

**A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO
UNDERSTANDING THE COMPONENTS OF
SUCCESSFUL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMS**

The Youth Development Study

CONCEPT MAPPING SUMMARY REPORT

Jennifer Southwick Brown

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Email: jsb75@cornell.edu

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A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING THE COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Currently, many programs claim to devote themselves to “positive youth development.” However, these programs vary widely and there is little consensus as to what youth development actually means. One reason for this is that policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and youth do not have many opportunities to engage in conversations about youth development (YD). The primary objective of this study is to bring these groups together in order to:

1. Explore the key characteristics of successful youth programs;
2. Explore which of the characteristics of successful programs are most important;
3. Explore which characteristics qualify as youth development;
4. Create a program review tool that includes key characteristics of successful youth development programs.

The current study asked members of each of the four groups (policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and youth) to brainstorm ideas in response to the focus prompt: “A specific characteristic or component of a successful youth/adolescent program is. . . .” A total of 1,075 statements were originally generated. A team of research assistants at Cornell University consolidated these responses into 100 statements by reducing redundancy, making them clearer and combining similar ideas. The reduced statement set was presented to the participants who were asked to: 1. Sort the statements in terms of similarity; 2. Rate the importance of each of the statements on a scale from 1 to 5 and; 3. Determine whether or not each statement is consistent with their understanding of youth development.

After the data collection was completed, the results of the sorting activity were entered into The Concept Mapping System¹ and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. At its core, concept mapping is a participatory approach that enables large groups of people from a variety of

¹ Concept System® Version 3

perspectives to reach consensus while minimizing the differentiation of power. Concept mapping ensures that all participants have an equal voice and that one person or group does not dominate the process or outcomes. This lends itself to the discovery of group consensus without masking important group differences. Multivariate methods were used to integrate the sort data of all participants into clusters of similar ideas. A total of ten clusters were generated. A group of representatives from each participant group (policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and youth) discussed the results in a facilitated interpretation session. The items in each cluster were reviewed and the group reached consensus on titles for each of the clusters.

The following report summarizes responses from practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and youth concerning youth development programs. Using their input, the project seeks to open the lines of communication between the groups and recognize common goals of youth development programming.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 163 people participated in at least some aspect of the project. The group was comprised of 72 practitioners (44.2%), 34 youth (20.9%), 31 researchers (19.0%), and 22 policy makers (13.5%)².

The youth were recruited from two youth serving organizations located in central New York. Policy makers were primarily recruited at the Youth Development Indicators Symposium held in September, 2004 in Albany, NY. Practitioners were recruited through the Healthy Communities Healthy Youth (HCHY) list serve and through Assets Coming Together (ACT) for Youth a program of the Family Life Development Center (FLDC) at Cornell University. Researchers were recruited via the Youth Research list serve as well as via a Psych Info article search by using the search term "youth development." All researchers for whom we could locate an email address were contacted. Additional participants (including policy makers, practitioners, and researchers) were recruited through the Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) list serve as well as through referrals by colleagues.

The mean age of youth (n = 20) was 15.45 (s.d. = 1.43); the mean age of practitioners (n = 38) was 42.42 (s.d. = 11.39); the mean age of researchers (n = 16) was 45.06 (s.d. = 10.71); the mean age of policy makers (n = 12) was 48.42 (s.d. = 7.40).

BRAINSTORMING

From October to November 2004, identified policy makers, practitioners, and researchers were contacted via email and asked to generate ideas to complete the following statement: "A specific characteristic or component of a successful youth/adolescent program is. . . ." Members of these groups individually sent their brainstorm ideas via email. Visits were made to the youth organizations in December 2004 to collect brainstorming ideas in response to the same prompt. Youth brainstorming was done as a group. Note that the focus prompt asks that participants consider characteristics of successful adolescent/youth programs in general. It does not specifically ask about *youth development* programs. This was done to ensure that the youth participants could understand and participate in the brainstorming and sorting phase of the project. The youth development concept emerges in the rating activity and is discussed in greater detail below.

² Four people (2.4%) did not associate with any of the 4 groups already mentioned and will herein be referred to as "other".

A total of 1,075 statements were generated. To make the second phase of the project manageable, the research assistants at Cornell met in January to edit the statement set, eliminating redundant statements and combining similar ideas. They were able to consolidate these responses into 100 statements. Representatives from each of the four participant groups were asked to review a random sample of the 1,075 statements and make sure that they were reflected in the final statement set (see Appendix 1).

RATING AND SORTING TASKS

In March 2005, the list of the final 100 statements was emailed to policy makers, practitioners, and researchers. The list enabled the participants to complete a series of sorting and rating tasks. A subset of participants from each participant group was asked to sort the statements for similarity (using sort cards) and give titles to each group of statements. Each participant completed the sorting task on their own. All of the participants were asked to rate these statements on a scale from 1 (relatively unimportant to a successful youth/adolescent program) to 5 (extremely important to a successful youth/adolescent program). They were also asked to indicate whether or not each statement was consistent with their concept of youth development (yes/no). In April 2005, the youth were asked to undertake the same procedure, with the exception of the youth development rating, at their respective organization locations.

CONCEPT MAPPING

The sort, importance, and youth development data was entered into The Concept Mapping System. The program is designed to help a group describe its ideas on any topic of interest and represent these ideas visually through a map. In the current study, the program created a series of maps grouping statements that the participants deemed similar to one another. Additional analyses were done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

INTERPRETATION SESSION

On May 17, 2005, local representatives from each of the four participant groups met for a facilitated interpretation session. They looked at the results of the data, viewed concept maps, reviewed the statements in each cluster and assigned cluster labels, and interpreted the meaning of the findings.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

RESPONSE RATE

Most participants completed the brainstorming activity (n=140) with only 23 people not participating in brainstorming. Of the total number of brainstormers, 66 were practitioners (40.5%), 22 were youth (13.5%), 27 were researchers (16.6%), 21 were policy makers (12.9%), and 4 were others (2.5%).

The total number of people completing sorts was 59 (36.2% of the total number of participants asked). Of the total number of sorters 22 were practitioners (37.3%), 18 were youth (30.5%), 10 were researchers (16.9%), and 9 were policy makers (15.3%).

The total number of people completing the importance ratings was 85 (52.1% of the total number of participants). Of the total number of importance raters, 36 were practitioners (42.4%), 20 were youth (23.5%), 17 were researchers (20%), 12 were policy makers (14.1%), and 4 were other (4.7%).

The total number of people completing the youth development ratings was 64 (39.3% of the total number of participants). Of the total number of youth development raters, 36 were practitioners (56.3%), 17 were researchers (26.6%), and 12 were policy makers (18.8%). Youth were not asked to complete the youth development rating.

