordinator, "What skills and resources do you think you need at this point to be able to do your job really well?" HW suggested the project reconsider the name Nain Youth and Adult Network (NYAN) given by the staff, feeling that the word 'network' might not reflect the action part of what they hoped to accomplish.

The suggestions from the project consultant fell flat. Following the national convener's intervention, there were no obvious signs of new project approaches or initiatives, nor were the suggested questions asked in the community. There is no evidence that the suggestions from

HW were bad. The Consultant had given them careful consideration based on the evidence presented to her. However, the process of communicating the information failed.

In her second quarterly report, the coordinator spoke of continuing challenges, again including a lack of volunteers in the community and a lack of youth interest (Nain, 2006). Despite the fact that the coordinator's initial optimism had worn thin, her hunger for direction was clear and her determination kept her moving forward. She had reached out to other agencies. A significant part of her effort was now collaborative, at least in theory if not in practice, with other youth-serving groups in the community.

5. Land-based camps and a missed opportunity to collaborate. The site coordinator held two weekend land-based camps (tent rather than cabins) during the project. Camps of this nature have long been a treasured tradition of families in Nain. There was a five-day summer camp program for seven youth, six adults and two elders, and a winter season camp for ten youth and five adults. Preparing for the camps provided the coordinator a much-needed focus for almost two months each.

For the coordinator, the camps were a good distraction from a lot of frustration, little program activity, and a limited sense of direction or energy. Even though the land-based camps were popular with the youth who attended, their value for the objective of youth engagement was questionable. There was limited involvement from the youth in the community afterwards, and the camps consumed a significant amount of resources in staff time and money. In some ways the camps were a missed opportunity for co-creation between HW and the team in Nain. Both DYER and HW had a long history of running leadership camps but there was no shared design of the two YERC camps. HW had learned over the years how a leadership camp can be used strategically to initiate or build on youth engagement. Though there was a subtle attempt by the researcher to point out the opportunity for collaboration, the two worlds never met.

The Applied Dissemination Role and Practices Of The National Convener

6. First field visit by the national convener. Three months into the project, the national convener's project administrator and consultant made a three-day trip to Nain. When and for what reason HW made a trip into Nain was an important decision since the cost in time and

money was quite high. There was sufficient money in the budget for the project consultant and the researcher to make a total of six or seven trips to Nain. This first trip by the administrator and consultant would use up two of those.

There was no established agenda for this first trip to Nain. The program consultant discussed general strategies with the site coordinator and explained that the main purpose for the trip was to, "hear your suggestions, ideas, and questions." In one meeting, she shared with the Nain team a recommendation for an approach to their work under the themes of connecting in the community, listening, and working well together. While in Nain, the consultant took on the role of friendly educator, focusing on encouraging and inspiring the YERC project staff.

The visit established the beginnings of a relationship between the national convener and the Nain team. It also gave the consultant an introduction to the community. Her focus was on a practice HW had come to be known for, establishing relationships. It is that same practice that led the national convener to send the project administrator up to Nain. However, it is not clear to the researcher what, if any, value-added was created for Nain by the presence of the project administrator in their community.

The visit accomplished little by way of offering the Nain team any clear direction or steps forward. The guidance provided by the consultant was principle-based and consistent with the national convener 's CYD Framework, but vague in terms of tangibles with which to proceed. Table: A.B.1 below outlines some of the advice she passed on to the Nain team.

Principle-based theme of coaching	Project consultant's coaching - national convener's
Mapping and connecting	"If I was staying here longer, I'd want to know what is happening in the clinic over there that can connect to the purpose of the engagement. And what is happening in the school that might be a community and school link. That's where I think the real crust of this could work, if you really do connect with other partners and other folks who are interested, and other volunteers, so that you do feel like its not…you're not out there…just you and Sarah. That's so important!"

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	“The first phase of your job needs to be about listening, …you’ll get so much more that way, so focus this whole first phase on it. It may feel like, oh we’re not doing enough, the doing part of your next little while is a lot of listening and observing, taking note. That’ll make it way more successful.”
Work culture	“maintain a healthy work culture together, I think that if I have one recommendation, and that’s just that, the three of you do your best to establish what ever you think your best working ethic is. So how are you gonna communicate together.”
Leaving a legacy	What is it going to be…when you think of establishing a reputation for yourselves in the town? What do you want people to be saying as they learn from this project, as they learn about you and Brenda? What legacy do you want to leave this with?

Table: A.B.1. Principle-based theme of coaching from the national convener’s project consultant

7. Concerns expressed by the national convener about the local convener. The HW project administrator who made an early visit to the community, was increasingly vocal about her concerns about the project in Nain. There were problems with reporting from the other sites but none were as slow and unresponsive as Nain. She was experiencing the first signs of the absence of the Ulipit Committee and the bouncing around of administrative responsibility for the project. She was frustrated about inconsistent communication and shared her concerns in a memo to the HW staff, “My greatest frustration has come from decision making and communication that needs to come from the Ulipit Committee. We don't have any one contact there who is aware of all the interaction that happens between us and the Labrador Inuit Health Commission (name change to DHSD), and there is no one person who seems to understand the whole project and how it is progressing. Plus, no single project rep/liaison goes regularly to meetings [Ulipit Committee] so the information exchange seems inconsistent and incomplete (If there is an info exchange at all).”

The administrator’s memo went on to explain, “Concurrently, we keep hearing that Ulipit is 'super-committed' to our project but I have not really seen any concrete commitment or action yet. They do not reply to letters or emails, they do not initiate contact with us. Our communication does not seem to come from within the community. So far I have initiated all negotiations, not the community. The DYER program director would usually call me and say,

"You need to call so-and-so on the Ulipit Committee and ask them for such-and-such" but really, it was my opinion that someone from the site should have been mediating that process."

Though the tone of the memo seemed harsh, it was an accurate reflection of the reality of the project in Nain. The project administrator was the first to call attention to the situation. It was at this stage that the reality of the lack of involvement of the Ulipit Committee was openly addressed and the project's struggles highlighted. Prompted by the administrator's concerns, HW directed attention to the Ulipit Committee. The researcher made his first trip to Nain seven months into the project. Upon recommendations from both HW and the Nain team, he assumed a researcher/practitioner role and pulled the committee together to make a presentation on the project. Though the committee showed interest, it became clear during that visit that they had fallen far short in what the DYER and HW considered their role of support for the project.

During the first six months of the project the committee had met only once, and as was learned later, conflict at that meeting disrupted the scheduled agenda and future meetings as well. Though individual members of the committee had been somewhat active in the YERC project, as a whole, the committee had little presence. One member of the committee shared stories of undemocratic "behind-the-scene" politics plaguing their process. It seemed there was very little effective democratic decision-making taking place, and what process there was, was heavily influenced by personal and community dynamics.

> Researcher's Note: The limitation of the committee structure, and the blind faith that their processes would be participatory, was to become a recurring theme in most of the research sites.

8. Orientation and training for front-line project facilitators. In the month HW staff visited Nain, they also hosted the key project staff from each of the four YERC community sites in NS to participate in "Re-Generation," a three-day conference, led by the national convener, on Community Youth Development.

There were three primary messages the site coordinator from Nain got from the conference. The first was related to the role of the coordinator being a facilitator. In the coordinator's words, "I'll be the one to plan what has to be done, and then find somebody to come in and do things." Unfortunately, this was a limited understanding of facilitation compared to the depth the national convener was capable of offering on the subject. The second message was: "I learned that my position would change." In other words, the project would be emergent and she should let the project shape her position. This would prove to be true and became quite discomforting for her. Ironically, these lessons came from a long conversation with an administrative staff person at HW who had no previous experience with HW programs. Finally, the coordinator also became aware of HW's emphasis on the idea of youth making service contributions to their community. However, she would not incorporate this practice during her tenure as coordinator. When asked, the RA for the Nain reported no significant learning from the conference.

The site coordinator and RA's from each site also participated in a one-day training on the HW Framework, as well as a general orientation to the project. Their time together created a network between the sites that would continue to grow throughout the project. An unexpected outcome was that the Nain staff discovered they were not alone in their uncertainty about what the project was and how it would unfold.

9. National convener not able to keep up to local demands. At the four-month point the coordinator's energy was starting to wane. She was still using a programmatic approach to the work. The RA reported, "We've only had two youth/adult nights as of yet, and planned an outing which never worked out." The coordinator hadn't grown tired of the work but was unsure what to do next. Matters were made worse by what she perceived as lukewarm interest for the project within the community. The coordinator also worried that since there hadn't been a youth group meeting for a long time, those youth and adults who had been attending would forget about and lose interest in what was being offered. The coordinator continued to try to start something to keep things moving forward.

Her first quarterly report to HW told a story of discouragement and disengagement, "There is a lack of volunteers in the community. The same people volunteer all the time and they end up getting burnt out. And there is a lack of youth interest." Concern with the presumed lack of

progress with the project in Nain was spreading beyond the site coordinator. The DYER director too was complaining of too much uncertainty about what the YERC project staff team was supposed to be doing.

The national convener was dealing with the reality that for the first time they had to support this level of concentration for a CYD initiative. To put things in perspective, the hours the Nain team had put into the project was equal to as much as eighteen months of one adult volunteer working with the YAT's back in NS. This concentration of hours YERC provided the community staff to carry out CYD was a first for HW. It wasn't that the community was pushing for a faster pace, but the project clock was still ticking while paid staff showed up every day wondering what to do next.

The project consultant was asking herself how she could best help the project staff identify and engage community resources. She focussed on the fact that they were only beginning to get a picture of some of the key youth-serving agencies in Nain and what services they offered. HW had always considered this information an important building block. Their framework identified the importance of engaging youth, supportive adults, individual community leaders, and a web of community service providers. Unfortunately, at this stage in Nain, only very limited information on any of these fronts was forthcoming. The RA's field notes were more reflective of the personalities of those running the agencies, and provided minimal information on those agencies' services. His previous relationships in the community seemed to be influencing the direction of his reporting.

   10. Seeking a solution on how to broaden the base of community participation. HW was at a loss about how to immediately help YERC in Nain. It was becoming clear that if the project was to succeed, more energy was required than what the coordinator alone could rally. This need of a broader base of involvement motivated HW to shift their focus to the question of how to release the energy they believed existed in the community's desire for change. This realization was a breakthrough for the project and the first real step by HW into exploring alternative methods of identifying and engaging people in the community; referred to in their framework as the Community Resources component.

The researcher made a second trip to Nain, and focused his attention on considering ways in which the action research methodology could help broaden the community base involved in the project. As part of that campaign, the coordinator contacted fifty-four community members, primarily human service professionals, to attend a session. The researcher was to facilitate on Community Youth Development. Thirty-three people attended the session. The national convener core staff, the project team in Nain, and the researcher agreed that what was needed was a method to engage the broader community in the effort to build a web of community support. With the help of data gathered during the researcher's first trip to Nain, the national convener began to conceptualize the YERC team in Nain as a *door* to a broader community system, rather than the sole focus of their attention. Up to that point, the national convener had directed its attention primarily on how to support the coordinator. This approach had the effect of positioning the Nain team as gatekeepers to broader involvement in the community. Complicating matters further, the national convener had done little to help the coordinator understand how she might open the gate, or what to do once it was opened.

> Researcher's note: This was the beginning of a realization in the research process that perhaps the intervention by the national convener was investing too much attention and resources on the coordinators, and that *that* choice ran the risk of inadvertently curtailing participatory process and broader engagement.

Empowered by a belief that the community was searching for positive social change, the Nain team, the national convener's project consultant, and the researcher focussed attention on how to help the community clarify and facilitate that search. The national convener had previously experimented with methods and tools to develop broader engagement and whole systems change such as: World Café,[78] Deliberate Dialogue,[79] and Open Space Technology.[80] Each of

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[78] World Café - An easy to use method for creating a living network of collaborative dialogue around questions that matter in service of the real work. Most Café conversations are based on the principles and format developed by the The World Café (see www.theworldcafe.com)

[79] Deliberate Dialogue – "…the combination of deliberation and dialogue can be used to create mutual understanding and connect personal with public concerns. People use this type of public conversation, what we term deliberative dialogue, to build relationships, solve public problems, and address policy issues" (McCoy & Scully, 2002).

[80] Open Space Technology - A simple, powerful methodological tool that enables self-organizing groups of all sizes to deal with hugely complex issues in a very short period of time. The goal of an Open Space Technology meeting is to create time and space for people to engage deeply and creatively around issues of

these, and other methods, had the design principles the national convener was looking to use in Nain but none seemed sufficiently comprehensive.

The Nain team and the national convener were looking for a method that would help people in the community connect in an appreciative way, build on their passions, move into action, and create a way for anyone to contribute meaningfully to the effort. These were also the type of values around which the national convener's framework was built. It was believed that the right method would help the community articulate what it was they hoped for, and then, help them move into appropriate action to achieve it. The Nain team believed that the right approach, tool, or method could help release ample community spirit, currently buried under the surface, to manage those issues and build a new future. With the pressures of the looming end date to the YERC project, the team was also looking for something that would move things along relatively quickly.

Together the Nain team, the project consultant, and the researcher agreed that a community Search Conference was an appropriate methodology. The method is a comprehensive community planning process used around the world and developed extensively by Merrelyn Emery (1999), based on OST (F. Emery & Trist, 1965). Dr. Don de Guerre of Concordia University, an expert on OST and Search Conferencing, agreed to act as a mentor through the process. If all went well, there would be a successful diffusion of ideas, strategies and plans resulting in the creation of what the national convener referred to as a Community Web of citizens engaged in a CYD agenda.

Community Actors

     11. Youth-led group. The Rising Youth Council (RYC) is a youth-led organization supported by the DYER. The size of the group varied year to year; they were a group of six to ten for most of the research period. Four of the members who lived in Nain became an important resource for the project. The full-time staff of the DYER provided significant mentoring and

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concern to them. The agenda is set by people with the power and desire to see it through, and typically, Open Space meetings result in transformative experiences for the individuals and groups involved. Open Space Practitioners Network (see www.openspaceworld.org).

program support to the RYC. Shortly after the YERC project commenced, the Nunnatsiavut Government formally recognized the group as a voice for young people in the region.

Like the Ulipit Committee, the potential to have the RYC central to the project had influenced the national convener's decision to select Nain as a YERC site. However, until the spring and summer months and eight months into the project, the RYC and youth in general had no involvement in planning or decision-making with the project. The DYER Director confided that the DYER's reliance on the RYC for youth voice was an imperfect strategy, "We chose to focus on these tried [experienced] youth leaders out there as a practical strategy to focus on. But relying on them I see now - maybe this strategy isn't the best."

12. Steering committee function. The Ulipit Committee was formed in 2000 in response to a string of suicides in Nain. The national convener's Executive Director met with eleven members of this committee during his assessment visit. It was this Committee he referenced when he wrote in his field notes, "There are many great individuals in the community who could be outstanding resources if engaged appropriately." It was the Ulipit Committee, as referred to by the locals, which was meant to assume the community partnership role for the Nain YERC site. The promise of involvement from the committee gave some reassurance to the national convener in selecting Nain as a site.

Unfortunately, other than one meeting during the assessment visit when the committee indicated support for the project and a role of convening, they had no formal and limited informal involvement in the project. The Committee's emphasis was placed only on winning support for bringing the project to the community.

Enterprising Spaces

13. Some successful youth-led enterprising. There were some high-points of activity that seemed to carry their own energy and break through the kinds of blocks that stalled other actions from succeeding. One of the more impressive actions was a good news publication for the community initiated by a new RA, hired after the SC. She quickly demonstrated a strong work ethic, and as a friend of the site coordinator, moved easily between research and hands-on support for the coordinator's program activity. Creating the Random Acts of Kindness newsletter was one of her first major activities. The idea came to her as she collected media releases about

Nain. She was struck by how most of the stories painted a very negative picture of her town, yet when she spoke with the people of Nain, she heard how much they liked where they lived. Working with a guidance counselor, a teacher, a few teens, and an elementary school class, the newsletter became a way to collect stories that presented a very different image of the community. There were two editions of the newsletter created during the YERC project and they received a great deal of positive feedback. One personal story which came out of the activity was about a teen whom had recently attempted suicide, being welcomed to help with the first edition. Encouraged by his new responsibility, within months his determination grew and he returned to school.

