

Youth and Community

Engaging Young People in Philanthropy and Service



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Written by Josephine Ho

 **W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION**

Acknowledgements

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This research documents the experiences, thoughts, and opinions of leaders in the youth engagement field. It would not have been possible without the support of the participants. Their resourcefulness, desire to share their personal experiences, and eagerness to give expertise on issues involving youth is greatly appreciated. Their commitment to enrich the lives of future leaders is evident in the leadership and support they provide to the communities.

Josephine Ho
Philanthropy and Volunteerism
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

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Executive Summary

The Philanthropy and Volunteerism program area of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has made more than \$100 million in grants to youth-focused, nonprofit organizations since 1988. Grants were intentionally given to these organizations to help fund the promotion and development of youth engagement in social, civic, and community building. In its commitment to youth, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation continues to seek opportunities in which it can assist in supporting this mission of youth engagement.



This paper reports the results of a three-month national scan of the ways nonprofit organizations are engaging youth so that these young people may become activists and responsible leaders through various philanthropic civic activities. The study presents the findings of strategies and impacts found within these youth engagement programs.

Recognizing that there are variations in the ways individuals and groups define youth engagement, this study focuses on youth engagement as defined here: programs specifically targeting youth in building leadership skills and community connectedness, serving as advisors for the needs of their communities, and linking youth in promoting unity and service.

Findings from this report are based on face-to-face interviews, telephone conversations, and electronic mail exchange with 28 respondents, five of whom were W.K. Kellogg Foundation program directors, and the rest of whom were external representatives of the youth engagement and nonprofit communities.

The study collected current and desired practices for youth engagement programs. Current practices identified by respondents involved community collaborations, development of youth leadership, engagement of diverse communities, collaborations with schools, and adult-youth partnerships. Suggested approaches for future youth engagement work included increasing youth opportunities, developing a youth philanthropy curriculum, promotion of effective practices, increasing support in diverse communities, and increasing support of youth philanthropy work through funding and collaborations. The review of study participants' responses led to three recommendations to strengthen the work in youth engagement: increase diversity focus of youth philanthropy, promote and disseminate learnings, and collaborate with schools.

This study was conducted to provide the W.K. Kellogg Foundation with an overview of the ways programs are currently engaging youth. The groundwork of this research serves only as a starting point for future research and learning connected to youth engagement. This study is neither meant to be exhaustive, nor was it derived from a sample representing all nonprofit organizations assisting, leading, and engaging youth to create positive change.

A Brief History of Youth Engagement

Since it was established in 1930, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has been guided by founder Will Keith Kellogg's wish: "Use the money as you please so long as it promotes the health, happiness, and well-being of children."¹ In keeping with Mr. Kellogg's guidance, the Philanthropy and Volunteerism program area has made youth one of its primary focus populations.

Three recent initiatives involving youth are Michigan Community Foundations' Youth Project, Building Bridges, and Learning In Deed.

The **Michigan Community Foundations' Youth Project (MCFYP)** aimed to enable every Michigan resident to have access to a community foundation and, for those ages 12 to 21, establish involvement in charity.² To do this, the program has developed the capacity of community foundations, built an endowment fund within each community foundation to meet the needs of local youth, and established opportunities for youth to learn and exercise their philanthropic knowledge.³ In 1998, MCFYP helped changed state legislation to lower the required age of voting members on nonprofit boards from 18 to 16.⁴ A total of 85 Youth Advisory Councils (YACs) have been established by Michigan's community foundations and nearly 8,000 young people have participated in the program.⁵

Prompted by a lack of educational training and research in the development of nonprofit leaders, **Building Bridges**, a \$12.5 million initiative, involved grants to 19 different organizations in the United States and eight in Latin America specifically to bridge the gap between nonprofit leaders and academia.⁶ To build collaborative efforts in support of nonprofit practitioners and graduate student scholarships, grants were made to organizations such as the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action and the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council.⁷ The introduction of Building Bridges has stimulated the work of developing and empowering nonprofit leaders through training, higher education scholarships, and continued research.

In 1997, **Learning In Deed**, a national initiative encouraging youth in K-12 educational institutions to engage in community service as a part of their academic programs, was launched.⁸ The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is a strong supporter of the practice of service-learning, as the program encourages "academic achievement, personal development, workforce preparation, and civic participation."⁹ Through collaboration with the National Service-Learning Partnership, the promotion of service-learning has been expressed through four purpose statements: 1) reclaim the purpose of education, 2) increase policy, program, and financial support for service-learning in K-12 education, 3) develop a comprehensive system of professional development regarding service-learning, and 4) provide leadership roles for youth in all aspects of service-learning.¹⁰ Learning In Deed's objective and success has been affirmed through practice and evaluation. This program has gained the attention of teachers, community leaders, parents, and students — with over 2,500 service-learning leaders in 49 states — and has also received national recognition by the White House and the Corporation for National and Community Service.¹¹

