



JOHN W. GARDNER CENTER
for Youth and Their Communities

Implications of the National Research Council's Study:

Community Programs to Promote Youth Development

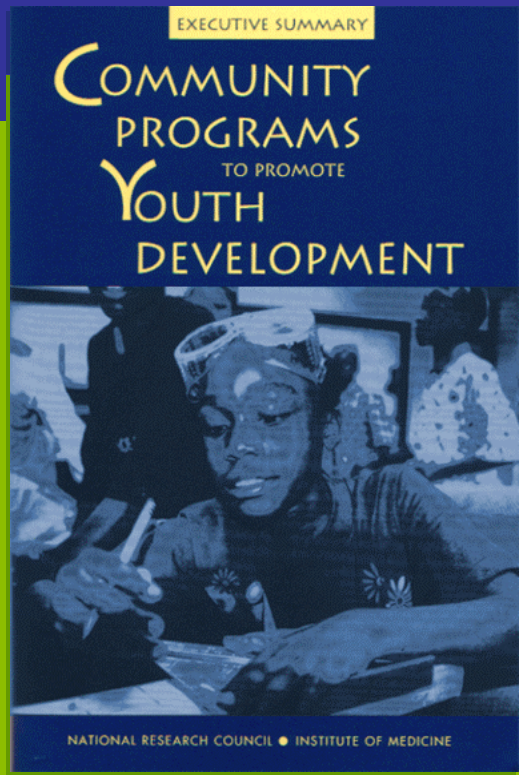
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Community Network for Youth Development
John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities



COMMUNITY NETWORK FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth



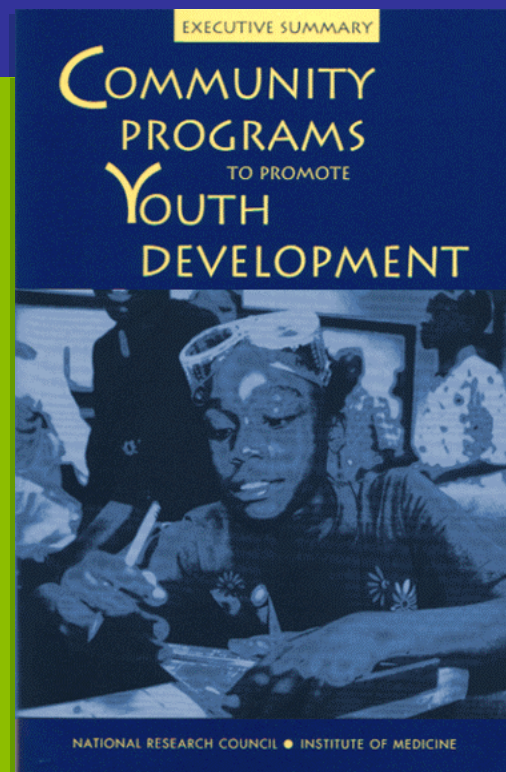
Board on Children, Youth, and Families
Institute of Medicine
National Research Council

Presentation Overview

- Background
- Report Findings
 - Assets
 - Developmental Settings
- Report Implications
 - Infrastructure
 - Where We Stand
 - Policy and Practice
 - Evaluation
 - Research
- How the Report Can Be Used
- Resources

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine

- ▶ Established the Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth
- ▶ Released its report:
Community Programs to Promote Youth Development



NRC Report: What is the ancestry?

- ▶ Grant Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship: *The Forgotten Half*. (1988)
- ▶ Carnegie Corporation Task Force on the Education of Young Adolescents: *Turning Points*. (1989)
- ▶ Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development: *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Non-School Hours*. (1992)

Why a focus on community?

Society loses out when youth fall through the cracks in institutions that could prepare them for a productive future. Community counts - for better or worse - in response to these institutional gaps and unmet needs for support, care and opportunities for healthy development.

