Preface

We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

— T.S. Eliot, Little Gidding V

In my application to DUSP, I posed these questions:

How does knowing a neighborhood’s story influence individual decisions to vote, join civic associations, or lead community change efforts? How can residents’ understanding of their local community’s history and current issues impact attitudes and ultimately inspire choices to participate in their community? How can we build on the sense of pride that comes from knowing about one’s community to develop grassroots leadership? How can communities use this information to engage newcomers and immigrants?

My curiosity was sparked by my own experiences in helping young people learn and teach the stories of their families and their neighborhoods. Stories and images of local activism in the South End, Jamaica Plain, Chinatown, Roxbury and other neighborhoods inspired me. I was excited to learn more about my Barbadian heritage and the history of Mattapan, the Boston neighborhood where I grew up.

With much support and many trips on the #1 bus, I have been able to explore these themes of community building, social activism and teaching and learning in my time at DUSP. This thesis brings together reflections on my professional experiences and academic interests. My one hope is that this work serves as a resource for others who see the power in learning and sharing stories for community building.

Images of local activism from left to right: Villa Victoria Betances mural in the South End (courtesy of Kiara Nagel), Southwest Corridor Park — View of Back Bay (www.mytowninc.com), Oak Street Chinatown Community Mural (photo by David Caras; www.bcnc.net); and Dudley Town Common in Roxbury (courtesy of Kiara Nagel).
Acknowledgements

This thesis is about people doing the work together for themselves. It’s about people power. I appreciate everyone for being together with me in this work physically and in spirit. Your powerful support and encouragement has been invaluable. Many, many thanks to:

My thesis advisor Ceasar for assuring me there was a story
Lang for keeping the story straight
Alethia for encouraging my voice
Thesis Wednesday crew: Solana and all the visuals, Ariel for enforcing the rules, and Diana Sherman for listening patiently
La Tonya for joy, Daniela for music, Lee, Kiara, Kenny, Brian, Ella, Diana, Nell, Hania, and my community in DUSP
James J., Karilyn, Shauna, Liz, Tanya, May, John, Mary, Horace and Sue and everyone who took time to meet, talk, and reflect with me about your work in community building
Makunda, Craig, Marcus, Sidra, LaShawn, Jenny, Wendy, Anne and all my friends for regular check ins and comedy
Mum for everything, Grantley, Anthony, and Ed

and to the Highest Power.
# Table of Contents

## List of Illustrations

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

- Citizen Participation
- Leadership
- Community Models of Leadership Development
- Summary

Chapter 3: Methodology

- Definitions
- Research Design
- Data Collection
- Analysis
- Strengths and Limitations
- Summary

Chapter 4: Union of Minority Neighborhoods Institute for Neighborhood Leadership

- Overview of Organization and Neighborhood
- Why was the UMN Institute for Neighborhood Leadership founded?
- How does the Institute support UMN’s Vision of the Community?
- Program Overview: Institute for Neighborhood Leadership
- What is the Institute’s Theory of Leadership?
- What is the Institute’s Leadership Training Approach?
- How does the Institute’s Approach contribute to Community Capacity Building?
- Summary: Union of Minority Neighborhoods Institute for Neighborhood Leadership

Chapter 5: Multicultural Youth Tour of What’s Now Youth Guide Development Program

- Overview of Organization and Neighborhood
- Why was the MYTOWN Youth Guide Development Program founded?
- How does the Program support MYTOWN’s Vision of the Community?
- Program Overview: MYTOWN Youth Guide Development Program
- What is MYTOWN’s Theory of Leadership?
- What is MYTOWN’s Leadership Approach?
- How does MYTOWN’s Approach contribute to Community Capacity Building?
- Summary: Multicultural Youth Tour of What’s Now Youth Guide Development Program
Table of Contents, cont.

Chapter 6: Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative Resident Development Institute ...........69

Overview of Organization and Neighborhood...............................................................69
Why was the Resident Development Institute founded? .............................................70
How does RDI Support DSNI’s Vision of the Community?........................................72
Program Overview: Resident Development Institute...................................................74
What is RDI’s Theory of Leadership? .........................................................................76
What is RDI’s Leadership Training Approach?..............................................................78
How does RDI contribute to Community Capacity Building?......................................80
Summary: Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative Resident Development Institute........83

Chapter 7: Analysis........................................................................................................85

Chapter 8: Conclusion..................................................................................................93

Works Cited and Consulted........................................................................................95

Appendices................................................................................................................101

A. List of Contributing Individuals
B. List of Case Documents
C. List of Interviews
D. List of Participant Observations
E. Illustration. Map of Boston Neighborhoods
F. Illustration. Levels of Resident Participation
List of Illustrations

Figures

1. Eight Rungs on the Ladder of Citizen Participation
2. Four Levels of Resident Participation
3. Contributing Factors to Community Capacity
4. UMN Leadership Development as a Strategy for Building Community Capacity
5. Our Theory of Healthy Communities
6. MYTOWN Leadership Development as a Strategy for Building Community Capacity
7. Building Power
8. DSNI Leadership Development as a Strategy for Building Community Capacity
9. DSNI Leaders
10. Leadership Development as a Strategy for Building Community Capacity
11. Three Approaches to Leadership Development
12. Four Levels of Resident Participation

Tables

1. Levels of Resident Participation
2. Summary of Popular Education and Community Vision Leadership Models
3. Criteria for Selection of Cases
4. Data Collected and Analyzed
5. Analytical Themes
6. Union of Minority Neighborhoods Institute for Neighborhood Leadership Series and Trainings
7. Overview of MYTOWN Curriculum and Selected Trainings
8. DSNI RDI Leadership Competency Series Modules
9. Comparison of 3 Leadership Development Training Programs and Approaches
10. Levels of Resident Participation
Chapter 1: Introduction

For decades, Boston residents have worked together and organized to strengthen and protect their neighborhoods, often in response to encroaching government policy and local development. The South End’s Villa Victoria housing complex is a testament to the work of Puerto Rican residents to gain site control and save the area from demolition under Urban Renewal in 1968. In the 1960s, residents in several communities lobbied the state to stop the destruction of their homes as part of a planned extension of the interstate highway. Today, the Southwest Corridor Park reminds us of that successful organizing effort. It represents the first time federal funds were used to develop a combined open space and transit system.

In Jamaica Plain, tenants at the Bromley Heath public housing development organized to become the country’s first tenant management corporation in 1970. Chinatown murals chronicled residents’ victories and struggles against Tufts University/New England Medical Center for land development rights. Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Roxbury is known nationally as the first non-profit organization to win the right of eminent domain from a city. Boston is a rich source of examples of resident-led organizing.

With 40 years of lessons in Boston and around the country, community participation is heralded as a key to strengthening healthy neighborhoods, communities and ultimately democracy. Foundations recognize that local participation contributes to social change initiatives. Researchers have cited several positive outcomes of community participation including better decision-making and lower costs. Proponents of asset-based community development assert that neighborhood residents and organizations can leverage their strengths to benefit the community.

The excitement about citizen participation in urban communities is not new. In the 1960s, black and poor people demanded the right to make decisions and even control the political and economic resources in their communities. They were both motivated by newly won gains of the Civil Rights Movement and angered by the federal Urban Renewal policy that excluded their voices and destroyed their neighborhoods. In response, the Federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 mandated “maximum feasible citizen participation” for the Community Action programs to govern social service delivery in urban neighborhoods.

But what did citizen participation mean? Was it simply resident involvement or more radical self-determination and control? In answer to this question, Sherry Arnstein introduced a

---


typology defining citizen participation as a “categorical term for citizen power” in 1969 (337). Her 8-rung ladder shows 3 levels of participation in order of increasing decision-making power. The levels are: (1) “nonparticipation” or involvement; (2) “tokenism” or representation; and (3) “citizen power”, which meant control and autonomous policy and decision-making (Arnstein 1969). The idea of citizen power made some segments of the public and political mainstream fearful of widespread political and social instability.

Today, foundations and researchers promote citizen participation as a strategy for reducing poverty in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. With significant reductions in federal funding for social services, foundations have invested significantly in projects to develop the human, financial and organizational resources that community members can use to create economic and social opportunity. ³

Foundation-sponsored change efforts emphasize four levels of participation: involvement, engagement, resident leadership and ultimately control. ⁴ Similar to the rungs of Arnstein’s ladder (1969), these levels represent increasing resident decision-making. Involved residents incur the least responsibility and risk. At the level of engagement, residents contribute to decisions and have some responsibility for carrying out neighborhood projects. Leadership is considered to be a form of engagement with greater power to make decisions. Control implies autonomy and authority to make decisions about the community’s political and economic resources. Foundation reports acknowledge the challenge of sharing power in projects, but generally contemporary discussions are not about resident control. Rather funders emphasize both engagement and leadership without clear definitions or distinctions.

Even after decades of research, the academic literature is still unable to offer a singular definition of term of leadership. Several theorists describe leadership in terms of the role of a great man in relationship to his followers. Researchers apply these theories to corporate settings where managers direct subordinates in stable environments. However, this paradigm is not well suited to dynamic community contexts constrained by economic and political inequalities. Emerging community leadership models offer an alternative view focusing on collaboration and empowerment. Historical examples of the work are the Highlander Folk School and the Citizenship Schools in the Civil Rights Movement as well as the efforts of adult educator Paulo Freire in Brazilian reform movements for voting and land rights in the 1960s. These radical, popular approaches encouraged political action, leadership and ultimately empowerment. ⁵

³ In the early 1990s, several national foundations introduced, Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) to combat poverty sponsored. Specifically, these place-based efforts seek to “develop [residents] as leaders, create social connections and organize people to participate in change” (Kubisch et al. 2002, 35). Resident participation is a cornerstone of CCI goals and activities.

⁴ Today, political scientists use the term citizen participation to describe political and civic involvement while writers about community development and building use the terms: volunteer involvement, resident engagement, resident leadership, resident-driven, community-driven and resident control.
But, how do contemporary organizations develop resident participation and leadership as a strategy for strengthening community and building capacity? Theories and practices of these efforts are not well documented in academic literature (see Chaskin et al. 2001; Mayer 1994). I propose to study three community-based leadership development programs in Boston given the city’s legacy of community activism. What were the motivations for developing these training programs? How did these programs emerge and build on the legacy of resident leadership? What practices do these local organizations use to encourage residents to participate and lead community efforts? What can we learn from these approaches about the concept of resident leadership in the context of community capacity building?

- **Summary of Chapters**

To explore community leadership development, this thesis looks at three local training programs as cases informed by theories from studies of citizen participation and leadership. Given this framework, the second chapter highlights key themes in the literature on citizen participation, leadership and leadership development models in community contexts. The third chapter describes the methodology for this study including a definition of terms, research design, data collection, analysis, and strengths and limitations.

In the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters, I trace the origins, theories and approaches of leadership training programs created by the three organizations selected for this research: the Union of Minority Neighborhoods, Multi-cultural Youth Tour of What’s Now, Inc. (MYTOWN), and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. The seventh chapter is devoted to a summary and analysis of the cases. In the final chapter, I share concluding remarks about the implications of using neighborhood leadership training as a strategy for building community capacity.

---

5 In the early 1960s the Ford Foundation demonstrated its support for building local decision-making by making grants to universities to offer courses to local leaders (O’Connor 1999).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Despite popular emphasis on community participation and the need to strengthen communities, relatively few researchers have done empirical studies of the theories and practices of community-based leadership development programs in urban contexts. Studies treat the related themes of: citizen participation, resident engagement, community capacity, traditional and shared leadership, and leadership development. In this literature review I draw on those themes. I introduce community participation in relation to current efforts to strengthen community capacity. Next I outline leadership theories and models for leadership development. This literature review concludes with a brief discussion of the need to understand community leadership development in urban settings, a link not often made between community building and leadership studies.

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation is a mainstay of American democracy. The American Revolution was the first of this country’s many fights for political participation and fair representation. New England town hall meetings have fostered community participation since colonial times. Black people have struggled in this country for as equally long for the right to participate. But in the 1960s, black and poor people intensified their demands to participate fully in the political and economic decision-making for their communities. Black people wanted the government to commit to racial equality and to make “policy with instead of for people” (Altshuler 1973, 15). They were motivated by gains of the Civil Rights movement at the time. Poor people were also angered by their exclusion from policy like the federal Urban Renewal projects that demolished their neighborhoods beginning in the 1950s and 1960s.

Then, in 1964, amidst growing social and racial tensions, the Economic Opportunity Act mandated maximum feasible participation of neighborhood residents in federally funded community action programs. The phrase was adopted enthusiastically at the time by both the administration and community activists. But, what did people mean by citizen participation? How did it relate to demands for community control? The Black Panther Party slogan “All Power to the People” captured the sentiment and passion of young black men and women who wanted full control of their community’s economic resources and the power to make decisions that affect their lives. In many cities, the white political establishment worked to undermine

---

6 I use the terms: citizen, resident and community participation interchangeably to mean broad voluntary efforts of community residents in both community and political affairs that affect their neighborhoods. Refer to Appendix E for definitions. For a historical discussion of various definitions, see Altschuler 1970 and Cahn and Pastell 1970.

the participation and political organizing of the poor through cooptation and other tactics.\textsuperscript{8} Then, like today, the lack of clarity about the terms complicated discussions.

To encourage “enlightened dialogue” in 1969, Sherry Arnstein introduced the “ladder of participation”, a typology highlighting the multiple interpretations of the terms: participation and control (336-7).\textsuperscript{9} Defining citizen participation as a “categorical term for citizen power,” Arnstein (1969) writes

\begin{quote}
The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you. Participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the corner-stone of democracy – a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually everyone. The applause is reduced to polite handclaps, however, when this principle is advocated by the have-not blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Eskimos, and whites. And when the have-nots define participation as redistribution of power, the American consensus on the fundamental principle explodes into many shades of outright racial, ethnic, ideological, and political opposition. ...

...People are simply demanding the degree of power (or control) which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which ‘outsiders’ may change them (337, 352).
\end{quote}

Arnstein’s 8-rung ladder shows the variation inherent in the concept of participation, used by both people who demanded and those who resisted citizen power. (See Figure 1.)

\textsuperscript{8} Scholars have debated about why the Johnson administration mandated citizen participation, especially given the backlash from urban democratic mayors. In \textit{Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding} Moynihan (1969) asserts that the phrase was a compromise included to protect poor black Southerners, but was not a major focus. He argues that the overall poverty strategy was created on the basis of unsound advice from social science theorists. Piven counters that the policy was part of the Democratic Party’s political strategy to garner black votes without alienating white urban and suburban voters. Bypassing municipal government, the federal government was able to allocate funds to address the needs of its new black constituents. She believes that the reallocation of public monies and services from white to black people led to the conflict between the federal and local government (1970).

\textsuperscript{9} Sherry Arnstein was a consultant on citizen participation to several federal agencies in the late 1960s. She was chief citizen participation advisor to the Model Cities Administration (Cahn and Passett 1970, 335). Figure available from: lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html. Accessed 15 April 2005.
The three sections of Arnstein’s 8-rung ladder represent increasing levels of authority granted to community groups in the decision-making process. The first level of “non-participation” as the name suggests refers to situations where residents do not actually plan or conduct programs. Rather nonparticipation “enable[s] powerholders to ‘educate’ or ‘cure’ the participants” (Arnstein 1969, 338-339).

At the second level of “tokenism,” powerholders inform, consult and placate citizens. Degrees of “Tokenism” describe conditions where [residents] lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the powerful. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow-through, no ‘muscle,’ hence no assurance of changing the status quo” (Arnstein 1969, 339).

“Placation” allows participants to have some influence, but the powerholders still make the final decision. The top rungs of the ladder represent situations where citizens can actually exercise power. In “Partnerships”, citizens can negotiate and bargain with traditional powerholders. “Delegated Power” and “Citizen Control” describe situations where the citizens control the decision-making. They have “full managerial power” over a program or institution and its policies. They are able to “negotiate the conditions under which “outsiders” may change them” (Arnstein 1969, 339, 353).

Even with Arnstein’s ladder, the meaning of participation and control remained unclear and controversial in academic and popular discourse. Unaccustomed to demands from the poor, some of the general public and the political establishment feared citizen participation. Riots, angry confrontations and large-scale demonstrations shaped interpretations of the strong rhetoric of black power and challenges to white authority. Naysayers highlighted situations where funds were mismanaged or used to discredit the existing white political structures.10

---

Entrenched political interests saw the involvement of poor people in decision-making as “a danger to a free state” and a threat to the status quo in the 1960s and early 1970s (Cahn and Cahn 1970, 30).

- Citizen Participation to Resident Engagement

Today, citizen participation no longer conjures up fear of physical violence or large scale political instability fomented by disgruntled black and poor people. While it is beyond the scope of this work to trace the evolution in this thinking, we see different perspectives on the term “citizen participation” both in academic and mainstream discussions.

The biggest change in the discussion about citizen participation is that major national philanthropy now underwrites major initiatives in community-led decision-making and participation. Foundations respond in part to the retreat by federal government in support for social service program. Funders learned the value of community participation from black and low income people in the 1960s. Despite these changes over the last thirty years, one thing remains the constant: the vague meaning and interpretations of the term ‘citizen participation’.

The contemporary use of the term citizen participation is applied narrowly to the realm of electoral political activity. Citizen participation is synonymous with civic participation, civic engagement and involvement in electoral politics and democratic activities. The focus is middle class voters, with some attention to participation and barriers faced by people of color and low-income communities. Instead of the threat of political participation of traditionally marginalized groups, some political scientists now worry about declining trends in social engagement and political participation for all Americans.11

Today, when we look at participation in community activities and decision-making, we find new terms for community participation: resident participation, resident involvement, resident engagement, resident-driven, and community-driven. We find the actors are called ‘residents’ - not ‘citizens.’ Residents are understood to be the people who live in specific locations who have a stake in decisions that affect their geographic communities and surroundings. There is confusion in the field about which community stakeholders should have a say and to what extent. In a discussion about resident engagement among funders and community-based organizations, a participant states wryly “Residents reside; stakeholders participate. But residents are the ones who have to live with the decisions” (Neighborhood Funders Group 2002). A report about foundation-sponsored change initiatives suggests that

...the goal of community mobilization should not be to engage all residents or to involve everyone in the same way. Those who want to participate will have different levels of interest and ability to commit (Kubisch et al. 2002, 42).

The roles that residents play are also unclear. According to some national funders focused on place-based strategies, engaged residents may take part in advising, planning, budgeting, implementation and managing data. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (Casey Foundation) is recognized among foundations for its commitment to resident capacity and creating opportunities for residents to lead and practice. The Casey Foundation believes that "[r]esident engagement is based on a simple and straightforward notion: that residents should have the most to say about what happens in their lives and in their neighborhoods" (Annie E. Casey Foundation Residents Engaged 2000, 8). The Casey Foundation states that the goal of its support for resident engagement and leadership is "resident empowerment"...

...a shorthand for...many linked activities: community organizing, resident engagement, capacity building, leadership development, and other involvement and empowerment strategies leading to increased opportunities for residents of low-income communities to determine their own and their community’s future (Learning 2002, 5).

I will discuss foundations’ view on resident leadership in the following section. To clarify, resident leadership should not be understood to be resident control of the 1960s. Kingsley, McNeely and Gibson (1997) suggest the term “community driven” to describe the “more central role residents play in implement and planning” for community building initiatives. The authors assert:

...This [term] conveys neither the indirect and nondefining role implied by the term “community participation,” nor the more inward-looking and absolutist role implied by the term community controlled (36).

In addition, the Casey Foundation interprets ‘community driven’ to mean that local institutions would have greater decision-making authority than outside government or business interests. ‘Resident driven’ implies that resident interests and opinions would take priority over all of those institutions (Residents Engaged 2000, 9).

---

12 In its series on Human and Institutional Capacity Building, the Rockefeller Foundation (2004) suggests that the Casey Foundation recognizes the Casey Foundation’s support for resident development, but suggests that more work is needed to help communities create “an agenda” to control all of its resources. Rockefeller suggests that this capacity may be more important than other skills: like running a meeting and working as a team that are more easily taught (28).

13 The Casey Foundation did not identify resident empowerment initially as a goal of its Rebuilding Communities Initiative. The grantees insisted that residents be incorporated. Participants say it was the most important outcome of the initiative (Lessons from the Journey: Reflections on the Rebuilding Communities Initiative, 8). The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), Baltimore, MD, sponsors national initiatives and research to support disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. For other initiatives, see Casey Foundation publications at www.aecf.org.
Although resident decision-making authority is a goal for the philanthropic partnerships, funders acknowledge the struggle for control between funders, non-profit organizations and residents. Foundations maintain control over the agenda despite some attempts to change this power dynamic (Annie E. Casey Foundation Residents Engaged 2000; Neighborhood Funders Group 2002; Kellogg Foundation 2001).

To clarify contemporary use of the terms, I offer an update of Arnstein’s ladder in Figure 2.