Table 1. Activities Completed by Primary Role

	Brainstorming	Sorting	Importance Rating	Youth Development Rating
Practitioners	66 (47.1%)	22 (37.3%)	36 (42.4%)	36 (56.3 %)
Youth	22 (15.7%)	18 (30.5%)	20 (23.5%)	na
Researchers	27 (19.3%)	10 (16.9%)	17 (20%)	17 (26.6%)
Policy Makers	21 (15.0%)	9 (15.3%)	12 (14.1%)	12 (18.8%)
Other	4 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Total	140 (100%)	59 (100%)	85 (100%)	65

MAPS

The Point Map in Figure 1 shows the relation of each statement to each other statement in two dimensions. Distance between points is meaningful: the closer two points are on the map, the more frequently those two statements were sorted together by the people who took part in this project. Therefore, on the Point Map, points that are closer together are more similar in meaning and points that are distant are more dissimilar. Figure 1 shows the arrangement of points (statements) for the current project. Appendix 1 includes a list of all of the statements used in this project. The numbers on the Point Map correspond with the statement numbers.

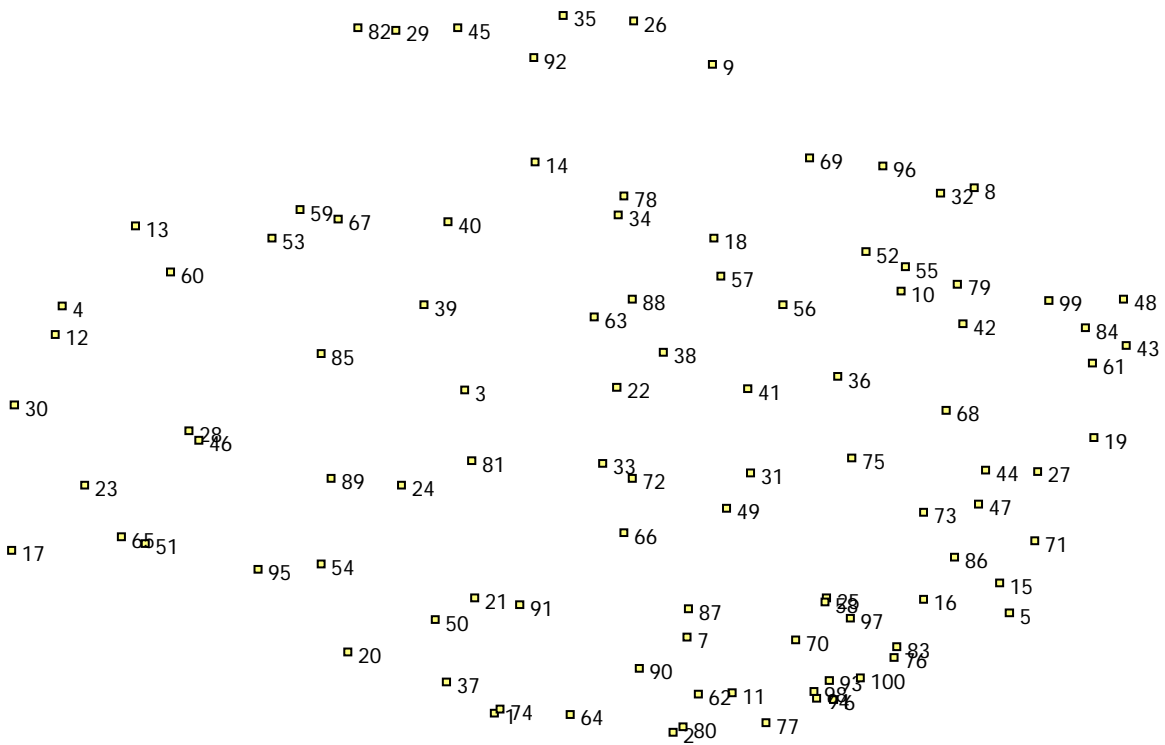


Figure 1. Point Map, indicating the array of all statements and their relationship to each other.

The Cluster Map in Figure 2 organizes the Point Map into groups, or clusters, of key ideas. People generating the map can decide to use as few or as many clusters as they see fit. They seek to consolidate the number of groups as much as possible without losing necessary details. For the current project, the optimal solution was a ten-cluster solution. The clusters were named at the interpretation session. Figure 2 shows the cluster map for the current project.

Larger regions of the map also emerged during the interpretation session. For example, the right (yellow) side of the map includes program characteristics that directly impact youth (Empowering Youth Friendly Environment, Youth Leadership Opportunities, Opportunities for Life Skills Development, Promotes Individuality and Connectedness). The middle (green) part of the map represents the overall program environment (Expectations of Youth Workers, Welcoming Environment & Family Engagement, Innovative, Strength-based Principles). The left (blue) side of the map addresses broader themes such as overall development and structure (Broad-Based Community Involvement, Program Structure, Ongoing Program Monitoring & Assessment).

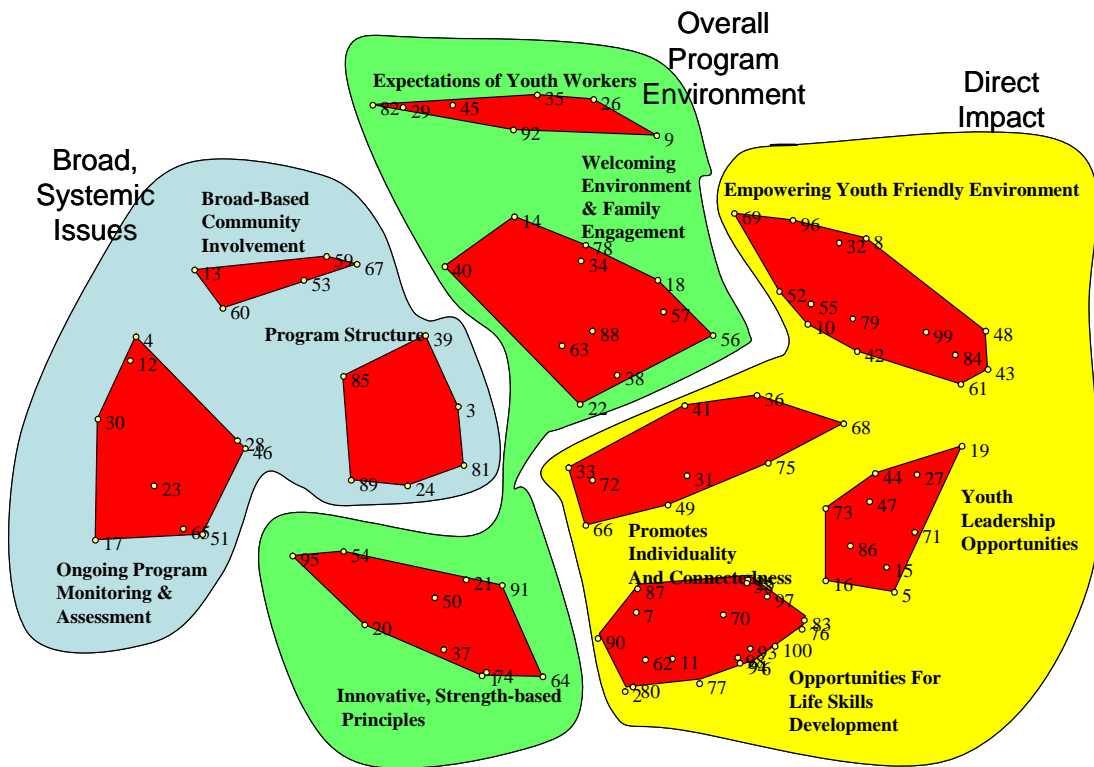


Figure 2. Cluster Map with Labels.