Another highlight of program action was the spontaneous organizing by a young person, from the Search19, of a night of Christmas caroling. She and a group of fifteen other youth and adults, went around the town singing for family members, elders, and neighbors. This small but meaningful contribution gave the YERC project staff a much-needed influx of energy. The young person who initiated the caroling was a member of the RYC and was home for Christmas.

This is not the only case where an influx of RYC members and other youth returning to town from school provided the project a much-needed shot of energy. The hunger for more youth involvement was temporarily satisfied during the spring and summer months of the project when the DYER hired the youth president of the RYC to organize some youth-led activity. The hiring was a creative response to the coordinator leaving her position on maternity leave, 1.5 years into the 2-year project. It was with resources from the vacant position that the young adult was hired.

With his leadership, three successful action projects were launched. First was an annual mini-music festival. A small group of young people with the support of the DYER staff convened a weekend music festival within two months of the idea being born. The successful festival attracted all ages to enjoy youth and adult bands from throughout Nunatsiavut.

Through another of his projects, Music For Life, musical instruments, a microphone, a stand X2, a PA system, and accessories were purchased for musical jam sessions. The goals of the project were to give Nain youth the tools needed to unlock their talents, to offer a social gathering for

youth outside of drugs and alcohol, as well as fostering mentorship between youth.

And finally, a graffiti project enlisted some of the young local artists to paint murals over some of the distasteful graffiti in town. The project was created in cooperation with the high school guidance counselor, who was also a valuable member of the Search19. Nain now has three new attractive murals where previously there had been graffiti-marred surfaces. The initiative was considered an opportunity to showcase the gifts and talents of youth, celebrate the Inuit culture, and attract participation by other young and old community members.

14. Visitors succeed with a new approach. Late in the project, during the period when she was working without a site coordinator, the RA had a realization about the limited reach of their strategy. She realized that due to the larger scale projects such as the Search Conference, the music festival, the camps, and the busy schedules of the Nain team, some more marginalized youth were missing out. She shared her thoughts: "I do wish that I was able to spend more time in the evenings on the dock, or at the arena just hanging with the youth. I would love to have more people hang and visit with the youth in Nain." It was a recurring sense the RA had throughout the project. Her belief in the importance of reaching out in an informal way to other youth to build relationships was reinforced by something she witnessed at the airport late one night. She told this story:

> After nine at night, I was driving my daughter Kayla, to her granddad's for a sleepover. Three young children, all under the age of eight, yelled to me, "Elsie, Elsie, can you take us to the airstrip?" I said, "Sure, why are you going to the strip so late?" They replied "We have to say good-bye to our friends Abigail and Eric; they are leaving at 10 o'clock."

> As I drove down the hill to the airport, there were about thirty youth there along with the thirteen members of the Gideon Youth group from Ottawa. The local children and youth, ages from three years old to eighteen years old, were all there hugging, singing, holding hands and crying; not wanting the departure of the new visitors.

> The Youth group from Ottawa arrived in Nain on July 2nd. Their first few nights were sleepless nights. They had played, chatted and mentored youth while spending nights on

the streets being a friend. A few days after they arrived they were partnered with the summer recreation department. On their arrival the first day with the summer recreation students, they asked, "Where are Martin and Mary? Where are the children we met on the street?" Very neat and clean children responded that those kids did not go to summer recreation.

That evening the youth from Gideon Youth group met with the children they had first met on the street and asked why they did not go the summer recreation program, explaining that it was fun, playing games, doing art and singing. One spoke up and said, "Can you sign the paper for me? I have no one to sign the paper so I can go. I wanna go to summer rec."

I [the RA] called the Town Council and brought this to their attention, that all children should have an opportunity to be in this free program. I was told they do have to have someone sign as part of the program for children with allergies, special care, or just in case of emergency contact in case we need to use it.

The children from the street never did join the recreation program. Being quite intrigued with what the Gideon youth were able to accomplish, the RA and the new summer youth staff person interviewed the two Gideon youth visitors before they left Nain. Below are the highlights from the opinions, thoughts, and ideas shared by the visitors.

The youth in Nain have two personalities, one for home and one for outside of the home. They like being around people who are from outside of Nain. They open up quickly telling them their problems, their fears, because they cannot talk about this sort of things to people in town. Maybe because it brings up hurt or people in town don't want to hear it. They are looking for guidance from outside the family home life, from adults mentors. They just need to have some attention. You don't need to plan meetings or events to engage the youth. Just wander on the street, have a ball if you like and a group of young people will surround you, with interest in doing something.

Researcher's note: It is interesting to note that without program-based structure such as

facilities and program schedules, the visiting youth workers from Ottawa were successful in establishing relationships with a large number of young people in town. In many cases these were different youth who were less outwardly accomplished than those attracted to the YERC activities. It is this observation that intrigued the RA as she questioned some of her and YERC's work and impact.

15. Search Conference - a whole-systems community-planning event. The YERC project team in Nain became the central organizers for the Search Conference**.** The organizing theme of the SC was to be, "The most desirable involvement of youth in the future of Nain." Using a simple democratic process, forty-three people were invited to be participants in the Search Conference**.** Nineteen of the forty-three invited came to the two-and-a-half day event. This group will herein be referred to as the Search19. Nine of the group members were youth participants. It was hoped that the Search19 would become the heart of influence for the project's processes and for community actions moving forward.

There was an air of responsibility and trust in the room from the first moments of the Search Conference**.** It was significant that the participants had a sense of being invited by the community to attend the Search Conference**.** The energy in the room was light and the interaction strong. The group took time to identify four criteria for, "A way to evaluate and guide each and every effort we carry out in the community – no matter how small or big." Those criteria appear in Table A.B. 2.

Theme	Criteria to evaluate and guide action
Youth participation and development	How can we ensure youth participation and ways to empower youth?
Community spirit	Will it build more community spirit e.g. focus on community respect and positive strengths, family support, local role models, youth and elders having time together, and new forms of community building and recreation?
Sustainable	How could what we want to do be sustainable e.g. do-able, realistic, viable ($), with the ability to keep it going?
Culturally relevant	Is what we want to do culturally relevant? e.g. using our traditions from the past to go into the future, and to keep culture and language strong?

Table A.B.2. Themes and criteria to guide action groups from the Search Conference

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For the last part of their two days of working together, the group came up with action goals to be achieved over a five-year time period. One of the flip chart sheets had a circle of hearts drawn around the statement, **"**Our hearts are full!" Table A.B. 3 outlines their action goals.

Action Group Theme	Action Goals to achieve with five year horizon
Youth inclusion	In 2012, youth are 100% involved and motivated in the community. Youth are leaders for the upcoming youth. Youth recognize they have the power to create a healthy community.
Suicide	In 2012, suicide is not a coping mechanism. People realize that suicide is a problem. Its being dealt with and reduced, but there is no way to completely end suicide. We will continue to fight and raise awareness on this touchy subject.
Drugs and alcohol	In 2012, there will be a reduction of alcohol and drugs in the community of Nain. The only place you find drugs is the hospital and people drinking socially.
Culture and tradition	In 2012, the Inuit culture and tradition will be improved. Our language will be commonly practiced in school, at home, in the workplace and in the community. Traditional activities such as Inuit games, throat singing and brass band will take place in the same recreational facility. Old traditions such as dog teams, crafts and Inuit clothing use will be revived.

Table A.B.3. Action Group themes and action goals to achieve with five-year horizon

The day following the Search Conference, every one of the participants showed up on time and eager for a four-hour meeting to create a structure by which the group could organize their work together, moving forward. They organized themselves into four action groups based on the themes of: youth inclusion, suicide, drugs and alcohol, and culture and tradition (see Table

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A.B.3). The groups were to self-organize and coordinate communication through the site coordinator and RA.

From the perspective of the participants, the Search Conference and the follow-up organizing meeting were very successful as stand alone events. The site coordinator at the time, shared this comment: "It wasn't until the Search Conference, and then after that, people really started to, like they soaked up the talk and stuff and we all got excited." In the week following the event, the AngajukKâk [mayor] of Nain sent an e-mail to the site coordinator with this comment, "The Search Conference in Nain was an incredible success! I am not only hearing so much thoughts from everyone in town, I can see it in their eyes. The positive energy is flowing, creating ripples of networking including more groups created for the young people in Nain."

16. The glow after the search conference. With the Search Conference complete, Nain appeared to now have a serious team of youth and adults ready to take responsibilities with well-thought out action plans. The site coordinator underlined the importance of the Search Conference in her quarterly report: "It brought diverse members of the community working together and wanting to make a difference for everyone in Nain. They were the ones who made the decisions to make a difference, all in a positive way." After the Search Conference, there were fourteen months of funding left to the project. There was sufficient budget for both the national convener's project consultant and the researcher to travel to Nain for one or two more field visits. There was plenty of time to provide coaching for what was anticipated to be a broader base of community participation than what existed prior to the Search Conference.

The most talked-about early action that started at the Search Conference was the resurrection of Nain's Brass Band by a small group of participants involved with the Culture and Tradition Action Group. There had been a long and proud history of brass bands in Nain but none had been active for over twenty-five years. A Brass Band was assembled and playing in time for Christmas 2006 celebrations. The community was thrilled and this success was a source of real encouragement for some of the SC19. As shared by one band member, also a Search Conference participant, "I was so proud I had goose bumps because that was the first time I ever heard people clapping in church! We still make beautiful sound."

17. Barriers and "near-actions." Unfortunately, the euphoria from the Search Conference didn't last. Over the course of the three months following the Search Conference, the Brass Band was one of the only visible project spinoffs. In fact, the Brass Band was one of the only tangible actions that sustained energy through to the end of YERC, fourteen months after the Search Conference. There were some seemingly determined pockets of activity behind-the–scenes, but in general, there was limited progress on any other of the Search Conference Action Goals.

The Nain team and the national convener were once again concerned, frustrated and curious about why things were stalled. The early success of the Brass Band had clearly demonstrated how having even one action item moving forward was significant for building community spirit and momentum. However, there were many other ideas and agreed-upon actions that began to move but were never realized. These *near-actions* would make it to the initial stages of moving from an idea to execution, but than stalled and never produced tangible results.

The near actions were ideas that had been planned with serious intent at the Search Conference and talked about with enthusiasm afterwards. Each had some form of action carried out. At times, seemingly small things were able to slow the fragile new initiatives. For example, as heard from some of the band members, the Brass Band was threatened for a period because, "…a teacher got their nose out of joint." As a result, the Band was without a place to practice or access to its instruments. The problem was solved when after having received a nudge from the researcher, one of the band members went to speak to the teacher directly. The teacher simply wanted to play with the group and was welcomed to join.

All of the action efforts, initiated in Nain, to change things for the better faced some level of challenge. Unfortunately, for the majority of the well-intentioned actions coming out of the Search Conference, the challenges proved too great. The chart below list examples of some of the near-actions that died out before they managed to gain a foothold.

Action Goal Theme from SC	Intent of Near-Actions

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Youth inclusion	Speaking to the Family Resource Centre (FRC) about their space being used as a gathering space after hours for youth and adults.
Youth inclusion	A young leader leading a series of rock and roll jam sessions at FRC space.
Culture and tradition	A senior adult working with a small group of youth and children to share his love and skill for dog sledding, and connecting this service to the school.

Table A.B. 4. Action Group themes from Search Conference and intent of "near-actions"

To find out more about why things might have stalled, the researcher conducted short phone interviews with each of the Search19, seven months after the Search Conference, to get their opinions about what might be done to re-kindle some of original plans from the event. The chart below summarizes the ideas, suggestions and concerns expressed in those interviews (SC19 check-in, 04/07).

Theme	Comments from SC19 during seven mo. check-in after **Search Conference**
Strategy	"Getting involved with the school is a good idea – a good way to start." "We are too focused on just one idea, the bill board, but there is no sense of where money will come from, at least I don't know."
Human resource concern	"There are substance abuse issues with a number of community leaders, including those at the Search and Nunatsiavut [government]."
Disempowering environment	"I'm afraid to step forward - not popular to go dry, and lead a dry movement."
Busy schedules	"People are busy, time is a factor."
Too few people	"We need more people."
	"The passion is there for me but don't want to do it alone."
Youth doing well	"The youth are motivated and on target, they don't need nothing."
	"The youth action makes me feel stupid [by comparison]." [from an adult member]

Table A.B. 5. Comments from SC19 (Search Conference participants) from a check-in call

The coordinators highlighted another trend in the community that they thought was slowing the progress of engagement, and pulling on their time. The coordinator and the RA were often called upon to contribute substantial time helping out with the community activities of other groups. They felt the community assumed they would do so. They reported a larger problem with the state of volunteering in Nain. The RA reported, "I do find there is lots of interest in town for helping and volunteering, however, the number that actually volunteer for a cause is really low." She pointed out that townspeople now expected to get paid for volunteering. She related this frustration back to the overall objective of the YERC project: "It is difficult to help and show others the great feelings you get inside from helping others for free, if they always get paid for helping out."

18. Trying to re-light the fire. The first follow-up meeting convened for the SC19 was not until four months after the event and only six of the Search19 attended. However, there had been interim meetings of the four action groups and they reported their progress at the meeting. The Suicide Action Group, seeming quite confident, reported that they were writing proposals and regularly conducting meetings. The Traditions and Culture Action Group reported on the launching of the Brass Band, the difficulties getting access to the rehearsal space from the music instructor, and the successful recruiting of new members to join the band. The Drugs and Alcohol Action Group spoke of making progress talking to the bar owner in regards to not serving alcohol to pregnant woman. There was no representative from the Youth Inclusion Group in attendance since the core leadership of that group had left to return to school outside of the community.

There was still movement forward after the Search Conference, but less than hoped for. Though the site coordinator and RA were available to support the action groups, they were unsure of how to do so. Since a number of the youth and adult members of the SC19 were frequently out of town for work and school, an effective support and follow-up process was never accomplished. Nevertheless, even with the low turnout at the follow-up meeting, support for the work and an after-glow from the Search Conference was still evident in town. In an e-mail to the Nain team, the Mayor commented, "There are a lot of compliments in the town about the groups [action groups], their accomplishments and commitments." The Nain team also felt encouraged that the Mayor asked the Culture and Traditions Action Group to organize

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Aboriginal Day. There were some other successes as well, including: a day-long school event about chasing one's dreams, a youth presentations on suicide, a Celebrate Life Festival, and the SC19 members going into school at times of need. Considering that a number of the key youth from the Search19 were away at school, the Nain team were encouraged to have some activity still surfacing from the shrinking group of Search19. They felt some new hope in the potential of these.

Six months after the Search Conference**,** and sixteen months since the YERC project started in Nain, some of the action groups were still holding on and even pushing forward. The Drugs and Alcohol group had put forward a few recommendations for the issuing of liquor licenses, and requested that the opening of the bar be moved back to 7 p.m. from early afternoon. They were concerned that children were being exposed to intoxicated persons very early in the day, and that some parents were at the bar rather than at home preparing supper. The group also put forward a recommendation to have two separate entrances at the combined snack and beer store, one for the sale of beer and another for regular retail. Their third recommendation involved an updated list of people under probation to assure beer was not sold to them. As for the Brass Band, they were still meeting regularly for practices. The Suicide Action Group had done public education presentations in two communities.