![Figure 2](image)

Table 1 describes activities associated with each level of resident participation in this schema:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>volunteering, socializing, making donations, attending meetings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>networking, paying dues, committee work, fundraising, speaking in public;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Role in decision-making and policy making, formal positions, community activism, organizing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>planning, policy making, strategy, budgeting, governance, information management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Building Community Capacity**

Despite the lack of clarity about how the terms are used, newer change efforts focus on improving the skills and resources available to communities so they can meet their own needs. Today this work is called community capacity building. But, the claim that low-income residents and communities lack capacity is not new. In one example of a low-income black community’s efforts to run its own Headstart program, one of the participants, an elderly black farmer, asked:

"why do you say we are not qualified to run the program?...When my grandchildren have to have their appendix taken out or their teeth fixed, I am the one who must decide which doctor or dentist is best qualified to do the job, even
if I don’t know anything about medicine. And if I am qualified enough to decide on doctors and dentists, then when why am I not qualified to decide on teachers?” (Cahn and Cahn 1970, 30).

This example dates from the 1960s, but the challenge about participation is still perceived to be that the communities lack the skills and wherewithal to take on these roles. Then, the questions about citizens’ capacities and motives led to fear, doubt and mistrust. Although scholars and activists have challenged the view that certain communities lack skills, this perception is firmly and widely held. Today questions about residents’ capabilities present opportunities and even invitations for funders and non-profit organizations to provide financial and technical assistance to help people and communities of color gain skills and experiences to facilitate problem solving. Alternatives to approaches that focus on community deficits seek to develop strategies to build on strengths and compensate for gaps that residents have.

National foundations and non-profit partners seek to strengthen the capacity of residents to lead, participate and make decisions more effectively. Funders have invested significant resources in strengthening individual and community capacity, most recently through Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs). Researchers and foundations began using the term community capacity in the mid-1990s to refer to the skills, resources and capabilities of a community to meets its own goals and needs. See Chaskin et al. 2001 for review of the literature.

Community capacity describes the amount and capabilities of resources available to a community to bring about change. The resources are the individuals and community-based organizations that work with support from funders and lobbying in order to improve their communities. These four factors or agents are identified in the “ecology of change” articulated by the comprehensive community initiatives (Kubisch et al. 2002). Figure 3 illustrates these four factors.

![Figure 3. Contributing Factors to Community Capacity](image)

---

14 See Jennings (2004) and “Race, Politics, and Community Development” (The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science July 2004) for discussions about the pervasive perception of lack of skills for low-income and communities of color.

15 In the early 1990s, several national foundations introduced, Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) to combat poverty sponsored. Specifically, these place-based efforts seek to “develop [residents] as leaders, create social connections and organize people to participate in change” (Kubisch et al. 2002, 35).
One definition of *community capacity* is “the combined influence of a community’s commitment, resources, and skills that can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems” (Mayer 1995). A community can strengthen its capacity through the efforts of a range of stakeholders from families to community organizations to the business community to foundation.

Building on that definition, Chaskin, Brown, Vidal and Venkatesh (2001) offer this explanation based on evaluations of major foundation initiatives,

> Community capacity is the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community. Community capacity may operate through informal social processes and/or organized efforts by individuals, organizations, and social networks that exist among them and between them and the larger systems of which the community is a part (7).

In their book, Chaskin et al. (2001) outline four characteristics of community capacity: sense of community, sense of commitment, the ability to solve problems and access to human, financial and economic resources. Sense of community refers to the level of connectedness an individual feels to the neighborhoods and other residents. Seeing oneself as a part of larger community as a prerequisite for collective action. Sense of commitment refers to the feeling of willingness to take responsibility. The ability to solve problems would encompass skills needed to address problems collectively. Access to resources includes knowledge, contacts and opportunities within and outside the community.

In the efforts to build community capacity, funders acknowledge that the existence of significant structural racial and economic barriers. In one report experts on these initiatives concede that even where CCI participants wanted to address these problems beyond, they lacked financial and other resources to do so (Kubisch et al. 17). So instead, the focus remains on what can be done to address the challenges of the communities by addressing the need for skills, knowledge and connections among residents and community-based organizations.

For residents, CCIs cite the need for leadership, building social connections and engaged participation. It is recognized that

> leaders are a core component of a community’s capacity. They facilitate and give direction to the work of community organizations. They initiate activities that provide cultural, educational and recreational, and other opportunities for community residents to enjoy themselves and strengthen community identity.

---

16 This team of researchers draws on their work in documentation or evaluation for three comprehensive community initiatives sponsored by the Ford, MacArthur, Mott, and LISC. Chaskin and Brown work at Chapin Hall Center for Children at University of Chicago and evaluated the Ford Foundations’ Neighborhood Families Initiative.
They advocate for community interests and catalyze the formation of informal groups to address emerging problems or capitalize on opportunities (Chaskin et al. 2001, 27).

Philanthropy promotes resident leadership as one strategy for meeting residents’ needs for skills.

As Arnstein (1969) characterized citizen participation, leadership sounds positive, noble and even inspiring. The Annie E. Casey Foundation states “…[w]e believe that community-based efforts will succeed only if residents are fully engaged as leaders, setting the agenda for the change they’d like to see” (Resident Leadership 2005). But what does leadership mean? How much decision-making authority do leaders have? Are these actual leaders or engaged participants? Do leaders have followers?

Leadership

In contemporary community building work, funders and practitioners outline the need, methods and techniques for leadership development, but offer little insight into theories and backgrounds of these programs. For example, Chaskin et al.’s comprehensive review of the state of community capacity building efforts devotes only one chapter to the subject of leadership development programs as part of an cursory overview of work in the field. Even books and manuals on organizing offer little insight on leadership development, dedicating no more than a few pages to the subject (Mondros and Wilson 1994; Bobo, Kendall, and Max 2001; Staples). Consequently, we must look outside of the community development field for literature to inform discussions of community leadership.

- Leadership: Hierarchical Models

When funders and organizations do discuss leadership theory, they refer to the literature on corporate leadership. The formal study of leadership within academia addresses corporate contexts and large public bureaucracies. The study of leadership, located in psychology and management fields, approaches leadership as a study of the great man in political or corporate settings. Based on his review of 600 books, chapters and articles from the 1930s to 1990s, Rost (1993) found that the majority considered leadership to be the work of:

great men and women with certain preferred traits influencing followers to do what the leaders wish in order to achieve group/organizational goals that reflect excellence defined as some kind of higher-level effectiveness (179-180).

The more common conceptions of leadership focus on the behaviors and traits of leaders and the relationship between leaders and followers.17

17 Leadership theories include: the great man, group, trait, behavioral, and situational/contingency (Rost, 26).
Only 150 works defined leadership explicitly or distinguished between leadership and other social processes that may be used to “coordinate, direct, control and govern” others (Rost 1993 179). Rost (1993) criticizes this body of literature as an “industrial leadership paradigm” (94). He argues that most of this literature focuses on creating effective managers, not leaders. He points to the overwhelming use of rational, technocratic language and methodologies. In contrast to leadership, management focuses on individual traits and goal achievement as the measure of effectiveness. Rost (1993) defines leadership as “influence relationship among leaders and followers (active participants) who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (102). In contrast, managers have the authority to compel subordinates to achieve the goals of producing goods and services through coordinated activity. While these coordinated activities may be part of leadership, they are not essential. Leadership might call for reform, disrupting the status quo, demonstrations and unplanned actions (Rost 1993, 152). Effective management may draw on leadership skills, but leadership is not management.

Although Rost (1993) defines leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real change that reflect their mutual purposes,” he clarifies that it is both “leaders and followers who “do leadership” (102, 112). Influence can come from leaders or followers, though leaders necessarily have more influence. Finally, Rost (1993) explains that:

leadership has more to do with who we are than with what we do, with the culture of the organization than its effectiveness, and with how leaders and followers integrate into community or society than with how they get their needs and wants met as individuals or a group (119).

While Rost urges researchers to understand leadership in different contexts, including community, he stops short of developing these ideas.

The most regularly cited authors on leadership in community contexts are: Gardner, Heifitz and Schein, whose work speaks to the role of leadership in social action. Gardner addresses the importance of influence and communication between leaders and followers in considering their relationship. Gardner defines leadership as “the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers” (1990, 1). He grants that leaders must be understood within their historical, political and structural context. Principled leadership depends on the existence of shared values among constituents. “It is community and culture that hold the individual in a framework of values; when the framework disintegrates, individual value systems disintegrate” (Gardner 1990, 113). He sees community building as “one of the highest and most essential skills a leader can command (Gardner 1990, 118).

Heifitz (1999) sees leadership as an activity of “mobilizing people to do something” (20). Leaders recognize when adaptive or technical work or change is needed. ‘Adaptive work’ requires people to learn about different values and to make a shift in their values, expectations, attitudes, or habits of behavior to respond to problems that are outside existing knowledge and skills.
When leaders use current knowledge, skills and tools are used to resolve a situation, that work is ‘technical work’ (Heifitz 1999, 22-23). Heifitz also examines the role of influence and the advantages and disadvantages of formal authority.

Schein offers another view of leadership that revolves around culture in organizational settings. Leaders create, modify and manage culture and their “unique talent...is their ability to understand and work with culture” (Schein, 5). Schein’s vision of culture is that of shared, basic assumptions held by a group with a history of shared learning and stable membership (15). He concludes his argument stating that leaders of the future will have to be perpetual learners and create learning cultures to accommodate the future change brought about by advances in technology and knowledge. The key is a leader’s ability to “listen, to emotionally involve the group in achieving its own insights into its cultural dilemmas, and to be genuinely participative in his or her own approach to learning” (Schein, 389).

Taken together, these models offer some insights for leadership in community contexts. Each emphasizes the leader’s influence on using and shaping shared culture and meaning. Gardner highlights the role of influence and shared values. Heifitz’s emphasis on adaptive work speaks to community contexts where different kinds of problem solving are needed for social action. Schein underscores the need for perpetual learning and fostering participation through listening. Within the body of corporate leadership models, these social models speak to the needed traits, behaviors, and roles for community leaders. However, their discussions apply best to leaders who hold recognized positions of authority and roles in relatively stable environments.

Despite their relevance, these studies do not fully address the needs of leaders at the neighborhood scale for people or color and low-income people. First, communities face the task of developing individuals for collective purposes. As Chaskin et al. (2001) write

[developing individuals’ leadership skills does not necessarily translate directly into community capacity. Those individuals must be willing to employ their skills in ways that benefit others (including the community at large) and that encourage others to play an active role in community life (57-58).

Further, the dynamics of leadership differs in community contexts. Often, there are several formal and informal leaders, especially in settings where volunteers and professionals work together regularly. Leaders burn out or move away. Community leaders and members may not know each other. In addition, Gardner, Heifitz and Schein’s approaches say little about how neighborhood-based leaders can operate effectively in contexts defined by deep racial and economic inequities. Limited resources fluctuate, frequently changing needs, and the demands for services far outweigh apparent solutions.
Leadership: Shared Leadership Models

Researchers in community development, adult education, history and women's studies have explored alternative models of leadership that reflect the opportunities and challenges of leadership in community contexts. Though less well recognized, there is a growing body of literature related to collaborative, developmental, democratic and informal leadership. These models are considered to be more flexible, committed to shared power, and less focused on the hierarchy of the leader and follower relationship. They share a number of factors that emphasize leadership as a collective process. These include:

- a belief in the need for shared vision;
- delegating responsibility for tasks to all members;
- empowering group members; and
- supporting the group's decision-making process.

Collaborative leadership focuses on shared responsibility and collective work. Rather than seeking control, a leader works collectively to empower others. One definition of collaborative leadership comes from a cross-generational study of women leaders engaged in social action in the 1960s and 1970s. Astin and Leland (1991) observe that:

Leadership is a process by which members of a group are empowered to work together synergistically toward a common goal or vision that will create change, transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life. The leader—a catalytic force—is someone who, by virtue of her position or opportunity, empowers others toward the collective action in accomplishing the goal or vision.

Astin and Leland highlight the underlying assumptions that they consider to be feminist. The three assumptions are: (1) knowledge is socially constructed and must be considered in its social, historical and cultural context; (2) that we are interdependent; and (3) that leaders can share power with instead of seeking to control them. Elaborating on this collaborative model, Ospina and Schall (2000, 2001) assert that leadership emerges as people make meaning of each other's roles in group settings. In their research for Leadership for a Changing World program supported by the Ford Foundation, Ospina and Schall clarify:

This means that leadership, like any process that involves cognition, is not individual, rational, abstract, detached and general. Instead, leadership is social (located in human communities), it is embodied and concrete (affected by

---

18 Some writers associate collaborative models with facilitative and servant leadership (Bass 1990; www.greenleaf.org).

19 Ospina and Schall are professors in The Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University, the research and documentation partner for the Leadership for a Changing World program.
material aspects and physical constraints), it is located (context dependent), it is engaged (dependent on interaction with the surrounding environment), and it is specific (sensitive to contingencies) (2000, 2001).

To study leadership, Astin and Leland (1991) suggest examining at four factors: the leader, the context, the leadership processes (style and strategies leaders employ) and the outcomes (of the social action) (56). In this vein Ospina and Schall recommend focusing studies on leadership as a collective process where we examine the “relationship between leaders, the team and the broader community that they serve” (2000, 2001).

Building on the collaborative model, the developmental leadership model focuses on nurturing and strengthening the capacities of all participants. Developmental approaches assume that anyone can practice leadership in any institution. Therefore, the developmental leader works with all participants to be inclusive, see the possibilities for their “unending growth,” develops their creative leadership and supports their potential contributions to the community at large. Belenky, Bond and Weinstock (1997) describe developmental leadership as a “model of public leadership dedicated to ‘drawing out,’ ‘raising up,’ and ‘lifting up’ people and communities (17). This leadership paradigm is “organized around values, metaphors and activities generally associated with maternal thinking and maternal practice” (Belenky, Bond and Weinstock 1997, 17). These leaders bring strong facilitation, listening and reflection skills to encourage participants to speak and share ideas to broaden the group’s knowledge.

Three other conceptions of collaborative leadership are worth mentioning. Chrislip and Larson’s (1994) collaborative leadership model focuses on the relationship between civic and elected leaders and citizens. Collaboration is more than simply sharing knowledge and information (communication) and more than a relationship that helps party achieve its own goals (cooperation and coordination). The authors believe:

...if you bring the right people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community (14).

Similarly, Gastil (1997) writes about the need for shared responsibility, empowering group members, and group decision-making in the leadership needed to facilitate democracy in the context of the global movement for democracy. Discussions of informal leadership highlight the role of shared vision and values and interpersonal relationships (Pielstick 2000).

Recognizing that leadership may be practiced individually or collectively, all of these models argue that it is in collective processes that we can understand the source of leadership. The collaborative, democratic, informal and development models all
represent participative forms of leadership that may respond to dynamics of leading and challenges of developing leaders in community contexts.

Community Models of Leadership Development

The purpose of this research is to explore the theories and practices of programs that use resident leadership development as a strategy for strengthening community capacity. In this section, I turn to development of leaders through training programs. For every conception of leadership, there are hundreds of leadership training programs. Leadership training includes both corporate and community models.

Corporate programs tend to rely on the individual leader-follower conceptions of leadership that support business audiences and their institutional context. Conger (1992) identifies four distinct approaches for developing leadership for corporate settings. To understand whether or not the training actually makes a difference in leadership development, Conger and his team participated and observed five major national training programs that typify these four approaches. Each approach, which Conger calls a model, incorporates elements of the other three, but one theme dominates. The four themes are: skills, conceptual, personal growth, and feedback (Conger 1992, xiii-xv).

Among leadership training programs, the skills model is the oldest, focusing on teaching the skills and behaviors that comprise leadership. The conceptual model assumes that providing a conceptual overview of leadership helps people better appreciate the experience of leadership. The personal growth model encourages participants to explore their own talents, values and desires as they seek to lead. The least common model focuses on feedback for the participants. Assuming that leaders have varying levels of the necessary skills, the feedback model encourages participants to address weaknesses and feel more confident about their strengths in order to lead more effectively.

Conger concludes that the corporate training models fall short because they create only awareness of skills in the limited time allotted. Participants need opportunities to apply the skills in the workplace. The programs do not address working with diverse populations or in decentralized settings adequately. Conger (1992) suggests that many corporations actually want managers who will produce results, rather than leaders “who take initiative, challenge the status quo, and encourage followings” (190). His recommendation is a blended approach that offers teachable skills, awareness of conceptual skills, personal growth, and confidence while inspiring passion.

---

20 The audiences include corporations (sales, operations and management divisions), education, government, and nonprofit organizations. Trainings are meant to complement coaching and on-the-job experiences.
Distinct from the corporate training models, community-based training models include two distinct approaches associated with more collaborative and developmental theories of leadership. The first is a popular education approach, inspired by the Citizenship Schools and Freirian traditions. The popular education is well known among community activists. A second approach that I call a community vision model has emerged in recent years with support by foundations. Both approaches accommodate a more collaborative theory of leadership for social action.

Despite differences, the community and corporate models are not mutually exclusive. Research on community leadership training show a role for the skills building, conceptual, personal growth and feedback approaches. In one forthcoming study of grassroots leaders, respondents acknowledged that “conceptual knowledge helped them gain deeper insight into leadership roles, enabling them to develop a broader picture and guidelines for appropriate behavior” (Boehm and Staples). Further, the authors state that,

An institutionalized experiential process has the advantage of enabling leaders to develop gradually as they take on additional roles and reflect on their experiences. Experiential processes may include feedback from skilled trainers and other participating leaders. The importance of feedback lies in its capacity to instill participants with a higher awareness of their own actions (Boehm and Staples).

The traditional hierarchical and the collaborative-developmental forms of leadership training overlap in some core skill areas and delivery methods. However, the fundamental differences in the institutional contexts and philosophies of the two approaches distinguish community leadership training programs from their corporate counterparts.

- Popular education: Citizenship Schools

The Highlander Folk School (Highlander) represents an early, successful example of using education for social justice in this country. Encouraged by Danish Folk Schools in Europe that promoted civic participation, Myles Horton (1905-1990) founded the school in 1932. Highlander believed that education based on experiences could be used a tool to empower poor people in Appalachia and the South in general to “develop their capacity for working collectively to solve their own problems” (Horton 1990, 132). In the words of Horton (1990), “the job of Highlander was to multiply leadership or radical social change” (115). Highlander stated its goals to preserve local culture (music and heritage), build consciousness and create a new social order. Though it was not called a leadership development program, Highlander staff invited people “with potential for grassroots leadership” who “were dealing with basic changes in the structure of society” (Horton 1990, 144, 147).

Located in the relatively isolated mountains of Tennessee, Highlander offered an immersion experience for political organizers. Workshops lasted 2 day to 8 weeks. The attendees, typically
15-40 adults of diverse racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds, often worked together both before during and after the training.

From its initial focus on adult education, the school became an important educational center for the labor movement during the late 1930s and 1940s. In the 1940s Highlander was known as a place where blacks and whites could meet to explore common interests and solve problems. The School earned a reputation for cultivating and supporting leadership among poor disenfranchised groups in the South. Horton (1990) described Highlander as “a stop in the continuum of defining and trying to solve an important problem, a place to think and plan and share knowledge” (148). Highlander staff believed strongly that people had the capacity within them to address the challenges and transform their own communities. The trainings were geared to meet the needs, interests and constraints of participants. Staff brought a variety of creative resources: movies, recordings, storytellers, music and consultants to help participants build shared knowledge, explore new concepts and plan to take new action at home. Training was just one part of the Highlander educational “process,” staff supported participants in often difficult situations in the field (Horton 1990, 133). Highlander did not follow a prescribed strategy, rather the school responded to the needs of situations as they arose.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Highlander’s emphasis shifted to the Civil Rights movement. In 1957, Septima Clark developed the concept of citizenship schools to increase voter registration among the black community on the Sea Islands of North Carolina. Clark, a black school teacher from North Carolina, was inspired by a Highlander workshop and recruited her niece Bernice Robinson to be the first teacher. Within three years, the number of black voters registered tripled with the help of the schools in Charleston Country (Levine 2004). The Citizenship School trained teachers to replicate the program in other parts of the South. Citizenship Schools valued and respected the competence and dignity of participants, but equally as compelling was the commitment to political education and organizing. Horton (1990) writes,

Along with becoming literate, they learned to organize, they learned to protest... because they also learned that you couldn’t just read and write yourself into freedom. You had to fight for that and you had to do it as part of a group, not as an individual” (104).

In 1961, the program was transferred to the SCLC, where Clark continued to direct the program for Civil Rights activists. Citizenship Schools trained tens of thousands of African Americans before the program ended in 1970 (Levine 2004).  

21 For decades, Highlander faced several legal challenges and accusations of communism levied by from conservative, Southern segregationists. Glen writes that Highlander survived because it remained both sensitive to southern culture and committed to transforming it” (4).

22 Horton (1990) wrote that Citizenship Schools were estimated to have impacted 100,000 people (115).
Popular education methods are used to encourage learners to reflect on their lives critically and to take action to bring about social change. Many writers credit the writings of Paulo Freire, (1921-1997) the Brazilian adult educator for promulgating this approach. Freire’s goal was "conscientizacao" or consciousness raising -- “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire 1970, 19).23

In his adult education work, Freire used culture circles to encourage participants to analyze the conditions of their lives and to see themselves as actors. The circles inspired Freire’s literacy work. Teachers taught literacy based on dialogues about topics participants wanted to discuss. In the late 1950s, Freire began to work with two democratic movements for voting rights and for land reform for illiterate peasants in Brazil. Explaining the core principles of the approach, Freire (1973) writes

...[w]e wanted a literacy program which would be an introduction to the democratization of culture, a program with men as its Subjects rather than as patient recipients, a program which itself would be an act of creation, capable of releasing other creative acts, one in which students would develop the impatience and vivacity which characterize search and invention” (43).