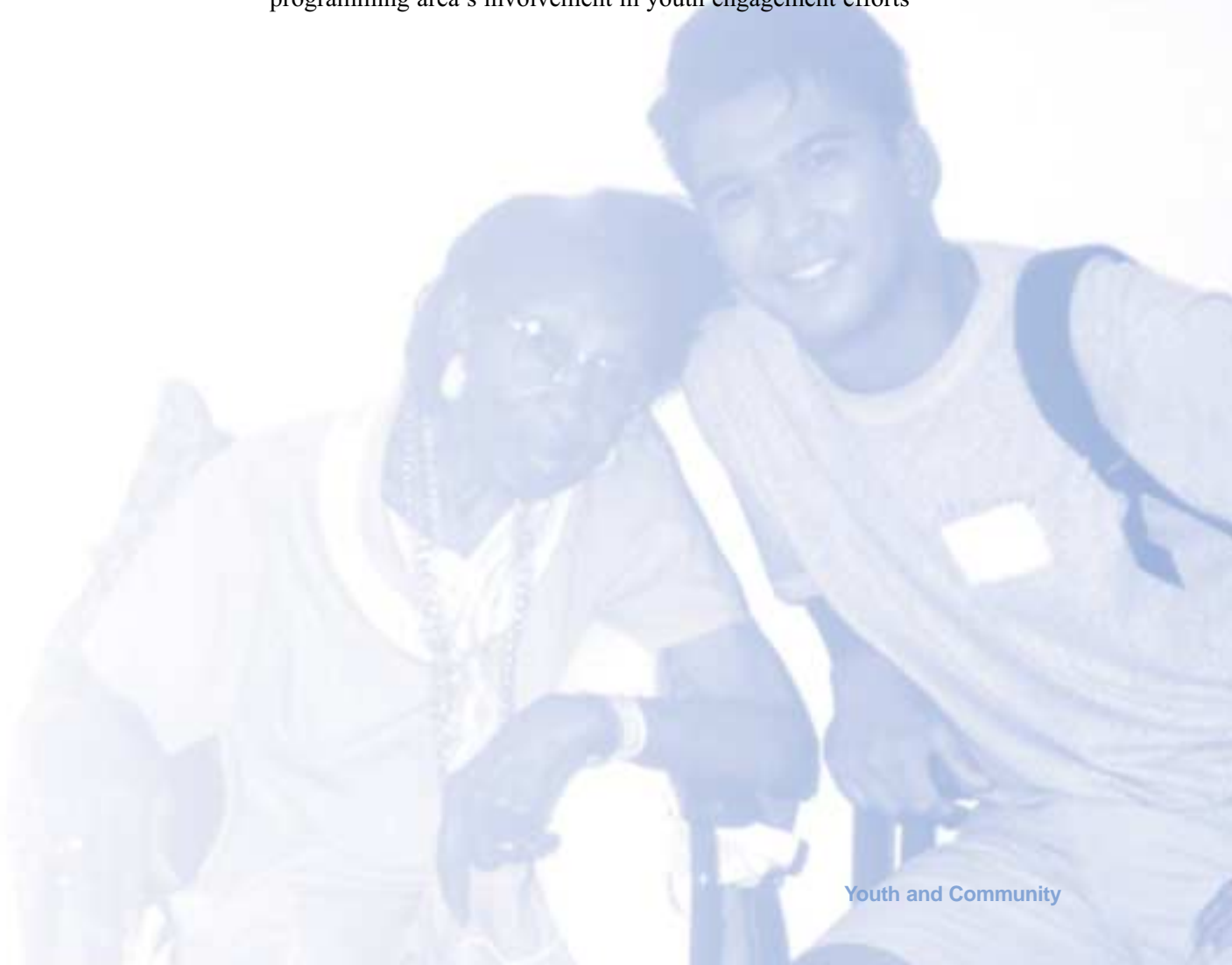


Purpose

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has helped to build and expand solid ground for youth as philanthropists, leaders, and participants in communities nationwide. Recognizing past accomplishments, the Kellogg Foundation desires to move forward in identifying new and innovative ways to support and encourage the development of youth.

Initiated by the Philanthropy and Volunteerism program area of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, this report summarizes results from a nationwide scan of nonprofit organizations engaging youth in philanthropy. It was conducted to accomplish the following goals:

1. Identify where and how youth engagement work is being done successfully
2. Identify how and why individual programs may have failed
3. Understand the current role of foundations and other organizations leading and supporting youth engagement initiatives
4. Identify new opportunities for the Philanthropy and Volunteerism programming area's involvement in youth engagement efforts



Method

Surveys of experts and leaders within the youth engagement field were conducted to learn and understand their issues, needs, and best practices.

Following is an outline of the field research process:

1. Interview questions for internal W.K. Kellogg Foundation and external experts were drafted
2. Interviews with the Foundation's program directors were conducted
3. Interviews with external advisors were conducted
4. Data collected from respondents were reviewed
5. Data were interpreted
6. Recommendations were developed

The research began by interviewing five of the Foundation's program directors from four programming areas: Health, Youth and Education, Food Systems and Rural Development, and Philanthropy and Volunteerism. One-hour discussions were held to gather participants' thoughts on youth engagement and referrals to nonprofit leaders (Appendix D).