Assessing Readiness To Convene

19. Initial signs that attracted the national convener to consider the site. Although buried under many layers of discouragement, there was a real sense of desire amongst Nain's citizens to change their community for the better. In the winter of 2000, a report was commissioned by a newly formed committee in Nain in response to a surge of suicides in the community. The Crisis in Nain report made it clear that the issue of alcohol abuse and accompanying troubles, was a prominent problem in the community. Child neglect, abuse, poor leadership, family violence and suicide were all mentioned in the report as areas of concern.

The Tusatet Report made a public proclamation in Nain that focusing on the plight, voice, and role of young people was a smart and necessary way to stimulate change towards building a

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more resilient community. It was this more public awareness of a new role for youth that eventually led to a call to the national convener in 2005 from a Community Development Specialist with the Department of Health and Social Development in Nain. The Specialist was reaching out, not unlike the supportive adult from Ship Harbor, NS, whom, with help from the national convener, initiated the first Youth Action Team in her community.

The Community Development Specialist had been living in the community for six months and had family in Nain. She had read about the national convener's work in a newsletter produced by the Coastal Communities Network[81]. She sensed that Nain had what she referred to as, "…a need to get their youth involved in the town." She described the young people in Nain as, "young individuals, who have a voice, but some times, they are not taken seriously." She had strong views on youth development, "To get respect from these youth we have to give them respect, and give them some responsibilities, and make them feel like they have ownership within the community."

The role of young people in Nain was primarily as recipients of service by professionals and adults in the community (e.g., parents, teachers, social workers, recreation workers). A theme the researcher was to hear throughout the project, was addressed early on by the community development specialist: "Because there are so many different organizations coming into this community, thinking they can fix things when they really can't, it is up to the youth to start fixing things for themselves. It's up to us as community members to start giving them responsibilities and making them feel like they are worth while."

   20. The assessment. The first trip to Nain was made by the national convener's Executive Director to assess the community as a potential site for the project. During a three-day visit, he spoke with approximately twenty-five people individually and in committee. He sensed sufficient interest from the people of Nain in seeing improvements in their community from which the national convener could build on. The Executive Director was aware of the challenges in the community, as much as one could be after a three-day visit. He urged both

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[81] Coastal Communities Network: "a volunteer association of organizations whose mission is to provide a forum to encourage dialogue, share information, and create strategies and actions that promote the survival and development of Nova Scotia's coastal and rural communities." http://www.coastalcommunities.ns.ca/main.php

optimism and caution, "They seem to be on a real balance with regards to their young people, as well as the community as a whole. Meaning, they could swing either way, high success or high struggle." Table A.A. 6 presents some of the concerns and struggles the Nain citizens revealed during the assessment.

Theme of concern	Concerns expressed by Nain citizens
Harmful lifestyle habits	"High substance abuse, especially among adults and elders."
Lack of inter-agency and citizen cooperation	"There is a disconnect between the elders and young people." "The Ulapitsaitjet were startled by a report that agencies are not working together."
History and its larger social issues	residential schools resettlement "Adults and seniors are drinking due to the resettlement and residential schools...and youth have a difficult time understanding why they should respect them."
Social	"Youth are out on the streets until late at night because they do not want to be home where their parents are drinking." "Little other than sports engages the young people outside of the school. Some cultural activities."
Education	"Very few graduate from high school."
Youth engagement	"Youth work is under valued. The pay at the recreation centre is $6/hr, at the convenience store $11/hr.)."

Table A.B. 6. Concerns expressed about their community during the first assessment visit

When the community development specialist was asked whether she had any fears about the with the national convener 's help initiative, she replied "They'll be interested and then the interest will dwindle, if we don't have motivated support." She also

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confided that she was concerned about finding young adult staff with the necessary skills. Both of her concerns would prove to be valid as the project moved forward over the next two years.

Researcher's Note: During his visit, the Executive Director saw and heard a lot. Knowing how long it took the researcher to adjust to the Inuit culture of conversation, perhaps a three-day assessment visit was not sufficient. With the priority the national convener places on relationship building and strength-based perspectives, a three-day first-time visit would make it challenging to pick up on the cultural cues, and to have some of the candid conversations which might have painted a more accurate assessment of Nain's state of readiness. It is not so much a question of would Nain have been chosen if the picture of support and partnerships had been more accurate, but rather, might the national convener have had a better sense of what level and type of support Nain might have required

Afterward

On the surface, most of what got started over the two years of the YERC project in Nain ended soon after the grant ended. There were many things done during YERC's time in Nain that seemed not to foster any ongoing activity or effort. However, when asked whether it had all been worthwhile, the last site coordinator expressed a belief that would be repeated by a number of others, "I think we opened some eyes and we opened up some hope for people."

One might never know what ripples they have created when working with the right intent. One year after the project's end, the researcher checked in on the status of the Brass Band and received this response from the youth coordinator at DYER, an original member of the Search19 and the Brass Band:

> Yes, we do get together but not regularly. We gather during Christmas, which is mostly when the traditional brass band played—during the Christmas tree lighting, in church, for elders' Christmas suppers, etc. When people turn 50 years old it has always been a tradition to have a big celebration in their house, so we have played and will continue to play when requested. The school brass band has also come back! We had talked about maybe performing with them during the next Christmas season, which I am really excited about because my daughter is in the school band.

Case Study: QC 4H

An Experiment In Applied Dissemination To An Established Youth-Led Organization

The Applied Dissemination Role and Practices Of The National Convener

21. Training and coaching for community actors – BOP team. The national convener's attention at this YERC site was exclusively directed towards the training and coaching support for the BOP team. The two ongoing questions that became the focus of the national convener's reflections on how best to support this site were: 1) What form of support can we provide the BOP team in their effort to become effective trainers on youth-and-adult partnerships? and, 2) How might we support the BOP team and the 4H organization in their effort to improve youth and adult partnerships overall in the organization?

> Researcher's Note: At this point in the YERC project at the QC 4H site and others, for their own benefit and that of the local conveners, the national convener began to see the need to be clear about the various roles they could and should offer to support dissemination. They were beginning to understand their roles including facilitation, training, coaching, and consultation, dependent on the situation.

One of the first things the seven-person BOP team did was to identify the skills necessary for them to follow through with their ideas. Having considered their capacity, they decided they could be most effective in addressing their goals by offering workshops and coaching on the topic of youth-and-adult partnerships.

The national convener's project consultant led a workshop for the group on the general theme of youth-and-adult partnerships. The group was introduced to some of the tools and approaches they might use for their own workshop design and facilitation. The youth were very receptive

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and appreciative of the training. They were eager learners ready to take the information and apply it. With a number of the BOP team members also sitting on the Board of QC 4H, the impact of the training would have immediate relevance in the organization. The opportunity to shape the material into their own workshop would serve as a meaningful way for the group to come together and create something of purpose to share with others.

Following the first workshop, the project consultant spent a second two-day training with the BOP team focusing on facilitation and their workshop design. During the training the BOP team did a practice run of their new workshop for invited 4H adult leaders, and received coaching and feedback on their facilitation from the project consultant and the researcher.

As a first step, the researcher gathered a group of senior youth members and the 4H Executive Director. The youth were already heavily involved in the organization as Board members, past Board members, and local club leaders. Nevertheless, the group had an appetite to address the theme of deeper and broader youth involvement within 4H. It was clear from the start that the youth were ready to take action on ways to better engage senior youth members. They believed in the importance of their role in the 4H and what it did for them personally. However, they were under no illusions, knowing their time was already spread thin with their volunteer commitments with QC 4H. They knew any direction they chose would have to result in the involvement of other youth members.

At their first day-long meeting, the researcher facilitated as the group mapped those things they knew were already happening in the 4H environment. The national convener's Framework was used as a tool to organize the mapping activity. A snap-shot of current conditions in the organization was completed under the themes of youth-and-adult partnerships, youth leadership, and community involvement. With their map, or environmental scan, and the national convener's Framework the group was able to articulate a theme of youth-and-adult partnerships as an energy point. Not only were the young people attracted to the theme, they felt it represented an issue for the organization. The group identified a number of examples where they felt poor youth-and-adult relationships were compromising the integrity of the organization. They were unanimous in the decision that whatever strategic action they took, it

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would be about relationship building with adults in the 4H. What struck the researcher at the time was just how quickly the group came to a consensus on an action focus.

Enterprising Space

22. Workshops and interventions by youth to build strong youth-and-adult partnerships. The BOP team followed up on their direction by designing and leading a one-day workshop on youth-and-adult partnership for the staff of a local community development organization. The workshop was a highlight of the team's time together and was an important first step on the path to youth engagement for the community development organization. The workshop was well received by the participants. All agreed that the workshop would be the first discussion of many between BOP and the organization in an effort to be more youth inclusive. However, in the end, there was only the one exchange between the two groups.

There were other presentations and workshops by the BOP team throughout the second half of the two years of the YERC project at local 4H clubs, at the provincial AGM, and at a meeting of the national board of 4H. The team also expressed interest in being a resource for building youth-and-adult partnerships within QC's Eastern Townships for other community and youth-serving organizations. The workshops the BOP team conducted would constitute their primary engagement during YERC.

Members of BOP also took on some leadership of another initiative that had significant impact for one of the local 4H clubs. Two of the BOP members, with the support of the others in planning and evaluation, facilitated the resolution of a significant conflict between the youth-and-adult leaders at one of the 4H clubs. The researcher assisted them as a coach in their preparations for their intervention at the club. The intervention was successful and the club and those members involved in the conflict were able to move forward together with a new framework for their youth- and-adult partnership. The success of the intervention contributed to BOP's confidence and sense of identity.

Assessing Readiness To Convene

23. Initial signs that attracted the national convener to consider the site. The overall impression from the assessment was that QC 4H was a strong small provincial organization with a genuine interest and experience in youth engagement. The site was also a good test case for networking the HW approach across a wide rural region in SW QC.

The site reviewed well in the assessment, in particular, because of it having an all-youth board with adult advisors, and progressive youth-led practices. These were considered positive attributes in light of the YERC objectives. Other highlights of the assessment included:

> • the Executive Director sat as a member of a committee interested in developing a Youth Forum for French and English speaking youth in the next year;
> • the apparent interest of the 4H national office to learn more about youth-led approaches, ideas for retention of older youth members, and for attracting adult leaders;
> • the QC 4H's Executive Director's involvement with the 4H national office, working as the chair of Youth Leadership Council;
> • the interest of 4H QC in being an example of new practices for the 4H national office;
> • the 4H QC interest in developing a more interactive web page for members; broadening the focus of their 'projects' (not just agricultural), and expanding to new regions in QC.

24. The assessment. The researcher for the YERC project conducted the assessment of the QC 4H to determine their preparedness to become a YERC site. The assessment visit consisted of two interviews, one with an interim executive director who was a young adult with a lifetime association with 4H and past chair of the Rural Youth Network, and another with the young adult chairperson of the QC 4H Board of Directors, also a lifetime member with the QC 4H.

25. Impacts. The research determined the following impacts from this case:

> • improved youth-and-adult partnerships within QC 4H organization,
> • improved youth-and-adult partnerships at 1 of 5 clubs in the region,
> • the creation of the BOP program as a means to provide training and support in youth-and-adult partnerships at the local club level,

• increased engagement of senior youth members (16 and up) within the QC 4H,

• increased engagement of 7 members over 16 yrs of age,

• the creation of the BOP program as a means to better engage senior youth members,

• senior youth trainers from QCV 4H to serve as a resource to community organizations in the region in the development of youth-and-adult partnerships,

• Five workshops and/or presentations conducted by BOP team members, ranging in length from one day to one hour, on building youth-and-adult partnerships, primarily internal to 4H with one external group.

Study: Youth In Action, PEI Case

The Applied Dissemination Role and Practices Of The National Convener

26. Training for the site coordinator. The coordinator went to Nova Scotia for a training experience with the national convener, along with two other YERC site coordinators. The chart below outlines some of the highlights of the training for the PEI site coordinator.

Theme	The Coordinator's comments
Experiential learning	"The workshop in Truro [nearby community] was helpful. It was real good to see a Youth Action Team up and running."
Relationship building	"I liked meeting people in person and the interaction, sharing stories and ideas."
Sense of support	"Having a place to answer questions has been great." "I liked seeing that supports are there for the program [YERC] along the way."

Table A.B. 7. Comments expressed by the site coordinator regarding the training by the national convener

The coordinator spoke about a core message behind YERC which excited her, "Being engaged means being empowered means community change." On the reverse, she felt that she would have liked more of her general questions answered earlier in the training. These unknowns about the project left her feeling uncertain and unsettled during the training and afterwards. "I would have liked further explanation as to what we were to do, what the expectations were for this position, and what is in the contract."

27. Unsure direction, no map, no direction. At this early stage, the coordinator was not clear about how the national convener could assist her other than with the Youth Lead camp. Nevertheless, she did feel a sense of support from the national convener for which she was

thankful, "It is a good thing to know that they're there. So I don't have to do this on my own. That's one of the big things." She also reported that since HW had direct experience with YATs, she had hoped for suggestions for bigger projects and examples of what other YATs had done.

> Researcher's Note: The lack of clarity on project direction and the coordinator's role would frustrate the project staff in three of four YERC sites.

A month after her YERC training in NS, the coordinator's questions for the national convener started to flow: "Would someone from the national convener be there during the next leadership camp? Does the national convener want me to introduce their framework to the youth, or even talk about their approach in general? What does the national convener think is the most important thing to convey to the youth?"

Other questions revolved around group dynamics, programming approach, and community engagement. For example, mid-way through the program, the coordinator sought advice from the project consultant to understand why the youth were not stepping up to take the lead. Though the coordinator would always ask for the youth's input, she was still making most of the suggestions and leading the meetings.

With only the national convener's framework and the availability by phone of the project consultant, the coordinator was left puzzling on a regular basis on how to apply the framework to her unique circumstance. The coordinator was hesitant to criticize what was perceived as support from the national convener. However she did admit she would appreciate more ideas about, "different ways to run with what the national convener is trying to do." On that note, the project consultant correctly anticipated that the coordinator would need a lot of examples of what the program could evolve into and how it could benefit others. As a result of subsequent coaching, the coordinator reported a shift in her thinking about community development and youth development. "I focus more on creative ways to build relationships with youth, with community members, and how to link the two." However, applying the concepts was quite another thing.

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The complexities of the project on-the-ground and the delicate balance of the national convener's role raised difficult questions for the national convener to consider. There were usually no clear answers. The following questions surfaced mid-way through the project:

> • Should we nudge the YATs into community service action? If so, how? If not, then what should we do (if anything)?
>
> • Considering YIA's dependence on the coordinator, how might the national convener continue to assist the YIA program beyond YERC?

The national convener would never directly answer these questions for themselves or for the site. They were not easy ones to answer quickly. The national convener continued to move forward with their framework in mind, coaching, and modeling for the coordinator whenever the opportunity arose. They appeared to have little time for big-picture thinking, a change of approach, new tools, or strategies that might have helped answer the tougher questions. They were facing their own significant organizational stress, and at times, the pressures of the YERC project appeared to make matters worse. They were in difficult circumstances. Though, at times, the national convener had experienced the kind of issues the coordinator was facing, they were not common. Perhaps the dilemma was due to the younger ages of the PEI group, or the greater experience of the HW facilitators. Whatever the reason, the national convener did not have practical answers for many of the concerns. The researcher began to wonder how much additional support and coaching the coordinator might require from the national convener. The framework and program ideas alone were quickly proving to be insufficient to disseminate the national convener's approach.

28. Looking for coaching on managing the dynamics of community youth actors.

The coordinator also spoke with the national convener about ongoing difficulties she was having with group control in both groups, wondering how to approach the youth on the issue. She asked the project consultant if there was a more appreciative manner to group management than yelling as she found herself doing. The meetings in Scotchfort seemed particularly challenging to conduct. She was experiencing what she considered a lack of respect for whoever was speaking, as well as difficulty in keeping the youths' attention for any length of time. Conversations often went off-topic, and on occasion, members made negative comments about others in the group or the community which were found offensive.