The goal was to “identify learning content with the learning process” in the words of an unnamed Brazilian sociologist (Freire 1973, 39). Freire (1973) believed “[participants] could be helped to learn democracy through the exercise of democracy; for that knowledge, above all others, can only be assimilated experientially” (36).

Interestingly, Freire envisioned that even leadership development needed to be approached as a collective project rooted in culture. “When cultural action, as a totalized and totalizing process approaches an entire community, formal leaders...grow along with everyone else...” or new leaders might surface “as a result of the new social consciousness of the community” (Freire 1970, 138-9). He worried that leaders who participated in training outside of their community would be alienated or would use the newly learned skills to control their peers.

Influenced by Freire, today’s popular education teachers encourage students to come to their own understanding; the teacher’s role is not to transmit or “deposit” knowledge in what Freire (1970) calls the banking concept of education to the student (58). Following Freire’s emphasis on visual representations and raising consciousness, popular educators rely on drama, song, puppets and visual arts to engage audiences in critical analysis of existing social conditions and encourage social action (Kerka 1999).

23The definition is the Translator’s note. Myra Bergman Ramos translated the original manuscript written in Portuguese.
The popular education approach reflects the both the Citizenship Schools and the Freirian project which believed in radical, liberatory pedagogy. The aim was to bring about social change through collective struggles for empowerment and political rights.

- **Community Vision Approach to Leadership Development**

The Community Vision approach represents a second model of leadership development in line with collaborative principles. This model is distinguished from the popular education approaches by its emphasis on the community's vision for itself. Both models of leadership development respond to the opportunities and needs of settings deemed economically impoverished and culturally devalued. The designers of the original popular approaches worked with marginalized communities with very low education levels in rural settings with few formal social services. Organizations that use the Community Vision model tend to be part of low-income urban communities, often served by a network of community-based organizations, local stakeholders and foundations. The community vision model focuses on developing relationships and commitment to a shared vision of community goals among participants. Community-vision approaches may employ techniques of popular education like peer leadership, participant-directed learning, a focus on practical skills, creative resources, and may be tailored to reflect local experience. There is a commitment to collective social action, but without calls for radical political organizing. 24

The community vision approach usually has the advantage of significant philanthropic support. Foundations seek to prepare community residents to assume decision-making roles, especially in foundation-sponsored initiatives. 25 Foundations have invested considerable resources to evaluate and learn lessons from the neighborhood-based organizations for community-change work. Leadership development ideally happens at the level of the individual, the sponsoring organization and the larger community (1999). The Kellogg Foundation articulates this perspective:

---

24 The community vision model may be considered an evolution in community leadership training with its professional orientation. Similarly, this reflects a larger trend of change and professionalism in social service organizations that compete for shrinking government and foundation support and that are influenced by corporate management models.

25 Casey Foundation has highlighted approaches grantees have taken to meet the requirements for both of its comprehensive community initiatives, Making Connections and Rebuilding Communities Initiatives. In the Rebuilding Communities Initiative (RCI), Casey required grantees to set up and oversee new governance structures in their neighborhoods, participate in collaborations, and organize residents among other activities. The Paths to Leadership report documents the five training methods: “formal skill training, transformational experiences, experience, supported experience and taking on a formal facilitator role” (Casey Foundation Paths, 9). Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative was one of the RCI grantees. The Kellogg Foundation (2002) commissioned an extensive study of 55 grassroots leadership programs by the Development Guild. The Ford Foundation, the Advocacy Institute and the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service at New York University have recognized over 150 individual leaders or leadership teams over the last five years with financial awards (http://leadershipforchange.org).
Increasingly, diverse populations must find ways to share power, resources and
decision making. KLCC operates from the premise that while many 21st century
communities are eager to shape new visions for themselves, they often need the
relationships and collective leadership experience to realize these visions. Our
goal is to create opportunities for communities to cultivate the relationships and
expertise they need to pursue a more just quality of life for all (2005).

The focus on vision reflects what funders see as the first step to implementing and achieving
plans for community change (Kubisch et al. 2002, 36). In turn, the foundation perspective
reflects the corporate approaches, which since the mid-1980s have advocated the need for
leaders to instill their vision in order to achieve results. Residents learn specific skills like
meeting facilitation, working with diverse groups, and goal setting. Clarifying values, conflict
resolution and working with diverse people feature prominently in the community vision
training. The foundations emphasize different aspects. The Casey Foundation emphasizes the
need for data management/control and strategies to avoid burnout, while the Kellogg
Foundation encourages analyses of power as part of decision-making and creating a learning
community for emerging grassroots leadership (Annie E. Casey Foundation 1999, 2005; W.K.
Kellogg Foundation 2002). These more professionalized approaches to leadership development
prepare residents to take part in the change initiatives endorsed by major national foundations.

Summary: Literature Review

In the 1960s, community leadership fueled social movements that led to personal growth and
economic and structural changes in our society. Encouraged by leadership development
training and the Civil Rights movement at the time, black and poor people demanded the right
to participate in their community's decision-making. Forty years later, the major national
donors have made resident-led community decision-making the cornerstone of their efforts to
support community building in low-income communities. In this commitment, foundations
have invested in community leadership development models that prepare residents to take part
and lead community initiatives.

Two community leadership approaches: Popular Education and Community Vision offer a
framework for leadership program staff who are challenged to value different contributions,
motivate, or engage members of the community. These approaches are meant to broaden the
pool of potential leaders in communities to accommodate varying skills and motivations and to
manage flux as people move away, burn out from active service, and face competing demands
for their time.

---

26 As corporate managers faced global pressure, the role of vision became more important to distinguish companies
and to help them compete more effectively.
The popular education approaches assume that groups have the skills they need to work together to address their own challenges. Popular trainings facilitate and provide space for reflection and joint problem solving. The community vision approach highlights the need for shared vision and relationship building for leaders. This community vision trainings help residents develop skills necessary to participate in future collective problem solving sessions. Table 2 summarizes key features of the two approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popular Education</th>
<th>Community Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship Schools</td>
<td>Primary Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• commitment to political</td>
<td>• creating and supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empowerment and social</td>
<td>a community vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose</td>
<td>• clarifying values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• practical and</td>
<td>• networking within and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participant-driven</td>
<td>outside the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
<td>• problem solving skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• peer led workshops</td>
<td>development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• respect for adults and</td>
<td>• opportunities for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what they know</td>
<td>practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• creating solidarity</td>
<td>Secondary Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and cooperation</td>
<td>• analysis of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• promoting local culture</td>
<td>• developing a “big picture”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and creative expression.</td>
<td>perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freire</td>
<td>• managing conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• dialogue about existing</td>
<td>• data use and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social conditions and</td>
<td>information control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td>• renewal activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• participants determine</td>
<td>• learning community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the content of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• teacher and learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as co-learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• visual representation,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drama, skits and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other “codes” to “animate”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or encourage discussion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This literature review has underscored the differences in these community-based leadership models from the traditional leader-follower models that dominate the corporate management literature. Relatively few researchers document alternative models focused on shared-learning, although this literature is growing. The popular education and community vision approaches highlight group-based strategies for leadership development. However, the question remains: how do leadership development organizations implement these approaches in contemporary urban communities? What are the leadership development approaches, underlying theories, and practices of actual community-based organizations? How do these programs meet the specific needs of their communities to broaden participation and build community capacity? The next chapter describes the methodology used to answer these questions through a study of three community-based leadership development programs in Boston.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Boston provides rich opportunities to explore questions of community participation. Across the country and even the world, non-profit organizations and associations look to Boston as a model for successful community organizing. In 2004, the Annie E. Casey Foundation launched a multi-year project to document the impact of Boston’s organizing history on improving the lives of children and families over the last 20 years. The Casey Foundation hopes to contribute lessons learned from the work of Boston residents and community-based organizations to the field of community building (web.mit.edu/crcp). National foundations and non-profit organizations promote community building and participation to address growing socio-economic inequality. These organizations emphasize the need for support for residents to make effective community decisions.

But, how are Boston-based organizations drawing on the city’s rich organizing history and knowledge to improve local ongoing community building efforts? In the face of continued socio-economic inequalities, how do contemporary organizations develop the ability of residents to support and lead community change? Foundation reports document training methods and general lessons about resident leadership training (see Chaskin 2001; Chaskin et al. 2001), but offer few insights into how local organizations conceive and practice leadership development as a systematic way for strengthening community capacity in neighborhoods. To address need in the literature and in the field, I undertook this study to learn how community-based organizations prepare and support residents who seek to play an active role in neighborhood efforts to make social change. The central question of this research is:

What are the theories, motivations and practices of local, community-based programs using leadership development as a strategy for building community capacity?

A set of related questions are:

- Why were the programs founded? How do they meet the need for resident leadership and engagement in the neighborhoods they serve?

- How do these programs contribute to community capacity building at the neighborhood level? Specifically, how do these programs help individuals develop problem solving skills and knowledge, confidence, social connections and sense of belonging to the community necessary to support community capacity?

In this chapter I describe the definitions, research design, data collection and analysis methods used for this study followed by a brief discussion of the strengths and limitations of these methods. (See Appendix A for a List of Contributing Individuals.)
Definitions

I define the three central concepts to this study: citizen participation, community capacity and leadership. 27

- Citizen participation

Citizen or resident participation is a categorical term used to describe voluntary efforts of community residents and stakeholders in the affairs that affect their communities. I include activities in both political and community building or community development contexts. Citizen or resident participation begins with the individual actor working individually or collectively to improve his or her community. A related concept community participation focuses on collective participation where the hope is that community members work together to address the community’s issues. The terms may be used interchangeably. Community organizing represents one form of participation. See Appendix F for further discussion of participation.

- Community capacity

I rely on Chaskin et al.’s (2001) definition of community capacity as

the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community. Community capacity may operate through informal social processes and/or organized efforts by individuals, organizations, and social networks that exist among them and between them and the larger systems of which the community is a part (7).

According to Chaskin et al. (2001), communities with capacity have four characteristics: sense of community, sense of commitment, mechanisms for problem solving and access to human, economic, political and physical resources. Sense of community refers to the level of connectedness an individual feels to the neighborhoods and other residents. Seeing oneself as a part of larger community is a prerequisite for collective action. Sense of commitment refers to the feeling of willingness to take responsibility. The ability to solve problems includes collective problem solving skills. Access to resources includes knowledge, contacts and opportunities within and outside the community.

In addition to the skills, knowledge and resources that individuals contribute, there is the question of their willingness to participate. I look at the characteristics of community capacity as well as the factors that make people willing to participate. I examine how leadership programs address these characteristics and factors: skills for problem solving, community

27 Refer to Chapter 2 for discussions of community participation and community capacity.
knowledge, confidence in one's abilities, and connections to other residents and to the neighborhood (sense of belonging).

- Leadership

I define leadership as a process between group members who commit to work together to achieve common purposes (Astin and Leland 1991; Rost 1993). This is meant to reflect the opportunities and needs for community problem solving in dynamic community contexts.

Research Design

This thesis is intended as an exploratory study of the approaches and practices of resident development created by community-based organizations to build neighborhood capacity. Qualitative research methods were used to examine three cases of leadership training programs offered by organizations in urban neighborhoods facing socio-economic disadvantages.

To select the cases for this research, I drew on my previous knowledge and on recommendations of neighborhood-based organizations that have created and sponsor leadership trainings. Table 3 describes the six selection criteria for the study. The three organizations studied met the specific criteria and agreed to participate in this research project.

Table 3: Criteria for Selection of Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>UMN</th>
<th>MYTOWN(^{28})</th>
<th>DSNI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood non-profit organization (history)</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possess a Community Training Program</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>3 years (pilot in 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer regular training at no or low cost (This requirement has 2 parts.)</td>
<td>Yes – low fee for materials</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – low fee for non-members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve low to moderate income neighborhoods</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written documentation of training materials</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to participants</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Community activism or organizing</td>
<td>Yes – complement to organizing work</td>
<td>Yes – uses stories of organizers</td>
<td>Yes – complement to organizing work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{28}\) While MYTOWN does not represent a conventional resident training leadership program, I wanted to include a program that uses the city's rich organizing history in order to inspire and train new leaders.
Data Collection

Interviews and participant observations supplemented my examination of the organization and the specific training program documents. Table 4 shows the data collected.

Table 4. Data Collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>UMN</th>
<th>MYTOWN</th>
<th>DSNI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization and Program description</td>
<td>Web site, funding proposal</td>
<td>Web site, funding proposal, brochure, evaluation reports</td>
<td>Web site, brochure, funding proposal addendum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum materials</td>
<td>Participants workbooks</td>
<td>Facilitator guides</td>
<td>Participant/Facilitator workbooks; debrief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of interviewees</td>
<td>7 (includes 1 follow up)</td>
<td>7 (includes 2 follow ups &amp; 1 focus group)</td>
<td>7 (includes 1 follow up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Interviews</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Time</td>
<td>30 – 60 minutes</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>45 – 90 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews of Staff (years of experience)</td>
<td>director/lead trainer (25 yrs). Staff (4 years)</td>
<td>2 program staff (1-3 years)</td>
<td>Program staff (25 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews of designers/trainers (experience)</td>
<td>2 interviews (over 40 years combined)</td>
<td>2 phone interviews with co-founder (10 years)</td>
<td>3 Interviews (over 50 years combined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with Participants</td>
<td>1 resident (40 yrs); 3 board members</td>
<td>Focus group with 7 participants (16-18 yrs)</td>
<td>5 residents (24 to 70 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Observation</td>
<td>3 two-hour trainings; 1 two-hour Study Circle</td>
<td>2 training sessions</td>
<td>2 eight-hour modules; 3 two-hour meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 The organization materials describe the organizations' missions, goals, activities, history and successes, while the program documents describe the program, its purpose, and components. See Appendix B.

30 I interviewed MYTOWN's current and past program directors (past participants). One is a past board member.

31 Experience refers to years of full-working experience; each has had at least 5 years of experience with the program. The DSNI program designers I interviewed included 1 staff, 1 board member and 1 consultant.

32 The DSNI participants interviewed include 4 current and 1 past board members. They included 3 women and 2 men. Two had led neighborhood planning teams. One of the MYTOWN staff is a former DSNI participant and referred to DSNI during our interview about MYTOWN. The MYTOWN participants interviewed have worked at MYTOWN at least 3 months and are from Boston neighborhoods. Three are from the South End. For UMN I was able to interview only one participant. I interviewed board members who had attended trainings or events.

33 I worked at MYTOWN from 2001-2004 after serving as the organization's program officer at a local foundation. I helped organize, edit and design training sessions in the MYTOWN curriculum. I coached Youth Guides to deliver the training sessions. I later worked to promote the curriculum to other youth-serving organizations.
To inform my analysis of the program materials, I conducted interviews with:

- the program staff who implement the training program
- individuals who designed and/or conduct the program sessions
- participants who had attended at least one sessions.\(^{34}\)

The interviews of staff and designers/trainers were focused on the mission, goals, client base and scope of activities of the organization and the training program. I asked additional questions to understand the underlying theory, the practices and efforts to help residents increase their capacity. The participant interviews with residents were intended to explore perceptions of the content, opinions about the impact, and conceptions of how social change happens in neighborhoods. I selected participants after meeting them at trainings and based on staff recommendations.

The interviews were semi-structured and lasted from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Each interview was recorded in writing and with a tape recorder except for five telephone conversations. For citations, I have used direct quotations where the interviewee has given written permission. I did not use the names of participants to protect privacy in some quotations. Both the written documentation and recordings were a rich source of data about the programs’ models for developing leadership. (See Appendix C.)

To gain more objective insight into the approach, content and flow of the trainings, I observed and participated in two or more training-related sessions for each organization. I hoped to compare my observations to the staff and designers’ conceptions of the program. At DSNI I participated in two 8-hour training sessions: the Values, Vision and Power module and the Organizing module. I was also invited to attend five preparation meetings with the facilitators for three modules: Organizing, Resource Development and Developing Leaders. At UMN I participated in three 2-hour trainings for Fundraising and Nonprofit Academies. I also attended a Study Activist Circle on CORI, the Criminal Offender Record Information. At MYTOWN I observed a training session on research, an activity on social justice and a planning meeting led by return Youth Guides.\(^ {35}\) I took notes where appropriate during the sessions and wrote reflections within one day. (See Appendix D.)

\(^{34}\) For each program, there is overlap in these roles. The program designers may lead trainings at all three organizations and at DSNI program participants may volunteer to lead future trainings. At UMN I was unable to reach participants, so I spoke with board members who were familiar with the training content.

\(^{35}\) As a former MYTOWN employee, I have created and led trainings at MYTOWN on leadership, research, communication, social justice, and personal exploration.
Analysis

Using the data collected, I examined themes related to community capacity building and leadership development models. See Table 5.

Table 5. Analytical Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership development</th>
<th>For each organization, I compare the approach used to models of community leadership development. I look for similarities in goals, training methods, staffing, operations and content. The organizations' definitions of leadership and the community vision provide context. Given that each of the models focused on resident development at three levels: individual, community and community issues, I also made note of this aspect of the leadership development programming.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community capacity</td>
<td>To measure the contribution of the leadership development on community capacity, I examine how each organization supports residents to develop the skills, knowledge and resources (see Chaskin). I also examine factors that encourage residents to participate: confidence, and connections to other residents and to the neighborhood (sense of belonging).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>These skills prepare residents to solve problem collectively. They include communication, leadership, organizing, policy analysis, fundraising, coalition building, critical thinking, working collectively, conflict resolution, and organizing (See Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Galston 2000; Kirlin 2003). These skills contribute to conceptual understanding or may be applied to practical situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>This category includes understanding and appreciation for community history, issues, and events and of different racial and ethnic groups in the neighborhood. It also includes knowledge and awareness of family history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>This form refers to a belief in the value, self-worth, capabilities and ability for the self or the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections to other residents in the neighborhood</td>
<td>This category includes social relationships with neighbors, residents and other stakeholders. These relationships may develop through proximity, family and social relations, community ties, and collective work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections to the neighborhood</td>
<td>This category includes a sense of belonging to the neighborhood. This connection may arise from past or present residence or interactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strengths and Limitations of Methodology

These research methods provided a rich source of data that helped me gain valuable insight into the rich texture of community-based leadership development in Boston. However, there were a few limitations related to data access, potential bias, and the challenges of describing work that is ongoing and evolving.
o Access to Data: I had uneven access to materials and staff time at the three organizations as a result of staff constraints, funding limitations and my own personal experience with the organizations. I was unable to complete second interviews with all of the program staff, as originally planned. While each program reflects careful thought and planning, older organizations that had received more funding support tended to have more complete documentation of their efforts.

o Accuracy: The program information may not accurately represent each organization’s work. Written materials may not be updated to reflect program changes that happen over time. It is a challenge to capture the dynamic processes of training sessions that are shaped each time they are delivered or even discussed.

o Bias: Some of the information collected may reflect both the interviewees’ and my own bias. Other materials may be written to present the program in the most favorable light to meet the needs and priorities of funders. People may have been reluctant to share information that reflects negatively on themselves or the organizations with someone they do not know well. In addition, as a former MYTOWN employee, I created and led trainings. My experience may introduce some bias, but it creates a sensibility about the training process that informs this study.

o Time: I was unable to observe an entire cycle of training and the process of leadership development, which may take place over months and even years.

o Focus: I chose to focus on formal training mechanisms for this study, but leadership development is a larger undertaking that encompasses coaching, experience, apprenticeships, and practice.

o Language and Concepts: All of the practitioners and participants offered insightful and critical reflections, but there were a few challenges. Some of the interviewees do not consider their experience in the training separately from their experience in the overall organization. Their definitions of abstract terms like power and leadership were unclear reflecting those found in practice and in the literature. Although I tried to define the terms, clarify the questions and guide the conversations, it was difficult for the respondents to understand my questions or to provide focused and detailed responses, in some cases.

In spite of these limitations, these multiple sources of data helped me appreciate the complexity of the theories, practices and motivations of the leadership development programs developed by respected community-based organizations in Boston.

Summary of Methodology

This research will examine three cases of local leadership training programs to learn more about the underlying theories, practices and motivations of this work. I rely on a review of the literature, program documents and interviews with the program designers, staff, participants and board members. To support my findings, I observed and participated in training sessions and related meetings. Using the data collected, I explore themes of individual and community
leadership as well as community capacity building. Despite some limitations, this study uncovers rich insights from the three cases: the Union of Minority Neighborhoods, MYTOWN, Inc. and DSNI discussed in the following three chapters.
Chapter 4: Union of Minority Neighborhoods Institute for Neighborhood Leadership

*Motto: Communities working together, uniting for change, can and will make a difference.*

Union of Minority Neighborhoods (UMN) is a local non-profit that seeks to broaden political leadership in communities of color in Boston. Conceived in the tradition of the Citizenship Schools of the Civil Rights era, the program helps grassroots leaders develop organizing skills for political empowerment. The trainings focus on skill development, information sharing and interpersonal connections through coalition building.