The Cluster Rating Map in Figure 3 depicts the importance ratings of each of the clusters. The greater the height dimension, the higher the average importance rating for the cluster. Figure 3 shows the average cluster ratings across all four groups for the Importance Scale.

In general, the participants rated the *Direct Impact* region (clusters included: Empowering Youth Friendly Environment, Youth Leadership Opportunities, Promotes Individuality and Connectedness, Opportunities for Life Skills Development) as higher in importance than the *Broad Systemic Issues* region (clusters included: Broad-Based Community Involvement, Program Structure, Ongoing Program Monitoring & Assessment). What makes this finding particularly interesting is that even policy makers and researchers (who generally tend to emphasize broader, systemic issues) agree with this assessment.

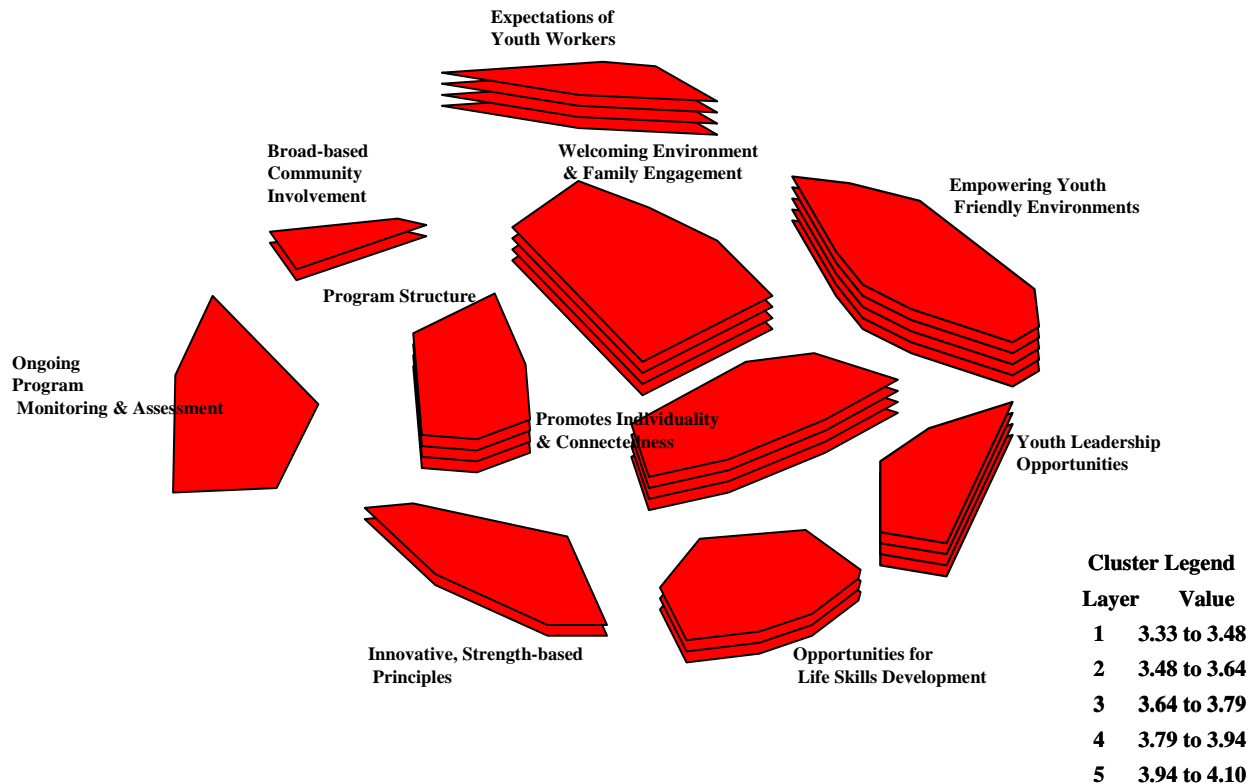


Figure 3. Cluster Map: Importance Rating.

IMPORTANCE RATING CONSENSUS

The Ladder Graph in Figure 4 compares the cluster importance ratings between participant groups. Below each graph is an r value which represents the correlation of importance ratings for the groups shown. Correlations vary from 0 to 1, with 0 meaning there is no agreement between the groups and 1 meaning there is complete agreement between the groups. All of the correlations between the groups in this study are high.

There was general consensus amongst the four groups in terms of mean importance ratings on the following clusters: Expectations of Youth Workers (mean ratings ranged from 3.741 to 4.011), Innovative Strength-based Principles

(mean ratings ranged from 3.353 to 3.643), Ongoing Program Monitoring and Assessment (mean ratings ranged from 3.203 to 3.436), Program Structure (mean ratings ranged from 3.461 to 3.917) (Figure 4).

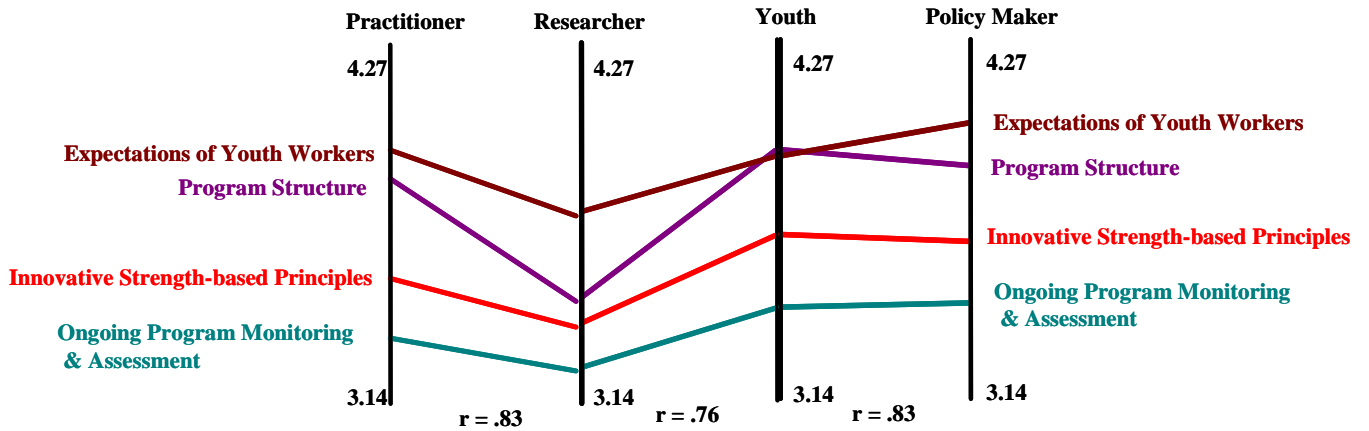


Figure 4. General Consensus Clusters Ladder Graph

Using SPSS, we also examined the importance the participant groups assigned to *specific concepts* (statement-level) that comprise successful youth programs. The most important statement across all four participant groups referred to the **need to respect everyone in the group**. Other statements that were ranked high in importance by all participant groups dealt with the **need for qualified staff** who are able to serve as **positive role models** for the youth in the program. However, the participants do not believe that the staff needs to have training specifically in developmental psychology or positive youth development.