Some of the coordinator's questions would get answered and some would not. The national convener provided advice on their approach at an arms' length distance from the leadership of the YERC site. It was a delicate balance between not wanting to give too much direction and not giving enough. In the project consultant's words, "We're definitely not creating one of our typical YATs here. I hope our influences are around helping the coordinator feel empowered in her role, with community members starting to get excited about supporting young people even more, with the young people themselves being excited about being involved." The project consultant's words are reflective of the servant leadership approach espoused by HW.

29. The national convener's consultant leads a camp program. The Youth Lead camp was another highlight for the groups, facilitated by the project consultant. The youth came to truly appreciate her and looked forward to having her come to the community to do "fun stuff." Though her work certainly incorporated an element of fun, in reality the work had a deeper purpose related to team building and leadership training. The adults noticed the change when she was facilitating, "There seems to be a different dynamic at meetings and within the group." They wondered how to bring this vibe back to the regular meetings. The coordinator also wondered, "How long does it take for the spark to happen? When does the group get an urge for meaningful contribution? How do you help that along? It seems to be lacking a bit right now."

> Researcher's Note: The contrast in culture between the regular meetings and the Youth Lead camp seemed, at least in part, to be associated with the facilitation of the project consultant.

Community Actors

The site coordinator hoped the youth would take charge of the YATs direction early in the process, "I'm not really saying a whole lot about the team because I don't want to develop anything, I want them to develop everything. We have the space and that's basically all that we have." She had a preconceived notion of the age group, **"**Right now I'm looking at the twelve to fourteen age group but that could change too, it all depends on who's the most interested." There had been earlier talk of trying to encourage fifteen and sixteen year olds to participate but ultimately, the age group of the actors would be twelve to fourteen years of age.

The two groups had very distinct needs so they met mostly as separate groups. The number attending the meetings varied between five to twelve throughout the project, down to three at times. For the most part there was lower attendance at the Scotchfort meetings. There was some discussion about inviting young people to join from other areas but, regardless of interest from some of the youth, this never happened.

> Researcher's Note: Though the coordinator was adopting HW's YAT approach, it was designed for older participants. The younger age group would come to have significant impact on the nature of the project in PEI.

30. Trying to recruit youth and adults. Going into the program the coordinator was hoping to rely on the support of the community, parents, and older youth to help keep the teams going. As she was established in Mount Stewart, she did not anticipate any problems with support from that community. She was aware that the community wanted a new program that gave the youth something to do rather than just walking around feeling bored. The coordinator had found the parents helpful in the past, and hoped that support would continue for the new group. She had a good relationship with a couple of older youth still in the area and felt they would be willing to help out occasionally if needed.

> Researcher's Note: The community support did not surface as the coordinator assumed, or hoped, it would. As it turned out, the concern related to community volunteers that the national convener had when first assessing the site was proved valid.

Hoping to get youth from Scotchfort involved, the coordinator had invested time building one-on-one relationships there for three years prior to getting the YAT started. By the time YERC began, she already had preliminary interest from the community. As a result of her efforts, the coordinator found an important bridge person from inside the community, a connector who believed in what the coordinator was trying to do. With this person's aid, the coordinator was able to envision moving from simple activity-based programming to one of youth being engaged in their community.

This Scotchfort connector and unofficial program ambassador spoke on behalf of the program to some of the youth and families to increase involvement. Her assistance was pivotal to the coordinator's involvement in Scotchfort. The connector explained that Scothfort had a different

culture and that many times the youth didn't do well with schedules. As well, she explained that numerous times the youth in her community forgot about meetings or appointments and that it might be more difficult to get them out to YAT meetings on a regular basis.

> Researcher's Note: The importance of the connector role was identified as part of the national convener's CYD Framework at the beginning of the YERC project. The circumstance in Scotchfort highlights the importance of the role not only in meeting more community members, but to better understand the distinct culture of each community and situation.

Another significant factor that contributed to the integration of the YAT program at Scotchfort was a new Chief. His support was instrumental in opening the way for the coordinator and the YAT. Ten months into YERC, a small YAT had started in Scotchfort.

> Researcher's Note: The buy-in of a gate-keeper, in this case the Chief for the Band in Scotchfort, would prove to be an important element to encourage youth inclusion not only at this YERC site but others as well.

In Mount Stewart, the coordinator successfully recruited community volunteers for specific activities and events, but not to come regularly to YAT meetings. She found if she asked people to volunteer for something related to their particular interest and passions they were more likely to agree. Whether their interest was a particular sport, arts and crafts, or music they seemed willing to come for informal instructional evenings for the young people. Unfortunately, she was hindered in her recruiting efforts because in some cases these same people were getting paid approximately $50 a night for this type of class.

> Researcher's Note: This same expectation to get paid for work that in some cases is considered volunteer work, also surfaced as barrier to volunteer engagement at the Nain YERC site.

The coordinator wanted to have adult volunteers working directly with the youth and helping them organize events in Mount Stewart, as was happening in Scotchfort. This did not happen but was due to a simple lack of interest on the part of the adults. The coordinator explains, "I never really defined the adult support role, I should have done that right at the beginning." As the program moved forward, the coordinator began to seek answers to this problem from HW. Unfortunately, the national convener would explain the role and the type of person(s) suited to it, but provide little instruction about how to recruit such a person(s).

The coordinator also believed that rural community dynamics was another issue keeping some adults and youth from getting involved. The coordinator explains, "You know, this person is related to that person, or they don't want trouble with that person because they got their sidewalk paved and someone else didn't; those types of dynamics. In a small community they happen and it's hard to get people involved when they do." Those associated with the program believed there was another factor limiting the ability to recruit supportive adults. Traditionally parents would get involved with their own children's activities but as soon as their children were no longer participating, those parents tended to no longer volunteer.

> Researcher's Note: This undercurrent of breakdown in the associational life (McKnight, 1995) of the community calls for consideration about the importance of determining the condition of a community's associational life as part of the assessment of a site's readiness for a community development project. There are similar characteristics here as to what appeared in the Nain case.

The coordinator considered, "The lack of real volunteers in Mount Stewart a big problem." The community members who seemed so supportive at the beginning of the project failed to become the assets for the program as envisioned. Though the Scotchfort YAT would get a much later start during the YERC project, they had a much stronger infrastructure of adult support for the youth, and therefore, a better chance of sustaining post-YERC.

The Project Activity In The Community

31. Youth action team group dynamic issues. Perhaps because of the younger age group than what was usual for the national convener's other YATs, the Mount Stewart group experienced difficult group dynamics throughout the project. The coordinator was already well aware of some group challenges, "getting everybody to say what they want to say and help out with activities in the beginning, will be difficult." The coordinator's biggest challenge would be introducing a new more youth-led approach. Her intent was to introduce the new approach at a leadership camp, Youth Lead, which was planned for the second month of the project.

32. A Weekend Overnight Camp to Ignite Involvement. Youth Lead was the type of camp the national convener had often used to launch YATs. It would be the coordinator's main strategy to recruit youth to join one of the two YATs. She made presentations about the camp and the YATs at three area schools, invited some youth personally, and put an ad in a local

newsletter. She was hoping to draw youth from Mount Stewart and surrounding communities, including Tracadie, Fort Augustus, and Scotchfort. The camp was described as a time for, "fun activities with a focus on team building, leadership development, and learning how to work with each other." Youth Lead attracted 16 youth from the YAT in Scotchfort and Mt. Stewart. The event was evaluated a big success by all the youth in attendance.

Following Youth Lead, the coordinator came to realize more work was required with the groups in terms of teamwork, especially with the Scotchfort team. The difficult group dynamics and control issues continued. As a result, she developed sessions for upcoming meetings that were to be fun, interactive and focused on teambuilding.

33. Differences noticed with organizing youth in the first nations community. In Scotchfort, the coordinator found quite a positive difference in how the residents approached working with their youth and their community in general. People were helping out and stepping up to ensure the youth programming happened. The YAT was by no means the only youth activity going on in Scotchfort. There was a committee providing opportunities every day for youth to do something positive and active. At the first meeting the coordinator convened in Scotchfort, she noticed a difference from how things happened in Mount Stewart. At the beginning of the meeting, the youth told the adults and chief in attendance they wanted an outdoor basketball court, but the youth didn't seem to want to do anything to help make it happen. It seemed as though they thought the community should just give it to them. By the end of meeting, with the intervention of the adults from the community present, the youth took some initiative. They had fund raisers planned and were talking about soliciting the chief for a piece of land on which the court could be built.

> Researcher's Note: It is interesting to note the difference that having supportive adults, including the chief, present at this meeting seemed to make to the youth stepping up. This is in sharp contrast to the coordinator being the sole adult at most of the Mount Stewart YAT meetings.

One thing that did seem difficult was getting the youth in Scotchfort involved in activities outside of their own community. To change that and to encourage youth engagement within Scotchfort, community members spoke to the coordinator about the importance of first establishing relationships with people in the community. They told her there was a chance to

get those youth involved in groups outside their own community only when a trust had been built first.

Enterprising Spaces

34. Peaks in energy. The good times for the YATs tended to be associated with the overnight experiences, or leading events for others. The youth volunteered at half a dozen community events and led a few of their own design. These experiences allowed them to engage in a way that was different from the regular meetings of the YATs. At one point during the project, there was a twelve-day trip planned to visit the youth from the QC YERC site. Though the trip never materialized, the idea and early planning alone generated enough positive feeling that it sparked new energy for the group and the coordinator. At another point, the youth were attracted to the idea of having more young people involved from different areas. Their sense was that it would be a good alternative to the social scene at their schools which they described as "a big popularity contest." The idea gained momentum but, though it was one of the projects objectives, it was never acted upon.

The highlight of all of the YAT activities occurred when the two groups came together around the building and leading of a children's Haunted House for Halloween. The two teams met together at least twice a week for over a month, to develop the Haunted House inside the Hillsborough River Eco Centre. The HRADC helped by closing down the centre to allow the youth to develop their project. Fifteen youth from the two teams, two HRADC board members, and three community adult volunteers participated in the activities. Others came forward during the preparations to lend a hand, to provide props and supplies, and add creative ideas to the project. The youth worked hard to develop a story line, build the set, and to gather the necessary props. Approximately 150 people toured the Haunted House within the two hours it was open on Halloween night. It was significant that the two teams came together to create and run the successful evening. One community member remarked, "You know, Halloween used to be a nightmare, and it isn't anymore – it's a pleasant experience... and that's shocking change."

Assessing Readiness To Convene

35. Initial Signs that Attracted the National Convener to Consider the Site. Through her role with YIA, the coordinator had previous involvement with HW in an effort to learn more about youth engagement. With the coordinator's interest in youth development, the support of the community development corporation HRADC, and the existing involvement of a group of youth in YIA and other local community groups, the PEI site appeared to include all the ingredients for a successful applied dissemination project.

The year prior to YERC, YIA received funding for one year to help community members within the Hillsborough River area develop and deliver sustainable programming for all ages within their community. With the new funding, focus groups which included older youth and community members were administered to gather information on potential programs and activities. The information that was gathered, as well as the process, stimulated interest in projects such as YERC. The addition of a YAT approach to YIA's existing work was an attempt to incorporate a distinct youth-led approach that was distinguishable from their other program offerings.

The YAT group in Mount Stewart had held approximately eleven meetings before YERC commenced there in January 2006. The coordinator described the group's pre-YERC activity as, "a lot of community development, community involvement and leadership activities." A number of the members were also regular participants in YIA's other youth programs. These other YIA programs followed more of a 'youth as participant' approach, rather than the youth-and-adult partnership and youth-led approach that YERC was espousing.

For two years prior to YERC, the coordinator had been taking advantage of what she called the national convener's "open door." She was able to access information, suggestions and ideas whenever she needed it. "I always had a sense of relief after talking with one of the staff members. I usually call with a problem, and it is resolved when the call is finished." The coordinator spoke of how the approach carried on into the YERC project, "I have the freedom to

plan and implement activities but I know that there is a guiding hand behind me if I need assistance or advice on how to improve the outcome of an event if it didn't work out the first time."

36. The Site Assessment. A new staff person hired by the national convener as the project administrator conducted the assessment of the PEI site. During her three-day visit to the area she conducted a series of interviews in three communities. The chart below outlines the groups with whom she spoke.

Heard from	Community Affiliation
Fort Augustine Recreation Committees	Community Association
Hillsborough River Area Development Committee, (Chairperson)	Community Development Association
School Principal	Human Service Provider
Mount Stewart Community Council, (Chairperson)	Community Development Association
Community Development Officer	Provincial Government
Lions Club	Community Service Club

Table A. B.8. Community organizations, individuals and associations visited by the national convener during the assessment visit

The chart below highlights the findings from the PEI site assessment.

Highlights of the findings from the PEI site assessment	(+) (-) indicator
Intricately involved area where people know each other, work together, and are actively involved in community betterment.	(+)
The YIA coordinator and the people who volunteer and work with her are part of a fabric, and are respected for their hard work and resourcefulness.	(+)
There is a YIA committee comprised of four women from the community who are available to help answer questions, or to help the Coordinator, in the creation of new ideas for the organization.	(+)

YIA makes wise use of small government programs, but they tax the patience of administrators at HRADC.	(+)
The HRAC Chairperson endorses the coordinator continuing to work with youth.	(+)
YIA has had a number of successes with small projects.	(+)
Adult helpers are being drawn from professional and senior sectors.	(+)
There has been a community research underpinning the YIA efforts.	(+)
Grant-writing abilities are apparent.	(+)
Team decision-making at the HRADC level is apparent.	(+)
There are political connections that could be important to the projects success.	(+)
There is a sense of cooperation in the community.	(+)
Initiatives in Hillsborough River Area already have the attention of the provincial government.	(+)
Uncertainties about who will do fundraising.	(-)
Uncertainties about who might be an alternate or support to the leadership of YIA.	(-)
The HRADC Chairperson worries about what will happen when the project ends.	(-)

Table A.B. 9. Highlights of the findings from the PEI site assessment

As the chart indicates, the indicators from the PEI site assessment were predominantly positive. However, the concerning or negative indicators identified proved to be significant. At the very least, the uncertainties about who might shore up the leadership of YIA proved to be important to the way the site developed. Less obvious was the fact that the sites established patterns, people, organizations and ways of working made it more difficult to introduce a new way of working with youth. It would be young people themselves, as well as adults, who would inadvertently restrict attempts to use a more youth-led approach.

After the site visit, the national convener was left with a few questions, which were posed in an e-mail to the YIA director (the eventual YERC site coordinator). She asked: Who is on my team, or am I essentially alone in this venture? What other organizations would be interested in

connecting to the initiative? How will the proposed new program activity be sustained once the YERC project ended? Despite what appeared to be a strong web of community support, the national convener felt the need to focus on whether the coordinator felt supported, rather than on the community web itself. They wanted the coordinator's perspective on the qualities of the support: Would the support amount to more than just verbal promises? Would there be money and/or volunteers to sustain the initiative after YERC? These questions would prove to be quite relevant as the project advanced. In the end, it also proved relevant that only the coordinator provided the answers.

> Researcher's Note: The circumstances at the PEI site could cause one to reflect on how common a practice it is to have proposals worth hundreds of thousands of dollars completed by only one person or a very small minority of the organization intended to carry out the work. This practice, repeated again at the PEI site, points to the need for a deeper and more thorough assessment process than what was completed at this site.

As could have been anticipated during the assessment, the site did an impressive job of networking in the early stages. Government, community groups, schoolteachers, grandmothers, youth professionals and youth from adjacent communities attended presentations and activities connected to the YATs. A diverse array of groups and individuals were asking about the youth groups, including representatives from three community groups, two federal government agencies, three local schools, five provincial government departments and one post secondary educational institution. Local community volunteers were also on hand, to help with events being delivered by the YATs.

