



Towards Shared Prosperity

Change-Making in the CYD Movement

The Community Youth Development (CYD) movement is dedicated to improving the security and quality of life for and with communities, families, and youth—with an emphasis on youth because they are powerful catalysts for change and can be positive forces in the creation of a safe, just, and prosperous world.

Since 1993 when CYD was coined as a term, many individuals and organizations have tested its core elements and created tools to facilitate and document the movement here and abroad. This article takes stock of that evolution in thinking and doing and presents an updated logic model for reflection on what the next generation of promises and challenges for the CYD movement might be.

Is CYD a movement? We think so—consider where the alternative, the status quo, has gotten us in the creation of safe, just, and sustainable communities. In this new era of interdependence, CYD¹ offers an inspiring and validating framework for social change. Indeed, to some, the integrative quality of CYD is the healthiest alternative to the status quo. In democratic societies based on the full and healthy participation of youth and adults, CYD provides a vision of what is possible. Grounded in the work of activists, researchers, opinion leaders, and policymakers from a number of fields and disciplines, CYD combines multiple assumptions about the current environment and guides our interdisciplinary change-making agenda.

In practice, CYD is at once intuitive and challenging, requiring Herculean boundary-spanning efforts and a broad range of knowledge, ingenuity, resources, and individual and public will and commitment. People gravitate to CYD because the assumptions, strategies, and outcomes make sense and ring true with what they know, think, and believe about young people and the social, economic, and political challenges of the day.

This article takes a fresh look at these matters and ideas and asks:

- *What are the cross-cutting assumptions that bring people together in the CYD movement?*
- *What is the world view/vision that motivates people to participate in CYD?*
- *What are people doing in the name of CYD; that is, what mix of disciplines, strategies, and actions are consciously undertaken to promote safe, just, and prosperous communities?*

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt, from a speech to the United Nations, 1958

Cross-Cutting Assumptions and Worldview

In this era of personal and political, local and global hate crimes, the need for healthy youth and families and safe, just, and prosperous communities is obvious. For those of us with a passion for justice, equality, and inclusiveness, which emanates from every individual, family, neighborhood, town, city, state, and country—and for those of us who are committed to the development of young people and communities—a chance for reflection, focus, and action renews our hope. We needn’t be held hostage to the iniquities of our past and present: we have the ability to change and the obligation to map the ongoing change process.

The words of Henry David Thoreau come to mind: “I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of [people] to elevate [their lives] by conscious endeavor.” Safe, just, and prosperous communities are possible; we can make them so by individual and collective conscious endeavor. We recognize that in the workings of the world, we do not have control, but that we *do* have influence. We, therefore, promote strategies and actions that have the most leverage in creating desired

change—strategies that are based on lessons from research and experience, that are politically feasible, and that are welcome in this nervous world.

The personal is indeed political, but with a nod to Tip O’Neill, all politics are not just local. The world, as witnessed most dramatically in the terrorist events this past fall in the United States, is inescapably part of our reality—more personally connected than many of us ever thought possible.

With this new understanding, the appreciation and valuing of other people—their countries, cultures, customs—make our need for connection to and participation in our own communities so much more vivid. Our families, neighborhoods, workplaces,

and communities are learning laboratories for creating safe spaces that promote the positive development and good health of people, justice systems, and the responsible use of natural resources. Democracies thrive with engaged citizens. The world’s survival depends not only on engaged citizens, but also on knowledgeable, compassionate individuals who cherish human rights, the common good, intergenerational relationships, and our home, this fragile planet earth. In other words, the

“When I participate I change myself, my family, and my community. . .”²

—Carlos, age 17

CYD movement may be seen as part of a global strategy for sustainable living where sustainable development is defined as “improving the quality of human life within the carrying capability of supporting ecosystems.”³

Gro Harlem Brundtland poses a challenge to all of us in assessing our relationship to the earth:⁴

The issues of the relationship between humankind and planet earth exist because our souls are too long for this short life. As far as we know, we are the only species that has the capacity to look beyond ourselves—to care about our posterity—to think in inter-generational terms . . . Our challenge today is to organize our knowledge, our tremendous scientific and technological potential . . . The question mark remains whether we have the political ability to organize and to change what we need to change.

Community Youth Development is a paradigm shift. It is both an intuitively simple approach rooted in very basic values and a profound, complex set of principles and methodologies. CYD holds an appreciative, holistic, ecological, relational worldview, grounded in equality and justice, compassion, and sustainability—it is about interdependence in families and communities around the world. This approach serves as the basis for all action, as individual by individual, family by family, community by community, we work, as Gandhi said, “to be the change we want to see in the world.”