The groups also generally agreed on the least important components of successful youth programs. The participants agreed that it is not important that successful programs be community-based. Successful programs can be located in schools. Documenting and publishing the progress and success of programs was also deemed relatively unimportant compared to the other statements. All of the participant groups also agreed that targeting programs to at risk youth is relatively unimportant. This finding helps to clarify the definition of youth development as an inclusive approach that focuses on supporting the positive development of all youth.

IMPORTANCE RATING DISCREPANCIES

The groups differed in their importance ratings for several clusters. Figure 5 presents the clusters where there was a discrepancy in importance ratings amongst the four groups. A closer look at the cluster rating map reveals that although the groups tend to agree that the *Direct Impact* region is more important than the *Broad Systemic Issues* region, the groups tend to disagree on the levels of importance assigned to each cluster within the *Direct Impact* region (i.e. Empowering Youth Friendly Environment, Promotes Individuality and Connectedness, Opportunities for Life Skills Development, and Youth Leadership Opportunities). For example, youth viewed youth leadership opportunities as significantly more important than both researchers and practitioners. This finding has important implications for adults who work with and study youth. Although adults are sometimes reluctant to share power equally with youth, researchers and practitioners may need to provide more leadership opportunities for the youth that they serve.

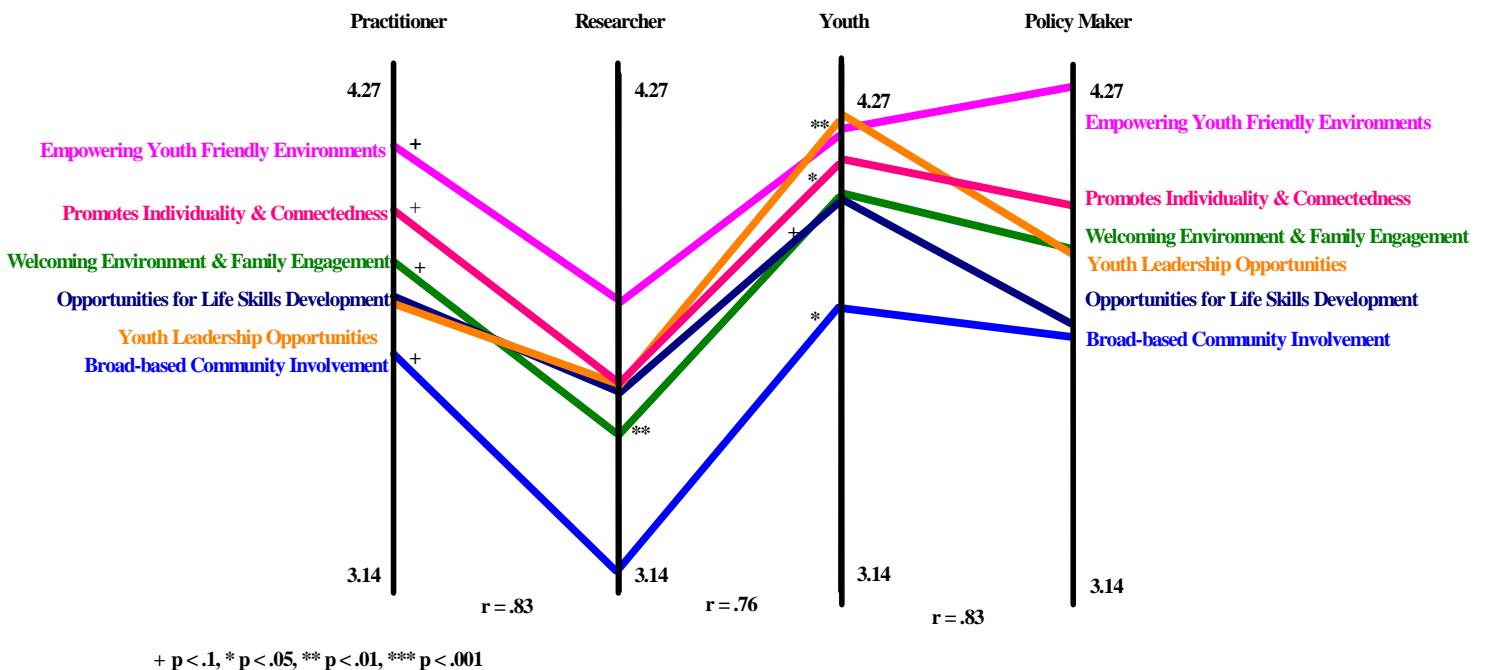


Figure 5. Group Differences by Clusters Ladder Graph

Youth and practitioners both rated the Welcoming Environment and Family Engagement cluster and the Promotes Individuality and Connectedness cluster as higher in importance than did researchers. Since researchers generally do not work directly with youth populations, they need to be particularly sensitive to the feedback of practitioners who do have direct contact with youth.

Both practitioners and youth recognize the importance of a highly connected, involved community to the success of a youth program. Researchers could utilize this grassroots knowledge to inform future research endeavors.

Across the statement set, youth and researchers tended to rate statements differently than both practitioners and policy makers. In terms of the importance ratings, youth consistently rated statements as higher in importance than both practitioners and researchers. This difference is particularly pronounced in the case of researchers. The youth generally used the upper portion of the rating scale and the researchers generally utilized the entire scale, including the lower range. In order to adjust for the differential use of the rating scale, the ratings for youth and researchers were standardized. The pattern of results after standardization was equivalent to the results prior to standardization. Both practitioners and policy makers' importance ratings tended to be more consistent with the youths' ratings. Although policy makers do not generally work directly with youth, they may have a better sense of youth and program needs due to their relationship with practitioners. As funders, policy makers are in continuous contact with direct service providers and therefore may have greater insight than do researchers into the operation and needs of successful programs.

There were some noticeable discrepancies in the importance the participant groups assigned to *specific concepts* (statement-level) that comprise successful youth programs. This is particularly pronounced between youth and researchers. Youth rated statements pertaining to leadership opportunities, community involvement, and connectedness as higher in importance than both researchers and practitioners. Although connectedness is a prominent topic in the youth development literature, researchers and practitioners do not rate it as being as high in importance as do youth. This may indicate that even greater efforts need to be made to explore the significance of community engagement, social support systems, and leadership opportunities in the lives of youth. Youth recognize their need for a supportive environment and adults need to respond to this stated need. In addition, taken together, these results indicate the need to include a youth voice in any research endeavor that has a direct impact on programming for youth. Future research should explore why youth and researchers rate importance so differently and what implications this has for researchers who study youth development.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT RATINGS

Another objective of this study was to determine which of the statements are considered to be consistent with YD principles according to policy makers, practitioners, and researchers³. In order to create a consensus list of statements that are consistently considered YD across the participant groups, frequency of 'yes' responses were calculated for each statement by group. The

³ Youth were not asked to rate the statements on the youth development scale.

total frequency across groups was then calculated and the statements were listed in ascending order by total frequency. The results indicate that there is a clear consensus between the groups on the top 35% of statements that are considered to be consistent with YD principles. Therefore, despite the myriad definitions of youth development that exist, all of the stakeholder groups generally agree on the core set of principles of YD. These principles include: active youth citizenship, opportunities for skill building, promotion of future time perspective, leadership opportunities, promotion of general health and well-being, fun activities, a strengths-based approach, sustained adult-youth relationships, ecologically and contextually sensitive and inclusive environment.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM REVIEW TOOL

By combining the results of both the youth development and importance ratings, a program review tool that includes the key components of successful YD programs emerges. In order to create this tool, the top 25% of statements that were consistently considered in line with YD were selected. All of the participant groups strongly agreed that these statements are consistent with the principles of YD. These statements were subsequently rank ordered according to mean importance (summed across all four participant groups, range = 4-20). This resulted in the Youth Development Program Review Tool (Table 2).