> The assessment of the PEI site overvalued its indication of a high number of community partners and supporters as also an indication of strong potential to recruit supportive adult partners to work directly with the youth.

36. Impacts. An objective of addressing improved capacity of the local convening organization (HRDAC) for youth inclusion was accomplished, though the degree of the change was minimal. However, an objective related to participation by older youth and supportive adult mentors/partners never materialized. Those involved in the two YATs, youth, adults and the coordinator reported on the hoped for increase in positive interaction between Mount Stewart and Scotchfort, "…there is more mingling now" (EB, Field notes PEI Site Selection).

The site was successful in leading a number of one-time activities that ranged from organizing a karaoke and music night to volunteering at an annual eagle festival. They made a short film, created a Haunted House for Halloween, volunteered at a day camp, and much more. In the end they participated, volunteered, designed, hosted and led as a part of a number of events that contributed to the community. It was hoped these type of activities would create a more accepting attitude towards youth in the area. Though it can't be said definitively that the attitudes changed, it is reasonable to surmise that it is true. The site coordinator reflected on the project, "Before I started, there was a lot of negativity between youth and adults – and adults thinking, you know, they would look at youth and think they were lazy. I think the mind-sets are shifting now. I'm just hoping that it doesn't shift back."

Objectives	Outcomes Anticipated	Objectives anticipated but not achieved
• host youth forum(s) • youth engagement activity for senior young people • develop a Scotchfort YAT • develop a Mt. Stewart YAT • bring the Scotchfort and Mt. Stewart YATs together to develop community project(s) • increase the numbers of youth involved in the YATs who live outside of Mt. Stewart and Scotchfort but within the Hillsborough River area • to work with the Allied Youth Board of Directors and youth board to increase their youth inclusion in decision making • increase the HRDAC's internal capacity to support youth engagement	• increased youth engagement in the Hillsborough River Area • youth engagement activity for senior young people • increased positive interaction between the youth of Mt. Stewart and Scotchfort • increased capacity of HRDAC's to support youth engagement	• youth engagement activity for senior young people • youth involved in the YATs who live outside of Mt. Stewart and Scotchfort but within the Hillsborough River area • increase HRDAC's internal capacity to support youth engagement

Table A.B.10. The anticipated, achieved, and anticipated but not achieved outcomes of the PEI YERC site

Afterward.

Three years after the end of the YERC project in PEI, the researcher did a follow-up with the individual who had served as site coordinator during the project, to determine what if any activity initiated during YERC still remained. As it turns out, when the YERC funding ended, the YATs in both communities ended as well, but in one of the communities youth engagement activity increased.

In Mt. Stewart, it seemed it was difficult to find someone to volunteer to run a group that had previously been funded. In Scotchfort, the youth from the YAT are now part of the Aboriginal Youth Environmental Services group. This group took over the YAT group because they were established prior to the YAT group. When YERC ended in Scotchfort, a new group of youth and adults evolved from the YAT membership to discuss issues for young people in the community, and to develop activities and programs that would positively impact their lives and that of the community. Whether or not YERC had a role in it, there were more activities for young people taking place in Scotchfort than there was before YERC (i.e. hosting elders dinners, going swimming, garbage cleanups etc).

<center>**Case Study: Community Futures Association**</center>

<center>*An Attempt At Youth Inclusion Within A Community Development Organization*</center>

The Project Activity In The Community

       37. Prospecting for partners and community actors. At the beginning stages of the project there were no specific suggestions for direction coming from the national convener. The project consultant was, in her words, "…watching for a crescendo. I want the coordinators to know they have permission to match their interest and passion with the natural rise of interest in the community. People will want to get together naturally in the community at some point. I will watch for when their curiosity is peaked." This theme would prove to be a frustration for the first two coordinators in the job.

What the first coordinators learned from the national convener was the importance of establishing links with what they named Community Resources: community organizations, initiators, innovators, connectors both youth and adults. After ten weeks of prospecting in the community the coordinator was feeling frustration and a lack of direction. Relief came in the

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form of two inquiries, one from a women's organization that wanted to involve youth in starting a community newspaper, and the other from a community worker in a social services agency who directed her to two youth centres in the region. In a report from this early period of the project the coordinator described her role as, "I'm becoming a bridge builder." It seemed that being a well-established organization such as the Association helped in reaching adults who want to work with youth. Though the contact with the woman's organization would not amount to anything tangible, the contact with the two youth centres would begin to form a central focus for the project.

The new energy picked up the coordinator's spirit, "She seems much happier and more at ease with the project since she found some groups that there was the possibility of doing something concrete with." The coordinator had described her time up to this point as, "….like inventing things to do." She spoke to the fact that because the groups came to her, she knew they were interested in doing something. Once contact had been initiated, she only had to work out what she could do for them.

38. Looking for space for youth inclusion within the local convening organization.
Though the youth centre activity was at least something to focus on for the coordinator, it was not near enough activity to keep her busy or engaged. The recurring question for her was, "How do I get youth in?" Three months into the project, the coordinator turned to what seemed far simpler than looking aimlessly in the community. At a meeting of the Tomorrow Committee, she broached the idea of engaging more youth within the committee and the Association. Following training in NS by the national convener, she suggested to the ED that the staff and Board of the Association participate in some youth-inclusion training from the national convener. The response wasn't positive and along with some earlier signs the coordinator began to believe that, "the ED wants youth involvement but not youth engagement." Her sense was that the problem was with the culture of an organization stuck in its ways with an ED and staff who had been in place for 18 years.

Though the coordinator was discouraged with the Association's leadership, it seemed the ED was making an effort. As the project commenced, the national convener gained a clearer understanding of her perspective and circumstance. The impression was that she wanted youth

included in the Association and she wondered candidly with the project consultant about splitting the Tomorrow Committee into two groups to encourage YERC's development. She admitted the busyness of her job affected her availability and talked about being uncertain of how to position herself to support the project. However, challenges that were to emerge at the site could not be attributed simply to one person's leadership. At a workshop by the national convener the Association staff expressed a desire for more youth engagement, but a number present did not feel that it applied to them or their job.

The idea of more youth inclusion on the Tomorrow Committee resonated with the chair who led a long discussion about how to find youth to get involved. This was the first clear direction or approval allowing the coordinator to focus at least part of her energy on youth engagement internally to the Association rather than only in the community. Unfortunately, neither the coordinator nor the committee members had any strong ideas on how to go about recruiting youth.

39. A desperate bid to establish an enterprising space. For the YERC component of her work, the coordinator's preparation for the first few months was loosely guided by the HW Framework. She agreed with the basic principles and suggested themes of action that underpin the framework but it fell short of giving her much direction on how to move forward, "It [the Framework] is to me common sense and I think maybe that's where I was looking for more of an answer." The national convener's consultant too was starting to struggle with the reality of the Framework's intangibles, while holding onto her first-hand knowledge that there was something unique that the national convener did in its work. "Our uniqueness is the container that gets created when people learn in a dynamic way."

As the coordinator desperately searched for a foothold for action on YERC, she felt unsupported by the Tomorrow Committee and overloaded by work given to her by the ED. Vagueness and uncertainty about the direction the project was to take in the community was yielding to more tangible initiatives previously established at the Association. The ED gave the coordinator the task of overseeing some of the existing youth-oriented program activity at the Association. Her time dedicated to the existing Association youth activity was financed outside of the YERC project. Though officially half of the coordinator's time was dedicated to YERC and half to this

other activity, the boundary between the two streams of work was grey at best. With the vague and emergent nature of the YERC work, the more concrete youth-related initiatives at the Association often took priority.

The coordinator expressed her growing frustration, "I'm very committed to the job and I like what it is all about. It's just that the ED keeps loading me up with other things and not letting me get at the YERC work in the way I think it should be done." Nevertheless the ED was proclaiming support for the nature of the project, "the exploratory work that she's doing is extremely important and it can take time and frankly, it's extremely useful to the Association even if some of the avenues that she's exploring don't get exploited during the project. They could be really good possibilities for the future." Although she tried, it would prove difficult to maintain space for the emergent process of exploration with the project in the community with so many other pressing needs for attention at the organization.

40. A volunteer leadership change closes down space for youth inclusion and participatory process. At the same meeting that the coordinator proposed the internal focus for youth inclusion, the chair of the committee submitted his resignation. This was the young chairperson who during the initial assessment of the site spoke with resolve of the need for youth voice on the committee and in the Association. Following the meeting the ED recruited an existing member of the committee to take on the position of interim chair. The recently approved action to have more youth on the committee was now ultimately in the hands of the interim chair.

Though the departing chair had proposed the idea of a six-month rotating chair, the Association Board of Directors Chair disagreed, "This was a leadership role that needed longer than a six-month term." There was little discussion and no vote on the matter. At the next Tomorrow Committee meeting the new interim chair communicated that she, "…would be happy to stay on in the position, if it was okay with everyone." Her offer was accepted but there were only two committee members present at the meeting. This new chair would remain in the position throughout the length of the project.

Under the interim chair the culture of the committee was changed. In one of the first Tomorrow Committee meetings she chaired, the coordinator felt discouraged and doubted that the committee would ever change to the kind of space that would foster youth inclusion and participation. At the meeting, the chair was the only one really contributing. He neglected to ask for any input from members whatsoever and skipped over items that would have engaged the youth in the discussion. The coordinator was feeling exacerbated, "Not only is the chair not getting youth engagement, he also doesn't understand the importance of a youth friendly committee." The ED was forthcoming about the struggle with the leadership of volunteer committees, "he [chairperson] is feeling the pressure and a little like his toes are being stepped on. My dilemma is it is hard to fire a volunteer." Ironically, at the time of the original assessment for the Association as a local convener, the Tomorrow Committee had presented the most promise as a means to organize a change process and was led by a dynamic young adult. Now, it was to be led by an individual whose autocratic leadership style had already concerned the coordinator and the committee's relationship to YERC was reduced to one of reporting only.

There was one point of notable improvement following a visit between the chair and the project consultant. At a planning meeting with the site coordinator and at the committee meeting following the project consultant's intervention, there seemed to be an improvement. The committee meeting was generally more positive and energetic and a lot more was achieved than usual. The coordinator felt that the chair was beginning to, "catch himself about asking all around the table for others opinions – he is not yet seeming to be valuing others opinions but it is a start."

However, as time went on the new chair proved more of a constraint than a supportive ally. When the chair asked the coordinator with an air of authority and accusation, "Exactly what are you going to be doing?" she was deeply discouraged. After eight months of close observation, the RA's field notes still painted a discouraging picture:

> The main concern of the chair of the Tomorrow Committee is that if the Committee allows youth on-board, or to have a voice, nothing will get done. However, it is my belief that the committee does not achieve anything anyway. The general format of the Committee is to have reports or updates from paid staff members. There is very little discussion about the reports. To say the volunteers are not being fully utilized would be

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an understatement. Without a doubt the current chair is a nice well-meaning person. However, it appears to me that her motivations although well intentioned, may not be entirely for the best interests of the youth. She is a very efficient, organized type of person and seems to struggle with spontaneity. Her intentions seem to be that she wants to help youth in her way. She seems to enjoy being in a position of power and finds it difficult to let go of, or share, that power.

The field note summary concluded on an equally blunt and discouraging note about the project in general, "I really do not know if the project [YERC] pulled out of the Association now whether it would have had any effect at all."

41. Logic model session. The project consultant and the researcher made a visit to the Association in the first four months to facilitate a Logic Model (LM) session with stakeholders. The session established a shared framework for stakeholders to work from for the YERC project. The tool the national convener used to facilitate the session was well received and seemed at the time a worthy way to support the project. There was a sense following the meeting of project organizers being more at ease with the project. It seemed to be a good way to draw all the different members into a belief that the project had a chance of succeeding.

As a result of the session, the site coordinator felt more confident that she had been on the right track with her work. Though she appreciated the session, the material that surfaced in the group session was not new to her. Ultimately, for her and the project what was accomplished was a sense of getting everyone at the Association on the same page. However, the session did not remove the coordinator's early frustrations with the project. "The session confirmed for me that people don't know what the hell they want. It's definitely frustrating to feel that the people that you are supposedly going to for guidance, because they're the decision making power, don't even know what they want." It seemed just getting together to talk about the project provided some welcome relief.

42. A second attempt to focus on an internal youth inclusion focus. The first coordinator came to believe the organization was sincere in their interest in involving, or at least serving, more youth. This was also the impression taken away by the national convener during

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the original assessment visits to the Association. Looking for a foothold to initiate substantive action, for the second time the coordinator turned her attention to the Association as a place for more youth inclusion, rather than the community. The first time had been six weeks earlier at the Tomorrow Committee meeting where the idea and focus got stalled due to the change of leadership.

The coordinator's rationale was that if the Association was to encourage youth inclusion in the community, it had to learn about it first hand within the organization. However, the coordinator also feared the Association would not be able to live up to the promises to youth about their inclusion at the organization, "You don't want to empower them and let them fall, so that's my concern. You know get them all fired up we're going to do something, something is going to happen, and then let them down."

The coordinator's concern was with the structure and culture of the organization, "I don't see that it [youth inclusion] is going to happen in the current Association structure." This led her back to an original idea of YERC, "I think the only way is a Youth Action Team." For the coordinator working directly with youth seemed a less complicated strategy than looking for new community groups with which to connect. Her resolve was strengthened knowing that the YAT idea was consistent with ideas that came out of the earlier Logic Model session and what was originally presented to the YERC funder. She wondered if the YAT could travel about doing activities and community work. Her intent was that the group would be very youth-led for such events as organizing a benefit concert with the proceeds going to the community. The idea provided the coordinator some confidence and the sense of the foothold she had been seeking. The YAT idea grew with a desire to include youth members from some of the emerging partners, including the youth centres and others with whom the coordinator had connected during her networking.

Her first step was to present the idea to the Tomorrow Committee and three of the Youth Centres with which she had begun to work. This was the first time the YAT concept would flirt with centre stage of the project since the original YERC proposal was shared with the sites. The Association's ED was excited by the strategy and expanded on it, "We discussed the youth centre coordinators forming a YAT, separate from the Tomorrow Committee. That team could

be given a budget to use as they see fit, maybe $5,000. That way the YAT would be about youth engagement in the region, not just in the Association." The ED`s remarks underline the strategic juggling she was experiencing with YERC. The YAT idea allowed her a way to cultivate youth engagement beyond what was becoming a restricting structure at the Tomorrow Committee, while also bringing the focus back out to the community.

Unfortunately, the YAT idea died as quickly as it was introduced. At the next Tomorrow Committee meeting, two weeks after discussing the idea with the ED, the emphasis of the coordinator`s activity shifted and she never introduced the idea of YAT. She simply reported to the committee the work she had completed to-date and asked them what she should do next. The chair suggested she continue to go out and do further investigative work and connect more with community groups serving youth.

When the chair was asked in an interview later why she made this request, she answered, "I just wanted to find out what was out there. I hoped there would be some other groups. If there was an exhaustive look at the region there might still be some groups to contact. To maybe find best practices of groups and share. I just thought that, maybe, just a few more, not a huge number, maybe add ideas." This request if honored would take the coordinator back yet again to the work of connecting in the community; the approach to YERC she had just admitted seemed fruitless. The chair's suggestion was consistent with the assumption of most community pilot projects that is—connect with many partners in the hopes of comprehensive change.