All external contacts were initiated with an electronic mail note or phone conversation detailing the purpose of the research and extending an invitation to share knowledge and perspectives for the study (Appendix C). After the third attempt, if a connection was not made, contacts were not pursued as interview subjects. Those responding did so by answering a list of questions via electronic mail or telephone conference (Appendix E).

The sample of participants was developed with the help of five W.K. Kellogg Foundation program directors. These resources identified 38 contact persons. Of those identified, 23 responded, for a total respondent population, including initial five W.K. Kellogg Foundation respondents, of 28 (Appendix A). W.K. Kellogg Foundation respondents included three females and two males. External respondents included nine males and 14 females (Appendix B). Findings from this report are based on face-to-face interviews, telephone conversations, and electronic mail exchange. Interviews ranged between thirty and ninety minutes. Notes were hand recorded.

Findings

Current Practices

Respondents indicated that specific practices differ from region to region because leaders in this field conduct their programs in response to the needs of the distinct cultures of their communities. Overall, their responses show that the practice of engaging youth in philanthropic activities has proven to be successful in building leadership and team skills, student activism, and academic achievement. They shared their opinions related to cross-cutting topics in youth engagement.



I. *Community Collaborations*

Respondents reported that bringing youth from various communities together created positive working relations and an awareness of the benefits of working together. Simply stated by a director at a youth engagement program, “Engaging youth in their communities and working as a network has worked.”

While community collaborations have provided benefits to communities at large, respondents indicated that it has helped youth particularly in other aspects as well. “What has worked,” according to an executive director at a youth organization, “is the ability for youth to help youth organizations link more with communities, professional development, and opportunities.” According to respondents, these additional community-level linkages have led to youth empowerment, higher self-esteem, and improved interaction between fellow youth and their communities.

One respondent, an executive director at a youth organization in the Midwest, indicated that visibility of youth in community collaborations is important: “The more they [youth] are seen and heard, the more people recognize their work.”

“[We] would like to see more connections made between youth programs nationwide.”

—*Nonprofit organization project manager*

II. *Development of Youth Leadership*

Respondents reported that the fresh ideas, community experience, and dedication of youth make them positive change agents and the next generation of leaders for the community. One youth program executive director said, “Young leaders are conscious about culture, communities, and economics.” A nonprofit organization’s project manager echoed that thought, adding, “We believe that the sustainability and relevance of our work in the South’s persistently poor rural places is dependent upon the voices, energy, and actions of youth.” However, some respondents felt that societal views of young people as irresponsible create a barrier to youth leadership work.

Respondents also reported that youth engagement created leadership opportunities for participants themselves. “Youth who participated in our leadership programs are returning to be youth leaders,” said one executive director of an inner-city youth organization.

One project director of a nonprofit organization said that though the organization did not have a youth program until recently, its new program has quickly attracted the interest of youth, and the staff immediately saw positive changes in these young people. The participant described changes as “empowering” and stated that the program enabled “youth to let other youth know of their rights and other possibilities in life.” The director went on to describe how engaging in activities like speaking in public, and working on and managing projects helps youth build self-esteem. The respondent indicated that interaction among the program’s participants has improved as youth have learned the use of appropriate communication channels. Many participants shared stories of achievement similar to the one above and cited youth leadership as an important aspect of establishing a youth engagement program.

“There are great changes in youth. They are making a difference in their own lives.”

—Community foundation executive director

III. Engagement of Diverse Communities

Respondents indicated that youths’ work with communities other than their own builds teamwork and assists in problem solving, but most importantly, encourages the participants to learn, understand, and accept one another’s cultures. Each community has a unique culture, in part determined by race, region, economics, etc. In order for a youth program to be fully engaging, it must, study participants indicated, work cross-culturally. An executive director of a community foundation stated that learning more about diversity and communities played an important and impactful role in his/her organization’s programming.

One nonprofit community organization’s executive director reported that bringing youth from differing communities together creates something beyond an opportunity to learn about another culture: “The most positive impact is when a person or groups of people [of differing racial backgrounds] believe that something positive can happen and start to make it happen in our communities... we strongly believe that we need to promote hope, bring people together, and work on challenging and important issues.”

The focus on diversity, said study participants, plays an important role in developing youths’ ability to find commonality with fellow youth from other communities. Respondents said that once common ground was established, friendships are often formed between groups and individuals. Respondents, however, indicated that though many such connections have been made, a great need for connections between communities remains. As stated by the executive director of a youth organization, “There are bigger opportunities in communities that have not been targeted.”

“...getting all youth involved and not just those who have been reached... we need to involve [youth] who are untouched.”

—Community foundation executive director

IV. Collaboration with Schools

Numerous respondents found schools to be the ideal institution to find participants for youth engagement programs and to serve as partners in this work. They indicated that such a collaboration takes time and effort, however, once a partnership between schools and youth engagement organizations is formed, a very positive impact can be made. One nonprofit's executive director described the organization's successful partnership as "a program that we helped to establish between sister schools with local leadership programs to promote diversity and community."