Overview of Organization and Neighborhood

The Union of Minority Neighborhoods’ mission is to ensure that skilled, committed, grassroots leaders of color, effectively organize on issues of concern in their communities, regions and nation. Staffed by a director and projects coordinator, the organization has three objectives which are to:

- Develop skills (organization management, fundraising and advocacy);
- Building broad-based coalitions; and
- Provide technical assistance (organizing campaign strategy and development).

The aim of UMN’s work is political empowerment for communities of color. Appealing to the self-interest of the participants, the organization offers a number of entry points: the trainings and study circles, organizing campaigns, and networking events.

UMN’s Institute for Neighborhood Leadership has trained over 300 residents, neighborhood groups, and staff at community-based organizations. The Institute has consulted with several local organizations: Teen Empowerment, Alternatives for Community and Environment, Massachusetts Jobs for Justice, Service Employees International Union, Project Hip-Hop, the Haitian Multi-service Center and small neighborhood associations.

To support campaigns for political and economic justice, UMN has formed three coalitions and sponsors networking events. In the coalitions, UMN activists have lobbied successfully for higher state budget allocations for youth employment, physical improvements to schools and public housing developments, and the preservation of state affirmative action policies. UMN-sponsored events include discussions and tours with activists of color and the Boston City Council, monthly networking events for activists and city program directors, and dialogues between black and Jewish communities fighting against social injustice (www.unionofminorityneighborhoods.org).

*Source: www.unionofminorityneighborhoods.org (my italics). All references from the website are as April 15, 2005.*
**Neighborhood**

UMN's office is located in Roxbury, where many of the program participants live. This neighborhood is the geographic heart of Boston, less than two miles from downtown Boston. (Refer to Appendix E for map of Boston.) Since its beginnings as a colonial town, Roxbury has been home to several ethnic groups: Irish, Italians, Jews, African Americans, Africans, Latinos and Cape Verdeans among others. Of the nearly 57,000 people who live in Roxbury, approximately 67% are black and 20% are Latino according to the 2000 Census. Urban Renewal projects of the 1960s, white flight and arson in the 1970s devastated the neighborhood and were compounded by public and private disinvestment through the 1980s. Residents, community-based organizations, businesses, funders and the City are working to revitalize the neighborhood. However, Roxbury still faces many challenges. The 2000 Census indicates that the neighborhood has the highest rate of unemployment in the city and second lowest median household income compared to Boston's other neighborhoods. UMN sees its role as developing community members' capacity to challenge and reverse these trends.

**Why was the UMN Institute for Neighborhood Leadership founded?**

Since 1974, the founder and director of Union of Minority Neighborhoods, Horace Small has worked in non-profit organizations, political campaigns, government and unions. Small came to Boston for graduate school with a strong spirit of activism and deep commitment to social justice and political participation. He founded the Union of Minority Neighborhoods to develop new political leadership in the black community. This need became clear as he worked to organize people of color to speak against the U.S. Senate confirmation hearings of John Ashcroft as Attorney General. Small established the organization as a direct response to what he saw as a lack of organizing skills and advocacy. Union of Minority Neighborhoods was intended to be a resource for people of color by people of color to help develop political power (UMN benefit program 2004).

UMN's political empowerment work reflects Small's experience of organizing and activism in the Civil Rights movements. He says of himself that he "was tempered and taught by doing" in the movement, coached by other Civil Rights activists. Small was a member of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which he says did a lot of the groundwork for older activists in the movement (Small, personal interview). Later, in his hometown, he developed the Philadelphia Community School to train hundred of citizens and citizen leaders in organizing, fundraising and non-profit management.

---


38 Small says, "the younger SNCC workers "did the...work and died. They set the table and the older workers came to eat" (personal conversation).
Small’s organizing campaigns in the 1980s and 1990s led to several firsts for Philadelphia: the first country’s gun buyback program, the first city to ban assault weapons, the first American city to divest from South Africa, and the first urban unemployment assistance program to address mortgage foreclosure. His experience includes work on the presidential campaigns for Carter (1976) and Jackson (1984) and on the Democratic National Committee. Small was named director of the National Federation of Black Organizers in 1999 (personal interview 2005; UMN benefit program 2004; Democratic Socialists of America). Small brings over 30 years of experience of organizing for power and change to UMN.

How does the Institute support UMN’s Vision of the Community?

UMN has not articulated a formal vision for the community, but the organization aims for measurable change for people of color in terms of employment, education, housing and other outcomes that the community deems important. UMN supports this work by organizing for policy changes, supporting social movements, increasing political participation and developing leaders.

Figure 4 illustrates the effort of the Institute to bring individuals together for political organizing and advocacy. An individual resident (represented by the face outside of the house) is motivated to participate in the group training series offered by UMN, a community-based organization. He or she is then encouraged to join other residents in Roxbury and other communities (group of faces) to lobby and advocate for economic and social improvements (advocacy symbol).

Figure 4. UMN Leadership Development as a Strategy for Building Community Capacity

UMN seeks to build community and connect people through campaigns and coalitions to address the issues affecting people living in high poverty neighborhoods around the state. UMN’s work is not done for the sake of community building. Rather, UMN seeks to increase political power for people of color by providing support for neighborhood leaders, who work on neighborhood issues. The “point…” of the work is to “…build power ultimately and build institutions that are run by this community (Grissom, personal interview). The Institute of Neighborhood Leadership is the vehicle for that work.
Program Overview: Institute for Neighborhood Leadership

Union of Minority Neighborhoods created the Institute for Neighborhood Leadership (the Institute) to provide training and assistance to “current and emerging community activists of color”. The goal is that “[a]ctivists develop skills and then put these skills into practice by organizing on the issues that affect them ranging from employment to state budget to political campaigns” (www.unionofminorityneighborhoods.org).

The Institute is committed to helping participants develop skills and knowledge as a means to gain political power. Trainings cover three skills areas: developing and managing non-profit organizations, fundraising, and organizing. Table 6 lists the Institute’s training series and supporting materials:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Series</th>
<th>Sessions and supporting materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit Academy</td>
<td>• How to Form/Program Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Effective Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Board Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strategic Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Program Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Academy</td>
<td>• Proposal and Grant Writing for Activists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Special Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fundraising by Phone, Email, and Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Major Gifts and Asking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Grant writing Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>• What is an Organized Block?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Handbook on Citizen Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Neighborhood Leader Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coalition Building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trainings are led by volunteer consultants, board members and local organizers. Each session begins with a brief welcome and announcements about upcoming UMN events and campaigns. The trainings are delivered in a lecture format. Depending on the topic, the trainer may call on people to share examples from their work and/or to invite questions. Trainings last 2-3 hours usually after work and occasionally on weekends. Each session attracts approximately 15-20 people, who pay a $5 donation for materials. The training schedule is flexible responding to demand from residents and availability of trainers.

39 Single training sessions include: Lobbying for Grassroots Activists and Media Skills. For 2005, the Institute has proposed to co-sponsor new workshops on how to run for office. The nonprofit academy has included a module called Developing and Revitalizing a Volunteer Program in the past. I was able to observe 1-2 sessions from two training series: the Fundraising and the Nonprofit Academies, which are offered regularly each year.
Many of the participants live in Roxbury and other parts of the city. Over 95% of them are people of color, and many are immigrants. People learn about the training through ads in the Bay State Banner, the city’s black newspaper, word of mouth, email distribution lists and other non-profit postings and listings. The Institute considers its “members” or “direct constituency” to be grassroots activists and organizers in urban areas, “whether first-time activists, not-yet activists or seasoned organizers” (UMN funding proposal 2005).

These skills are intended to help people of color become “more active, more effective and more visible on the issues, policies and institutions that affect them” (UMN funding proposal 2005). The program coordinator says the trainings are meant to “weave in and out [of UMN’s campaign work and technical assistance]; one without the other is not effective” (Grissom, personal conversation). Participants are encouraged to join UMN’s organizing campaigns and coalitions, though they can use the skills and practical information to support their own activities and gain political power.

What is the Institute’s Theory of Leadership?

UMN’s commitment to develop leaders is an expression of its desire to bring about individual and community change. The UMN vision of a leader is informed member of the community who is able to listen and apply his or her skills to meet to the needs of his or her community. Those skills include organizational management and fundraising skills (Brown, personal interview). The Institute believes in the potential of its members for community and political leadership. UMN does not discuss its views of leadership in terms of the traditional constructs of leader and follower. Instead, the organization focuses on identifying people who can work on UMN’s organizing campaigns and coalition building.

The organization seeks to cultivate political leadership in order to achieve a vision for political and economic equity for people and communities of color. UMN sees itself as developing both “leaders and future leaders” (Karant; personal interview; Smalls, personal interview). One of the volunteer trainers, Sue Karant explains,

...communities and neighborhoods are built up with people. And they change and they thrive because of the personality of a leader... A leader can be inclusive and listen and respond to what folks need... We find a lot of extraordinary people who show up to these things and who come from that place and could truly develop leadership (Karant, personal conversation).

Grissom echoes this thought saying, “a community is only as strong as its grassroots leaders” (personal interview). Although the Institute is interested in identifying leaders for UMN organizing campaigns, the Institute offers the training for all residents who are interested.
Staff recognize that whether community residents are new, experienced or potential leaders, they know the most about their situations. One UMN trainer says people who attend the trainings,

...are in the best position to say what is going on in their neighborhoods. And then on top of everything in their lives to acknowledge they need help and to come for help...That too is a problem for all people. A lot of people are not students...” (Karant, personal conversation).

For UMN, community organizing and empowerment are methods to develop “a new generation of citizen activists” (www.unionofminorityneighborhoods.org). The UMN approach is to build self-reliance among community residents with respect to organizing and community leadership. The goal is “help people with skills [so they can] enter a network, an orbit they weren’t in before” (Grissom, personal interview).

Small cautions against relying on the city’s few black political figures who may or may not have actual political power. Further, he is skeptical of professional organizers and activists located either inside or outside the target neighborhoods. Small says, “…in a place like Roxbury there are many activists – a lot of organizing is just bringing together old organizers” (personal interview). Professional activists are said to dominate organizing and use strategies that may have negative consequences for making change (White-Hammond, personal interview). He criticizes other professional organizers in the city for undertaking campaigns that they cannot win. In his view “unsuccessful campaigns do more harm than good” and waste resources. As a result people of color “have been screwed by activists, people who come from outside” (Small, personal interview). Local leadership is intended as a response.

To Small, the key is that the group chooses “issues that are winnable, people can understand and that build community”. Building community refers to the making connections between residents in order to encourage them to organize and address their common issues. Small uses strategies and tactics from what he calls the six forms of organizing, but to him, the most important factor is building community (Small, personal conversation). In line with that approach, UMN is informal, flexible and willing to taking on issues in response to requests from community members. However, this approach may represent a strain for the organization’s staff and resources given its limited external funding. It may also make the organization’s work difficult to comprehend and seem unwieldy to funders, potential collaborators and outside observers.

Depending on the issue, Small uses strategic and tactics from what he considers the six forms of organizing: the Alinsky model, which works to win power in small increments; labor organizing; mass-based, mass action like PIRGs, advocacy like Jobs for Justice; conscious-raising like the Black Power movement; and mandated citizen participation, which he describes as a farce and merely a response to government requirements. So for example, to address employment issues associated with the Criminal Offender Record Investigation laws, Small says they must change the “rules of the game”, namely the law. To do, this he will rely on the Alinsky and conscious-raising to motivate residents to take action through organizing. He will coach them or encourage them to come to class to develop skills as needed (personal conversation).
What is the Institute’s Leadership Training Approach?

UMN’s Institute for Neighborhood Leadership embodies the spirit of the Citizenship Schools created by the Highlander Folk School and later directed by the Southern Christian Leadership Center. UMN applies four distinct features of the approach: skill development for political empowerment, practical training, peer leadership, and community building.

- Commitment to political empowerment

The Citizenship School approach is committed to developing skills as a means to political empowerment. Small speaks passionately about what he sees as need for black political empowerment. The SCLC Citizenship Schools helped people learn to read the U.S. Constitution and exercise their voting rights as citizens in the 1960s. At UMN the skills relate to organizational development and management, which the staff consider to be “all the skills of organizing with the lens of forming a nonprofit” (Grissom, personal interview).

The UMN web site describes the context for this work.

Americans today join, trust, and vote even less than we did a generation ago. This decline has been most dramatic in urban neighborhoods among African Americans and Latinos…. Economic oppression and the disenfranchisement of people of color weaken the democratic fabric of our country. Unorganized communities are paying the price. For a democracy to work, all people should have equal access to be heard. Communities of color must be allowed to act and organize for themselves. They must tap into their power through collective action. It is toward this end that the Union trains and develops grassroots leaders of color… (www.unionofminorityneighborhoods.org).

This statement echoes the concerns of the political science literature about declining civic involvement, but UMN’s answer is local political action. UMN works against a perceived “sense of powerlessness” in the city (Karant, personal interview). This resolve reflects the developmental approach of the Citizenship School proponents who believed in empowering those who were most affected by a problem so they would “see themselves as having the right and the capacity to have some say-so in their own lives” (Payne 1995, 68; Preskill 2003).

The Institute offers trainings for people of color to achieve their own political objectives in order to address their concerns. The founder Small explains

People can’t get power, unless they get power. They have to understand where the money is, power, voting…. We need a “learn how to count” mentality. “Politicians are counting. We have to learn how to count…. If we don’t win, we do more harm (personal interview, my italics).
UMN’s Handbook on Citizen Participation describes how to influence legislators, build coalitions and organize. For a given issue, Small says people need to learn to research members of the City Council and why nothing has happened, who has worked or is working on the issue, and any bills that have been passed (personal interview). Even the fundraising trainings “politicized”. We discussed the funding cuts under the Republican administrations and racial discrimination (Karant, personal interviews; participant observation). UMN works to orient participants to how politics work and the need for political action.

At UMN, building coalitions is essential to gaining political power. Recognizing that “...we have people with talent and energy...” UMN seeks to leverage those resources for the community’s political gain (www.unionofminorityneighborhoods.org). The UMN web site states

Our collective clout represents millions of voters and billions of dollars of real economic power. By working effectively in our communities on the issues that affect us, and by standing as one to address these issues on a national stage, communities of color can become a force that cannot be ignored” (www.unionofminorityneighborhoods.org).

At UMN, community building largely takes the form of building diverse coalitions, especially with groups of people outside of the black community from other Boston neighborhoods, organized labor, Jewish organizers, and others across the state depending on the issue. Much of the community building and collective problem solving appears to happen in the campaigns where people apply what they have learned in the classes. The two-hour training sessions are too short a time to deliver skills and emphasize community building to the participants.

- Practical training

People come for what they need and they leave with more than they expected.

-- UMN funding proposal 2005

To achieve the broader vision of increased political power, UMN offers training that participants can apply immediately. The fundraising trainings, clinics and events are the most popular. People seek support for their own neighborhood causes, and organizations want to make up for funds lost to economic recession. Many of the participants ask for one-on-one help with grant proposals and organizing campaigns, so the Institute offers clinics when possible. Before UMN sponsored the first Black Advocacy Day at the State House, ninety percent of local residents had never spoken to an elected official (UMN benefit program 2004). A new proposed training “How to run for office” is a direct response to requests from residents (UMN funding proposal 2005).

There is a disjuncture between the program and participants’ goals. The participants in large part are focused on own interests, not necessarily UMN’s long-term vision for political power.
Reflecting this sentiment, the director of projects Grissom notes that the organizing training is not well attended. She explains that people are practical and won’t seek training unless they feel it will help them directly, so “if you say it’s nonprofit management, people think it’s a more employable skill” and they are more interested in attending (Grissom, personal conversation). Grissom also surmises that local residents may not identify themselves as activists. A conversation with one participant who has attended multiple sessions echoes this sentiment. Though she values the training, she says she lacks time to apply the information from the training. Even though she is “always doing” for others and serves on several boards, this participant does not consider herself an activist (telephone interview).

Outside of the classes, UMN invites participants to practice new skills and gain increasing responsibilities by working on UMN campaigns. UMN staff trust and believe in the skills of the people who express interest. The staff recognize the essential need to develop “a specific role and task to plug people into” as part of the overall goal to increase political participation for communities of color (Grissom, personal interview; Small, personal interview). One board member says “political empowerment through osmosis doesn’t work” (White-Hammond, personal interview). During the trainings, facilitators deliberately refer to UMN’s existing work as a case study to inform and engage participants. Since the organization’s resources are constrained, participants have many opportunities to contribute.

Staff offer coaching and support to encourage new leadership, so it’s “not pimping to put a poor person up there [to speak]; because of the training, they’re ready to go” (Karant, personal interview). For 2005, the Institute has launched a campaign called “Building Community... Recruiting and developing a new generation of Grassroots leadership” (UMN funding proposal 2005). To this end, the weekly workshop series will focus on building skills in leadership, communications, organizational and program development, organizing, fundraising, planning, outreach, collaboration, advocacy, and governmental affairs.

- **Peer leadership**

*And they came in that night and I told them that they ask me to teach this class. But, I’m not going to be the teacher, we gonna learn together. You gonna teach me some things and maybe there are a few things I might be able to teach you, but I don’t consider myself a teacher. I just feel that I’m here to learn with you, you know, learn things together.*

-- Bernice Robinson, first Citizenship School Teacher, Sea Islands, South Carolina

Peer leadership is central to the Citizenship School method. In the 1960s Citizenship Schools tried to find local teachers with the knowledge, but not necessarily degrees (Levine 2004). While not strictly peer-led, UMN’s workshops are “for people of color by people of color”. Professional advocates of color designed the curriculum, and many of the volunteer trainers are

---

41 Robinson and her students started calling the classes a Citizenship School in 1958. Bernice Robinson. interview by Sue Thrasher and Elliott Wigginton. Highlander Archives, tape recording. 9 November 1980 as found in Levine 2004.
people of color. Over 95% of the participants are ethnic and racial minorities (UMN funding proposal 2005). The staff takes pride in this fact, seeing it as a unique and critical contribution to the city’s neighborhoods of color. UMN believes that “[a]s people of color, we enjoy a special perspective. Our workshops allow people the safety to talk freely about issues, concerns, and experiences” (www.unionofminorityneighborhoods.org). Similarly, one board member believes that the key to the training is that it is “set up to be...from the perspectives of people of color” and is meant to be “conceptualized and [related to one’s] sense of self” (White-Hammond, personal interview).

UMN’s projects coordinator sees the sessions as a way to “even out the differences between the professionals and residents and citizens...It reminds nonprofit professionals that it’s not about the non-profit or the professions”. One board member, who works only with coalitions, talks about leading UMN workshops as being the only time he is with people he actually wants to help. The experience forces the trainers to think carefully about how they talk about problems with their colleagues versus people in the community (Grissom, personal interview).

However, UMN has trouble finding trainers of color to commit and volunteer consistently. The Institute trainers tend to be consultants or professionals with specialized knowledge who train when they do not have professional engagements. The long term vision is to offer ‘train the trainer’ sessions to residents who will then become the pool of trainers for the Institute (Karant, personal interview).

Overall, UMN’s approach to leadership development starts as an individual and group-based approach through the training and organizing work. However, UMN focuses on leveraging the individual gains to make changes in broad-based issues to benefit individual community members and the community as a whole in the long term.

How does the Institute’s approach contribute to Community Capacity Building?

In line with the Citizenship School approach to leadership development, the Institute makes the link between political empowerment and collective problem solving. One board member suggests that UMN mitigates what she sees as three related barriers to community participation. The Institute trainings address the lack of complete information and lack of skills, while UMN networking addresses the perceived lack of support (White-Hammond, personal interview). Confidence and connecting to other residents are an important function, but not stated goals of the training.

---

42 This issue came up in my conversations with staff, a trainer and board members.
**Skills**

Through the Institute, UMN focuses on **skill development** as a strategy toward building power through coalitions. Program materials describe the Institute’s work in “training, support and assistance to current and emerging community activists of color…” (UMN funding proposal 2005). The premise of the work is that people need skills in order to participate effectively. Participants seek program development and fundraising skills that they can use directly and immediately in the projects they are undertaking. Volunteer trainer Karant describes these as

> “the other skills of thinking of how to reach out to your people, how to develop a program, how to assess if your program is working, getting your self-esteem high enough to talk with people who have money and to talk to them whether they are foundations or corporate people – those things are very doable, very trainable” (personal interview).

These skills can also be leveraged for political action.

Yet, there are others who “just do not have the [basic] skills”. The director, the program coordinator and a trainer all speak painfully about a fundraising training where it became clear that the participants were not able to tell their story or even write a letter effectively to complete the training. Karant remembers the incident saying, “And when we got into the car to go home, we were so depressed we couldn’t talk to each other” (Karant, personal interview; personal interviews). Based on this experience, UMN tries to structure trainings to help people compensate for skills they may lack. Training sessions do not incorporate writing. Further, Karant suggests that people hire a grants writer and offers separate one-on-one sessions to review proposals. Like the Citizenship Schools of the Civil Rights era, UMN seeks to address these perceived and real barriers to people building political power.