- Milbrey McLaughlin, Stanford University, *Community Counts*

Social forces have changed family and community life

Informal community support for young people has weakened

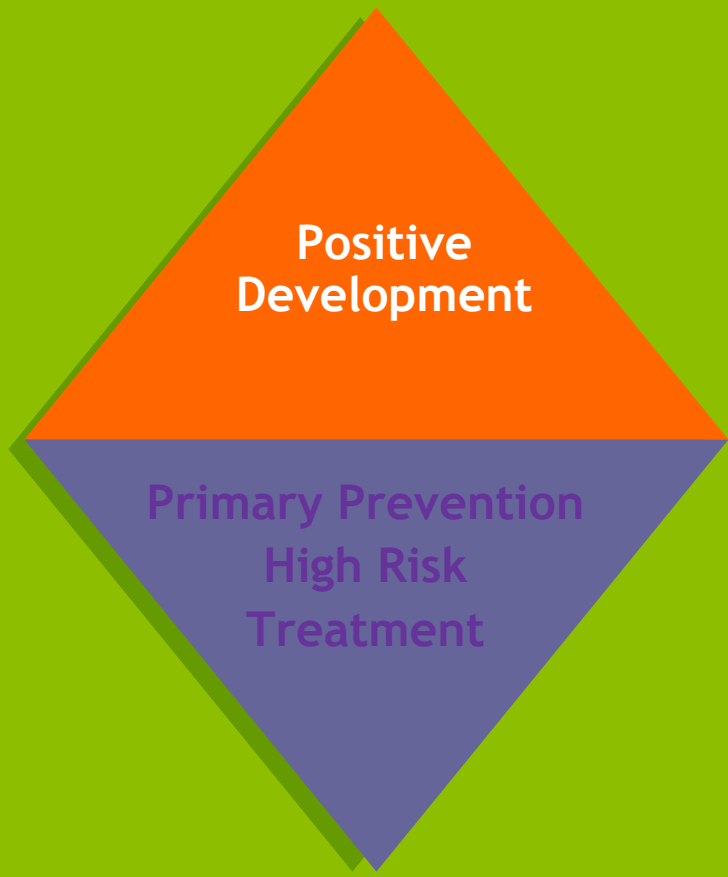
- ▶ High rates of family mobility
- ▶ Greater anonymity in neighborhoods
- ▶ Extensive media exposure to themes of violence and heavy use of drugs & alcohol
- ▶ Deterioration and disorganization of neighborhoods and schools

What is Youth Development?

Youth Development is the acquisition of attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills that will carry youth forward into successful adulthood.

- National Research Council

Youth Development: A Paradigm Shift



Addressing youth problems is critical...

But, problem free is not fully prepared

Findings about Adolescent Well-Being

- ▶ All youth need a variety of experiences to develop to their full potential.
- ▶ Some youth are doing very well.
- ▶ Some youth are taking dangerous risks and doing poorly.
- ▶ Some youth have unmet needs and are particularly at risk of participating in problem behaviors.

The NRC Framework: Assets that Facilitate Positive Youth Development

Physical Development

Intellectual Development

Psychological and Emotional Development

Social Development

The NRC Framework: Assets that Facilitate Positive Youth Development

Physical Development

- ▶ Good health habits
- ▶ Good health risk management skills

Intellectual Development

Psychological & Emotional Development

Social Development

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Intellectual Development

- ▶ Knowledge of essential life skills
- ▶ Knowledge of essential vocational skills
- ▶ School success
- ▶ Good decision-making skills
- ▶ And more

Psychological & Emotional Development

Social Development

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Psychological & Emotional Development

- ▶ Good mental health
- ▶ Good coping skills
- ▶ Good conflict resolution skills
- ▶ Strong moral character
- ▶ And more

Social Development

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Social Development

- ▶ Connectedness
- ▶ Sense of social place / integration
- ▶ Attachment to prosocial institutions
- ▶ Ability to navigate in multiple cultural contexts
- ▶ Commitment to civic engagement

Key Take-Aways

- ▶ Healthy development requires building a combination of assets across asset domains
- ▶ Having more assets is better than having few

Features of Positive Developmental Settings

- ▶ Physical and psychological safety
- ▶ Appropriate structure
- ▶ Supportive relationships
- ▶ Opportunities to belong
- ▶ Positive social norms
- ▶ Support for efficacy and mattering
- ▶ Opportunities for skill building
- ▶ Integration of family, school, and community efforts

Physical and Psychological Safety

Supportive Practices

- ▶ Increase safe peer interactions
- ▶ Decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions
- ▶ Regular check-ins with youth

Opposite Poles

- ▶ Physical and health dangers
- ▶ Feelings of fear and insecurity
- ▶ Sexual and physical harassment and verbal abuse

Opportunities to Belong

Supportive Practices

- ▶ Opportunities for social inclusion for all groups
- ▶ Active outreach to increase diversity of participants
- ▶ Encouragement of strong positive social identity formation
- ▶ Support for cultural and multi-cultural competencies

Opposite Poles

- ▶ Exclusionary practices by staff
- ▶ Ignoring exclusionary behavior among the participants
- ▶ Tolerance of bullying or other discriminatory behavior