Respondents indicated that partnerships with schools provide youth ways to integrate their learnings. For example, according to an executive director of a nonprofit organization, it is valuable "to engage youth through training [so that] they can then replicate the models they learned into the schools." A program director at a private foundation suggested a specific opportunity, saying, "We need to take advantage of the many opportunities in order to make spaces for youth leadership, for example, student government." The director indicated that civic leadership learned from this type of program can lead to community action such as "tak[ing] an active role in improving the environment."

Despite wide interest among youth engagement professionals in partnering with schools, respondents felt that schools, for the most part, have not yet become accessible partners. One youth engagement program director said schools "make it so hard for kids to get out of school to work in the community. Schools need to work with community and not have community work around them. It would really make a difference if the school and community can work together."

*"We need to get schools to become more community service friendly."
—Youth organization executive director*

V. Adult-Youth Partnerships

When asked, most respondents quickly identified adult-youth working relationships as ineffective. Even those who acknowledged the benefits of adult involvement in youth engagement programs indicated several reasons that this partnership has a high failure rate.

One critique of adult-youth collaborations cited by several respondents was that, oftentimes, adult organizations establish a youth advisory committee simply for the positive recognition associated with doing so and not for the contribution and special opportunity youth involvement may present. "It is difficult to get adults to take [youth engagement] seriously," said one youth organization's executive director, "It is a real struggle. Adult companies and government agencies view [youth] as a kiddie project. [Youth] want to be more than an advisory committee for government officials." Another executive director said, "It is good that youth have an opportunity to sit on boards. But not when the adults treat them as pets. [Many times], youth are only filling seats and not actually allowed to advise." Supporting these sentiments, another nonprofit's project manager said, "Young people have been treated more as beneficiaries than as contributors or decision makers."

“Don’t make decisions about us without us.”

—Private foundation program director speaking on behalf of youth

One respondent, a director of a youth program, stated very simply, “the youth-adult engagement just hasn’t had a good impact.” The director continued by sharing the following story illustrating how the actions of the adult leaders can increase the gap between youth and adults.

A panel of adult leaders was invited by the director to come in and listen to the youth present their ideas on how to decrease the existing racial tension within the community. The adult leaders arrived and listened to the youth’s opening remarks and recommendations. However, to the youth and programming manager’s surprise, the adult leaders responded very negatively. According to the director, it was obvious that “the adults came into the meeting already with their minds made up not believing in the youth. The kids were upset that they were not being listened to.” The director also added, “But not to my surprise, they [youth] all kept their professionalism, viewed this as a situation that is likely to occur again, and as an opportunity to prove to the panel their capabilities.”

Respondents indicated that, for many adults, true collaboration with youth is unrealistic. Many adult leaders, they said, may not fully trust the abilities of their young co-participants. When adults fail to work “with” youth, respondents said, any pre-existing feelings of unworthiness and abandonment among the young people involved are intensified.

Most respondents pointed out that the building of any relationship is a two-way effort. In other words, adults must be as willing to support and guide as the students must be willing to accept challenges. One executive director said, “We need meaningful relationships between youth and adults. It is not impactful because the relationship is not strong.” One youth program director reported that meaningful relationships can be difficult to come by. His/her organization tried matching youth with board members as mentors, but “it just didn’t work. The board members were too busy and never took the time. They didn’t mind the title of mentor, just the responsibility.”

Though numerous respondents indicated that adult-youth partnerships were ineffective, many were hopeful, viewing this type of relationship as one of great potential. Those that had experienced working partnerships between youth and adults offered that this relationship works best when both parties believe in the engagement and its learning possibilities.

Participants said that adult-youth partnerships are valuable because they bring two sets of talents to the table. Adults, they said, have additional years of experience and are able to bring a great amount of education, resources, and expertise that is beneficial to youths’ learning process. Youth, they said, bring a fresh approach, energy, and curiosity, which gives adults the opportunity to approach work with a different perspective.



By bringing these talents together, respondents said, youth and adults create an evolving working relationship. Therefore, establishing such a partnership, as reported by an executive director of a youth program, is “the best from two worlds.”

“Nothing is impossible in [youth] eyes.”

—Youth organization executive director

Some respondents offered recommendations for the attitudes adults must have to truly engage youth. One community foundation executive director said that having youth work with adults means “breaking barriers between adults and youth... it becomes a reversal of power.” According to some respondents, this takes some extra work on the part of adults. “They’re not stupid,” said one youth organization’s executive director, speaking of youth. “They need something from us if they are going to ‘give’ to the community. And that something has to be pretty concrete like... an adult who is obviously devoted to them and not just the project. It doesn’t work to just tell them, ‘Well, you’re learning leadership skills.’” Along the same lines, the program director of a private foundation said, we “must prepare new leadership, but need existing leadership to coach youth through the whole process. Youth must see themselves as learners.”



A nonprofit’s project manager said, “We would like to see a more supportive environment for young people within nonprofit organizations, in which there were cooperative intergenerational working models.”

“This is not really a youth movement, rather a youth — and adult — process. You are not satisfied when leaving things up to only youth or only adults, but when the two come together, you are satisfied... the best from two worlds.”