The work of CYD activists, policymakers, and educators contrasts with the norm in social programs and services in the USA, where the goal is to work *on* young people rather than *with* them. We as a society have often ignored broader community

and societal issues and left young people out of important dialogue. And when we have addressed community issues, young people have seldom been involved as partners in community creation, maintenance, and change.

In general, we have not yet created healthy environments where all people can thrive and flourish. In particular, our systems serving youth tend to be based on a deficit-driven model that is not equipped to create space for healthy development and relationships. These systems can be partially characterized by the following:

- Inconsistent, fragmented, and crisis-driven services
- Inadequately prepared educators and youth and community workers

“We live in a time today when youth engagement has particular import and potential. Part of what makes this such a powerful time is the shift taking place in adult/youth relationships, one that . . . is as fundamental as the change that has taken place in gender relations and in relations between minority and majority cultures . . . As a result of technological advances in communications, no longer do adults necessarily have greater access to information and thus greater knowledge, which is the key to adults’ ability to maintain control over youth. Of course young people continue to need adults, but the nature of that need is evolving in a way that makes possible a more equitable youth/adult partnership.”⁵

—Inca Mohammed

- Disconnected programs that lack community focus and as a result further increase dependence and fragmentation
- Traditional approaches that treat youth as objects rather than resources
- Vague values and philosophy of practice, which result in an idiosyncratic approach
- Overspecialized and overprotective youth and community workers

- Externally-driven practice
- Competing agendas of professional groups
- Politically-motivated funding
- History and learning that get muddled

This is where the paradigm shift comes in: what began as an effort to create better social, economic, psychological, environmental, and physical health for all young people evolved into a “diagnosed problem” model of treatment, which fails to look at the whole person in the context of families and communities. Youth are seen as a collection of problems instead of as future parents, neighbors, and workers who need maximum adult involvement, teaching, and encouragement to grow and be productive citizens. What began as an effort to have just, safe, and economically viable communities evolved primarily into the creation of affordable housing and jobs for adults. In this system, neighborhood development has been viewed in economic terms rather than as a comprehensive way to improve the overall quality of life for all residents.

CYD focuses on how we can harness the energy, creativity, and dedication of both youth and adults to create systems and communities that fully engage young people in their own development and in building sustainable community. As long as youth are viewed and treated as objects, adults will continue to deliver services and *give* them learning experiences. The alternative—the opportunity—is to co-create a “practice field” where adults and youth can learn together on a lifelong basis.

Meaning and Practice in the CYD Movement: Strategies and Outcomes, or What People Are Doing and Thinking in the Name of CYD

Youth and community activists who have learned about CYD feel a deep connection to its content and intent. It has moved many like Ross Pologe—who have devoted their lives to this endeavor—to feel their passion for the work renewed:⁷

“Three shifts must occur [to genuinely expand the role of young people]:

(1)

Youth and organizations will have to shift from doing service to making change.

(2)

The purpose of youth participation will need to shift from youth development to national change, from programs to politics.

(3)

A nation romanced by acting locally will need to broaden its orientation from community building to nation [we would say “world”] building.”⁶

—Forum for Youth Investment

CYD has re-kindled my spirit—it has re-connected me to the reasons I got into youth work to begin with. This is all about building community, about caring relationships with each other, about respect and believing that all of us can be better human beings and citizens.

Given its foundation in the new sciences, quantum and chaos theory, as well as new understandings of biology and ecology, CYD fundamentally affirms that everything exists in relationship to everything else and that these relationships are constantly changing. It underscores the maxim that “we can never merely do one thing.”

Over several experimental years, CYD has succeeded in creating a new and larger context for youth in community. CYD assumes the involvement of young people in their own development and that of the community—in partnership with adults—to make use of their talents and increase their investment in community life. CYD is about “young people actively involved in the process of developing their own identity, self worth, independence, and sense of belonging, as well as their connection to family, community, the earth, and the sacred.”⁸ Key principles of CYD include “creating a culture of re-

spect and partnership; creating a just and compassionate society; creating safe space, creating a culture of appreciation; transferring practical, usable skills; being conscious stewards of relationships; and finding and living one's true calling.¹⁰

A recent report by the Cornerstone Consulting Group (2001) on The Ford Foundation's Community Youth Development Initiative (CYDI) notes:¹¹

Across the country—in communities large and small, urban and rural—Community Youth Development, under a number of names, is bringing adults together with young people to strengthen their community's social, political, and economic capital . . . The added value of "community" in youth development seems to have gained a foothold in a number of the communities. Although the distinction between community youth development and traditional youth development remains elusive for some, the concept of Community Youth Development resonates with many.