43. A blow from the extended environment diverts the attention of the project. There was a background story that explained why the coordinator did not present the idea of the YAT strategy to the Tomorrow Committee. As it turned out, in response to the coordinator's earlier expressions of uncertainty, the ED got funding for a new project. The project was to commence immediately and run for one year. It was added to the YERC work the coordinator was already developing with the youth centres and to her efforts to help the Tomorrow Committee be more youth inclusive. Research field notes from the period report, "She [the coordinator] is having to bend over backwards, to innovate, and to manipulate the situation to squeeze the Wellness Days into the mandate and available time of her original YERC work. The directive from the ED left the coordinator further stressed and disillusioned. By the time it came to the Tomorrow

Committee meeting where the coordinator was to present the YAT idea, she had already attended her first meeting for the new initiative. The grey area between the pre-established and tangible youth-related work at the Association and the visionary, yet vague and emergent YERC work was disappearing. The ED seemed aware of the strain the coordinator was under during this period and vowed to sit down with her to, in her words, "talk about the outcomes from the LM session [now ten weeks past], and what activities would best target those outcomes and to sort of make a little more of a coherent action plan, maybe."

44. Coordinator quits when the chance of an enterprising space disappears. The first of the coordinators resigned from her position seven months into the project and before the anticipated meeting to work out some issues with the ED ever took place. When informing the Tomorrow Committee of her decision the coordinator simply said, "I didn't feel it was working out for me, the evenings, long trips. My family and I have daycare but it is not working out the way I thought. So I had to make a decision." Though there was no formal message about any other organizational reasons for the resignation, she made the decision to resign shortly after the previous Tomorrow Committee meeting and her first Wellness Day meeting.

At the Tomorrow Committee meeting at which the coordinator resigned, she presented a Strategy and Outcomes document to the Committee. The document was a scaled down version of the results of the Logic Model session with clear strategies and accompanying outputs, outcomes and indicators. The national convener's project consultant and the coordinator worked on the document together. For the coordinator the document was a means of establishing a foundation for the coordinator who would follow, as well as, a last effort to organize her work to-date in a form of an action plan. The three action themes of the document were: 1) to link youth centres and youth gathering places/ organizations/ groups in the region; 2) to help organize wellness days; and 3) to assess the Association's current situation with regard to youth inclusion and to set a goal for this. Ironically, just after the coordinator resigned, when the ED was asked what she would consider success from the YERC project, she responded, "I would really like to see some of those youth action groups in place and working. I'm very interested in seeing what will happen with those."

45. New coordinator heads to the established programs and partners. Two weeks following the resignation of the first coordinator a new coordinator was hired, a young and energetic individual with experience working with youth. As with the first, the new coordinator found the story of the national convener inspiring. She would soon take on the coordination of four streams of activity, three that existed prior to YERC and one, the Wellness Days project, which started after YERC began. Two of the programs were in addition to what the first coordinator had on her plate. Also, the new coordinator would pursue two streams of the work started with three youth centres, and a new project possibility with a woman's centre that wanted to link with the youth centres, which later did not develop into anything tangible.

After two weeks, the new coordinator spoke to her progress, "I'm at the beginning and still trying to take it all in. I have a rough idea but I don't have clear-cut objectives. The difference with her job start versus the previous coordinator was that she felt the allure of the more concrete nature of the existing Association programs, "the Association work is more defined [than YERC] and so it easier to get on with it."

After her first meeting with colleagues on the Wellness Days project, the new coordinator had her first reality check about youth inclusion at the Association. "There wasn't a lot of youth involvement. I thought there would be more. My take was that it was like a seniors day and they are just trying to put youth there, where it doesn't fit. They are happy if they get six to eight youth there and I'm, like, what? That's not youth engagement and it is not even youth involvement."

46. No map, no direction, again. She spoke of a lack of clarity similar to that of the first coordinator at the back at her job start, "There isn't anything that doesn't add up but the whole thing is not clear." Once I see the national convener's framework and how it all started, I think that will be such a good resource."

She saw the framework but it provided her little direction. Soon enough, the new coordinator was seeing the challenges that plagued the first coordinator, "I find that stepping into this role, I understand what has to be done but what is more challenging, is how to proceed." She

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appreciated the principle of learning that underpinned the project but also recognized that the open landscape and participatory principle came with inherent challenges.

However, she seemed more positive about the possibilities for youth inclusion at the Association than was her predecessor. Her early observations were, "…that the staff and members of Association are willing [to include youth] they just lack the know-how. It appears, to me, based on my experiences so far, that those who have resistance to the idea of really engaging youth do not fully understand why it is important and the benefits surrounding it" Following up on this idea, one of the first significant interventions the new coordinator organized was a workshop on youth-and-adult partnerships for the association staff.

47. Coordinator feeling unsupported by the executive director. At this stage, the new coordinator was inching into her work with the Tomorrow Committee. Reflecting an impression similar to that communicated by the first coordinator, her early observations were that "She [the Committee Chair] clings to the structure, a no-nonsense type of person, she is not so open." However at this stage, the new coordinator was optimistic that she and the chair would work together to bring more youth onto the Tomorrow Committee.

As well as the uncertainty about how things would go with the Tomorrow Committee she had more immediate concerns in regard to the Association's ED. She was of the impression that the ED would not help the youth voice grow at the Association, "She is all business, she will say it is all about youth inclusion but she does not show it." The coordinator seemed quite aware of the importance of having the primary decision maker on board if there was to be any real progress, "We can't ignore the ED factor. Guarantee, if she gets it, everything will speed up." Her pessimistic view of the ED 's support of youth inclusion was fed by a comment from a community partner, "With her [ED] you have fake adult support."

Two months after she started, the coordinator and the ED came together to review some of the project history. Following that meeting, the new coordinator sensed that it had helped pull them closer from what she described as "a huge gap between us." However, the coordinator's concerns were not alleviated. She complained that the ED wanted things done her way and in a

structured way. Ultimately, she was worried that she wouldn't be able to accomplish anything "if top management are not on-board."

Field notes from this period reflect a feeling of déjà vu. The RA painted a troubling picture, "I feel the new coordinator's mood is going down the same path the last coordinator did and that the project may be in danger of also losing her." Nevertheless, following the meeting with the ED the coordinator seemed to gain a more balanced perspective. She wrote a reflective review of the situation in her journal. Following are some excerpts from that entry:

> I look back now and think that the meeting [with ED] would have been far more effective if I delivered my thoughts/ideas in such a way that she [ED] felt more appreciated, and valued, as well as the Association a valuable organization. As this is the first time that she is seeking to work with youth, it comes as no surprise that youth is not her specialty, nor should it be. That would be challenging for anyone making a transition because it requires a total shift in perspectives in some respect. I do know the organization has its culture and it has had it for sometime, so I do understand where she is coming from.

> So far with the project, I feel although I have not had too many interactions with the ED, there is a lot of resistance. Whenever I go to her with something, there is never much room for creativity (for lack of a better word). She appears to articulate that I have lots of ground to work with but then feedback I get from her is so rigid that it is contradicting. It makes the job a little more challenging when you're getting mixed information on expectations etc. On one hand, I'm getting a message that 'you have infinite possibilities'… but then the second part of that is 'but you have to do it this way.' So, I am given the responsibility for the project, but not the authority to carry it out.

The coordinator's comments on the lack of control and authority were similar to those from the first coordinator near the end of her tenure. A few days after the meeting with the ED, the new coordinator would move into preparations for her second meeting with the Tomorrow Committee. She was hoping for a good connection with the committee to balance the growing frustration she was having internally with the Association, "I definitely was very frustrated going

into the meeting." Having recruited some new youth members to come to the meeting her hope was to make the meeting more youth-friendly. She also planned to introduce the members to HW's framework.

The coordinator convened a short meeting with the chairperson in preparation for the meeting. The ideas for the agenda presented by the coordinator met with some resistance. Afterwards, the coordinator reflected on the meeting, "I didn't get done my whole spiel before [he] presented me with concerns, "I think we need that" and "I don't think we'll have much time for all of this" and "maybe you can just say this part and you don't need all of that." From the coordinator's perspective no matter how she presented her thoughts, or responded to his feedback, the chair "was not going to see the value." Though the chair reluctantly agreed to let the coordinator add her touch to the meeting, when the chair introduced a cooperative game the coordinator had planned, she did so with a heavy dose of reservation, "If we have time, time being the operative word, we have a team building game." Once the game was over the chair was dismissive, "Okay, so now we have team built…." The chair then went on to give a speech on the mission of the Association and such things as outward migration. From the coordinator's perspective, the Tomorrow Committee did not seem any more promising as a leverage point for change to more youth inclusion than was working with the ED.

    48. Second coordinator resigns and sheds light on some foundational issues. The second coordinator resigned approximately six months after starting the position, and fourteen months into the twenty-four-month project. When asked if she was leaving because of circumstances at Association, she responded, "I was leaving anyway, she [the Executive Director] just sped the process up. I have to feel good about where I work, you know... but I was leaving anyway." In a series of follow-up e-mails over a number of weeks following her resignation, the past coordinator shared her reflections on the project. Her comments are included in Table A.A. 10.

What worked well?	Why?
"Time spent discussing the project with the RA"	"to be able to bounce ideas back and forth, as well as obtain feedback and clarification"
"Time spent speaking with the project	"helped me to gain a good grasp on youth engagement principles and framework, and a sense of support and understanding of the

consultant and the researcher"	bigger picture"
"Working with others who were passionate and willing, as well as positive"	"resulted in making changes, a difference, moving forward with initiatives"
"Being able to set a flexible schedule"	"maximizing time spent out in the community creating a greater opportunity to make an impact"
"Building relationships with the "Youth Centre Coordinators"	"there was such a need and willingness to see things happen (i.e., the opportunity to get some support and link up with others in the community, doing the Association work & possessing the Association goals")"
"Training on youth engagement"	"gaining a better understanding of the job and in turn being better positioned to explain to others the purpose of the project"

Table A.B.11. Comment's from site coordinator after she resigned about what worked well about her job

What was challenging?	How did it play out?
"feeling that I was given the responsibility of the project but not the authority to carry it out in the way that I was trained to do"	"I often felt discouraged about having to continuously justify ideas, initiatives which were met with doubts"
"most of the staff at Association did not understand the project, and as a result often did not feel that it concerned them"	"staff were not that eager or willing to play an active role in seeing the project's principles through"
"time frames and the workload were often unrealistic with disregard of the distribution between the Tomorrow Committee responsibilities, and other Association responsibilities, and the YERC"	"YERC goals and objectives were at times neglected"

Table A. 11. Comment's from site coordinator after she resigned about what had not worked well about her job

In a resignation letter the coordinator stated,

> In order to implement the project's principles, organizational change was required, yet this [attempt at change] created feelings of uncertainty and unfamiliarity… basically what I meant was that there weren't any steps taken to make sure the project was

successful. There were no shifts that would set up my job for success, like including youth, changing the mind set, and educating people. When I went in [at the beginning of my job] it was a hassle to include youth, it was like – "it will take more time if we include youth." There was no buy in, there was no shift from the beginning so everyone just carried on their daily process and they didn't think it applied to their job. Everyone needs to look at their job and how they can change their daily stuff. So everyone is attending seminars but they are like ``it doesn't really apply to my job.``

From the very beginning through to the end of her tenure, the second coordinator was of the opinion that, "There was no foundation set when I went there. My job was going against the grain from the beginning. For something like this to take off you need support from the top, not just talking about it but doing things, actions, buy in, training, more support from training. Who is going to buy in when it is so wishy-washy." She wasn't placing blame on the ED, "She has a lot on her shoulders to try to pull something like this off. Merging different perspectives when the gap between the two is quite immense is a huge task and the ED does so much, she is spread so thin.

49. A new coordinator, more structure, less exploration. Another coordinator was hired a few weeks after the second coordinator's resignation. This new coordinator would remain for the final six months of the project, and though with different responsibilities, she would stay well beyond the end of the project.

In contrast to the first two, the new coordinator had program activity to jump into which was structured and, for the most part, already organized. She admitted it was a fast and hectic start. She also spoke of some self-initiated new priorities for YERC, in particular getting into the schools to reach out to those young people. In general, she appeared to give more attention to the established Tomorrow Committee members than her predecessors. The project consultant made a late winter trip back to the site with the priority to support and train this coordinator and speak with the chair of the Tomorrow Committee in hopes of establishing somewhat of a coaching relationship with her. At this point, the national convener seemed more focussed on tangible action than earlier in the project. Reflecting on the visit, the coordinator shared, "She

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[project consultant] helped me to develop an action plan for what I want to do for now until the end of the project."

The Applied Dissemination Role & Practices Of The National Convener

The national convener was well known for their effective hands-on program approach in NS. However, before the project ever really got moving, the project consultant was facing the challenges of implementing this approach outside of their home turf. She shared her concern, "How the hell do you do that [show them an approach] over the phone? She went on, "So our initial questions is, 'Can we share what we do outside of NS?' We don't know for sure if we can."

Both the first two coordinators found the national convener's level of experience and those at the youth centres very important, "Knowing that you all have so much experience, knowledge and resources has made the transition of stepping into this role quite a bit easier for me."

The second coordinator also shared her perspective, "I think they are very passionate about what they do, so that reassured me in the sense that where the national convener is today has come from this evolution of trial and error. It reassured me to know that there was a history, that it wasn't a fly by night."

She too got the message from the national convener that there was support for the role and room for creativity within it, "I don't have to exhaust myself trying to re-invent the wheel. There are already so many resources at my disposal while still allowing for creativity and letting things emerge naturally."

     50. Training by the national convener. In the fifth month of the project, the national convener hosted the key project staff from each of the four YERC community sites to come to NS to participate in Re-Generation, a three-day conference on Community Youth Development. For the Association's coordinator, the Re-Generation did not alleviate her uncertainty about the job, "When I went to Halifax for training I even started to panic more because I met the PEI YERC site coordinator and she was also unclear on what was happening." Overall, the Association's coordinator felt the time in NS better positioned her to discuss certain issues with the

Tomorrow Committee and showed her the benefits youth can play in an organization but left her with little in the way of tangible new directions.

The time in NS also helped her better understand the national convener's perspective that the YERC project was be an emergent learning process. She explained that she now understood, "There is no clear path, there is trial and error and change of thinking. For a while, for a few months I may be thinking this is the right way and then realize that no this isn't working and that I better try something different."

As part of the training all the site coordinators visited a successful youth centre in NS. The youth and the program at the youth centre inspired the Association's coordinator. However, once again it illuminated the stark contrast of her situation at the Association where no youth group of any kind was currently established. "We really don't have a bank of youth to work with, so we've got to now find another association or group of adults, or group of youth who haven't been partnered with adults, to get them going."

The second coordinator also made a trip to NS for some additional training with the national convener to complement the one-on–one coaching she was receiving. Afterwards she shared, "It [training] was extremely helpful, a lot of success of the project is dependent on getting feed back from the national convener." She also had a chance to speak with a lot of people doing successful youth engagement work, "It helped me see the difference in dealing with people that get it [youth inclusion] and those that do not. When you are speaking with ones that do not, you are just hitting the wall all the time." This was an important perspective for the coordinator as it was not a lesson readily available to her at the Association.

52. Field visits by the national convener. During the fifth month of the project, there was a critical visit to the Association by the national convener's project consultant and the researcher. This was the first meeting of the full project team at the Association. Again, the national convener's default was to embrace the emergent approach. The consultant's common refrains to the ED and the coordinator was, "Whatever you think will work" or, "If that is good with you." This may have been empowering at first but as the case explains, the lack of a framework for action gradually became an issue.

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One of the project consultant's site visit's came in the midst of the continuing frustrations experienced by all of the internal stakeholders at the Association: the new coordinator, the ED, and the Tomorrow Committee chair. The project consultant was intentional with her interventions during the visit, including: 1) a meeting and youth inclusion workshop with the Association Board, 2) attending the second youth centre coordinators meeting with representatives from seven youth centres, 3) convening a meeting between the coordinator and the ED, and 4) significant coaching with the coordinator.