There was general consensus on the importance ratings for the first 13 indicators listed in the Youth Development Program Review Tool. Only two of the statements in the Youth Development Program Review Tool were rated differently across groups in terms of importance. Practitioners and researchers both rated statement 1 (enhances protective factors and reduces or reverses risk factors specific to the population) as higher in importance than did youth. Practitioners rated statement 76 (builds self-esteem, self-confidence, and coping skills) as higher in importance than did researchers.

Table 2. Youth Development Program Review Tool

Importance Rank	Statement (Statement #)	Cluster	YD Rank
2	Positive, caring adult role models, mentors, and volunteers who are consistent, honest, respected and reliable (9)	Expectations of Youth Workers	14
4	Sustained, positive adult-youth relationships (96)	Empowering Youth Friendly Environment	13
5	Staff model positive attitudes, behavior and effective leadership skills rather than preaching about them (26)	Expectations of Youth Workers	6
6	Offers opportunities that intentionally teach youth skills, knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors that foster resiliency, self awareness, advocacy, problem solving, and friendships (98)	Opportunities for Life Skills Development	17

Table 2 (Continued)

7	Helps youth develop a sense of hope in the future and a sense of their future selves (86)	Youth Leadership Opportunities	4
9	Inclusive and respectful of youth, their passion and their power of contribution (79)	Empowering Youth Friendly Environment	20
10	Program reflects a strength based philosophy, works to intentionally build assets, and promotes positive youth development (21)	Innovative Strength-Based Principles	10
12	Opportunities for skill building and a sense of mastery that will aid in the transition to adulthood (6)	Opportunities for Life Skills Development	2
13	Empowers youth to make their own choices, take risks, take action, and think outside of the box (27)	Youth Leadership Opportunities	19
14	Meaningful leadership roles for youth (19)	Youth Leadership Opportunities	5
15	Relevant to the participants' lives and responsive to the context that youth come from (family, school, community, poverty, culture) (72)	Promotes Individuality and Connectedness	12
16	Recognizes youth as individuals and provides opportunities to develop individual talents (68)	Promotes Individuality and Connectedness	7
18	Creating a sense of belonging, membership, connectedness, and pride in the program (36)	Promotes Individuality and Connectedness	24
19	Builds self-esteem, self-confidence, and coping skills (76)	Opportunities for Life Skills Development	18
20	Promotes the physical health, mental health and general well-being of youth (25)	Opportunities for Life Skills Development	8
24	All youth contribute to the program in some way (84)	Empowering Youth Friendly Environment	21
26	Promotes active youth citizenship, civic engagement, and responsibility to self and community (16)	Youth Leadership Opportunities	1
28	Appropriately tailored to language, culture, gender, and literacy (63)	Welcoming Environment & Family Engagement	16
30	Variety of activities that are fun, as well as engaging, enriching, hands-on, and work to bring everyone together (70)	Opportunities for Life Skills Development	9
33	An opportunity to try out and be exposed to new ideas, activities, and skills in an unthreatening environment (100)	Opportunities for Life Skills Development	25
34	Developmentally appropriate and consistent with social-emotional, cognitive-language, physical-motor, and spiritual development (7)	Opportunities for Life Skills Development	23
35	Contributes to social development through team work, conflict negotiation, and leadership skills (83)	Opportunities for Life Skills Development	3
36	Enhances protective factors and reverses or reduces risk factors specific to the population (1)	Innovative Strength-Based Principles	15
54	Service learning and community-service activities (2)	Opportunities for Life Skills Development	11
57	Encouragement of strong family connections in young people's lives (18)	Welcoming Environment & Family Engagement	22

Specific statements in the YD Program Review Tool are primarily concentrated in the *Direct Impact* region. Six of the statements fall in the *Overall Program Environment* region and none of the statements are located in the *Broad Systemic Issues* region. Figure 6 presents the items from the YD Program Review Tool overlaid on the Cluster Map. Although none of the items

from the Review Tool are located in the *Broad Systemic Issues* region, these clusters should not be ignored. One way to interpret the Cluster Map with the YD Program Review Tool is to recognize that the items in the *Broad Systemic Issues* region refer to components of successful youth programs in general. The highlighted statements in the *Direct Impact* region and the *Overall Program Environment* region refer specifically to characteristics of successful youth development programs. Given this interpretation, it is interesting to note that the items in the *Broad-Based Community Involvement* cluster did not appear in the YD Program Review Tool despite the fact that the YD literature tends to highlight community involvement as a crucial component of youth development programs.

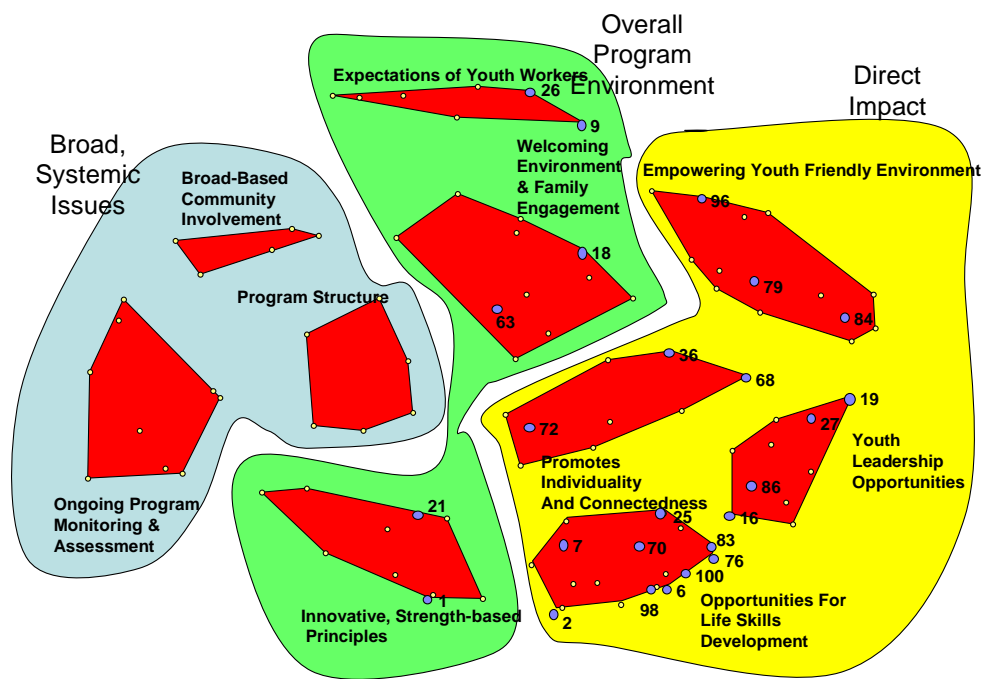


Figure 6. Cluster Map with items from the Youth Development Program Review Tool highlighted