—Youth program executive director

Desired Practices

A study participant from a multicultural, human development and community building organization summed up the needs expressed by many other respondents in saying, “...the following issues are important to develop in the youth movement: balance of social justice and youth development, continued efforts at excellence and value of the work we do, increased networking across sectors and groups of people, [and] long-term sustainability of our work.”

“...if funders want a youth-led project, they should select experienced youth agencies to be the project leaders. Funders should not select adult-focused organizations and then expect them to shift gears.”

—Youth organization executive director

I. Increased Youth Opportunities

Through additional opportunities for youth, respondents said, the leaders of tomorrow will be better equipped with an extensive background in education and qualified

hands-on expertise. One study participant, who was once an organization's youth leader and who is now executive director of that organization, detailed the benefits of promoting youth leaders and opportunities.

“It isn't our purpose to create future community workers, but it does happen... what is needed is a stronger connection between programs like ours and related college programs like humanics or sociology. If these kinds of connections were promoted, perhaps we'd see more locally grown leaders with the related education — more people rooted in the community's culture yet with the broadening education to see other approaches as well.”

All respondents expressed a great interest in wanting to create more opportunities for youth. A youth program educator reported, “I would like to see more opportunities available for children to have real world learning experiences and make legitimate contributions to their communities where they see needs relevant to their own lives.”

Respondents also advocated for providing opportunities in a variety of discipline areas. “Youth will be in key positions, so it is critical to give them the opportunity to experience,” said the executive director of an inner-city youth organization in New York City. “[They also need to] get into areas where it is not traditional to have community building, such as business, medicine, and law...need [to have] solid leaders in these corporate America settings.” This director's statement resonated with other respondents with regard to the importance of youth participation in a variety of organizations.

A community foundation executive director described potential youth involvement in civics, saying, “I'd like to see young people involved as a matter of course in the civic life of our communities. They would be involved in community problem-solving and public resource allocation. Their opinions would be valued. They would have a place at the table in a majority of organizations and institutions. They would not be tokenized or marginalized... nor would they be romanticized.”

“[I would like to see more] hiring of young organizers in vocal, upfront leadership roles. The civil rights [movement was] led by youth, therefore, youth must be able to take the stand again in leadership because, as seen by the movement, they can do it.”

—*Nonprofit organization executive director*

Phrases including having “their opinions valued,” they “need real-world experience,” they must “be involved,” and they must work in “a supportive environment” were voiced by numerous respondents when explaining what the opportunities should include for youth.

One executive director of an organization engaging youth in philanthropy said that increasing opportunities for youth is not only the responsibility of employers but also of the adult leaders themselves within those organizations to “...move youth

development past training. Don't just give them one year of training and then set them loose on their own. We have a responsibility for them after the training, and we need to help them to continue to move."

II. Youth Philanthropy Curriculum Developed

Interviewees indicated a belief in the importance of gaining a partnership with schools within their community, though, as noted in the "Current Practices" section of this report, these collaborations are challenged. More specifically, many respondents reported a desire to implement a youth philanthropy-focused curriculum.

"[We need to develop] a curriculum devoted to community leadership and civic engagement."

—Youth engagement program director

Respondents stated that there are currently many educational institutions, at both high school and university levels, that support community service as a graduation requirement. They felt that nonprofit organizations benefit from gaining additional volunteers from an institution with such a requirement and that the linkage would also be a great way to introduce youth into philanthropy, especially if the engagement in philanthropy was made more profound and intentional.

"[There should be] an emphasis on requirements for youth service, especially for high school graduation," said one private foundation's program director. "[There should also be] an emphasis on requiring that youth be involved in planning community activities, [such as recreation, public services, and schooling] that will affect them." A nonprofit organization project manager said, "Civic participation; community involvement; and, finally, philanthropy should be emphasized, not just literal job training, literacy, and general education."

III. Effective Practices Promotion

Though respondents were aware of many success stories in youth-focused programming, many reported struggling to obtain literature about current programming and lessons learned, not encountering the type of information they needed at all, or having to acquire it from numerous sources. One inner-city youth organization's director said, "[We] need to understand best practices in youth and community development."

"[The more youth] are seen and heard, the more people are recognizing their work."

—Youth organization executive director

Respondents said that establishing a portal to house all youth engagement information that would assist youth organizations and their constituents in understanding the mission of youth philanthropy would be extremely beneficial in the promotion of their work. They reported that having an institution that focused on youth engagement might help their work gain valuable visibility.



Interviewees reported that the promotion of effective practices could build on the existing knowledge of youth engagement through research and evaluation. One nonprofit's executive director suggested, "Host a forum. Bring people together to talk about how to leverage kids to get them to where they are [capable of being]."

"Do it like Amway... spread the word. Train a core group of people... and then that group trains another."

—Youth program director

Other respondents reported a need for structure — a system for creating solid youth-focused programs. A private foundation representative said, "...we would like to see youth development become more impactful by becoming more strategic in program design." A youth organization's executive director said, "We need more scale in our programs. For example, Make A Difference Day... what happens after this one day [of advocating the public for change]? We need a more sustained message [for our work] and programs."