**Knowledge**

The Institute presents opportunities for information exchanges. In the trainings UMN can deliver “the same information together” (Grissom, personal interview). Participants speak about specific examples in their work and problems. People learn about effective strategies from each other. Karant talks about “the excitement that comes out of these classes is that people feed on each other. They get ideas and they share back and forth. That’s really wonderful to see when something gets people interested and they can do that” (personal interview).

Karant noted that in the trainings people are so eager for knowledge, that they will discourage each other from talking too much because they want to hear what “Sue has to say” about fundraising (personal interview). One participant said she was surprised at the depth of information she received. She said that the sessions answered lots of questions and that “if you’re not there, you…miss out” (telephone interview).
The underlying belief at UMN is that if people have the information that is critical to their lives, they will be motivated to act. For example, the web site informs people about the low representation of people of color among state elected officials as well as the high rates of unemployment and incarceration for people of color. This information is related to campaigns that UMN supports.

Knowledge of community issues is related to building confidence and connections.

- **Confidence**

Though the trainings do not set out to develop participants’ confidence to other residents, these are recognized as two important functions of the trainings. It is presumed that people will build confidence by taking on increasing responsibility. Grissom believes that people have a “sense of belonging when they know there’s a crew.” Further, she talks about the value participants place on what they have paid for and what they see others placing value on. She explains that “it’s like a we thing” (personal interview). Karant suggests that the fundraising training helps build participants’ self-esteem. In my own experience over 2 months, I observed one participant become more confident as she presented her program, asked questions and interacted with staff and the other participants (participant observation, April 2005). Small refers to this feeling as a “freedom high” when someone gets confident and feels supported (Grisom personal interview; Small, personal interview).

By offering trainings developed by people of color, UMN hopes to address what may be some of the reasons that people don’t participate. Both the director and the coordinator suggest that some community residents do not identify with “traditional lefty culture” of activism. The Institute may help residents develop confidence to act and participate in organizing campaigns.

- **Connections**

UMN Institute emphasizes making connections through coalition building and networking events outside of the Institute trainings. However, there are still some opportunities during and after the training for personal connections and networking. Trainer Karant notes the opportunities participants have to meet each other.

One woman...loved the workshop because she got to talk with her people. She lived in a neighborhood in Grove Hall that was so dangerous she didn’t even talk to her neighbors. So this was a chance for her to share with others who had ideas.... One class came up with an idea to try to do joint fundraising together (personal interview).

There is the potential for people who would not otherwise meet each other to connect. While the organization values working together, the emphasis is not on building relationships and trust for the sake of connecting. One participant I interviewed wished there were more connection especially among [UMN] alumni. She says “people learn stuff and still feel isolated”
(telephone interview). The idea is to leverage local and statewide relationships to build a power base in order to achieve community economic and political gains.

- **Sense of belonging to the neighborhood**

UMN identifies with Roxbury because of the issues that affect the residents living in the community as an opportunity for building a power base to help residents address those issues. Although Small is animated about the need to find ways to “plug people in” by looking for “wins” on neighborhood issues, the Institute does not explicitly focus on connecting individual residents to the neighborhoods where they live.

**Summary: Union of Minority Neighborhoods Institute for Neighborhood Leadership**

Union of Minority Neighborhoods follows the approach of the Citizenship School tradition in leadership development. This strategy reflects the founder’s work in the Civil Rights movement. The approach emphasizes political empowerment, practical lessons, peer leadership, belief in people, and community building. In terms of building community capacity, the Institute builds participants’ skills, knowledge, confidence, and connections, but does not focus explicitly on building a connection to the neighborhoods where participants reside. UMN aims to address the common issues that affect residents across low income neighborhoods in Boston and the state.
Chapter 5: Multi-cultural Youth Tour of What's Now Youth Guide Development Program

Purpose: By connecting young people to a more inclusive, contemporary, local history, MYTOWN works to inspire young Bostonians to assume their roles as citizen change-makers.43

In 1995, MYTOWN was created to help young people develop a sense of belonging and pride in the neighborhoods as a step toward helping them become engaged citizens. Rooted in the personal experience and values of the founders, the model seeks to address the need for connections to local history and the needs of their participants for personal empowerment. The MYTOWN training and group projects encourages participants to work collective in community efforts by developing a sense of community, skills, knowledge, confidence and to a lesser extent connections to other neighborhood residents.

Overview of Organization and Neighborhood

Multi-cultural Youth Tour of What's Now, Inc (MYTOWN) seeks to use the process of sharing local history to empower young people and build appreciation of urban neighborhoods. This community-based nonprofit organization believes in the power of local history to inspire youth activism and to undermine the stereotypes that stigmatize urban neighborhoods. MYTOWN documents and portrays a more inclusive multi-ethnic history of Boston neighborhoods (www.mytowninc.com).44

MYTOWN works to help young people become “effective leaders, engaging educators and active citizen change makers...” (MYTOWN funding proposal 2000). Since its start in 1995, MYTOWN has hired over 200 high school students to serve as Youth Guides. Youth Guides learn about examples of neighborhood activism and create walking tours, slide shows, and movies to explore and share that history. More than 7,000 Boston residents and visitors of all ages have learned about social activism and organizing in the South End and other Boston neighborhoods. MYTOWN hopes to instill pride in Youth Guides and the tour participants about the neighborhoods where they live (www.mytowninc.com).

Each year, MYTOWN hires 35-40 Youth Guides to work after school (10 hours for 11 weeks) and during the summer (25-30 hours for 7 weeks).45 Most of the Youth Guides are students of  

43 MYTOWN funding proposal, 2000 (my italics).

44 All references to the MYTOWN web site are made as of April 14, 2005.

45 Up to half of the youth may have worked previously at MYTOWN. The returning Youth Guides help train, manage and evaluate new Youth Guides. In addition to the Youth Guides, there are six adult staff members, the Support Staff. The four full-time staff are the executive director, manager of information practice, manager of promotions, and the Youth Guide Director. The part-time staff are responsible for leading consulting workshops and office/technical support. The Support Staff has combined experience in youth development, public education and
color and come from neighborhoods around the city. Although data on family income are not collected, over 60% report that they are eligible for free lunch programs at school (MYTOWN, funding proposal 2005).

- **Neighborhood**

MYTOWN’s work is centered in the South End, though Youth Guides have researched over 15 Boston neighborhoods over the past 9 years. (Refer to Appendix E for map of Boston.) The South End is considered a microcosm of the issues and events of the larger city over the last 100 years. South End was planned to be a wealthy enclave created from landfill in the 1860s and 1870s. In the next 30 years, this 1-square mile area became a working class neighborhood. It was home to successive waves of immigrants from Western and Eastern Europe, joined by African Americans from the South and Boston’s Beacon Hill section in the 1920s. The South End became Boston’s jazz center for blacks and whites in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1960s, Puerto Ricans migrated to the neighborhood.

Federally funded Urban Renewal projects of the 1960s and 1970s threatened to destroy much of the mid-Victorian housing stock and disrupt the multi-racial community. Successful organizing efforts of the 1960s and 1970s account for much of the affordable housing that remains today. In 1980s, a gay, white community began to move to the neighborhood for its historic character. Today, the South End is home to over 28,000 people, who are white (45%), black (23%), Latino (17%) and Asian (12%). (These percentages are of the total.) The neighborhood faces gentrification and pressure from downtown development. MYTOWN tours of the South End highlight the stories of the community activism of residents who represent all races.

**Why was the MYTOWN Youth Guide Development Program founded?**

...if you are not trying to bring power and recognition to the people being passed over and acknowledge their voices, what’s the point?  
– Karilyn Crockett, MYTOWN co-founder

MYTOWN’s emphasis on personal empowerment through the stories of neighborhood activism and service is rooted in the co-founders’ college experiences. MYTOWN grant proposals share the story:

Karilyn Crockett was born and raised in Boston, but as an African American, she felt alienated from the city she learned about in history class and on local field trips. This Boston seemed to belong to a small number of people whose families

---

marketing. A volunteer board directs the organization. Full and part-time adult staff are referred to as the Support Staff to distinguish from the Youth Guides who are also considered staff.

46 In 2005, MYTOWN moved to a larger, accessible office in the nearby Fenway neighborhood in Boston.
emigrated from Western Europe. This Boston bore little resemblance to her daily experiences with people of all colors, creeds and backgrounds (funding proposal 2003).

In the first request for funding, Crockett wrote “Growing up in this place, my friends and I were made to feel embarrassed and even ashamed of our addresses by outsiders who believed we lived in an ‘inner city jungle’” (personal statement n.d.).

Learning about the 300-year history of African Americans in Boston and the work of activists like Mel King, Myrna Vasquez and Tunney Lee while on a walking tour of the South End made an impression on Crockett. Proposals describe her experience.

For the first time, she felt that Boston was indeed a city shaped by the experiences of her family and neighbors, a place that she could truly call ‘my town’. Karilyn realized the potential of using this history—the history of “my town”—to realize her vision of increasing youth activism and strengthening the inner city community where she grew up (funding proposal 1998).

To Crockett, sharing this history, the stories of average citizens, offered an opportunity for connecting and engaging people. Many of the stories from that day in the South End became the tour stops that Youth Guides researched and use to educate tour takers. One of the first grant proposals states that “MYTOWN addresses the need for all people to connect with their community and neighborhood histories, showing the average person why they should and can be proud of where they are from” (1997). It was her hope that young people who heard the stories about social activists would feel more connected and eventually inspired to act.

In 1995, Crockett convinced her college friend, Denise Thomas to come to Boston and co-found MYTOWN immediately after graduation. Their community service in college shaped the program’s conceptions of leadership. Crockett’s original South End tour was sponsored by Project Reach, a now defunct leadership development program for black and Latino students. This program was designed to motivate and coach college students who wanted to “rebuild their communities” (Crockett personal statement). Working at DSNI and City Year, Crockett learned the importance of “community process and shared leadership”. She adds that “DSNI and City Year showed me that public and community service is fundamentally about reconnecting people” (personal statement). Originally from Texas, Denise Thomas had served

---

47 Mel King (b. 1930) is long-time community activist and educator in the South End. Myrna Vazquez (d. 1976) was a famous actress in Puerto Rico and community activist in Villa Victoria during the 1970s. She helped form the non-profit, which was later named for her, Casa Myrna Vasquez to work against domestic violence in Boston (www.casamyrna.org). MIT Professor Emeritus Tunney Lee was a housing activist in the South End, Chinatown and other communities.

48 DSNI is the Dudley’s neighborhood planning and organizing agency (www.dsnionline.org). City Year is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization focused on voluntary youth community service (www.cityyear.org).

57
on the board and Executive Committee of Dwight Hall, Yale’s largest community service program. The act and process to create MYTOWN, including fundraising, recruitment and operations, were empowering experiences for the co-founders and the Youth Guides.

How does the Program Support MYTOWN’s Vision of the Community?

Without memory, there is no justice. The stories of our families and of residents shape our city.  
-- Karilyn Crockett, MYTOWN co-founder

Over its 10-year history, two principles have been central to MYTOWN’s vision for a healthy community: youth empowerment and community ownership. MYTOWN considers knowledge of community history as a means to engender personal empowerment. In one proposal, the stated vision is that “no young person will be disengaged by the present face of his/her neighborhood or community” (funding proposal 1997). While the emphasis has changed over time, the themes of citizen change, community, transformative history, and personal and economic self-determination have remained consistent (MYTOWN funding proposal 1997; 1998; 2000).

• Community Vision: Personal Empowerment and Group Achievement

In MYTOWN’s theory of a healthy community, youth and groups of people play a central role in accomplishing goals for improving the community (see Figure 5). Groups rely on information, cooperation, focus, respect and conflict resolution. Preparing Youth Guides to take part in this conception of a healthy community is connected to the program emphasis on personal empowerment, teamwork and managing behaviors (MYTOWN Youth Development Urban Field Notebook 2004).

---

Figure 5. Our Theory of Healthy Communities

Healthy communities depend on:

• young people becoming aware and informed decision makers who can help themselves and their neighborhoods.

• groups of people who work together to get things done. These groups accomplish their goals because they know how to respect one another, support the group’s strengths and challenges, resolve conflicts and communicate well. The group’s members all strive to help one another succeed.

• people who can focus their attention on goals and contributions that ensure the communities’ success, peace and productivity.

Adapted from MYTOWN. Youth Development Field Notebook. ©2004.
• *Community Vision: Community Ownership*

Reflecting the second principle of MYTOWN’s community vision, MYTOWN assumes that social change does not happen without a deep sense of ownership.\textsuperscript{49} Thus,

Each person must believe that change is important in order for it to happen. In order to change something, you must feel that that thing that needs to change affects your life. You must understand the problem and own the solution. There are many things in your community that are great, but there are also many things in your community that could be improved. These improvements mean changing things. Change requires people’s investment (Make It Work program document n.d.).

The hope is that “...discussing the accomplishments of local change-makers, MYTOWN demonstrates the need for young people to assume community leadership and ownership” (funding proposal 1997, 1). Figure 6 represents MYTOWN’s leadership training work to encourage appreciation of urban neighborhoods as a strategy for developing residents who are engaged and take leadership roles in local initiatives.

An individual youth (represented by the face outside of the house) is hired by MYTOWN to participate in the Youth Guide leadership development program (block arrow). Through exploring their family and neighborhood history, Youth Guides develop an appreciation and a sense of connection to their own communities (the group of faces).

Although organizing stories are central to the MYTOWN model, the founders chose not to incorporate organizing as a program activity. Crockett speaks of this decision saying,

The idea was to offer an orientation to community organizing, to show that it is a legacy in their community. And that it wasn’t just before they were born and

\textsuperscript{49} MYTOWN also assumes the inherent value of all communities and intellect of the people who live in them (MYTOWN Make it Work program document n.d.).
wasn’t just radical and crazy [as school history classes communicate]...People where you live have been actors as well. You and people [who] you know are actors. It wasn’t a fear of being political or being politically active... We wanted the Youth Guide Director to hold the space for Youth Guides for critical thinking and to offer support on their journey (telephone interview).

Even though MYTOWN’s hope is to inspire young people to act, Crockett recognizes that “[a]pathy is a choice, too... What [MYTOWN’s approach to organizing] evolved into was what Youth Guides were interested in, needed or wanted to do” (telephone interview). Staff support organizing activity as Youth Guides express interest. In 1999, Youth Guides picketed Northeastern University for its plan to build dorms in the South End (Rigaud, personal interview). In 2004, some Youth Guides became active in the controversy about the plans to construct a bio-terror lab in Roxbury. Generally, Youth Guides express more interest in issues related to teens and their lives (Miranda, personal interview). Youth Guides tend to volunteer in community service activities through school or other places rather than in neighborhood-based activities (focus group).

**Program Overview: MYTOWN Youth Guide Development Program**

…it is not the physical structures, or the dollar signs that count in the end, but the way people feel about themselves, each other and the place they live...  

— Mel King, *Chain of Change* 50

The Youth Guide Development Program prepares youth to research, create and lead tours for the public. I focus on the leadership work of the program’s structured trainings and team projects, though Youth Guides also learn through coaching and evaluation, community service placements, and visits to Boston sites. MYTOWN’s curriculum contains over 70 activities organized into four categories or explorations:

- Self and family (cultural diversity, leadership and social justice)
- Neighborhood exploration
- Research and Getting the Story (data gathering, surveys, oral history, interviews)
- Sharing the history (through tours, slide show, movies and skits).

Table 7 shows the four explorations and selected trainings in the MYTOWN Curriculum.

---

Table 7. Overview of MYTOWN Curriculum and Selected Trainings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self and Family</th>
<th>Neighborhood Exploration</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Sharing the History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Tree</td>
<td>Model City</td>
<td>IDEAS of Research</td>
<td>3Ps of Public Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Leader</td>
<td>Neighborhood Plunge</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>MasterPEACE Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of My Environment</td>
<td>Picture This</td>
<td>Oral History</td>
<td>Bomb Tour Stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Does the Media Portray You</td>
<td>Your Street Project</td>
<td>MYTOWN Meets Main Streets</td>
<td>Check My Script</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MYTOWN explorations are intended “to teach young people how to value themselves, their communities and their culture by leading them through a directed, active exploration of local people and space” (BRICK Final Report 2003). The curriculum evolves as the support staff and youth have revised and created new training guides over time.

Each week, Support staff and return Youth Guides lead 2-3 trainings with some coaching. The trainings are organized to support the overall program schedule designed by the Youth Guide Director in consultation with the returning Youth Guides. During the summer, staff learn the South End tour stops researched by former Youth Guides in order to lead the tours. In the academic year, trainings support the group’s independent research and presentations about other Boston neighborhoods.

Youth Guides are in a sense paid to learn, but the program is not meant to be like school. Interactive sessions incorporate art, skits, games, writing and discussion. Trainings sessions have individual, small group and large group exercises that appeals to visual, oral/aural and kinesthetic learning styles (MYTOWN, Working with Youth Guides n.d.).

**What is MYTOWN’s Theory of Leadership?**

In one planning document, Crockett characterizes leadership as “…the highest level of self-actualization. Transcending self” (MYTOWN Curriculum Development n.d). Individual development is at the core. At MYTOWN, leadership is practiced in a collaborative, developmental style. The Youth Guide Development Program reflects several elements of developmental leadership. These leaders help others grow, facilitate dialogues based on storytelling and listening, reflect, offer critical evaluation and are committed to learn (Belenky, Bond and Weinstock 1997; Preskill 2003).

At MYTOWN, everyone can do leadership; leadership is considered a process. Community leadership encompasses: self-awareness, public speaking and listening, problem solving, cultural competence, and facilitative leadership skills. The program is designed to help Youth Guides understand and practice all of these competencies. Youth Guides demonstrate facilitative leadership skills through their organizational skills (ability to create plans and meet
deadlines) and capacity to work as part of a team (MYTOWN Youth Guide performance evaluations). Peer leaders are coached to “make a space for others to lead,” to take initiative and to reflect on and evaluate the group’s work (personal experience).

Youth Guides may not necessarily leave MYTOWN to become future neighborhood leaders, but the hope is that they have the skills, knowledge, confidence and sense of purpose to contribute to a collective undertaking. The current Youth Guide Director Shauna Rigaud says

*doing stuff does not always equal to being on Channel 7 News.... It’s about small steps...how they interact with people, how they think about different things in their neighborhood, how they share info...*

*So for me [leadership] is not about the podium stuff, it’s about knowing who you are and understanding your role and making decisions for yourself that can affect the larger community”* (personal interview).

At MYTOWN, leadership starts with the individual’s personal discovery, then considers his or her role and contributions to the larger community.

**What is MYTOWN’s Leadership Approach?**

*Knowledge of self and place and ownership can carry you...I knew a lot about the neighborhood, what it meant to be young and Cape Verdean. It was a tool to empower me. ...I knew where I was from.  

-- Elizabeth Miranda, former Youth Guide*

MYTOWN’s leadership development approach is focused on personal empowerment. The approach incorporates a popular education approach reminiscent of both the Citizenship Schools and Freire’s work.\(^5\) The features of this hybrid model are the efforts to instill: pride, consciousness, and a sense of efficacy through peer leadership and community service.

- **Pride**

MYTOWN’s training sessions help Youth Guides develop pride in themselves, their families and their neighborhoods through personal discovery. MYTOWN’s work starts with the story of Youth Guides and their families. This approach taps into what the participants know already and serves as preparation for further exploration. In the initial interviews for the Youth Guide position, candidates draw a family tree to show the relationships and identify leaders in the family. Youth Guides interview a family member and write the story of how their family came

\(^5\) When Crockett and Thomas founded MYTOWN, they did not know about Freire’s work. Later, Crockett found it difficult to understand, so the program was developed based on their experiences with the Youth Guides. They also did not know much about the academic theories of the cognitive and developmental needs of adolescence (Crockett, personal interview, March 20, 2005).
to Boston. Follow up discussions highlight the arrival of different immigrant groups in Boston and celebrate the diversity of people working at MYTOWN. This focus is reminiscent of Freire’s focus on discussion about culture and consciousness-raising.

- **Consciousness raising**

The second purpose is of the program is to raise awareness about social justice and inequity. Former Youth Guides developed trainings to discuss leadership and the forces including discrimination and oppression that stop people from exercising leadership effectively. Social justice workshops engage Youth Guides in thoughtful discussions about the power dynamics in the country and interplay of race, class and age. For example, one activity asks Youth Guides to compare how the media sees them according to their age, race, and country of origin to how they see themselves. Youth Guides have created collages, raps, poetry and other visual expressions to explore this question (MYTOWN Curriculum n.d.).

Youth Guides also learn about the outcomes of past struggles that affect them today. In 2001 Youth Guides re-enacted the 1965 march led by Martin Luther King in the fight for equitable resources for black students in public schools in Boston. Based on their own experiences and readings, the group discussed whether the goal for more equitable resources was achieved. A popular topic among Youth Guides is the differences in budget locations between their suburban and urban (exam and non-exam) high schools.