Following this site visit, the ED spoke with appreciation of the way the consultant facilitated the workshops, "No fingers pointed, as in 'you have done it wrong' and, she encouraged us to look at what we have done in the past and build on it." The influence of the consultant's visit was tied to her skills as a facilitator, "She is such a good facilitator. She is objective. She is good at drawing out the thoughts of people in the room rather than projecting her own." One of the senior staff added, "I loved it. It made everyone look at the bigger picture of everyone. I was thinking we don't do some of these things with youth. It was an eye opener for me. I am guilty of some of the things, around not giving respect to youth."

What would eventually be training for a third coordinator, was reflective of the national convener's appreciative approach. She drew on the coordinator's own stories and experiences and framed these as experiences of engagement. The approach left the new coordinator with a sense of confidence, "She [the project consultant] gave me confidence in my own abilities to do the job. Now I feel like I have some experience that I didn't think I had."

53. Fuzzy coaching from the sidelines. The first YERC coordinator had been anxious for a clear sense of a start throughout her tenure. She didn't feel like the answers were forthcoming from the national convener or the Association. The coordinator's frustration was heightened by her perception of the national convener's character, "I get the feeling that everybody at the national convener organization is really laid back. It's like, 'Oh yeah we'll do it. We'll answer that whenever, or you know, the next time we speak, you know,' and that's great. It's just I'm not so laid back, as far as flexibility." She also made similar comments earlier on, "You listen to what the national convener personnel say and they are all very very sweet. It sounds like we're

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partners, and lots of give and take and we can make this what we want to, and lots of scope for creativity and this all sounds very good, but, in actual fact my experience so far is that, it is very top down." She expanded, "It's like well we could do this, or well we could do that and it's whatever you want and it's what the community wants. It's just I believe in all that but there has to be a balance, you know. There's, like, all the touchy feely [chuckle] you know, evaluation, exploratory stuff but somewhere along the line it's got to materialize 'cause I'm still in the tire spinning stage."

Unfortunately, the program stress at the national convener extended to the administrative function of the project. The coordinator explained, "We haven't had the information that we needed at crucial points along the way to really be a partner or to really have creative scope." She also felt the lack of clarity from the national convener extended beyond their program approach, "The model [framework] is one thing but then there is all this administrative stuff that was lacking, which I found hard to deal with."

Following Re-Generation the project consultant sent an e-mail to the coordinators about what direction they might take with their community work. The themes of the proposed actions were general: increase your own awareness of youth engagement and where it is already going on in your own community; increase the capacity, energy, and enthusiasm in the community for youth engagement; increase your positive relationships with youth groups; and generate community desire for youth engagement. There were no specific examples or guidance on how to pursue the themes addressed in the e-mail. The coordinator and the YERC project were stuck in the generalities of the national convener's approach and framework.

The gap between expectation and reality was obvious in the coordinator's search for clarity and tangible action in the first four months of YERC, "I came to the realization that this is a research project and that wasn't clear to me before. I sort of had in my head that there was a model, not like a hand-book but just a few more defined areas to guide me." Though she felt her earlier training in NS and coaching from the project consultant did little to move the project forward, she did come to a greater understanding and appreciation for the underlying scope of what the project was all about, "They [the national convener] are sort of trying to put something concrete down on paper to help others, based on experiences, so I felt better about that."

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With some reservation, the coordinator agreed with the principle of community development the national convener practiced, "I think, and I believe that this is the national convener's feeling as well, that you can't just come into a community and tell them what to do. It has to come from the community." She was also sensitive to the importance of the consultative approach, "I don't want to insult anybody who has been working with youth by not getting their feedback, because I just know you're not going to get anywhere if you step on anyone's toes." However, the principle of being participatory and consultative did little to alleviate the coordinator's uncertainty on how to begin, "the national convener reassured me that it's [YERC] what our site wants it to be, which makes sense… but I was hoping for a little bit more."

54. An appreciative lens on a coordinator resigning. The project consultant responded to the first coordinator's resignation in an e-mail to the ED suggesting that the resignation, "was an opportunity to do some collective, creative problem-solving together." There was a prompt in her message, "You may as well look at all the options, tap into all the interest, and examine what strategy feels best for you." She went on to bring in a theme that was a growing priority, "This is as an opportunity to gain more widespread ownership on this task and to gather your collective thoughts as to what the next best move is." She went on to open the question of a different way to structure and organize the project, "The concept of one coordinator is the process taken thus far but certainly other appropriate options exist."

Enterprising Space

53. An attempt to create an enterprising space post project - a youth wing. The 3rd and final site coordinator, hired near the end of the project, resurrected attention to youth inclusion within the Association which the original coordinator had attempted eighteen months earlier. There was the beginning of a younger feel on the Tomorrow Committee which encouraged her.

> Late in the project the axis of change for more youth voice in the organization shifted to the board. A new chairperson, himself less than thirty years of age, led the change effort with the idea of adding a youth wing to the board, "it will be a parallel board with considerable power and authority over its own decision making." The idea first came up

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in a project-sponsored workshop on youth inclusion. From the beginning of the project at the Association, the Tomorrow Committee assumed a role much like that of a steering committee.

As the project moved into its final quarter, the chairperson of the Board sounded optimistic about where things would go with the youth inclusion agenda. Interestingly, he also talked about the fact that the changes pre-dated YERC, "Even before this project [YERC] started, there was already a shift in that direction [youth inclusion] in the Association and the last strategic meeting we had led us towards prioritizing some certain youth issues of the Tomorrow Committee." There was a marked effort on his part to make structural changes that impacted the Tomorrow Committee and the Board, "The committee has taken on a life of its own through attrition but also through recruitment efforts with the Board, and over time, we ended up with a Board that's much more fully dynamic and energetic toward this issue [youth inclusion] than ever before."

To support this effort, nearing the end of the second year of the project, the project consultant made a final visit to the site. With an eye to sustainable change, she was keen to talk about the youth wing concept with the ED and coordinator. She started into that component with, "It sounds like there are some different opinions on what it should be." With some impatience and irony, the ED reminded the project consultant that YERC was an emergent project. The ED also clarified the official position, "This is not policy; this is not the direction the Association is going in. We do want to make a place for youth within the Association. We want the Association to be for them as well but, we want it to be relevant to youth so we want to ask them."

> The chairperson had still bigger plans for structural change, including abolishing the Executive Committee, tightening the board of directors, and the eventual creation of a council that would meet less often but bring together community stakeholders on a fixed and permanent basis. The chairperson's intent was to address the objective of increased youth voice in the Association as part of the overall structural change process.

This push for change by the new chair of the board was the last significant development before YERC came to its end quietly and as planned, twenty-six months after it started.

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Eleven months after the YERC project ended at the Association, members of the Tomorrow Committee helped bring about the creation of an Association youth council.

54. Post project effort to sustain a youth-led structure. The youth wing idea continued to move forward but would not take its permanent shape until well after the YERC project ended. Three years after YERC ended the third coordinator of the project, still employed at the Association, provided an update on the youth inclusion agenda.

In theory, the Youth Council is supposed to be composed of one large main council and a number of community councils. The members of the main council are representatives from each of the community councils that already existed in the region. The youth organizers of the Youth Council thought this would be a good way to encourage such existing youth groups to participate in the Council, without drastically changing the way that they work. Youth associated with the Tomorrow Committee established during the YERC project, were recruited for the Council.

The Youth Council plan [originally conceptualized as a Youth Wing] unfortunately did not live up to its expectations. The coordinator shared her reflections,

"Part of the problem the Council is having right now relates to the size of our territory. It is very difficult to bring these youth together (in person) to do things. We had some funding last year for this and for activities but that has run out. The youth are all connected through Facebook and sometimes plan mini get-togethers with other groups, but that is all they can really do. Also, there is no coordinator to help coordinate all of this, so it is being left to just one or two young people (who already have a lot of their plates).

Also, although the Youth Council does sit on the Board of Directors of the Association (one member), he does not get much say in anything. In theory, he is supposed to have voting power but in practice, the other board members do not really listen to him or respect his opinions (there might be one or two that try, but that is all). In fact, about a month ago he spoke to them about the situation and asked for their help. The board members all agreed to pass a motion saying they would continue to support the youth

council, but did not specify how. Also, not one Director would agree to provide help/support for the youth until I specifically asked them to name someone to be the liaison for the council. In truth, the reaction that actually came from the representative nominated was: "so you don't want to help them anymore?"

I think the youth council was a fantastic idea because the youth are there and want to get involved. They are fantastic and enthusiastic but they are getting discouraged having no support and no help financially (also, not even help to organize fundraisers). I continue to support them and help them coordinate activities as much as I can but it has to come after my other work, since it is not technically in my job description anymore."

Assessing Readiness To Convene

55. Initial signs that attracted the national convener to consider the site. The national convener was attracted to the site in light of: its proximity to the researcher, as a community development organization, and the difference of its mandate from the other local conveners. These were the only early signs for this site.

What the assessor first heard from the local convener was that they wanted to, "Help young people who want to make a difference in their community and find other young people who want to do the same." The Association spoke of its membership being very concerned about the migration of young people from the region and this motivated their application as a YERC site. The national convener was of the opinion that the answer to stem the out-migration from the community by young people was to engage them while they were still there.

56. The assessment. As with all of the YERC sites, there was a site assessment visit to the Association to consider its potential to be one of three local convening organizations to be chosen for the YERC project. The local organization was responsible to convene appropriate partners and community members in their communities, as indicated by the national convener's framework.

Most of the first assessment visit, of the two that were conducted with the Association, consisted of interviews with its ED. Following the initial assessment there was some concern about her capability to successfully guide the organization through a participatory project involving young people. Although she was friendly, she seemed almost too sure of herself and the assessor intuited that her leadership style might be one of tight control. The assessment interview with the ED left the assessor wondering if she was the type of leader that empowered her staff or if hers was a more autocratic approach.

A second assessment visit to the Association included additional interviews with the ED, as well as other staff and volunteers. A young staff member who had community and youth development experience was also interviewed. Initially, the fact that she was on staff was considered a good indicator of the Association's readiness to convene YERC. However, this young staff shared two significant insights regarding the ED's leadership during the assessment, "She is not very well respected in the region, or by the people that relate directly with her," and "YERC may be the first real grass-roots initiative at the Association." These concerns were similar to those shared in a meeting, early in the site assessment, by a senior staff member of a provincial agency coordinating community economic development in the region. The individual had convened a meeting with the assessor to express concerns about the organization being considered as a YERC site, "I feel that they [the Association] will do what they need to do to get the money, they do a lot of what they call consultations and that is it. There is little action and questionable consultations."

During a second assessment visit, a new structural element was introduced that alleviated some of the mounting concerns about the potential of the Association's application to be a YERC site. It was at that time that the ED introduced the Tomorrow Committee which she claimed would have a key role in YERC's leadership. The Committee's mandate was, "To ensure that young people are informed about the advantages and opportunities for living in the region and to facilitate their reaching their full potential." The ED suggested the YERC Coordinator could keep the Committee informed but not necessarily report to them. She went on to suggest that the Tomorrow Committee, "could maybe play more of an advisory role and provide ideas." It was encouraging news that the Tomorrow Committee and their youth focus existed. Time was taken during the assessment to meet with the chair of the committee, a young business leader and a

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previous recipient of a Tomorrow Committee award. This very competent young businessman increased the assessors' confidence in the Association's ability and interest in hosting the YERC project and involving young people in decision-making.

There was one last interview during the second assessment visit with a few executive members of the Association's Board. The chair of the board was a young adult, and again, this increased confidence that the Association was moving in the right direction to be a leader in youth inclusion in their own organization and in the community. Finally during the visit, there was a presentation and a "question and answer" session with the entire Association Board.

Following the two assessment visits, the ED sent an e-mail with information that strengthened their application further, "I just received a call back from the Dean of Students at the University. I told him a bit about the YERC Project and asked if he thought some young adult mentors might be available from the university to get involved in some action groups. His response was extremely positive!"

The hesitations about selecting the Association as a local convener had to do with whether they had the necessary leadership skills and drive to fulfill YERC's vision of youth leadership. The Association demonstrated the desire and intent to incorporate youth-led processes but had limited prior experience of youth-led processes. In spite of the concerns, with the Association's extensive community development experience, the assessor still considered them a strong choice for YERC.

The choice of the Association as a YERC site was helped by the expressed interest of the funder to have a site in the region of the Association. Finally, the choice of the site was also influenced by the fact that the researcher for the project, who had strong youth inclusion experience, lived within an 1.5 hour drive from the site. It seemed to be a reassurance that with the researcher nearby, regardless of any shortcoming at the site, knowledge and coaching would be readily available.

57. What appeared to be was not. The picture the assessment provided of the site would change significantly within the first month of the project. The young staff member at the

Association with youth and community development experience who had been interviewed during the assessment was let go from her position. As well, the dynamic young chair of the Tomorrow Committee resigned due to a pending extended trip out of country. The promised university students would eventually participate in a focus group but otherwise, they would have very little involvement.

During its next twenty-seven months the project would experience significant ups and downs, more downs than ups, including: two coordinators leaving their position, the rocky start to the relationships between the Association and the national convener, and the fact that regardless of their stated intent, the ED and the new chair of the Tomorrow Committee were ineffective youth inclusion advocates.

Case Study: Youthscape Case (Secondary Study)

This case concerns YouthScape (YS) a national Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI) with a vision to increase the resiliency of five Canadian urban centres by leveraging the capacity of marginalized young people in planning and implementing community development initiatives. YS shared a set of general design elements in common with YERC, these included: the intramediary roles of convening, front-line facilitation, partnerships, and backbone or base-camp support.

The Local Convening Function

58. Steering committees - a structure of disengagement. The Request for Proposals from the Foundation stated, "It is a working assumption of this project that each community initiative will have a steering committee comprised of young people and adults from diverse backgrounds and sectors." The principle behind the working assumption was to establish a broad footing in the community through strong relationship with diverse community

organizations and youth and adults working together. As a working assumption the sites had some room to be creative with the way they structured their governance but most failed to recognize it, or understand any alternative option. One site did establish a more creative forum-type approach that proved very successful and helped other sites re-invent their own approach.

For all the other sites, the steering committee structure proved problematic. The partners that came to the table fell into their usual patterns of organizing. Four of five YS sites encountered challenges with their steering committees within the first year of the project. In a number of sites potential partner organizations either drifted away, or never came to the table in the first place.

Comments regarding the steering committees included, "they were redundant," "there was an identity crisis," "they were not youth-friendly," "there was a disconnect between the convening organization, the steering committee and the youth they were supposed to represent," and, "no one really understood the role of the steering committee." As one YS actor reported, "We spent lots of time building a city-wide steering committee. Now we know it was a damn waste of time."

59. The challenge of transferring ownership from the local convener to partners. One of the more difficult challenges with the way in which the project was structured was transferring ownership from the local convening organizations to the broader community. There were some decisions the convening organizations made that other community actors felt might have been better made by a broader group. For higher-level strategic decisions, a number of the sites created a management team with small groups of staff, and in some cases, community partners. Some also felt that some decisions made by YS management teams should have been opened up to a larger group. Determining what decisions should be directed where was often left to the site coordinator or ED of the local convening organization. In a number of cases, the coordinator alone made what could be considered important strategic decisions. Finding a balance between participative decision-making and the expediency that comes with decisions made by staff was difficult for a number of the sites.

A few of the convening organizations responded to the limitations of the steering committee and management team structure with new alternative forms of decision-making. For the most part, the proposed changes were designed to encourage democratic and cooperative principles. In the words of an ED of one of the local conveners, "We were striving to create a more balanced structure." The new structures had a variety of functions and form. At one site, an alternative form of conducting meetings was established under the name, "The Marketplace." One team member described it as, "A space that would encourage people to talk more freely about what they wanted." The hope was that The Marketplace would serve to highlight what young people were doing, to create more of an exchange and to become an information collection point for giving and receiving feedback. At other sites, small ad hoc management teams were created in an attempt to encourage flexible team decision-making. At still other sites, all-youth selection committees were formed to make decisions on the small grant funds. In this way, the small grants fund was successful in compelling some convening agencies to get decision-making power into the hands of young people, and as a result, it created an alternative pocket of decision-making.