Referring to visibility, one nonprofit's project manager said, "The youth voice needs to be stronger and more heard in both mainstream society and in progressive organizations. People in the youth movement need to work to get more visibility for the movement; this will change how youth are viewed and treated in mainstream society and will affect organizational structures, making them more youth-friendly."

A community foundation executive director also suggested that effective practices can add visibility and value "...by building an understanding of what youth philanthropy is all about by gain[ing] media coverage... marketing... and show[ing] the importance and true impacts of this program."



IV. Increased Diversity Focus

Many respondents indicated several facets related to supporting diverse communities. All revealed an interest in pursuing the problems facing challenged communities, many of which, they implied, are demographically diverse.

"...the best youth philanthropy is directed at social change and is very intentional about recruiting and engaging the not-always-chosen youth."

—Community foundation executive director

One nonprofit organization project director said, "I would like to work with youth from other [differing] cultures and different communities on projects and to solve problems."

A youth program educator said, "Children need to find out that individuals can make a difference and that they can help create their own destinies rather than accepting a poverty/welfare mentality."

Several respondents highlighted specific opportunities for youth engagement related to diversity. One executive director from an inner-city youth organization said, “[There should be more] moral and ethical leadership training sessions... particularly for men.” A nonprofit’s project manager said, “We find that college students and young professionals are interested in learning more about volunteering opportunities in communities of color...” Another nonprofit organization project manager said, “There needs to be advocacy work done for youth, and especially to help progressive people make the connection between oppression of youth and oppression of other marginalized groups.”

Respondents also identified certain educational or capacity development needs that must be met to achieve quality interaction between youth-focused organizations of differing communities. Interviewees identified a need for educating, as well as helping community members understand and support youth-related issues before assisting in any type of restructuring within the community. They also noted the importance of soliciting the specialized assistance. For example, the executive director of one regional nonprofit specializing in providing education and training assistance reported the following related to cross-community collaborations: “...training in how to work with grassroots organizations and different cultures and communities... is needed because different cultures have their own customs and traditions that someone from the outside would not know about. Having such training would be helpful when moving youth from serving one community to another.”

V. Increased Support of Youth Philanthropy Work

All respondents said that increased funding would be very helpful to youth programs. For some, this was a matter of having difficulty obtaining existing youth funding. Others believed that the right amount of funding for youth programs was not available. As stated by a representative of a major foundation, “We would like to see an increase in state and federal policy and funding directed toward [the disconnected youth population] group.” The executive director of a youth program in a migrant community also stated that though funding does exist, his/her organization continues to lack enough “commitment from foundations and philanthropic agencies. Money quickly runs dry; therefore, we need a longer commitment... we need funds to create and to continue work in building leaders.”

One private foundation representative spoke about another form of support that should be increased to aid the success of youth-focused programming: “Collaborations and coordination between programs, foundations, and regional agencies... could amount to greater impact.”

Recommendations

Participants in this study shared their thoughts and lessons learned from their own experiences working with youth serving organizations. Each participant’s reflection included stories about concerns, challenges, education, and hope about his or her youth engagement programs. Though each program is designed to support the uniqueness of its community, a series of common needs were expressed for the purpose of strengthening these programs, field wide. Based largely on desired practices that surfaced most prominently and consistently among participant responses, the following recommendations have been made.

1. Promote and Disseminate Learnings

During the study, respondents expressed interest in reviewing the thoughts of other study participants, in terms of lessons learned, current practices, present and future condition of youth engagement work, etc. Most said that they currently rely on their individual investigative work to encounter information about youth engagement programs. This searching for information may amount to an inefficient use of their time — time that might be better spent engaging youth. Increasing the visibility of youth programs through dissemination of effective practices was highly valued by respondents for this reason.

One director who expressed this need suggested a national branding campaign or some other type of campaign that would support and promote youth philanthropy. That individual also suggested promotion of a working youth philanthropy model as well as a resource for training individuals interested in engaging youth in philanthropy. Along similar lines, respondents suggested establishing a national commission that would house information, generate visibility, organize conferences, conduct training and development exercises, build credibility, and add voice to the mission of youth engagement. Creating such a central “portal” for accessing learnings and effective practices enables those working with youth engagement programs to easily find and use tools that will advance the practice of youth engagement, bridging a significant knowledge gap.

2. Increase Diversity Focus of Youth Philanthropy

Respondents said that youth philanthropy programs are intended for more than providing youth with an opportunity to learn about grantmaking. These programs, they said, were established to engage youth in community building and to help them learn to work cooperatively. According to an executive director of a youth service organization in San Francisco, “youth programs need to be focused on what skills and ethics youth will have with them tomorrow, and not just keeping them alive today... Loyalty, mutually supportive groups working together toward a difficult community goal just can’t be beat, period.” Striving to achieve diversity goals in the process builds ethics and also creates an opportunity to intentionally engage youth from communities of color and communities underserved by charitable organizations.



Most respondents indicated that this sort of diversity focus is imperative in youth engagement programs. They said that there was a place for youth engagement programs in every community, but addressing diversity with those programs — that of the youth involved in the program, the communities being supported, the neighborhood housing the youth program, and the opportunities and collaborations with fellow nonprofit organizations — is nearly tantamount.