- **Instill sense of efficacy**

At MYTOWN, the Youth Guides’ personal empowerment is connected closely to leadership development. The training program and team projects incorporate four key elements to empowerment for youth: feeling valued, making individual and group decisions, making a contribution, and community service. Though the founders did not know about “cognitive development or adolescent maturation” when they started MYTOWN, the program’s philosophy responds to the psychological needs of the Youth Guides’ for self-actualization (Crockett, personal interview). Adolescence is a time of many physical, emotional and mental changes. Research has found that a number of critical factors for healthy youth development including a sense of positive identity, support, social competence and as well as empowerment. The Search Institute (2004) identifies four assets that youth need to feel empowered:

---

52 Youth Guides dramatized King’s march as part of the protests that led to the 1974 court order to desegregate urban schools through bussing. I led the march from Carter Playground in the South End to the Boston Common.

53 The Search Institute is nationally recognized for its research and extensive surveys on youth development. See Appendix G for the Search Institute’s 40 developmental assets needed by teens for healthy development.
- **Community Values Youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth;
- **Youth as Resources**—Young people are given useful roles in the community;
- **Service to Others**—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week;
- **Safety**—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

MYTOWN’s leadership program addresses these four factors for efficacy both inside and outside the organization. Recognizing that “teens struggle to define themselves...and make...life decisions,” MYTOWN activities allow Youth Guides explore themselves, their interests and their neighborhoods (Rigaud, personal interview). The goal is to make Youth Guides feel supported, respected and capable of succeeding both individually and as a group. Former Youth Guide Director Miranda compares learning together at MYTOWN to a “Civil Rights model...because they feel supported as though they don’t have to know or do everything to feel highly successful” (personal interview).

Further, trainings and the history projects are supposed to encourage Youth Guides to try new activities and roles. Youth Guides practice making decisions about the history projects, the weekly trainings, and the overall program plan (Rigaud, personal interview). To Youth Guides working as peer leaders, MYTOWN suggests,

> Your focus should be how to help young people gain experience doing as much as possible. Before you know it they will run the entire show! (That’s what you’re aiming for.) ...Your job is to help your team members work and think together. Share leading the group with every individual team member. Make sure everyone gets a chance to lead the team at some point... (Youth Development Urban Field Notebook 2004).\(^4\)

The training, tours and research give opportunities for practice and repetition that help Youth Guides learn and feel a sense of accomplishment.

The Youth Guide position is meant to be a “meaningful work” experience (MYTOWN funding proposal 1997). Through the history projects Youth Guides make a contribution to the larger community. Youth Guides address an unmet community need to collect neighborhood history and stories that are largely undocumented. The activities help Youth Guides explore the city and feel comfortable in different neighborhoods.

In summary, MYTOWN takes a personal approach to developing leaders as a first step to encouraging participants to consider future community leadership roles.

---

\(^4\) This work was begun in 2001 to respond to Support staff requests for more direction about MYTOWN’s approach to youth development. The MYTOWN Youth Development Field Notebook is a refined expression of that work that is shared with clients of the BRICK Initiative, MYTOWN’s consulting initiative. It was completed in 2005.
How does MYTOWN’s Approach contribute to Community Capacity Building?

In its efforts to encourage youth social activism, MYTOWN helps young people learn about neighborhood history in order to recognize the value in their communities, develop confidence, build skills, and connect to other residents. To be consistent with the other cases, I will discuss MYTOWN’s contributions to community capacity in the following order: skills, knowledge, confidence, connections to others, and sense of belonging to the neighborhood.

- **Skills**

MYTOWN’s trainings and history projects allow Youth Guides to develop **skills** in four key areas: leadership, communication, critical thinking, cultural competence and work readiness. The skill building is important for the youth guide’s future civic involvement and employment. One MYTOWN program document directed to Youth Guides says “[d]emocracy demands a lifetime of informed participation. Are you ready?” (Make It Work program document). MYTOWN evaluates Youth Guides’ progress in the four skill areas over time.55

Although there is considerable attention to developing skills, MYTOWN’s founders and staff do not consider skill development to be the most important part of the experience. In the planning for MYTOWN, community members suggested necessary skills, but they “…were excited about a position where young people…could learn and have a sense of knowledge and pride”. Crockett remembers that funders were interested in seeing young people “be able to articulate themselves, have a job and responsibilities”. The Youth Guide position represents a “handshake” between these two visions (telephone interview). Staff confirm that skills are not the most important aspect of the program. A former Youth Guide Director describes the training as

...a form of validation, the access pass...[because] if you can’t talk to different people,...if you can’t work with different kinds of people, if you can’t write well,...have people hear you out, you can’t get to your goals. It’s the access pass that the trainings serve as. ...But I never thought the skills were the most important part... (Miranda, personal interview).

---

55 Further, these four competencies correspond to the state requirements for school-to-work jobs and internships. One MYTOWN proposal refers to research that demonstrates the link between competence in leadership, communication, critical thinking and cultural competence for young people and success after high school graduation (MYTOWN, funding proposal). The Search Institute’s 40 developmental assets also include many of these elements. See Appendix.
In contrast, Youth Guides and more recent funding proposals emphasize the skill development. An analysis of a recent proposal indicates over 20 references to skills, 6 to knowledge and none to pride or sense of belonging.

- **Knowledge**

  Youth Guides...build on what they know, so you don’t start with a sense of lacking or a sense of deprivation, you start with a sense of celebration – already having the knowledge base to make that impact (Miranda, personal interview).

Through group discussions, exercises and their own research, Youth Guides explore themselves and their family first, then, they learn about the history of organizing in Boston neighborhoods. Youth Guides share that knowledge on tours, slide shows, movies and workshops with children and adults. These organizing stories acknowledge the power of individuals who organized and did community service. Youth Guides value the history and knowledge they learn at MYTOWN, especially black history. MYTOWN helps them appreciate and value their cultures and neighborhoods, filling a void at school. One Youth Guide says, “know[ing] who you are and where you came from is how you change the course of the future” (focus group).

Youth Guides also discuss contemporary events and issues like the lack of recreation areas and trash collection that affect them. These discussions may lead the group to consider the role and need for voting and the political process. Youth Guides discuss how to solve the problems they raise, but they do not necessarily act on those ideas and plans at MYTOWN. Miranda describes MYTOWN, saying “we’re impacting people who can impact something” (Miranda, personal interview).

- **Confidence**

Youth Guides develop confidence through the trainings, activities and history research at MYTOWN. The Youth Guide Director Rigaud believes that staff encouragement and the opportunities to practice help build confidence. Several Youth Guide talk about the need for affirmation, saying there is “not a lot of things that say we appreciate you and we’re about you” outside of MYTOWN (focus group). Another staff member echoes this sentiment about Youth Guides.

You don’t have a quiet people, an unconfident people, an unengaged people. You’re [developing] skill-ready, engaged young people who are ready to say whatever I care about I can handle, make a difference, [and create] change (Miranda, personal interview).

Although Youth Guides work together to solve problems as part of the trainings and work at MYTOWN, it is not clear that they connect those to working with people in their neighborhood and to working on neighborhood issues at this point.
• **Sense of connection to other residents**

MYTOWN emphasizes teamwork and support networks. However, making connections to residents in the Youth Guides’ home neighborhoods is not an explicit goal of the trainings. MYTOWN’s work to empower Youth Guides as educators is considered a “different way of working together” (Rigaud, personal interview). Youth Guides develop relationships with each other and staff, especially those guides who return for several phases. Through the work, Youth Guides meet youth, youth workers and activists around the city. Youth Guides, who have worked multiple phases at MYTOWN, speak about strength in numbers in order to accomplish a goal for one’s community. They are able to cite stories of people of color, city residents and young people working together to make change.

At the same time Youth Guides speak about the frustration of working with others to address community issues despite (and perhaps because of) work at MYTOWN and in other community service activities. In response to the question, how does MYTOWN get people to be more involved in their community, only three out of seven Youth Guides identified “getting to know people in your neighborhood”. Additional research is needed to explore the impact of the story telling and the training on Youth Guides’ perceptions and willingness to work with their peers and other residents.

• **Sense of community**

At MYTOWN, sense of community is closely linked to knowledge of both history and contemporary issues. The premise is that knowing and teaching the stories helps build a sense of connectedness or belonging to one’s neighborhood. Affirming the thinking of MYTOWN’s founders, the current Youth Guide Director believes that

> “when you allow young people to learn more about themselves and the neighborhood they grew up in, they feel more connected to those neighborhoods and when...[they] teach other people, they feel more empowered” (Rigaud, personal interview).

Similarly, the former Youth Guide Director says, “We’ve been good about mobilizing young people to care about their communities...[however] they’re not trying to change something in their communities... Sometimes that happens after MYTOWN (Miranda, personal interview).

---

56 The return Youth Guides suggested that they have learned to work with difficult people by giving them something to do. This delegation is consistent with MYTOWN’s approach to empowering others.

57 To solicit this information I posted each of the aspects that motivate people to participate and asked Youth Guides to indicate the areas that they believe MYTOWN helps them with being involved in their communities. They ranked the aspects of MYTOWN gets them more involved in their neighborhoods in the following order (number of votes): skills (7), knowledge (5), confidence you can contribute to your neighborhood (4), getting to know people in your neighborhood (3), and feeling like you are connected to your neighborhood (3). This small survey is meant as a guide and is not of statistical significance. I tried to simplify the questions and make them accessible to the group.
Youth Guides who live in the South End and who had worked with MYTOWN for several years feel that MYTOWN focuses on helping Youth Guides connect to their own neighborhoods. All Youth Guides residents speak highly about the learning neighborhood history and feel more connected to the city. Former Youth Guides have reported that they would consider working for social justice and in community leadership after their MYTOWN experience (MYTOWN Youth Guide program evaluations).

However, non-South End residents do not perceive that MYTOWN emphasizes making connections to the neighborhoods where they live. In a focus group, Youth Guides actually ranked ‘feeling connected to your neighborhood’ lowest in a survey of what MYTOWN helps them do to be involved in their neighborhood. Again, further research is needed to understand the effect of MYTOWN’s work on the feeling of being connected to one’s neighborhood. It is unresolved whether Youth Guides who work at MYTOWN for longer periods develop a stronger sense of connection over time.

By focusing on the individual, MYTOWN staff is able to connect to the program participants and build their personal capacity. However, the focus on self-actualization may outweigh MYTOWN’s efforts to convince Youth Guides to contribute to collective change efforts.

**Summary: Multicultural Youth Tour Of What’s Now Youth Guide Development Program**

This chapter describes MYTOWN’s leadership approach as a personal empowerment model. This orientation reflects the personal experiences of the founders. MYTOWN encourages Youth Guides to take pride in themselves and their neighborhoods, raises consciousness about social justice, and instills a sense of efficacy. MYTOWN’s strategy is to use the stories about social activists of color in urban neighborhoods.

With respect to encouraging participation as a means of building community, MYTOWN seeks to instill a sense of community, confidence and connections to others through skills and knowledge among the program participants. Follow up research is needed to understand whether MYTOWN’s work encourages programs participants to apply their work to neighborhood-based community outcomes.
Chapter 6: Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative: Resident Development Institute

Uniting Community: Bringing the community together, with all its cultural, racial, ethnic, generational and religious diversity, and all of its stakeholders, to arrive at shared values, vision, strategies and to organize for the collective power to achieve its collective goals.58

Established in 1984, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative is the neighborhood’s planning and organizing agency. DSNI has created the Resident Development Institute to train community leaders to work toward realizing the community’s vision of an urban village. DSNI exemplifies the community vision leadership method designed to develop commitment to shared vision of community goals, power analysis and a neighborhood learning community. DSNI emphasizes connections to the neighborhood and other residents, conceptual skills and knowledge, and confidence in its efforts to build community capacity.

Overview of Organization and Neighborhood

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is a non-profit community planning and organizing agency located in Roxbury, in the heart of Boston. DSNI’s mission is to “empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create and control a vibrant, high quality and diverse neighborhood in collaboration with community partners” (www.dsni.org).59

Founded in 1984, DSNI is recognized nationally for being the first and only not-for-profit organization to win the right of eminent domain over abandoned land in a 60-acre boundary area in the heart of the neighborhood from the City of Boston.60 Today, DSNI has helped reclaim 650 of the 1,300 lots that resulted from years of arson during urban white flight of the 1960s and 1970s. The organization’s first successful campaign “Don’t Dump On Us” helped stop illegal dumping in the late 1980s. By the 1990s, DSNI recognized that its success in building the neighborhood’s physical capital – land and housing stock – was tied to building human capital in the Dudley area Medoff and Sklar 1994). The ultimate goal is stated as “to tap and help unleash the creative power of the community to the fullest extent possible” (Watson 1997, 2).


59 All references to the web site are made as of April 14, 2005.

60 Dudley is a 1.5 mile area within Roxbury, one of Boston’s 16 residential neighborhoods. See Appendix E for map of Boston. DSNI has never exercised the right of eminent domain to acquire private property for public use, usually with compensation to the owner. Residents created a community land trust, Dudley Neighbors, Inc., to control the development process and maintain an affordable housing stock in accordance with DSNI’s comprehensive plan. Since the mid-1980s, over 144 units of housing and two community spaces have been constructed on this land (www.dsni.org). See Medoff and Sklar (1994) for history.
DSNI sees its role as creating spaces and opportunities for residents of the Dudley area to envision and articulate their goals for the community. DSNI works to implement neighborhood plans with its community partners that including local community development corporations, non-profits and faith-based institutions, businesses and corporations. Residents from the neighborhood’s major racial and ethnic groups and representatives from other neighborhood stakeholder groups serve as the board of directors. DSNI has nearly 4,000 members who represent the demographics of the neighborhood.

- Neighborhood

The Dudley neighborhood has a population of 24,000 residents who are African American (37%), Latino (29%), Cape Verdean (25%) and white (7%). (These percentages are of the total population.) Dudley is less than two miles away from downtown Boston and close to major transportation routes. (Refer to Appendix E for map of Boston.) While the Dudley neighborhood’s diversity and central location are among its assets, some indicators show persistent challenges. According to the 2000 Census, the neighborhood’s per capita income is less than half of that for the City of Boston as a whole. Approximately 16% of area residents are unemployed, and nearly one-third of the population earns less than the poverty level (www.dsni.org). DSNI’s planning and organizing efforts are intended to address these issues and help the neighborhood realize its vision for economic, physical, social, and human development.

Stemming from the neighborhood vision, DSNI has chosen three “strategic focus areas”: resident leadership, economic development and youth opportunities to build on the neighborhood’s strengths and address its challenges.

**Why was the Resident Development Institute founded?**

DSNI began to plan the Resident Development Institute in 1994 with a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Rebuilding Communities Initiative (RCI). In the early 1990s, DSNI recognized the need to broaden its leadership base and engage new residents. The visionary, authoritative leadership style of some past board leaders had served the DSNI well, but there were questions about their willingness and capacity to create opportunities for new leaders.

---

61 There are 34 seats on the board and 16 are reserved for the major ethnic groups in the neighborhood: African American (4 seats), Latino/Hispanic (4 seats), Cape Verdean (4 seats), and White (4 seats) without regard to actual numbers in the population in the neighborhood. It is not clear what percentage of the membership is active.

62 As part of an organizational assessment with a consultant and a futurist in 2002, DSNI identified 14 “stepping stones” as community agenda items, which were narrowed to 7 “drivers of change”. These items were further distilled to the 3 strategic focus areas that guide DSNI’s current work (DSNI and Strategic Interventions 2002).

63 The Annie E. Casey Foundation agreed to invest in the DSNI leadership building work as part of its eight-year commitment to the Rebuilding Communities Initiative (RCI), a comprehensive community initiative (Learning 2002, 5).
Some internal and external observers criticized what they saw as the leaders’ self-aggrandizement that inhibited the organization’s growth (participants, personal interviews).

An Annie E. Casey Foundation report observed,

The need for resident leadership forced DSNI, which had traditionally developed leadership through involvement over a period of years, to “compress all of [its] institutional memories and learnings in such a way as to shorten the learning curve for the development of new community leaders.” DSNI moved to this strategy because it found that it could not produce enough leaders, fast enough, through informal mentoring and experiential learning (Learning 1999, 8).

DSNI envisioned that RDI would create new leaders and model new leadership styles. RDI was intended to support DSNI’s human development mission to:

Advance community-wide strategies to achieve the goals of increasing resident participation and control over circumstances affecting their physical, spiritual and mental well-being; foster coordinated, resident-driven, capacity-building human services; and influence government policy making (Medoff and Sklar 171).

The RDI Design Team made slow progress, however. The first trainings, Facilitator Learning Sessions, were offered in 1998 with the help of an outside consultant. The committee hoped the 5-day trainings would create more capacity to design and facilitate learning among residents. In 2000, DSNI undertook an aggressive campaign to develop the Institute. The RDI working papers refer to the unique ‘window of opportunity’ for intensifying the planning efforts as the funding support and consulting assistance would be “less certain” by January 1, 2002. The board recognized the “current high visibility for community-based leadership development programming within the donor community” (DSNI RDI Design Team n.d.).

The Casey Foundation paid for a consultant, Jennifer Henderson, to work with the RDI Design Team (the Design Team). Envisioned as a nine-month project, it took over two years for the team of staff and board members to develop the series. Henderson challenged the Design Team to reflect on both their personal and organizational values. The Design Team researched DSNI’s historical documents to ensure that the principles and trainings aligned with DSNI’s core values. As a result, the RDI “training model...represents the history, learning [of

---

64 This may have reflected the board’s lack of commitment or lack of capacity to create new leadership (Louie, personal interview).

65 Jennifer Henderson has over 30 years of experience in leadership development. She worked with Civil Rights, anti-war, poverty and anti-hunger organizations. She worked for the Center for Community Change. According to Louie, she understands change, adult education and values (Henderson, telephone interview; Louie, personal interview).
DSNI has given us a way to name ourselves, to name our values, organizing and leadership model” (Louie, personal interview).

DSNI’s need to ‘name’ the work surfaced in the planning for the RDI. The RDI working papers acknowledged that because of the “void of a “first-person description”, others have taken credit for ideas that “originated in the DSNI community” about leadership development (DSNI RDI Design Team n.d.). DSNI takes pride in its work to create RDI as an embodiment of the organizational values and its homegrown leadership model. Working with a consultant enabled DSNI to incorporate principles of adult education, current practices and theories in the leadership development field. Overall, RDI provides DSNI the opportunity to translate and transmit lessons from its rich organizing experience to leaders committed to realizing the community’s vision for economic, physical and human development.

**How does RDI support DSNI’s Vision of the Community?**

*We can’t do it alone. It is through cooperation that we come to understand that anything is possible.*  

RDI allows DSNI and the Dudley community to carry out the commitment to “holistic” development and resident control expressed in the community’s vision (Medoff and Sklar 1994). DSNI convened residents to articulate a vision for the neighborhood in 1987 and again in 1996 (www.dsni.org; Medoff and Sklar 1994). At the second session supported by the Casey Foundation’s Rebuilding Communities Initiative, residents reaffirmed the original vision of Dudley, the “urban village”. Dudley Village is a “culturally vibrant, active, people-centered, mutually supportive community with a sense of “can do” optimism... [with] play spaces, community gatherings, and a full range of neighborhood services, activities and activism” (DSNI Urban Village Vision Process 1996, 14).

According to the vision, residents enjoy community economic power, political power, mutually supportive relationships, and self and group expression. Other themes that emerged include life long learning (including a community information center), neighborhood unity, physical and visual quality of life, harmony with nature, security, and community friendly transportation (DSNI Urban Village Vision Process 1996, 12). Organizing is considered to be “the renewable energy that powers DSNI’s human, physical and economic development” (Medoff and Sklar 1994, 259).

---

66 I believe that many of the Jennifer Henderson’s values and experiences also shaped the leadership series as reflected in the community vision approach that DSNI’s leadership training expresses.

67 An earlier description reads “Dudley Village is a model of an economically and environmentally sound neighborhood that nurtures human development” (www.dsni.org/dudley_village.htm). Data accessed on April 14, 2005.
DSNI’s organizing work is supposed to achieve this community vision by aligning the interests of individuals, groups like DSNI comprised of individuals, and the larger community. In resident development, the task is to encourage residents to see themselves as part of the larger neighborhood and engage them to work collectively toward realizing Dudley’s community vision. Figure 7 shows the image of concentric circles to represent this interplay.

At the center of the circles is the “self”, the individual resident. Initially motivated by individual concerns, residents come together and form a “group” like DSNI. Through organizing numbers of residents, the group builds power and is able to command attention by policy makers, public officials or other decision-makers. The group is then able to achieve gains and improvements for the “community common good” in the Dudley neighborhood (DSNI and Strategic Interventions. RDI Values, Vision and Power module 2005). DSNI’s leadership development work is intended to increase the numbers of leaders and support residents who are committed to carrying out the community’s vision.

Figure 8 reflects the work of RDI to create a “circle” of DSNI leaders who are supportive of each other and the community vision. Neighborhood residents (symbolized by the face out of the house) attend RDI (block arrow) and join the DSNI circle of leaders (circle of faces) to help uphold the vision of Dudley as an urban village. The leaders support for one and another and share responsibilities modeling themselves after geese (refer to the section entitled What is DSNI’s Theory of Leadership?).

---

68 The ‘concentric circles’ image is common at DSNI. At least three training modules incorporate the schema. Both Jennifer Henderson and one of the past participants referred to these concentric circles. This diagram is adapted from DSNI and Strategic Interventions. RDI Values, Vision and Power module 2005.