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

The Youth Development Program Review Tool can be used as a self-evaluation tool for adolescent programs. Programs that want to verify that they can claim to be YD programs may wish to consult the Review Tool in order to see if they fulfill the most important principles of youth development. It is difficult to fulfill every principle of YD simultaneously. Oftentimes programs will emphasize certain competencies over others; however, they must do so with caution so as not to undermine any of the other factors that enhance positive

development (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). The checklist can also be used as a reference in conjunction with the Cluster Map, as a means of informally assessing adolescent programs. What makes the Youth Development Program Review Tool different from other attempts at clarifying and defining the components of successful YD programs, is that it incorporates the opinions and perspective of multiple stakeholder groups that have a vested interest in promoting positive youth development. Researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and the youth themselves are the authors of the checklist and have together created a consensus picture of the characteristics of successful youth development programs.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Youth Development Program Review Tool marks a step in the direction of a useable evaluation tool for monitoring the effectiveness of youth development programs. Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) identified the need for standardized observational measures that could be used to assess youth programs. They state that the youth programming field can learn from work that has already been accomplished in the field of early childhood research. The Early Childhood Classroom Observation Measure is based on research and recommendations that define an ideal early childhood classroom and measures such variables as resources, cultural sensitivity, and social climate (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Before the Youth Development Program Review Tool can be used in practice, an operational definition for each of the statements needs to be developed. These should be observable indicators whose presence can be ranked on a likert-type scale. This tool could then be used internally by program staff and participants (including the youth) as well as by external evaluators.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to bring youth, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers together in order to determine the key characteristics of successful youth programs; determine which of the characteristics of successful programs are most important; and determine which characteristics qualify as youth development. The study was able to meet these aims by analyzing the data that each group generated via brainstorming, sorting, and rating.

The four groups identified the clusters Empowering Youth Friendly Environment and Promotes Individuality and Connectedness as the most important components of youth programs. Expectations of Youth Workers, Youth Leadership Opportunities, Opportunities for Life Skills Development,

Welcoming Environment and Family Engagement, and Program Structure were rated as the next most important components. These were followed by Broad-Based Community Involvement, then Innovative Strength-Based Principles, and finally, Ongoing Program Monitoring and Assessment.

The current study bridges the views of practitioners, policy makers, youth and researchers on successful youth development programming. The consensus reached in this study can be used to improve current youth development programs and create more effective youth development programs in the future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: List of Statements Used in Concept Mapping Project

#	Statement
1	Enhances protective factors and reverses or reduces risk factors specific to the population
2	Service learning and community-service activities
3	Clear expectations for membership/participation and everyone (including adults) is held accountable
4	Financially sound with multiple funding streams
5	Individual and group leadership development
6	Opportunities for skill building and a sense of mastery that will aid in the transition to adulthood
7	Developmentally appropriate and consistent with social-emotional, cognitive-language, physical-motor, and spiritual development
8	Youth/adult partnerships where each member at the table is equal
9	Positive, caring adult role models, mentors, and volunteers who are consistent, honest, respected and reliable
10	All kids are genuinely valued, even the 'difficult' ones
11	Discovery-based and emphasizes experiential learning
12	Accessibility in location, cost, and hours of operation
13	Works across agency (involves multiple collaborative relationships across agency)
14	Open communication between parents, staff, participants and school
15	Creates a context in which young people create materials/resources (e.g., curricula, publicity/outreach, educational activities, displays, etc.) as well as opportunities for young people to speak/teach/facilitate/engage the public
16	Promotes active youth citizenship, civic engagement, and responsibility to self and community
17	Time spent documenting and publishing progress and success
18	Encouragement of strong family connections in young people's lives
19	Meaningful leadership roles for youth
20	Structured reflection, open dialogue and debriefing of activities (or the program)
21	Program reflects a strength based philosophy, works to intentionally build assets, and promotes positive youth development
22	Expectations for behavior are clear, simple and consistently and fairly enforced and rewarded
23	Appropriate revisions based on ongoing evaluation of program fidelity, events, activities, impacts and outcomes
24	Highly flexible, allowing for a change in focus as youth/adolescent needs and interests change
25	Promotes the physical health, mental health and general well-being of youth
26	Staff model positive attitudes, behavior and effective leadership skills rather than preaching about them
27	Empowers youth to make their own choices, take risks, take action, and think outside of the box
28	Conceptual core and clearly articulated mission, vision, purpose, beliefs and expectations
29	Staff development is frequent, appropriate and stimulating and staff come to work prepared, and are able to adapt to unexpected challenges and opportunities
30	Not at a school
31	Uses a comprehensive approach that focuses on the whole youth
32	Caring teen/peer mentors and role models
33	Opportunity for open, honest dialogue without boundaries and complete confidentiality
34	Diversity in backgrounds (ethnic, social-economic, and cultural), interests, and ideas

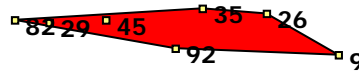
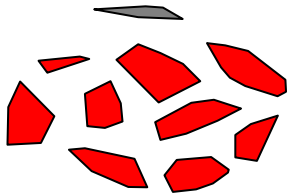
#	Statement
35	Staff is dedicated, friendly, welcoming, enthusiastic, available, accessible, open-minded, and engaged directly with youth
36	Creating a sense of belonging, membership, connectedness, and pride in the program
37	Develops at least one of the 40 Developmental Assets outlined by the Search Institute (including support, positive values, social competencies)
38	Continuity, longevity and duration that the youth can depend upon
39	A friendly and safe environment (physically, socially and emotionally) that allows for healthy risk taking
40	Values and utilizes the input and feedback of youths' families and includes them in the asset development process
41	Recognition that youth's basic needs must be met (i.e. hunger) before expecting them to excel
42	An orientation and culture of advocacy where youth feel valued and supported (the organization is "on their side")
43	A personal and group sense of ownership by the youth for the program
44	Focuses on young people's taking concrete action to solve a problem and to improve their environment
45	Well paid staff who care for children and see their work as a career and not just a job
46	Access and referrals to community resources, including information, health care
47	Young people leave knowing that what they get at the program is helpful/applicable somewhere else in their life
48	Youth initiated and represents a youth agenda not an adult agenda.
49	Readily and easily available resources for youth to accomplish their goals
50	Needs to be innovative and constantly generate new ideas
51	Positive outcomes that are measurable and observable
52	Inclusive of all youth regardless of ethnicity, gender, social status, academic achievement, etc.
53	Reflects the community it serves (cultural values, staff, offerings, volunteers, etc.)
54	Achieves a balance between structure and flexibility
55	Respect for everyone in the group and their ideas
56	A place where youth feel safe to be themselves and or change themselves from who they often have to portray
57	Targeted to those hardest to reach or with higher need
58	Opportunities to interact with adults from the community including policy makers, school administrators, and law enforcement
59	High levels of community involvement and support that is non-partisan and across-the-board (includes families, funders, political leaders, businesses, schools, courts, juvenile justice system, churches, etc.)
60	Broad-based coalition that strives to integrate the assets within the community, collaborate, and provide 'seamless' social support
61	Meaningful youth input and buy-in at all levels including planning, implementation, evaluation, decision making, overall goals, and participant recruitment
62	An academic component as well as critical thinking skills, life skills, and character development activities
63	Appropriately tailored to language, culture, gender, and literacy
64	Inclusion of computers/technology in some meaningful way to be defined by the youth and facilitators.