. . . despite these promising signs and the continuing attractiveness of youth development concepts, there are also serious questions. Community participants note that it is easier, by far, to implement a youth development program than a . . . much more complicated youth-adult partnership for community development. . . The slow-moving nature of comprehensive change also complicates public perception of the

development process, as some mistakenly expect early reductions in crime and substance abuse or gains in school performance . . . Although . . . the efforts are strongly felt and internalized by individuals and agencies . . . none of the communities has a plausible plan to gain widespread support.

. . . It is important to remember how young the field of youth development is and how much younger still is the Community Youth Development approach.

CYDI's evaluative summary captures the essence of work by many organizations seeking to move beyond traditional youth development to a more integrated, holistic approach for building a healthier world. Through this process we continue to face many challenges—not least of which is pulling together the many strands of CYD into a comprehensive framework.

"Just imagine if we all believed in ourselves and worked together— young people, adults, seniors, all cultures, all religions—all sharing our gifts and talents . . . We have everything it takes."⁹

—Craig Kielberger

"Our biggest intent is to create a global voice for change in the practices and values used in all types of organizations everywhere. This voice will not come from well-crafted mission statements issued from some central authority. It will emerge from thousands of local circles as they are networked together."¹²

—Margaret Wheatley

And So, We Build the Loom: The Need for a CYD Framework

*upon this gifted age, in its dark hour,
rains from the sky a meteoric shower . . . of facts . . .
they lie unquestioned, uncombined.
wisdom enough to leech us of our ill is daily spun;
but there exists no loom to weave it into fabric.*

—Edna St. Vincent Millay

The initial CYD framework¹³ was first drafted in April, 1999 to provide a clear articulation of CYD assumptions, impact, strategies, and outcomes. The framework was co-created by the National Network for Youth CYD Guide Team, staff, and members working closely with Susan P. Curnan and Lisa LaCava of Brandeis University. Also called a “logic model,” the framework articulated the CYD theory of change and provided a picture of how CYD works: the way it links outcomes with program strategies as well as its under-girding theoretical assumptions and principles. The clarity of thinking that occurs from using the framework has become an important part of the overall education effort and success of moving CYD forward and a validating guide for work around the world.

“We are so intelligent and we have so many ideas, but we are overlooked.”

—Young Woman, Street Survival Project, Center for Young Women’s Development

“Youth who hear an ethic of social responsibility emphasized in their families are more likely than their compatriots to be engaged in some type of service to their communities. They are also more committed to public interest goals such as helping their country, preserving the environment, and assisting the less fortunate.”

—Constance Flanagan

The revised framework, *Towards a Shared Prosperity* (see page 32), captures the essence of the CYD paradigm. It is intentionally designed to be as large and open as possible while still retaining integrity. Youth development is inextricably linked with family and community development, commu-

nity development with nation building, all of which are in turn linked to our connection with the earth. As evident in the framework, the relationship of the parts and the quality of the relationships are paramount.

Elements of CYD appear to be evident in many settings and methods: youth development, asset mapping, service learning, summer and after-school programs; community schools; adventure experiences; environmental action efforts; restorative justice and conflict resolution initiatives; youth civic engagement and youth activism projects; university-community partnerships; drug free schools; empowerment and enterprise zones; and street outreach are several examples. This is good news. Yet, we must also note that programs are often designed with conflicting and/or limited strategies when viewed from the more encompassing CYD assumptions. The *Towards Shared Prosperity* framework addresses these conflicts and encourages more holistic thinking and action and offers new strategies and activities to advance Community Youth Development.

Toward a Shared Prosperity is a work in progress; it will always be as such because of the evolutionary nature of our goals. Many people in many neighborhoods and communities around the world are committed to change-making in the CYD movement. If our collective work is successful, we will hone the principles (assumptions) and outcomes, and use them as our compass for developing and implementing strategies and activities. Theoretically, the strategies—and especially the activities—should be flexible, to enable customization of particular locales and situations. Regardless, those who use the tool will have a template for their own work: the focus can readily be adopted for many types of organizations.