69 In a personal interview Bothwell refers to the DSNI’s goals for a “circle” of leaders. In a following section, I discuss DSNI’s theory of leadership which uses a metaphor of geese to emphasize the need for leaders who are both ready to lead and provide support to others. See DSNI and Strategic Interventions. RDI Developing Leaders 2004.
Program Overview: Resident Development Institute

DSNI's Resident Development Institute (RDI) is the clearest expression of the organization's commitment to resident leadership and participation. The RDI is envisioned as

...an institute with and without walls, helping DSNI become a learning organization and the Dudley community a learning community...RDI is a repository for our community history and learning, helping to document our experiences and tell our story.

It captures community guidance into standards, and provides the data, information, tools and processes for good community decision-making (DSNI, Resident Development Institute fact sheet 2004).

RDI is intended to support resident control of decision-making. The interests of residents take precedence over those of outside entities like funders or the City. The target audience is "community leaders, based on the principles of experiential learning" (Louie, personal interview). RDI is supposed to give participants specific opportunities to practice and apply the learning from the training.

The Resident Development Institute incorporates a Leadership Competency Series, DSNI publications and a Speakers Bureau. Table 8 lists the eight training modules in the Leadership Competency Series.

Table 8: DSNI RDI Leadership Competency Series Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Modules</th>
<th>Rotating Modules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Values, Visions, and Power</td>
<td>• Strategic Thinking &amp; Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community Organizing</td>
<td>• Resource Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing Leaders</td>
<td>• Public Policy Advocacy (pilot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitation and Meeting Design</td>
<td>• Race (pilot)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70 Two modules: Public Policy Advocacy and Race have been piloted, but are still under development.
Modules are offered free to residents and local stakeholder groups who are members of DSNI. Non-residents are asked to make a donation. DSNI has begun to deliver the trainings on a fee-for-service to other neighborhood associations and non-profit organizations outside the neighborhood.

Since November 2003, nearly 150 people have completed the training including 54 board members. In 2003, the decision was made to require board members to attend the training. Participants typically include DSNI board and committee members, representatives from local non-profit organizations, and residents who are or would like to be involved in neighborhood activities. Many of the board and committee members are residents (DSNI Attendance Lists, DSNI training debrief documents). Attendees represent different races and ethnicities and tend to be over 25. RDI staff does special outreach to younger residents, who work with DSNI, and has worked with an affiliated organization that works with young people.

- **Training Design**

RDI’s training methods are designed to be experiential, in line with adult learning theory and popular education. Each module incorporates people’s experiences. For example, the first activity in the leadership module is an ice breaker (a warm up exercise) that asks participants to reflect on a time when they played a leadership role namely where they were able to “lead, guide, facilitate...make something happen in some way” (Louie, personal interview). Influenced by the writing of Paulo Freire, the Brazilian adult educator, DSNI acknowledges that “everyone is a teacher and learner” (DSNI and Strategic Interventions. RDI Developing Leaders 2004, 5). RDI Lead Staff May Louie explains,

...that’s why we call the people who are running the modules...facilitators. They’re not teachers. So the model is not the teacher as expert in front of the room. It’s actually someone creating a learning environment, creating tasks, giving tools. And that everybody sits in the room simultaneously as learners and teachers. So there isn’t this line between members of the group, you know, or between the facilitators and the participants. It’s a pretty blurred line.

---

71 These are the number of participants from November 2004 through April 2005 (DSNI Attendance Lists).

72 The annual modules are offered each year and required for board members. Facilitation and Meeting Design is required for board committee chairs only. Before board members were required to take the trainings, board members represented a small number of the training participants. In the two sessions I observed in January and February, 2005, board members represented the majority of attendees (Bothwell, personal interview). Since the program’s inception, a third of all attendees have been board members. (DSNI, funding proposal notes; DSNI, attendance lists).

73 Age diversity among training participants is intended to diversify the community’s leadership.
It's clear that somebody's is running it... in the sense that they've got the facilitator notes and the workbook (laughter). But at a certain point the group owns it -- if you do it well (Louie, personal interview).

At every module, participants receive a workbook with the agenda, exercises and background materials. Posters illustrate the ground rules, DSNI's mission and principles, and key concepts for each module. The modules are designed to accommodate different learning styles and offer opportunities for practical application and for learning by doing. Participants are invited to work in small groups for discussion, art projects and skits and in a large group for discussions and ice breakers.

Planning the training sessions provides an opportunity for board members and interested residents to develop their facilitation and design skills. Volunteer facilitators attend 3-5 meetings to prepare and debrief. During the 2-3 hour meetings, the facilitators discuss and revise the script, content, and sequence of the trainings with DSNI staff.

RDI's offerings and learning design are intended to further DSNI's commitment to resident leadership and control for board members and other residents to improve the Dudley neighborhood.

**What is DSNI's Theory of Leadership?**

...when you get to a 24,000 person community that is very diverse, many generations, immigrants and a native born African American, Latino, Cape Verdean, white, Haitian and increasingly Asian population, how do you put that all together? And we think that's our job... Organize to fight for the right to make decisions, but [support] the skills, the information base and the sense of community and group process so the community can make good decisions together....So the issue of resident leadership is huge in our model of change.

– May Louie, RDI Lead Staff

DSNI's leadership model represents a collaborative approach that focuses on shared values, developing others and learning. The goal is to expand the "circle" of DSNI leaders (Bothwell, personal interview). Figure 9 shows the features of DSNI's leadership model.

---

84 In 2002, at the end of the Rebuilding Communities Initiative, DSNI stated the 5 principles of its Change Model. They are: change from the inside outside, resident-led collaboration, role = planning and organizing, community-controlled revitalization and hope and innovation (DSNI and Strategic Interventions, 2002; Louie, personal interview)
DSNI envisions leadership as a collective rather than an individual undertaking. Committed to the community’s values and vision, DSNI leaders are from community and are accountable to the community.

DSNI leaders empower other residents and leaders. This definition departs from the traditional leadership theory that focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers. The word follower does not appear in the definition. RDI lead staff member May Louie acknowledges the challenge of using and supporting this “counter-cultural” leadership model (personal interview). This work responds directly to the organization’s desire for new, inclusive leadership. The RDI Developing Leaders module (2004) includes this passage to illustrate the concept of shared leadership:

As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an “uplift” for the bird following. By flying in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds 71% more flying range than if each bird flew alone. When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect him. They stay with the goose until it is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own with another formation or catch up with the flock [author unknown n.d.] (7).

Louie highlights the importance of ongoing individual development and growth at DSNI.

So we are saying for every individual there are roles in which you are emerging, simultaneously, you’re emerging in certain roles, you’re mature in certain roles

---

May Louie, Director of Leadership and Capacity Building, is the lead staff person for RDI. She came to DSNI in 1994 to oversee the Rebuilding Communities Initiative funded by the Casey Foundation (Learnings, 5). A lifelong activist, she was involved in the early formation of the Asian American and anti-war movement and coalition building (Louie, personal interview).
and you’re seasoned in certain roles. And we said seasoned – well salted? (laughter). We said okay, so we found some other word” (Louie, personal interview).

In a planning meeting for the Developing Leaders module, a group of volunteer facilitators and staff discussed whether everyone is a leader at DSNI. There was agreement that everyone can develop and demonstrate leadership skills. According to the Executive Director John Barros, “everyone at DSNI is a leader. What makes them effective is knowing when and how to play different roles” (participant observation). RDI helps resident learn about leadership readiness, playing different roles and supporting the group with coaching from staff. The trainings do not specify the different roles, however.

Overall, RDI captures the essence of DSNI’s leadership model: shared vision, cooperation, support and continuous personal and group growth through its work to create the Resident Development Institute.

**What is RDI’s Leadership Training Approach?**

*So, if you look at the field of community change we occupy one pole really in sort of how much community control we think there should be and in terms of the leading role we think residents should play in that. So we’re really the extreme…. And if you say that you think that residents should run this, part of this is a statement of principle of self-determination.*

*We all know from all our lives that we’re not prepared to make every decision a good decision, so how do you prepare people -- with the tools, the information, the skills and not just individually?*

--- May Louie, RDI Lead Staff

DSNI’s leadership development reflects the community vision approach, using popular education techniques. RDI shares at least three of the features central to this leadership development approach: creating and supporting shared vision, analysis of power, and creation of a learning community. Though not discussed here, RDI also incorporates elements like peer leadership, cooperation and techniques found in popular education approaches.

- *Creating and supporting a community vision with individuals and organizations*

The community vision approach to leadership development is predicated on the shared vision created by community members as an expression of their community values. DSNI has made a strong organizational commitment to the “community vision” for Dudley and is explicit in how that vision drives its work. Clarifying values is essential to the work to create a shared vision.
(Annie E. Casey Foundation Paths 1999). DSNI has also communicated its model of change, an approach supported by foundations for comprehensive community initiatives. 76

Given the organization’s goal to create new leaders, the RDI series helps DSNI inculcate its leadership values and model in board members and other residents. In the Values, Vision and Power module, the foundation of the series, participants learn about the community’s shared vision as well as DSNI’s mission, community values, and statement of community rights. Participants then analyze how DSNI’s three strategic focus activities relate to these three statements. The module invites reflection on the two community visioning processes convened by DSNI. Participants create collages to express a shared vision for Dudley Street. The community’s shared vision is referenced in other modules in the RDI leadership series (DSNI and Strategic Interventions. RDI Organizing 2005; Developing Leaders 2004).

Strong facilitation and meeting design are important skills to support work to develop and carry out a community’s vision. DSNI offers practical training support on facilitation training and meeting design. It has come to be recognized as an essential skill for participating in the collaborations funded by CCIs and for community leadership in general (Kubisch et al. 2002; W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2002).

- Analysis of power and change strategies in the community

RDI’s emphasis on discussions of power aligns with funders’ conceptions for grassroots training. DSNI sees the opportunity to create political and economic power by bringing together numbers of individuals who have shared goals or vision. Power is at the heart of DSNI’s definition of organizing (DSNI and Strategic Interventions. RDI Organizing 2005). In the first training module, Values, Vision and Power, the facilitators engage participants in a discussion of who has power in our society and the sources of that power. The facilitator draws a line under the names of those with power. Participants identify those without power in our society. These names and categories are written below the line. After the group brainstorm, the facilitator erases the line. The facilitator emphasizes that the point of DSNI’s work is not to switch who has power, so some people end up powerless.

The trainings examine the concept of power, but do not specify strategies for analyzing and using power. In the January session of Values, Vision and Power the group discussion of power was actually the shortest of all our conversations for the day. To apply the concept, we were given scenarios and asked to create skits, loosely connected to our discussion of power. 77


77 In one scenario participants respond to complaints that DSNI favors one racial group over another in the neighborhood. The second scenario revolves around a discussion about how to address gentrification in the neighborhood. Staff reminded us about the tools including the DNI land trust to address the need to preserve affordable housing and community (DSNI and Strategic Interventions. RDI Values, Vision and Power 2005).
The idea of a learning community is important to the community vision approach to leadership development. To figure out how to facilitate learning in the RDI, DSNI's leadership committee used resources like Peter Senge's systems thinking. One board member, Paul Bothwell, who served on the committee said at the time of the first workshop in 1998, said

What drives this 'engine of change is that we really pay attention to serious leadership development. We develop skills, knowledge, confidence for residents to be leaders of all aspects of this revitalization effort...I would call this [a] 'collaborative learning community' (Annie E. Casey Foundation RCI News 1999).

Building on the commitment to learning, Louie talks about the importance of opportunities to apply the training.

... when you say you want resident leadership [and] you actually train leaders [and] they've got to have a place to be leaders...You... want... the program imbedded in your organization... so in a lot of these programs where individual activists go through transformations, in 50-60% of the cases they have to leave the organization. Because they come back and they can't get the organization to move where they've moved. And so it's like this [snap, snap], right? ...[P]eople have to have the places where they practice skills and where the skills are supported (Louie, personal interview).

Louie's statement captures the importance of the shared experience, organizational support and opportunities to apply what has been learned in the leadership trainings. However, this link between the trainings and the ongoing board and committee work was not made strongly in my observations. It may because many of the participants were board members. The idea of a learning community – focused on learning and practical application – provides support for new and existing leaders.

In summary, the RDI offers a community-based approach to leadership development. The goal is to leverage the individual gains from the training for the benefit of the broader community.

---


79 The consultant Jennifer Henderson shared this concern with DSNI staff (telephone interview).

80 See African proverb.
DSNI’s Resident Development Institute contributes to community capacity building by encouraging individuals to work collectively. RDI offers residents opportunities to strengthen their sense of belonging to neighborhood and make connections to other residents, develop skills and knowledge, and build confidence. To maintain consistency with the other cases, I discuss the characteristics in this order: skills and knowledge, confidence, connections to people and connections to the neighborhood.

- **Skills and knowledge**

  [Community empowerment means] the people themselves are learning these skills...so they can take ownership of whatever changes need to be done in the community.
  
  -- Arnaldo Solis, former DSNI board member

DSNI’s Resident Development Institute seeks to develop **skill and knowledge** in order to realize the community’s vision for the neighborhood. Participants often come out of their own self-interest for the opportunity to build their own skills to be used in their own volunteer and paid work. Board member Paul Bothwell suggests that many of the participants are already involved in community activities. They see a need for support and appreciate the opportunity to gain and hone skills that can be applied directly and immediately (personal interview). The most popular training is Facilitation and Meeting Design. Another participant talked about the value of the Public Policy and Advocacy module given that “politics are complicated and scary to people” (Langhorn-Harrell, personal interview).

In addition to practical skills, RDI participants appreciate the opportunity to reflect on the concepts covered in the modules. One board member says “it’s stuff you already know, but they get you to think about it in different ways” (Glynn, personal interview). Another board member believes that residents need and have “a thirst for knowledge” about how to “fight fights they don’t have the tools to win” and about how things are done”. He talks about how the RDI modules gave him “a new methodology” that “came out of praxis – out of 25 years of DSNI experience and testing”. Further, he feels that the trainings could use more accessible and offer more ideological discussion (Fuster, personal interview). This reflects the findings of Boehm and Staples’ forthcoming study that experienced community leaders see the benefit in trainings that provide a conceptual framework.

For different participants, the trainings convey new information as well as reinforce concepts. DSNI emphasizes building one’s individual skills to work in groups on behalf of the community.

---

80 DSNI Board Member Paul Bothwell uses this metaphor to describe DSNI’s work. This quotation is found in Medoff and Sklar 1994, 6.

81 This quotation is found in Medoff and Sklar 1994, 177.
• **Confidence**

The RDI’s experiential learning design creates an opportunity for residents to build confidence. By incorporating ways for participants to build on what they know, the RDI’s design encourages residents to think about own experience and validates their accomplishments. Several participants speak about this as the major benefit of the training (Henderson, personal interview; Glynn, personal interview; Langhorn-Harrell, personal interview).

• **Connections to other residents**

*So even though I came to the table alone, nothing that made me [who I am] was alone.*  
-- former DSNI participant

Several training modules encourage participants to think not only of their own needs as individuals but also in relation to a larger group and the community. The concentric circles schema suggests the **connections to other residents** in the Values, Vision and Power, Organizing, and Developing Leaders modules.

Participants appreciate the opportunity to discuss and practice concepts in the course of the training with other participants. The facilitators mix the groups intentionally. The group activities encourage participants to work with other residents involved in DSNI. The art projects and skits encourage participants to think creatively and critically as they work together. During breaks and even after the full day of training, participants meet and talk with another. By encouraging participants to interact, RDI helps build support for individuals to consider working together to bring about the neighborhood vision.

• **Sense of belonging to the neighborhood**

The training can be said to play a role in strengthening residents’ sense of attachment or belonging to the neighborhood. Many of the RDI participants feel connected and are involved before they come to the training. Stories of DSNI’s past community inspire and excite participants. For example, one facilitator shared her pride in DSNI and the community’s accomplishments. She told the story of her family getting involved in the Don’t Dump on Us Campaign after one of her family members got sick from trash dumped in her yard (participant observation 2005). The training is very much a vehicle for communicating the organization’s legacy in order to build support for future collective work. In a survey of 12 RDI participants, residents said they stayed involved because of they believed community residents could make a difference, their community vision, and for some, knowledge of prior successes” (Development Leadership Network 2002).

---

82 More than half of the group identified DSNI or the Dudley community during this concentric circles exercises in two sessions I observed (participant observations). Many participants find out about the training because they are connected to DSNI or a partnering organization.
DSNI seeks to build the cooperation by helping participants appreciate and connect to DSNI’s history in helping the community to realize that vision.

Summary: Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative Resident Development Institute

Rooted in DSNI’s organizing history, principles and community vision, Resident Development Initiative is the vehicle for creating and supporting new leaders in the Dudley neighborhood. The also approach emphasizes power analyses and creating a learning community.

At DSNI leadership development is intended to support the larger goal of encouraging individuals to work collectively to carry out the neighborhood’s vision. In that work, the Resident Development Institute focuses on helping residents develop a stronger connection to the neighborhood and residents, skills and conceptual knowledge, and confidence.
Chapter 7: Analysis

I highlight the leadership development programs offered by three Boston-based organizations: the Union of Minority Neighborhoods, MYTOWN and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. This chapter offers a summary and analysis of lessons and implications of this study on the research question:

- What are the theories, motivations and practices of local, community-based programs using leadership development as a strategy for building community capacity?

Over the last four decades, community participation has come to be recognized as a central and necessary element of local and nation-wide efforts to improve and strengthen urban neighborhoods that face structural inequalities. National foundations have invested significant resources in supporting resident decision-making and leadership. Yet, academic literature does not address questions about resident leadership in much depth. This study seeks to contribute to our understanding of community-based efforts in leadership development. Using a case study approach, I explore three programs in Boston, a city known nationally for its legacy of successful resident organizing.

The training programs of UMN, MYTOWN and DSNI grew organically to meet the perceived community need for new leadership and engaged community members. Shaped by the experiences of the program designers, the three programs share a commitment to a theory of collaborative-developmental leadership. However, each uses a different approach to empower and encourage participants to work collectively to improve their communities. The programs contribute to building community capacity by helping residents develop skills, knowledge, confidence, connections to other residents, and connections to the neighborhoods where they live. Table 9 compares the defining features of the three cases. The discussion that follows mirrors the format of the case studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>UMN</th>
<th>MYTOWN</th>
<th>DSNI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Base</td>
<td>Roxbury, Mattapan, Dorchester</td>
<td>South End/Lower Roxbury</td>
<td>Dudley section of Roxbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Skills and support for organizers of color; organizing</td>
<td>Youth development and appreciation for urban neighborhoods</td>
<td>Community planning and organizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Program</td>
<td>Institute of Neighborhood Leadership</td>
<td>Youth Guide Development Program</td>
<td>Resident Development Institute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. Comparison of 3 Leadership Development Training Programs and Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why was the program founded?</th>
<th>Need for more political leaders; Personal experience of founder</th>
<th>Youth employment &amp; document history; Personal experience of co-founder</th>
<th>Need for new community leaders; Took advantage of funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Highlander Folk and Citizenship Schools:</td>
<td>Highlander Folk and Citizenship Schools and Freire (culture):</td>
<td>Community vision with Freirian methods:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Political empowerment</td>
<td>• Instill sense of pride</td>
<td>• Community Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practical training</td>
<td>• Raise consciousness</td>
<td>• Power analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer leadership</td>
<td>• Instill sense of efficacy</td>
<td>• Learning community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Lecture and discussion</td>
<td>Popular education</td>
<td>Popular education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainings: Number of Sessions; Duration</td>
<td>• 2-4 series per year</td>
<td>• 70+ activities (2-3 per week)</td>
<td>• 6 modules (offered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• up to 5 weeks</td>
<td>• 11 weeks after school (10 hours)</td>
<td>• 1 day per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2-3 hours per week</td>
<td>• 7 weeks in summer (30 hours)</td>
<td>• 8 hours per session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis for community capacity building</td>
<td>• Skills</td>
<td>• Connection to place &amp; Confidence</td>
<td>• Connection to neighborhood and other residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge</td>
<td>• Knowledge &amp; Skills</td>
<td>• Skills &amp; Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Connections to others (coalitions)</td>
<td>• Connections to others</td>
<td>• Confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Why were these community-based leadership development programs created?

Many foundations and social activists believe that collective action and social organizing are the answer to deep structural inequalities. This work depends on individuals' being equipped, mobilized, ready and willing to work together, and positive about the group's ability to achieve positive results. This is no easy task. But, especially in challenging urban contexts, how do practitioners encourage individuals to work together to solve community problems collectively? Reflecting my update of Arstein's ladder (1969), the intention is to move residents along the continuum of community participation that begins with 'involvement' to control and full decision-making authority.

Leadership development training programs represent one response of community-based organizations to meet a perceived need for individual and community participation and leadership. The three programs are contemporary efforts in a long tradition of training.