#	Statement
65	A needs/assets/outcomes assessment (formal or informal) that shows the program's understanding of where its participants are coming from, what they need to get from the program and what the program will be a springboard towards
66	Establishes high expectations/goals and provides the needed support to be successful
67	The community (including schools, teachers, parents, etc.) understands and supports positive youth development principles
68	Recognizes youth as individuals and provides opportunities to develop individual talents
69	Consistent with youth culture and has leaders who are 'youth savvy'
70	Variety of activities that are fun, as well as engaging, enriching, hands-on, and work to bring everyone together
71	Creates opportunities for young people to meet and collaborate with young people from similar organizations in other neighborhoods, cities, states, regions, and countries
72	Relevant to the participants' lives and responsive to the context that youth come from (family, school, community, poverty, culture)
73	Takes youth outside of their comfort zone, geographically, physically, culturally and/or emotionally, to provide growth opportunities
74	Prevention (i.e. drug/alcohol prevention) as a subtext
75	Recognition of and rewards for youth successes and achievements including, media attention, social emotional recognition and monetary compensation
76	Builds self-esteem, self-confidence, and coping skills
77	Utilizes creativity and the expressive arts as a means of bringing issues and stories to the fore
78	Availability to all youth in the area, not select youth
79	Inclusive and respectful of youth, their passion and their power of contribution
80	Structured activities that provide success experiences, especially adventure-based and physical activities
81	There is structure and consistency—youth know what to expect and look forward to various program components
82	Employs trained staff and/or volunteers who have a strong background in developmental psychology and positive youth development principles and practices
83	Contributes to social development through team work, conflict negotiation, and leadership skills
84	All youth contribute to the program in some way
85	Reduces barriers for participation by providing transportation, accommodations for disabilities and multiple languages
86	Helps youth develop a sense of hope in the future and a sense of their future selves
87	Offers networking and career opportunities with alumni of the program and others
88	Fun, playful, clean, teen-friendly space
89	Seeks to change community norms & structures, not kids
90	Appeals to a variety of learning styles
91	Comprehensive program planning for various age groups that addresses various areas of child/youth development such as identity, emotional, and moral development
92	Consistency of the group members and staff
93	Communication/team building opportunities that foster positive pro-social interactions
94	Opportunities to be creative
95	Evidence based, in other words, based on current research and 'best practices'
96	Sustained, positive adult-youth relationships
97	Uses real life as a context in which youth can learn about and take action on major global and local issues (e.g. sexuality, HIV/AIDS, environment, education, etc)

#	Statement
98	Offers opportunities that intentionally teach youth skills, knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors that foster resiliency, self awareness, advocacy, problem solving, and friendships
99	Youth led and driven but with adult guidance
100	An opportunity to try out and be exposed to new ideas, activities, and skills in an unthreatening environment

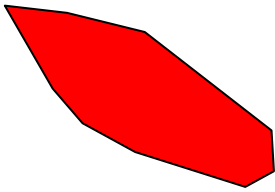
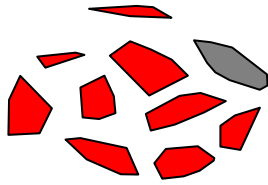
APPENDIX 2: List of Statements by Cluster

Cluster Name: Expectations of Youth Workers



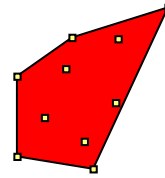
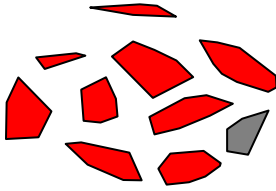
- Positive, caring adult role models, mentors, and volunteers who are consistent, honest, respected and reliable (9)
- Staff model positive attitudes, behavior and effective leadership skills rather than preaching about them (26)
- Staff development is frequent, appropriate and stimulating and staff come to work prepared, and are able to adapt to unexpected challenges and opportunities (29)
- Staff is dedicated, friendly, welcoming, enthusiastic, available, accessible, open-minded, and engaged directly with youth (35)
- Well paid staff who care for children and see their work as a career and not just a job (45)
- Employs trained staff and/or volunteers who have a strong background in developmental psychology and positive youth development principles and practices (82)
- Consistency of the group members and staff (92)

Cluster Name: Empowering Youth Friendly Environment



- Youth/adult partnerships where each member at the table is equal (8)
- All kids are genuinely valued, even the 'difficult' ones (10)
- Caring teen/peer mentors and role models (32)
- An orientation and culture of advocacy where youth feel valued and supported (the organization is "on their side") (42)
- A personal and group sense of ownership by the youth for the program (43)
- Youth initiated and represents a youth agenda not an adult agenda. (48)
- Inclusive of all youth regardless of ethnicity, gender, social status, academic achievement, etc. (52)
- Respect for everyone in the group and their ideas (55)
- Meaningful youth input and buy-in at all levels including planning, implementation, evaluation, decision making, overall goals, and participant recruitment (61)
- Consistent with youth culture and has leaders who are 'youth savvy' (69)
- Inclusive and respectful of youth, their passion and their power of contribution (79)
- All youth contribute to the program in some way (84)
- Sustained, positive adult-youth relationships (96)
- Youth led and driven but with adult guidance (99)

Cluster Name: Youth Leadership Opportunities



Individual and group leadership development (5)

Creates a context in which young people create materials/resources (e.g., curricula, publicity/outreach, educational activities, displays, etc.) as well as opportunities for young people to speak/teach/facilitate/engage the public (15)

Promotes active youth citizenship, civic engagement, and responsibility to self and community (16)

Meaningful leadership roles for youth (19)

Empowers youth to make their own choices, take risks, take action, and think outside of the box (27)

Focuses on young people's taking concrete action to solve a problem and to improve their environment (44)

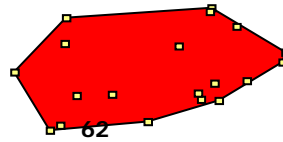
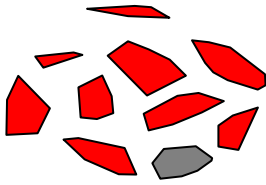
Young people leave knowing that what they get at the program is helpful/applicable somewhere else in their life (47)

Creates opportunities for young people to meet and collaborate with young people from similar organizations in other neighborhoods, cities, states, regions, and countries (71)

Takes youth outside of their comfort zone, geographically, physically, culturally and/or emotionally, to provide growth opportunities (73)

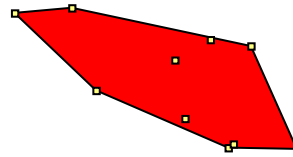
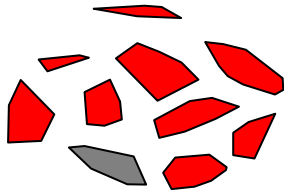
Helps youth develop a sense of hope in the future and a sense of their future selves (86)