60. The role of the site coordinators (front-line facilitators). The role of the site coordinators proved problematic for YS. Throughout the first 1.5 years of the project, questions surfaced as to whether the coordinators at some sites had the necessary skills to move the YS agenda forward. The convening organizations had been left to their own devices to shape the role and job descriptions for the coordinators. Dealing with the lack of relevant skills, and particular character traits of some coordinators, consumed a great deal of time for the national convener and the EDs. Referring to the characteristics of one coordinator, an ED shared, "Her skills were not able to address the many issues. She has been very controlling. She was not able to facilitate youth leadership, nor was she good with adults. She was just not a people person. She alienated many people in the community." Though an extreme case, three site-coordinators left or were asked to leave their positions. One site had three different coordinators in less than three years. With these unanticipated circumstances, the national convener had the difficult task of quickly orienting new coordinators, all of whom had very diverse skills and vague mandates to work with.

The Project Activity In The Community

61. The opportunity in the messy collaboration. There were multiple points within YS that brought together youth and adults in the hope of shared decision-making and community action. They came together as young citizens and a project coordinator; the local and national convening organizations; the EDs and the community-based project staff; and any number of other working relationships. They came together around a shared vision, that of building resilient communities through youth engagement. The project brought together the cultures of academics, researchers, youth, private foundations, seasoned and young adult youth-workers, evaluators, not-for-profits, activists, students, Aboriginals, Francophones, Anglophones and others. Each individual involved in YS's leadership held their own distinct role, language, practice and bias.

These times of coming together were messy, uncertain, frustrating and as the project neared its end, eventually transformative. It was these collaborations that represented YS's opportunity for co-creation, learning and innovation. It was also a space where significant creative tension lay. Overcoming the challenges required innovation and a quality of interaction between partners.

62. A not so deep slice of the community. The Foundation's intent for the convening organization role was that they would convene a deep and broad slice of the community. Their vision called for a mobilization strategy that went beyond working with the usual community agencies. Under the rubrics of CCI, the strategy options available to the conveners ranged from simple collaborations with other community service agencies on a specific issue, to a full-scale cross-community mobilization. The Foundation hoped for a result that resembled a movement coordinated by a diverse coalition.

What they got instead was a project that for the most part remained mostly inside the local convening organizations, struggling to generate any shared community direction. In the absence

of a specific system—target, or objective and accompanying compelling action in the forefront, it became quite difficult to attract others to YS. The local convening organizations reached out to organizations familiar to them that they had worked with in the past, or that had experience with marginalized young people. Most YS sites never seriously attempted to mobilize individuals or organizations beyond the traditional boundary of community service agencies and institutions. In two communities, the Foundation feared their grant contributions would be used to maintain business as usual at the convening organizations, supporting existing projects that were divergent from YS's objectives.

> Researcher's Note: This is also the kind of redirection of funds to other programming that took place in the Futures Association, YERC case.

63. Challenges with youth involvement. There were a series of challenges at the local convening organizations with trying to involve young people in the initiative. These included practical questions about access, outreach, finding appropriate methods of interactions to sustain involvement, and deeper issues around what approaches work best so marginalized young people could meaningfully contribute to community processes. The challenges sometimes appeared insurmountable to the community actors. In the words of a steering committee member from one community, "I think it's probably a rare gift to be able to engage the marginalized people in a meaningful way. To be able to engage in a non-patronizing way, gain their trust and bring them into the system in a meaningful way is, I think, as rare as a brain surgeon's skills."

Though a number of the convening organizations already had successful programs that served youth, some seemed reluctant and/or without the skills to create the space for youth participation in their daily decision-making, governance and management. Though in some sites there was little involvement of young people in the first half of the project, there was considerable investment of time trying to attract youth. Sites that struggled with recruitment choose to direct their effort at building governance structures that they believed would allow for effective youth and adult relationships. It was their hope that once they established new relationships between youth and adults, ideas and motivation for meaningful action projects in the community would follow. Others argued that this approach missed the need to create the

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kind of culture of hope, action and celebration that would attract and keep young people engaged (Dozois, 2009). In the end, at all sites young people mostly got involved with YS once there was either a tangible action project or an offer of a grant to start one.

64. The funders pre-launch design phase. The Foundation spent significant time prior to the launch of YS learning relevant lessons from others, and reflecting on how they could be strategic in supporting a youth engagement initiative. Their belief was that engaging marginalized youth called for innovative and comprehensive approaches. They learned it was necessary for the approach to involve unlikely allies (e.g. homeless youth, small business owners, and police) who would bring a range of perspectives and skills to the table.

During the design preparations for YS, the Foundation also introduced a promising new concept of "Comprehensive Community Initiatives" (CCI)[82] to work on complex issues in community development being implemented in rural and urban centres throughout Canada. The approach is based on principles of community building, local ownership and local action. CCIs were to tackle some of the most challenging of social issues including poverty reduction, illiteracy, adolescent mental health and active living. Community organizations and citizens were brought together with a mandate to co-generate for the betterment of the community.

Drawing upon the CCI model and the Foundation's early learning from involvement in Vibrant Communities,[83] the Program Officer responsible for YS at the Foundation encouraged community partners to consider elements of the CCI approach. In particular, the sites were asked to map out youth issues within the context of larger economic and social issues. Secondly, they encouraged community partners to connect the design and implementation of small-scale projects to larger systems with an objective of transforming neighbourhoods rather than just completing a single project (Cawley, 2010).

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[82] Comprehensive Community Initiatives - Evolved from various community development models, CCIs work to strengthen the capacity of participating organizations and neighborhood residents to address a wide range of issues and bring about change. These initiatives focus on building leadership among local residents and organizations, and require collaboration among a wide spectrum of neighborhood residents and institutions (Winton 1998).

[83] Vibrant Communities: A network of cities in Canada trying to reduce poverty collaborative. www.vibrantcommunities.ca

Based on consultation with some leading youth engagement practitioners, the Foundation also decided that supporting youth-led projects was to be the preferred mechanism for ensuring that young people would be at the centre of YS (Cawley, 2010). To reduce the likelihood that the youth-led projects would generate a series of one-off, unconnected projects, community partners were encouraged to collectively choose a community issue, local system, or neighbourhood around which the grants could be clustered. Secondly, in order to leverage the energy and creativity of young people, experience from other initiatives suggested that adults could play a crucial role in helping young people to navigate complex institutions. In short, it was recognized that there was a considerable amount of front-end (identifying a community issue) and back-end (embedding successful projects into larger systems) work required maximizing the value of the youth-led projects (Cawley, 2010).

The Applied Dissemination Role & Practices of the National Convener

65. Poor communication about structure that shaped the project. There were parameters, either mandated or perceived as mandated, which shaped the projects direction. These included: 1) local convening organizations; 2) a national convening organization; 3) steering committees, and 4) site coordinators. As a result of this imposed structure, the sites reported feeling a sense of having little input on decision-making related to resources or national strategy. Their feeling was that the Foundation and the national convener were making the most important decisions, and that only the smaller budget decisions like granting for community projects, were left for them to make.

The local convening organizations perceived some of the parameters as mandatory, when in fact they were not. In addition to the belief that having a steering committee was mandatory, the sites also assumed that any of their existing services did not qualify as fundable, and that a coordinator role was mandatory. The confusion at the sites about which strategies were negotiable, and which were not, underlies the importance of the national convener role communicating to community partners with exacting clarity.

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66. Small grants fund. In response to the lack of progress at the sites and evidence in the field, the Foundation reasserted the mandate of a small grants fund on the local convening organizations. The small grants fund was a source of confusion and tension within YS for the first fifteen months of the initiative. Much of the tension was around the parameter established by the Foundation, that 35% of program funds provided to the sites were to be expended through a small grants fund to young people. The Foundation introduced the parameter based on evidence that providing small grants to young people for community projects was recognized as a highly effective strategy for youth engagement. There was misunderstanding about whether it was a mandated expectation or an option that communities could choose to adopt.

Late in the first year, the tension around the small grants parameter created a serious threat to the future of YS. Not withstanding the fact that three of the four sites were talking about leaving the project, the small grants strategy contributed to getting the project back on-track and filled the action void. The small grants strategy saw young people take on a range of projects. It also forced some local convening agencies to get decision-making power into the hands of young people.

67. Convening a learning community. One of the projects strategies was to develop a national YS learning community between the local convening organizations and the other community actors. This remained a challenge for the first two years of the project, and began to bear fruit only in the final year. Contrary to the objective of establishing a learning community, during the trying times at YS, instead of turning to the YS community and the national convener's project staff for support and leadership, the local convening organizations tended to stay internal. They projected their discomforts on those they considered responsible for the mounting tension, the national convener and the Foundation.

A big part of establishing the learning community and another significant strategy for YS were forums, or gatherings, for the community actors. These were intended to be an important part of the YS structure. There were four events where all of the convening organizations had a chance to review, reflect and plan together. The first event was an orientation for the short-listed sites. These events stimulated a great deal of activity leading up to, during and afterwards. One of the primary objectives of these events was to build team spirit into the YS project.

Unfortunately, during YS's first national gathering that objective was compromised. When a brave minority publicly presented alternative and divergent perspectives, they felt neither welcomed nor supported. The project's ability to engage diverse partners at that point in time seemed inadequate.

Though the first and second gatherings were marred by minor problems and challenging dynamics, things improved significantly for the last two. The developmental evaluators and the national convener noted shifts in mindsets, processes, and strategies as a result of these events. In addition, relationships built between the sites contributed to collective decision-making and shared creativity throughout the project. The gatherings provided a true beginning for the integration of young people into the broader YS community.

68. Fundamental issues with conceptual language. In YS's first year, important questions about the project began to surface from all operational levels i.e. "What system are we focusing on? Where do we begin? What will bring everyone together? Who should we bring together? What is YS: an approach, an organization, or a project?" The roots of these questions could be traced back to the national convener and the Foundation's own early struggle with articulating the concept of comprehensive in a way that would move the mandate of YS forward at the community sites. The communities had felt the explanation given by the national convener and the Foundation, of what comprehensive could mean in the form of practical strategies and projects, seemed vague (Dozois, 2009).

In the beginning, people also got entangled in debates over what YS meant by the term, marginalized youth. In one community, spearheaded by some strong-minded youth, the focus was heading in the direction of healing for youth who could be found in jail, the psych ward or the detox centre. This was a high-risk strategy that had the potential of pushing the local convening organization into providing emergency social services well beyond their skill level. This strategy was eventually abandoned. At another site, the community partner had difficulty moving beyond its comfort zone of working with high achieving students, and would never successfully get involved with young people who were marginalized.

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There was also good deal of unresolved discussion while the various partners in the communities struggled with youth engagement as a unifying theme. As one young person expressed it, "Youth engagement is terminology stuff … no one gets it. You have to be there and get involved. You have to experience it to fully understand what it means." The constant echo was, "youth engagement in what?" The what, being the missing reason to be engaged, to meaningfully contribute, and to create or to act for the collective good.

Assessing Readiness To Convene

69. Initial signs that attracted the national convener to consider sites. The Foundation, with the support of the national convener, put a broad call out to youth-serving organizations across the country to apply as local convening organizations for YS in their respective communities. Twenty-four organizations applied to be a convening organization for the project in their community, and five were eventually selected. Before the assessment process of the proposals was undertaken, a decision on priority criteria was made. The document, Guidelines for Evaluating Proposals was produced by IICRD for evaluating the final YS proposals (Appendix B).

The Foundation and an advisory committee with expertise and leadership in the areas concerned with the YS themes selected the local conveners based on the following:
- strategy and opportunity for meaningful youth engagement;
- potential for impact,
- system readiness for change/ enabling environment,
- innovation/creativity,
- capacity of convening organization for meaningful youth engagement,
- engagement and commitment to the learning community, and
- diversity.

The guidelines were applied primarily to the assessment of written proposals augmented by site visits, and various in-person and telephone conversations between the applicant agencies and the Project Manager at the national convener organization. Though the Guidelines were helpful throughout the process, some important structural information was lacking in the proposals,
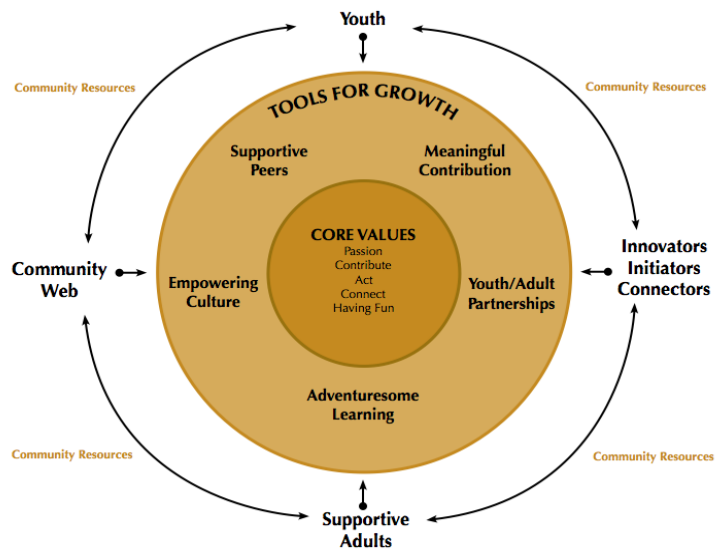
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and the manner in which information was gathered and assessed was flawed. What was missing was a more exacting way in which to uncover the competencies and culture of the applicant agencies and the project proposals being submitted.

70. The assessment. Eventually, the Foundation and the national convener's advisory committee selected a short-list of seven potential convening organizations from the proposals. However, the proposals and candidate agencies fell short of the Foundation's expectations. While all of the potential candidates had positive profiles in their communities and track records of working with youth, only a couple had relevant experience of working with marginalized youth. Secondly, most of their attempts to build local coalitions focused on a narrow band of youth-serving social agencies; without a strong presence from local government and businesses.

In response to the original call for proposals by the Foundation, candidate communities identified general themes that stretched across multiple disciplines of study, governance models and agencies. Various interim steering committees and multiple forums were proposed in the hope of finding some shared issue(s) or direction(s) around which they could rally with enthusiasm. There was no coherent process or plan to identify a common ground that people were ready to action, thereby growing the numbers and knowledge of those engaged in the systems change effort.

Based on the content of the proposals, the Foundation seriously considered pausing and reopening the selection process. After reviewing their options, they decided instead to work with the five best candidates, recognizing that significant training and support might be necessary on multiple fronts. For example, in three communities, they encouraged the successful applicants to work in collaboration with youth-led organizations with more street credibility or specialized expertise (e.g., art and social inclusion, support to street-involved youth, etc.) (Cawley, 2010).

Appendix B: Heartwood Community Youth Development Framework

Youth

Community Resources   Community Resources

TOOLS FOR GROWTH

Supportive   Meaningful
Peers   Contribution

CORE VALUES
Passion
Contribute
Community •   Act   Innovators
Web   Connect   Initiators
Empowering   Having Fun   Youth/Adult   Connectors
Culture   Partnerships

Adventuresome
Learning

Community Resources   Community Resources

Supportive
Adults

HW's Community Youth Development Framework. The centre circle (Core Values) are intrinsic motivators for youth engagement. The Tools for Growth are design principles that guide front-line facilitators to foster conditions that engender a culture of engagement. The outside circle is a portrayal of community resources (supportive adults, youth, and innovators, initiators and connectors) that help to catalyze community youth development, and a strategy (Community Web) to sustain it (author's description).

Appendix C. The Youthscape Guiding Principles

Accountability

Systems Change

Learning Community

Building Resilient Communities

Diversity

Strengths Based

Youth Leadership