Opportunities for Mattering

Supportive Practices

- ▶ Youth-based empowerment practices
- ▶ Opportunities to provide meaningful services to one's community
- ▶ Opportunities to move into positions of leadership and responsibility

Opposite Poles

- ▶ Excessive adult control
- ▶ Limited opportunities to provide valued contributions
- ▶ Limited opportunities for leadership roles in organization

Key Take-Aways

- ▶ Young people are influenced by a range of experiences that occur in a range of settings
- ▶ Those settings that have a positive impact share several important characteristics
- ▶ Youth thrive when messages and supports from school, family and community are coherent and mutually reinforcing

Where We Stand Now

- ▶ We know a lot about what works
- ▶ We know much less about how to create and sustain programs high in experiences that work
- ▶ Current funding and policy climates makes it very difficult for staff to create and sustain supports and opportunities for positive youth development

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

- ▶ Ensure programs are well designed and based on a developmental framework
- ▶ Provide an ample array of program opportunities for diverse youth
- ▶ Create locally appropriate mechanisms for monitoring the availability, and quality of programs
- ▶ Provide resources to support community-level programming

Recommendations for Evaluation

- ▶ Should be appropriately calibrated to the attributes of the program, the available resources, and the goals of the evaluation
- ▶ Funding should ensure programs are well designed initially and then evaluated in the most appropriate way

Recommendations for Research

- ▶ Fund comprehensive longitudinal and experimental research on the personal and social assets that shape youth development
- ▶ Promote more rigorous research to identify key elements of programs promoting youth well-being and development, with particular attention to the needs of an increasingly diverse youth population

Recommendations for Data Collection and Social Indicator Data

- ▶ Promote the development of social indicator data that builds understanding of how programs are implemented and improves the ability to monitor programs
- ▶ Fund youth development surveys in more states and communities, and the development of more robust survey measures
- ▶ Fund opportunities for individual programs and communities to improve their capacity to collect and use social indicator data

How Practitioners Can Use the Report

- ▶ Use the body of research identified in the report to justify your work with local stakeholders and funders
- ▶ Use the features of positive developmental settings as a basis for training staff, designing programs, and developing program standards and assessment tools
- ▶ Share the executive summary and main charts with principals and teachers they work with

- Forum for Youth Investment, *Off the Shelf and Into the Field*

Assessing Program Quality

Youth opportunities for...

- ▶ membership and mattering;
- ▶ reflection and expression;
- ▶ exploration and skill building;
- ▶ planning and decision-making; and
- ▶ work and service

Staff practices and supports that...

- ▶ create fair supportive environments;
- ▶ provide individual supports;
- ▶ promote learning and skill building;
- ▶ promote real-life skill-using; and
- ▶ involve families and communities

Administrative and management policies that ensure...

- ▶ inviting environments;
- ▶ safe, healthy environments;
- ▶ well-trained, high-performing staff and volunteers; and
- ▶ high-quality programming

How Funders and Policymakers Can Use the Report

- ▶ Use the report to bring renewed voice to local coalitions and task forces working on education, after-school programs or community-based prevention
- ▶ Use the report's new frames to undergird funding guidelines
- ▶ Invest in the development of the infrastructure to create a coherent and effective workforce

- Forum for Youth Investment, *Off the Shelf and Into the Field*

Invest in Infrastructure

- ▶ “Knowledge resources” are needed. These include training and support for carrying out high quality programs
- ▶ More systematic evaluation is essential. Strategies for monitoring the availability, quality, and consequences of programs are needed.

How Researchers Can Use the Report

- ▶ Use the new frames in planning your next evaluation
- ▶ Use the report's recommendations about social indicators and research to support the development and use of community indicators
- ▶ Use the report to start a conversation about what methodologies and approaches are necessary to capture the complexity of community-based programs

- Forum for Youth Investment, *Off the Shelf and Into the Field*

How Advocates Can Use the Report

- ▶ Use the report to articulate the relevance of the youth development framework to young people in all settings. Especially important is using developmental approaches to improving academic achievement and creating effective learning environments in schools
- ▶ Use the report's findings and recommendations as framing tools for annual conferences or newsletters
- ▶ Write translation guides linking, for example, Search Institute's 40 assets with the America's Promise 5 resources

- Forum for Youth Investment, *Off the Shelf and Into the Field*

Resources

- ▶ Community Network for Youth Development
www.cnyd.org
- ▶ John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities
gardnercenter.stanford.edu
- ▶ National Research Council Publications
books.nap.edu/catalog/10022.html
- ▶ Forum for Youth Investment
www.forumforyouthinvestment.org



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