Cluster Name: Opportunities For Life Skills Development



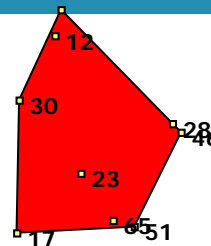
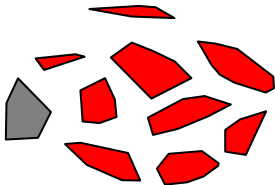
Service learning and community-service activities (2)
Opportunities for skill building and a sense of mastery that will aid in the transition to adulthood (6)
Developmentally appropriate and consistent with social-emotional, cognitive-language, physical-motor, and spiritual development (7)
Discovery-based and emphasizes experiential learning (11)
Promotes the physical health, mental health and general well-being of youth (25)
Opportunities to interact with adults from the community including policy makers, school administrators, and law enforcement (58)
An academic component as well as critical thinking skills, life skills, and character development activities (62)
Variety of activities that are fun, as well as engaging, enriching, hands-on, and work to bring everyone together (70)
Builds self-esteem, self-confidence, and coping skills (76)
Utilizes creativity and the expressive arts as a means of bringing issues and stories to the fore (77)
Structured activities that provide success experiences, especially adventure-based and physical activities (80)
Contributes to social development through team work, conflict negotiation, and leadership skills (83)
Offers networking and career opportunities with alumni of the program and others (87)
Appeals to a variety of learning styles (90)
Communication/team building opportunities that foster positive pro-social interactions (93)
Opportunities to be creative (94)
Uses real life as a context in which youth can learn about and take action on major global and local issues (e.g. sexuality, HIV/AIDS, environment, education, etc) (97)
Offers opportunities that intentionally teach youth skills, knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors that foster resiliency, self awareness, advocacy, problem solving, and friendships (98)
An opportunity to try out and be exposed to new ideas, activities, and skills in an unthreatening environment (100)

Cluster Name: Innovative, Strength-based Principles



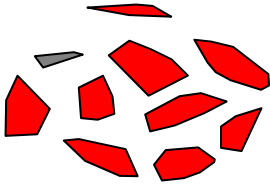
- Enhances protective factors and reverses or reduces risk factors specific to the population (1)
- Structured reflection, open dialogue and debriefing of activities (or the program) (20)
- Program reflects a strength based philosophy, works to intentionally build assets, and promotes positive youth development (21)
- Develops at least one of the 40 Developmental Assets outlined by the Search Institute (including support, positive values, social competencies (37)
- Needs to be innovative and constantly generate new ideas (50)
- Achieves a balance between structure and flexibility (54)
- Inclusion of computers/technology in some meaningful way to be defined by the youth and facilitators. (64)
- Prevention (i.e. drug/alcohol prevention) as a subtext (74)
- Comprehensive program planning for various age groups that addresses various areas of child/youth development such as identity, emotional, and moral development (91)
- Evidence based, in other words, based on current research and 'best practices' (95)

Cluster Name: Ongoing Program Monitoring and Assessment



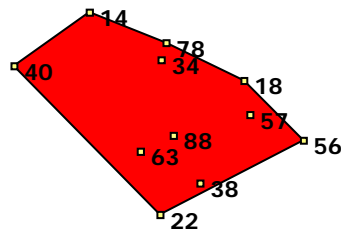
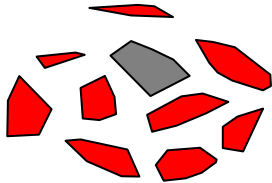
- Financially sound with multiple funding streams (4)
- Accessibility in location, cost, and hours of operation (12)
- Time spent documenting and publishing progress and success (17)
- Appropriate revisions based on ongoing evaluation of program fidelity, events, activities, impacts and outcomes (23)
- Conceptual core and clearly articulated mission, vision, purpose, beliefs and expectations (28)
- Not at a school (30)
- Access and referrals to community resources, including information, health care (46)
- Positive outcomes that are measurable and observable (51)
- A needs/assets/outcomes assessment (formal or informal) that shows the program's understanding of where its participants are coming from, what they need to get from the program and what the program will be a springboard towards (65)

Cluster Name: Broad-Based Community Involvement



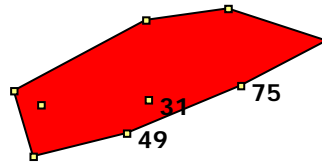
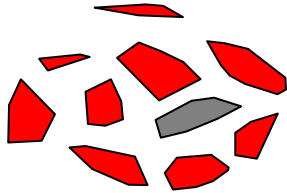
Works across agency (involves multiple collaborative relationships across agency) (13)
 Reflects the community it serves (cultural values, staff, offerings, volunteers, etc.) (53)
 High levels of community involvement and support that is non-partisan and across-the-board (includes families, funders, political leaders, businesses, schools, courts, juvenile justice system, churches, etc.) (59)
 Broad-based coalition that strives to integrate the assets within the community, collaborate, and provide 'seamless' social support (60)
 The community (including schools, teachers, parents, etc.) understands and supports positive youth development principles (67)

Cluster Name: Welcoming Environment and Family Engagement



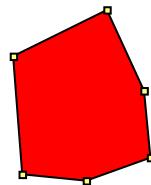
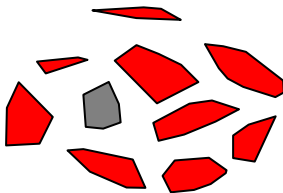
Open communication between parents, staff, participants and school (14)
 Encouragement of strong family connections in young people's lives (18)
 Expectations for behavior are clear, simple and consistently and fairly enforced and rewarded (22)
 Diversity in backgrounds (ethnic, social-economic, and cultural), interests, and ideas (34)
 Continuity, longevity and duration that the youth can depend upon (38)
 Values and utilizes the input and feedback of youths' families and includes them in the asset development process (40)
 A place where youth feel safe to be themselves and or change themselves from who they often have to portray (56)
 Targeted to those hardest to reach or with higher need (57)
 Appropriately tailored to language, culture, gender, and literacy (63)
 Availability to all youth in the area, not select youth (78)
 Fun, playful, clean, teen-friendly space (88)

Cluster Name: Promotes Individuality and Connectedness



Uses a comprehensive approach that focuses on the whole youth (31)
Opportunity for open, honest dialogue without boundaries and complete confidentiality (33)
Creating a sense of belonging, membership, connectedness, and pride in the program (36)
Recognition that youth's basic needs must be met (i.e. hunger) before expecting them to excel (41)
Readily and easily available resources for youth to accomplish their goals (49)
Establishes high expectations/goals and provides the needed support to be successful (66)
Recognizes youth as individuals and provides opportunities to develop individual talents (68)
Relevant to the participants' lives and responsive to the context that youth come from (family, school, community, poverty, culture) (72)
Recognition of and rewards for youth successes and achievements including, media attention, social emotional recognition and monetary compensation (75)

Cluster Name: Program Structure



Clear expectations for membership/participation and everyone (including adults) is held accountable (3)
Highly flexible, allowing for a change in focus as youth/adolescent needs and interests change (24)
A friendly and safe environment (physically, socially and emotionally) that allows for healthy risk taking (39)
There is structure and consistency-youth know what to expect and look forward to various program components (81)
Reduces barriers for participation by providing transportation, accommodations for disabilities and multiple languages (85)
Seeks to change community norms & structures, not kids (89)

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