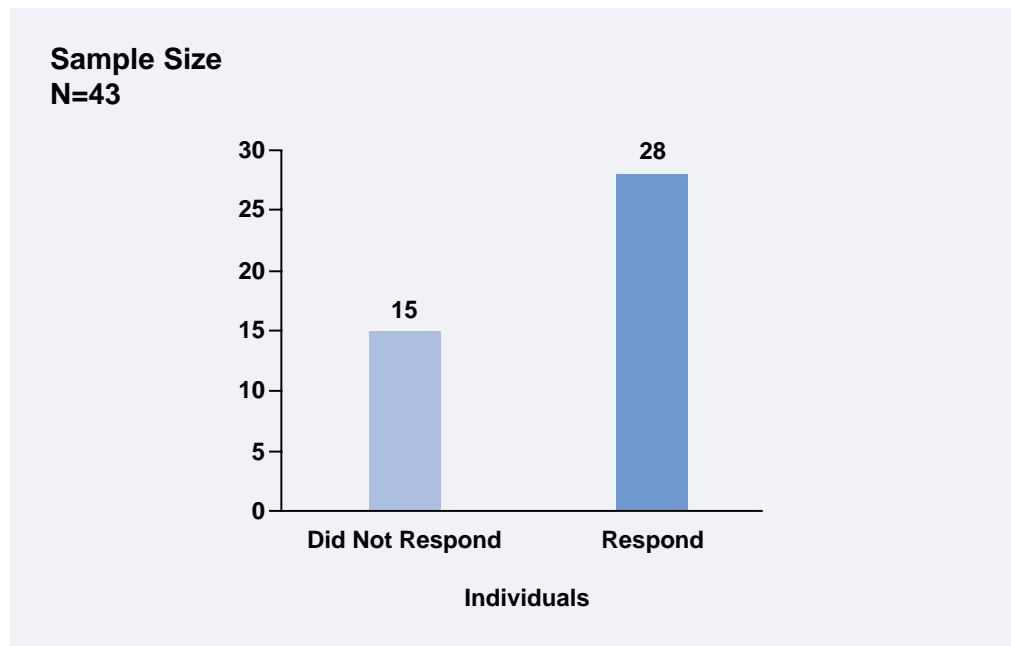
3. Collaborate With Schools

Participants indicated that establishing school-community partnerships would provide opportunities to extend philanthropic practices beyond solely “after-school programs,” creating benefits for youth, youth-focused community programs, and schools alike. Students would benefit from learning leadership and team-building skills, communities would benefit from augmented volunteerism, and schools would reap the improvements in student work associated with extracurricular activity. Respondents said that youth engagement programs, when combined with school activities, would likely enjoy increased visibility, and thereby, increased impact within the communities served. One participant reported finding that many of the high school graduates in that individual’s program have gone on to college, majoring in human development areas of study. “It isn’t our purpose to create future community workers,” that respondent said, “but it does happen... what is needed is a stronger connection between programs like ours...”

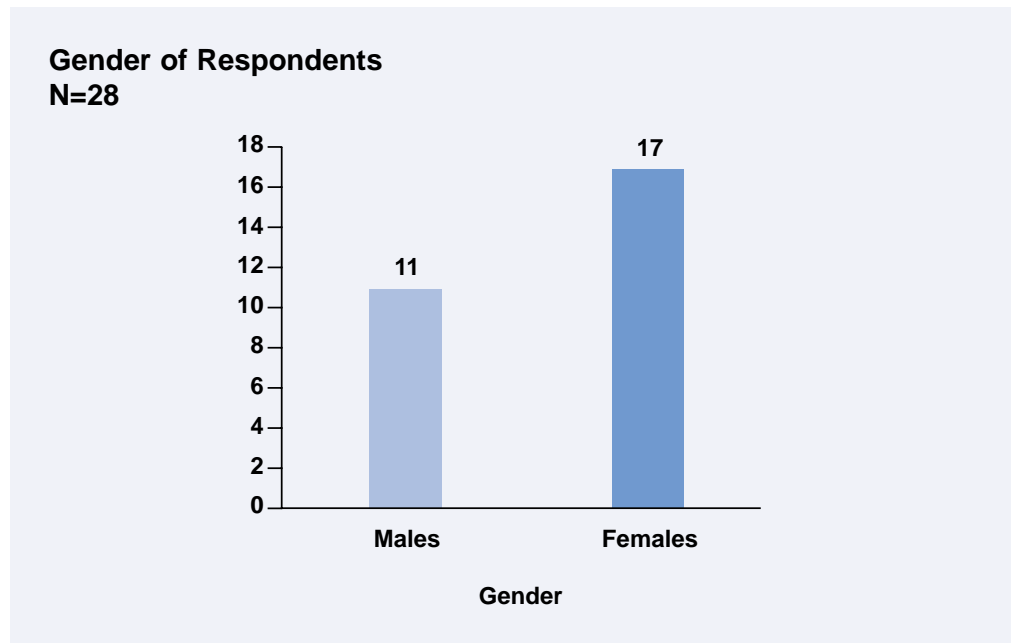
As encouragement, respondents already partnering with schools in some way reported making substantial strides — impacting an increasing number of youth, gaining additional support from educators, and increased community involvement for change.