---

8 Social movements in this country have achieved political and economic restructuring often only after significant disruption and instability. Individual communities would need to marshal incredible resources to counter the large systemic disparities perpetuated by this country's entrenched political and economic interests.
grassroots leaders for social action in this country. Founded in 1932, the Highlander Folk School was committed to using education as a process for radical social change. Developed at Highlander, the Citizenship Schools inspired rural and poor black community leaders to vote and organize for political change in the struggle for civil rights. This work paralleled the efforts of the adult educator Freire in Brazil to use discussions about culture as a tool to educate landless, peasants in social movements for voting and land rights. These popular approaches emphasize democratic practice and peer leadership. A third more recent, professionalized approach draws on popular training techniques to achieve aims of relationship building and the community’s vision for change at the neighborhood level. This community vision approach enjoys foundation support.

- How do these programs support the vision and needs of the community?

Leadership programs create and develop residents and community leaders who are committed to working together. While the three organizations in this study serve similar neighborhoods, each program in this study adopts a particular approach to meet the needs of individual residents, a physical neighborhood or broad-based communities. The differences in their approaches reflect the perception of the designers of the community’s vision and needs. This conception appears to be shaped by the founder’s experiences or the organizational needs.

Reflecting the founder’s experience as a Civil Rights activist, Union of Minority Neighborhoods is designed to bring individuals together for political organizing and advocacy. Similarly, MYTOWN’s co-founders modeled the organization after a personal experience of affirmation. DSNI’s Resident Development Institute responds to a vision and need articulated by the residents, neighborhood stakeholders and its own board for more inclusive leadership. Through RDI, DSNI communicates the vision, values and organizing history of the Dudley neighborhood in Roxbury. With its focus on specific neighborhood over time, DSNI is in a better position to undertake this process of creating vision and assessment and validate the need for the RDI.4

Without a structured analysis, questions arise about how well these program goals meet the community need given existing services. For example, structured training may not actually be appropriate strategy for the goal of creating new leaders. The content, formal structure and outreach of the program may be more likely to attract people who are already active, inclined to work in community initiatives or comfortable with structured educational activities. Training represents a tool to be used in conjunction with other strategies to create leaders. In practice, residents report that they develop skills through past personal experience, coaching along with training.

---

84 It is recognized that communities can have needs at different levels simultaneously. However, without a systematic analysis of those needs, the organizations including leadership development programs, may not respond to those needs appropriately. For many organizations, the cost, time, required skills and broad geographic targets might make this work seem out of reach.
As Conger (1992) finds in corporate training programs, the community-centered trainings may introduce skills or concepts that are useful for engagement and leadership, but may not present enough topics, in the depth needed and in enough time for community members to actually learn to lead. He suggests that this limitation may explain why more resources are not invested in formal training (Conger 1992). Additional study is needed to understand the combination of structured learning, experience and coaching that is most effective for developing new community leaders who have no prior experience.

- **What theories of leadership do the programs embody?**

The three programs espouse a collaborative-developmental theory of leadership. Unlike the traditional leadership paradigm that focuses on the relationship of a central actor to his or her followers, the collaborative models view leadership as a process of empowerment. Collaborative leaders share responsibilities for tasks and motivate group members to reach shared goals. One specific type of collaborative leader, the developmental leader, seeks to develop the capabilities of group members and create new leaders.

The three organizations value, respect and draw on the contributions, skills and intellect of all participants. This is significant for residents who are often marginalized or discriminated against on the basis of their race, socio-economic status or residence in a high poverty neighborhood. This open, democratic approach welcomes and prepares new leaders to take on roles in dynamic community settings that are under-resourced and under-appreciated. The new leaders may join or replace prior leaders when they move on to other work or move away from the neighborhood.

- **What are the programs' approaches to leadership training?**

All of the programs strive to empower the program participants (or to make them more effective) according to the organization’s mission or purpose. UMN uses the Citizenship School approach to leadership development. The core elements: political empowerment, practical skills and peer leadership respond to the immediate needs of the community members. This informal approach targets grassroots leaders who may not have the experience, connections or confidence to access resources outside of their community. MYTOWN aims to instill a sense of efficacy, consciousness of social justice issues, and neighborhood pride in its youth participants in hopes of encouraging community engagement and leadership. DSNI works to train new leaders committed to achieving the community’s vision of an Urban Village. In its approach DSNI focuses on creating shared vision, analyzing power and change strategies in the model, and creating a learning community.

Only MYTOWN makes personal efficacy a priority among the three programs. Youth development literature shows that young adults need self-actualization. It may be argued, as MYTOWN does, that self-actualization is actually a prerequisite for residents of all ages who
desire to take any individual or collective action in the neighborhood. MYTOWN has designed training sessions and activities to help participants recognize their value to themselves, a group of peers and their communities. MYTOWN Youth Guides explore their sense of selves, capabilities and social roles in a supportive environment.

Personal empowerment is at the core of the UMN and DSNI approaches, but the programs focus on political empowerment and collective efficacy for adults. UMN and DSNI seek to encourage participants to work in groups to address community and broad-based issues. The programs share other features: peer leadership, practical training, raising consciousness and analyzing power in relationships that serve to reinforce personal and group empowerment.

- How do the programs contribute to community capacity building?

Ideally, leadership programs seek to strengthen community capacity by engaging residents at three levels: individual concerns, group or community needs and issues outside of the immediate neighborhood (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 1999; Annie E. Casey Foundation 2001). The three cases of this study attempt to encourage residents to participate by increasing their community problem solving skills and knowledge, confidence, and connections to other residents and the neighborhoods by varying degrees. The hope is that after the training residents will apply their strengthened individual capacity to the larger undertaking of community capacity to benefit their neighborhoods as a whole.

In its efforts to create more political leaders, UMN urges residents who are often involved in community causes to become engaged in political organizing activities. Appealing to residents' desire for practical skills, UMN focuses on skills, knowledge and confidence through the formal training. Outside of the trainings, the organizing campaigns and other social events facilitate networking for the grassroots leaders. The goal of MYTOWN's leadership training is to provide the program participants with the resources needed to participate and lead if and whenever the individual so chooses. MYTOWN trainings are intended to help participants develop connections to their neighborhood and self-confidence through increased knowledge, skills and connections to others. DSNI strives to reach its goal for community control by developing the capacity of board and other community members to engage in collective community work. DSNI focuses on building connections to the neighborhood and other residents, developing skills and knowledge, which, in turn, raise confidence.

Overall, the three programs seek to strengthen the individual capacity as part of the community's capacity by focusing on problem solving skills, knowledge, confidence, and

85 There is room for debate about the extent to which the organizations design programs based on a systematic analysis of the actual need in their communities, the existing organizations that address those needs and the possibility of collaborating with those groups. Whether through funding constraints, conviction in the work or other factors, or lack of awareness, these analysis and processes are not undertaken systematically or well articulated as part of program design. One promising project at MIT's Center for Reflective and Community Practice led by two Program Fellows, Kenneth Bailey and Rob Peagler offers program design support for new programs.
connections to people and place in varying degrees that are shaped by the program's leadership development approach. These factors are said to undermine resident participation: a lack of skills, knowledge, confidence, and connections to other residents and to the neighborhood.  

- **Summary: How do the programs contribute to community building overall?**

For the overall goal of community building, the organizations in this study offer training programs to motivate and prepare individual residents to participate in collective problem solving activities. Figure 10 illustrates the logic of these programs.

![Figure 10. Leadership Development as a Strategy for Building Community Capacity](image)

The first challenge is to get individual residents to leave the house (represented by the faces outside of the house). To address this hurdle, community-based programs offer training programs (the block arrows) that appeal to the self-interest of residents. The starting point is that residents feel like 'there is something in it for them personally' – that they or their family will benefit. The hope is to leverage the individual gain of increased skills, knowledge, confidence and connections for the benefit of the community (the group of faces).

However, in all of approaches studied, the initial draw may become a drawback for the larger project of encouraging community engagement and leadership. Trainings that appeal to participants' self-interest without equal or more emphasis on working collectively may not encourage residents to participate in larger community initiatives. Fundraising trainings at UMN, a meaningful job at MYTOWN and facilitation training at DSNI attract members of the community who see the personal benefit of completing formal training. But will people continue to work on a group agenda? What is the impact of training offered by organizations like MYTOWN and DSNI that are explicitly designed to make the connection to the neighborhood and to other residents?

Community-based organizations may not be able to translate the benefits enjoyed by individuals into benefits for the broader community. Further study is needed to see if and how over time program participants actually apply the new skills and resources gained in the training to community building work in their neighborhoods. Also, what strategies offer the

---

86 See Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995.
most promise to community-based organizations that seek to capture individual gains for the good of the community?

The differences in the program approaches reflect their answer to the fundamental question: what is the problem? To what end(s), are these leadership programs training resident leaders and engaged participants? Are leaders expected to work on the personal or community causes that they have identified, to work with an organization on a place-based community vision or to work with an organization to address community-wide issues? Are these community initiatives generated by the community or by philanthropy? Is the goal to fix the people, the place or the issues, or some combination thereof?

In this study, the leadership development programs take on approaches at each level as shown in Figure 11:

- individual (how can we make people feel confident and take a stake in their neighborhood?);
- community or group (how can we make our neighborhood better for the people who live here?); and
- issues-based (how can we decrease disparities in poor communities of color in the state).

Given the major foundation support for community capacity building, these findings beg the question: what are the problems within the community -- or with the people -- that foundations seek to change through leadership training? Is it really that residents do not have the problem solving skills to address community issues? Or, is it that residents lack the management skills to participate in the foundation-sponsored initiatives set up for community-based

---

87 Thank you to Crockett for continuing to raise this fundamental question (personal interviews). We also need to question of who is defining the problem.
organizations? Is the problem really the result of systemic racism and structural inequity beyond community residents and sympathetic community-based organizations?

The three cases suggest that groups of residents do have skills, knowledge, and confidence -- and motivation -- to participate in collective community problem solving efforts. Community-based organizations may help residents build on these skills or identify ways to compensate for gaps.

However, even the most talented residents cannot be expected to solve today’s urban community problems created by decades of dis-investment, neglect and structural racism in an era of shrinking fiscal resources. Nor, can residents and the mediating community-based organizations rely solely on foundation support to address these issues, even significant multi-year investments. This is not to suggest that residents, community-based organizations and foundations do nothing, but to acknowledge the limitations of these initiatives. The challenge is to pay as much attention to fixing the issues external to the community (and to who is fixing them) as we do to the people, place and issues within community. Like the radical popular education traditions that inspired them, leadership development must be part of a comprehensive strategy for political and social transformation and economic restructuring led by residents and supportive community-based organizations.

---

88 Beside the practical consideration of the limitations of foundation support, funders are also prohibited from sponsoring political activity by law. Political organizing is a potential threat to the corporate interests that fund the foundations.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

To the perennial question of whether leaders are born or made, this study of resident leadership programs answers YES, they can be made in urban communities! Community-based training programs can be used as part of an overall strategy to develop neighborhood leaders. These resident leaders take initiative, may hold formal decision-making roles in their communities, work collectively and develop other leaders. But, as important as community leaders are, communities need engaged community members. These training programs can help members demonstrate leadership skills, contribute to a community agenda and exercise responsibility. Overall, resident leadership training programs encourage community participation and decision-making, suggestive of Arnstein's ladder (1969).

This thesis uses the leadership training programs created by the Union of Minority Neighborhoods, MYTOWN and Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative as case studies to explore this overall people-based strategy to strengthening neighborhoods. Each organization takes an individual-, place- or issue-based approach to leadership development. A collaborative-developmental theory of leadership underlies each program, focusing on group empowerment, shared responsibility and developing other leaders. The programs are designed to meet perceived community needs for: political empowerment, self-actualization, or commitment to the community vision. Elements of popular education inspired by the radical traditions of the Citizenship Schools and Freire’s work in Brazil influence each approach. Regardless of the approach, we find that the training programs in this study support community capacity building.

Ideally, these training programs encourage community members to work together to build on community strengths and resolve challenges facing their communities. Residents develop problem solving skills and knowledge, confidence, and connections to other residents and to the place. Inspired, residents contribute to collective problem solving efforts: as engaged participants, community leaders and community stewards who control community resources.

This examination of community-based leadership development programs raises several questions for further research:

- What is the impact of the training and community history on program participants’ willingness to work with peers and other residents on community problem solving initiatives? Do the program participants apply newly gained skills, knowledge, confidence and connections to collective efforts?
- How does the full process of leadership development – structured trainings, mentoring, coaching, and experience – contribute to community capacity building over time? What combination of structured study, experience and coaching are most effective for developing new community leaders or engaged participants?
- What leadership development approaches are most effective in encouraging community leadership and engagement? And for which segments of the community?
- What are some of the challenges related to sharing power for foundations and community-based non-profit organizations sponsoring resident leadership development?
- What do residents believe is needed to make community change? How do residents’ perceptions compare to those of major foundations and of community-based organizations? What support and program approaches do residents prefer? How do residents’ preferences compare to the program offerings?

Of these questions, residents’ perceptions may be the most important to explore. At the core of this thesis are perceptions about what resources are needed to improve communities, from the perspective of national foundations and community-based organizations. Foundations support leadership training programs to address the need for skills that prevent residents from fully participating in community change efforts. Community-based organizations may also see the opportunity to build on community resources and/or to address macro-level structural inequalities.

In this spirit leadership development programs may help some residents develop awareness, skills, knowledge and confidence. Other residents value opportunities to reinforce what they already understand and to make connections to the larger community. This study underscores the need for community empowerment and support that acknowledges residents’ skills, knowledge and other resources. The Highlander Folk School’s Citizenship Schools and the Freirian project are historical examples of leadership development rooted in community empowerment. These radical efforts did not face the same challenges of sharing power and decision-making in projects supported by national foundations and their non-profit partners, however. Despite this difference, contemporary leadership training programs have the potential to support community members’ personal, community and political empowerment.

Let’s have residents answer the questions: what problems are we trying to solve? For what purpose are we creating resident leaders? Residents need the decision-making authority and financial autonomy to define and lead collective efforts to support and leverage community capacity – internal resources, external relationships, funding and advocacy – to bring about the community’s own visions for economic and political parity.
Citizen, Resident and Community Participation


**Community Building and Organizing**


Leadership


**Leadership, Human Development and Empowerment**


**Leadership Development (Foundation Reports)**


Appendices

A. List of Contributing Individuals
B. List of Case Documents
C. List of Interviews
D. List of Participant Observations
E. Illustration. Map of Boston Neighborhoods
F. Illustration. Steps of Participation
Appendix A: List of Contributing Individuals

Abbanat, Cherie. Lecturer, MIT.


Bailey, Kenny. Fellow, MIT Center for Reflective Community Practice.

Briggs, Xavier de Sousa. Professor, MIT.

Clay, Phillip. Chancellor and Professor of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT.

Davis, Diane. Professor, MIT.

Duckworth, Eleanor. Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Farrow, Lee. Project Director, Boston Community Learning Project. MIT Center for Reflective Community Practice.


Kahn, Charlotte. Director, Community Building Network, The Boston Foundation.

Kee, Robert King. Senior Associate. Interaction Institute for Social Change.

Keyes, Langley. Ford Professor of City and Regional Planning, MIT.

Jennings, James. Professor, Tufts University.

Jones, Alethia. Martin Luther King, Jr. Visiting Scholar, MIT.

Jordan, Audrey. Program Officer. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

McDowell, Ceasar. Associate Professor of Practice of Community Development. MIT Center for Reflective Community Practice.


Nagel, Kiara. Student, MCP 2006. MIT

Pedulla, Mark. Organizer, City Life Vida Urbana.
Rein, Martin. Professor of Sociology. MIT.
Appendix B: List of Case Documents

UMN


Union of Minority Neighborhoods. n.d. training documents. (various dates).


MYTOWN


MYTOWN. n.d. Working with Youth Guides.


**DSNI**


DSNI. 2004. funding proposal addendum. (September).


Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and Strategic Interventions, Inc. 2005. Resident Development Institute. Organizing. (February 26). (workbook and debrief notes)


Appendix C: List of Interviews

Union of Minority Neighborhoods

Bell, Ron. Board Member. March 29, 2005.

Brown, Michael. Board Member. April 12, 2005.

Grissom, Mary. Staff Member. February 8, 2005; March 1, 2005.


Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Bothwell, Paul. DSNI Board Member and neighborhood resident. February 23, 2005.

Fuster, Tito. DSNI Board Member and neighborhood resident. March 7, 2005.

Glynn, Theresa. DSNI Board Member and neighborhood resident. February 7, 2005.


Henderson, Anita. DSNI Board Member and neighborhood resident. February 12, 2005.

Langhorn-Harrell, Kimberly. DSNI Board Member and neighborhood resident. March 11, 2005.


MYTOWN

Crockett, Karilyn. MYTOWN Co-Founder and Staff Member. March 1 and March 20, 2005.

Miranda, Elizabeth. MYTOWN Staff Member. Former Youth Guide and Board Member. March 7, 2005.


Rigaud, Shauna. MYTOWN Staff Member. Former Youth Guide. February 9, 2005.
Appendix D: List of Participant Observations

Union of Minority Neighborhoods


UMN Nonprofit Academy. April 12, 2005.

UMN Study Activist Circle. Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI). February 22, 2005;

MYTOWN

MYTOWN IDEAS of Research training. February 14, 2005.


Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative


Appendix E: Map of Boston Neighborhoods

This map indicates the geographic area served by the cases in this study.

- Union of Minority Neighborhoods is based in Roxbury and serves Dorchester and Mattapan, which are primarily neighborhoods of color.
- MYTOWN’s program activities are focused in the South End, but Youth Guides who participate in the program come from all over the city. Many Youth Guides live in the South End, Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, and Hyde Park.
- DSNI primarily serves the Dudley section of Roxbury indicated in gray on the map (www.dsni.org).

Appendix F: Illustration. Levels of Resident Participation.

The Four Levels of Resident Participation schema builds on the concept of Arnstein’s classic ladder of citizen participation. As Arnstein suggests, the power to make decisions is the key, but I focus on community action in initiatives started either by the government or funders as well as community-generated efforts. See Figure 12.

![Figure 12: Four Levels of Resident Participation](image)

Resident participation can take the form of involvement, engagement, community leadership and community control. The terms are presented in order of increasing commitment, responsibility and activity of the participants in the community’s decision-making and efforts to create change. I assume that all community members have a stake in the outcome for the community. Further, communities need all elves in order to reach its goals. However, some are more willing and committed to participate in the community’s decision-making and initiatives to bring about change. I refer here to their motivation, not necessarily their ability or experience in community action given that given that people can learn and develop. As with many schemas, this is meant to advance discussion rather than provide a strict definition of these terms. There may be significant gradation and overlap.

Table 10 provides working definitions and examples of the four subcategories of community participation: involvement, engagement, leadership and control. The spectrum of community participation ranges from the least contribution to community decision-making, problem solving and efforts to create change.
As noted, the power to make decisions distinguishes the subcategories of community participation. Amplified definitions are provided below for each subcategory.

Involvement – This category is not considered to be part of active decision-making in the community. While community members may be committed to addressing a specific need in the community, the focus is on achieving the specific intended outcome.
Engagement – This form describes the activity of members who contribute to collective problem solving efforts and decision-making. These residents may be acknowledged for their contributions.

Leadership – This level corresponds to a higher level of engagement. This community member takes initiative in decision-making and efforts to make change, though they may not be in formally recognized role. The participant takes on defined stance on community issues. In the next section I will describe leadership as it is used in community contexts by the organizations examined in this research.

Control – This form is the ultimate level of community participation and social action. In the role of social agents, community residents have political and economic autonomy to make decisions that affect the community. In many ways this represents an ideal form of participation.
Appendix G: Search Institute 40 Developmental Assets

Search Institute™ has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Asset Name and Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>1. Family Support-Family life provides high levels of love and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Positive Family Communication-Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Other Adult Relationships-Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Caring School Climate-School provides a caring, encouraging environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Parent Involvement in Schooling-Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empowerment</strong></td>
<td>7. Community Values-Youth-Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Youth as Resources-Young people are given useful roles in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Service to Others-Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boundaries &amp; Expectations</strong></td>
<td>10. Safety-Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Family Boundaries-Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. School Boundaries-School provides clear rules and consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constructive Use of Time</strong></td>
<td>14. Adult Role Models-Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. High Expectations-Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment to Learning</strong></td>
<td>17. Creative Activities-Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. Youth Programs-Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Assets</strong></td>
<td>19. Religious Community-Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment to Learning</strong></td>
<td>20. Time at Home-Young person is out with friends &quot;with nothing special to do&quot; two or fewer nights per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Values</strong></td>
<td>21. Achievement Motivation-Young person is motivated to do well in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22. School Engagement-Young person is actively engaged in learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. Homework-Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24. Bonding to School-Young person cares about her or his school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25. Reading for Pleasure-Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Competencies</strong></td>
<td>26. Caring-Young person places high value on helping other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27. Equality and Social Justice-Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28. Integrity-Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Identity</strong></td>
<td>29. Honesty-Young person &quot;tells the truth even when it is not easy.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30. Responsibility-Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31. Restraint-Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32. Planning and Decision Making-Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Identity</strong></td>
<td>33. Interpersonal Competence-Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34. Cultural Competence-Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35. Resistance Skills-Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution-Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Identity</strong></td>
<td>37. Personal Power-Young person feels he or she has control over &quot;things that happen to me.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38. Self-Esteem-Young person reports having a high self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39. Sense of Purpose-Young person reports that &quot;my life has a purpose.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Identity</strong></td>
<td>40. Positive View of Personal Future-Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>