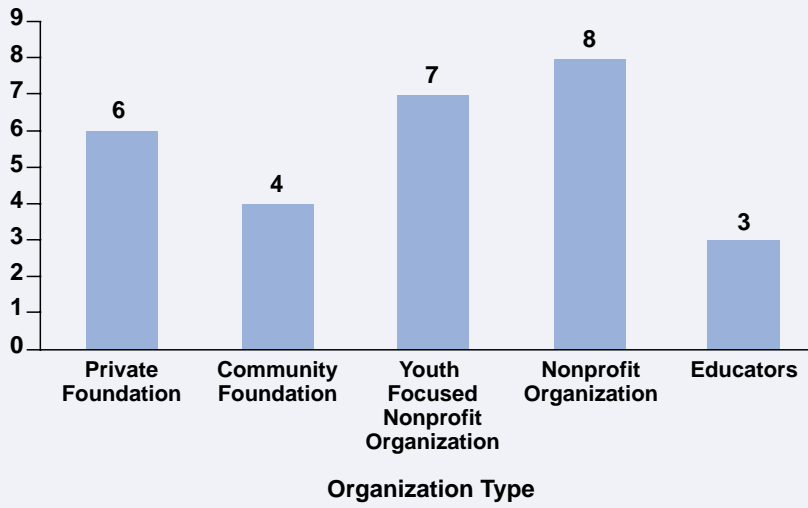
Appendix A: Participation



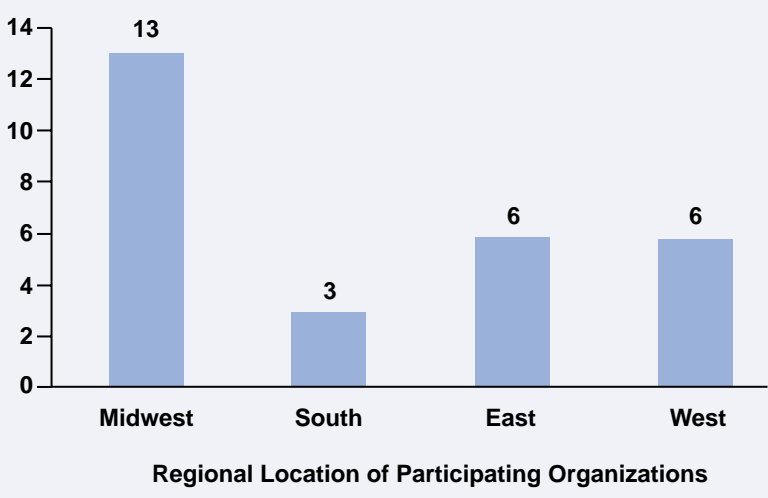
Appendix B: Demographics of Respondents



Types of Organizations



Regional Location



Appendix C: Sample of Initial Electronic Contact Letter

Dear (name),

I am Josephine Ho and I work with the Philanthropy and Volunteerism program area at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Your name was given to me from (name) as having knowledge in the youth philanthropy field.

I am currently conducting a research and national scan of youth engagement work in order to identify creative, new, and cutting edge innovations that are taking place with youth. This scan will help to inform us as we move forward to identify ways to do our work in youth engagement. With your help, I hope to gain new information that will help lead me to complete a thorough report. To do this, I ask for your time to either complete several quick questions through email or have a telephone conference at your convenience. Due to time sensitivity, I request to have our exchange no later than (date).

Please accept this invitation as your knowledge, experience in the field, and perspectives will be of great benefit in our research. If you have any questions or concern, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Sincerely,

Josephine Ho
Philanthropy and Volunteerism
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
One Michigan Avenue East
Battle Creek, MI 49017
Telephone: 269.968.1611
Facsimile: 269.968.0413
www.wkkf.org

Appendix D: List of Questions for W.K. Kellogg Foundation Staff

(Name) – Program Director, (Program Area)

What do you see on the horizon for youth engagement?

Who should I talk to in the youth engagement field? Persons in foundations (private & community), communities, organizations, and projects that may connect me with the leaders.

Do you know of innovative youth programs that have or are capable of accomplishing a large, sustainable impact based on positive community change?

Youth leaders (youth and adults) identified in the field:

Appendix E: List of Questions for External Nonprofit Leaders

Please explain to me about your targeted youth programs.

What has and what hasn't worked in your community?

What has had an impact and what hasn't?

What kinds of collaborations/networking in youth service programs are you involved in, both currently and in the future?

What more would you like to see done in the youth movement? In what areas?

In the future, how do you see youth development programs becoming more impactful?

Thank you for taking time out to assist in our research. Your contribution is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about our study, please contact Josephine Ho, Philanthropy and Volunteerism program area, at (269) 968-1611.

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**W.K.KELLOGG
FOUNDATION**

One Michigan
Avenue East
Battle Creek, MI
49017-4058
USA
269-968-1611
TDD on site
Facsimile: 269-968-0413
www.wkkf.org