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1. The term "Community Youth Development" (CYD) was coined in March 1993 by the CYD Guide Team of the National Network for Youth.
2. Carlos, age 17, quoted in "Young People Taking Responsibility for Change in Latin America," by Steve Mokwena, in *CYD Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter 2000, p. 27.
3. From "Strategy for Sustainable Living," 1991, by a partnership of global conservation organizations.
4. World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, "Our Souls Are Too Long for This Short Life," in *Sustainable Development International*, Spring 2000, 2nd edition.
5. Inca Mohamed is a former program officer of The Ford Foundation. This quote is excerpted from "Notes from a Program Officer: The Case for Youth Engagement," in *Broadening of Youth Development: Youth as Engaged Citizens*, by Inca A. Mohamed and Wendy Wheeler, The Innovation Center for Youth and Community Development and the Ford Foundation, 2001, p. 11.
6. Forum for Youth Investment, "Building Nations, Changing Nations: Youth Action Beyond Communities," in *CYD Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Summer 2001, p. 57.
7. Ross Pologe, Fellowship of Lights, Baltimore, Maryland.
8. Definition crafted by Anne Doshier for the National Network for Youth CYD Guide Team, March 1993, published in "Community Youth Development," by Della M. Hughes, *New Designs for Youth Development*, Tucson, Arizona: Associates for Youth Development, Vol. 11, No. 1, Winter 1994, p. 3.
9. Craig Kielberger, "An Interview with Craig Kielberger, Founder of Free the Children," in *CYD Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter 2000, p. 16.
10. National Network for Youth CYD Guide Team, March 1993, in "Community Youth Development," p. 3.
11. See the article, "Linking Youth and Community Development: Ideas from the Community Youth Development Initiative," on p. 16 of this edition, by Ira M. Cutler and Sharon Lovick Edwards.
12. Margaret Wheatley, author of *Leadership and the New Science*. See also "Restoring Hope to the Future Through Critical Education of Leaders," in *CYD Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring 2001, p. 19.
13. Della M. Hughes & Susan P. Curnan, *CYD Journal*, 1 (1), pp. 7-13.

The Institute for Just Communities is available as a resource to assist those interested in using the CYD framework, Towards A Shared Prosperity, as a management and learning tool, developing their own customized logic models, field books for planning and implementation, and evaluation handbooks. Call Della Hughes at 781/736-3609 or email hughes@cydjournal.org.

TOWARDS SHARED PROSPERITY

Change-Making in the CYD Movement

The CYD movement is dedicated to improving the security and quality of life for and with communities, families, and youth—with an emphasis on youth because they are powerful catalysts for change and can be positive forces in the creation of a safe, just, and prosperous world.

* Given the inclusiveness of the assumptions for CYD as presented in this framework, both the outcomes and strategies noted are only examples of what is possible—they must be tailored to each situation in which CYD is applied.

—Della M. Hughes and Susan P. Curnan

ASSUMPTIONS: Moving From...

Intentional Change

It is possible to share prosperity and create safe, just and prosperous communities, countries and a world where young people are partners and contributors working with adults to positively influence the conditions affecting the security and quality of their lives.

Youth and Families

- Many youth face lives of chronic unemployment, victimization, violence, welfare dependency, homelessness, imprisonment, substance abuse or dependency, poor health and other risk factors because of the lack of opportunities to acquire basic building blocks for healthy development.
- Together youth and adults can improve the quality of life and create safe, just and prosperous communities. This requires adults and youth to work together on policies and programs that provide opportunities to acquire the immutable building blocks for the development of healthy individuals, families and communities:
 - Sense of belonging (attachment and relationship)
 - Mastery (achievement and education) – Generosity (altruism and service)
 - Independence (autonomy and work) – Interdependence (sustainability and the sacred)

Communities

- Factors such as racism, classism, gender discrimination, and homophobia, are the root of hate crimes and affect the ability to participate in routine activities in life. Basic human rights, such as can be found in the UN Declarations of Human Rights and Rights of the Child, are the foundation of a safe, just and prosperous world.
- All people have the innate ability to learn and prosper. Prosperity requires education, work place skills, good health, income opportunities and asset accumulation, nurturing and healthy relationships, safe and adequate food and housing, support networks and community knowledge, and the developmental building blocks above.

Policy

- An asset-based framework offers a bridge between those who are committed to investing in the development of the capacities of people and those who seek to increase community productivity and economic growth. This framework also offers an alternative to existing social and economic policies and programs that tend to encourage fragmentation, deficit thinking and single service delivery.

Systems

- Intentional change requires systems thinking and acting and the involvement of multiple individuals and institutions. It also requires relationships that are rooted in mutuality, respect and reciprocity, and enable co-creation of new systems as well as co-learning among divergent thinkers.
- Knowledge comes from many sources. CYD holds that knowledge emerges from the complexity and rigor of practice, as well as theory and research. Theory, practice and research operate in a cycle of mutual enrichment, which is enhanced by opportunities for reflection and integration. By working collaboratively, philanthropic organizations, universities and communities can accelerate knowledge development and strategic communication in the CYD movement.

Sustainability

- Recent trends (including fear and insecurity due to terrorism, changes in public perception about and trust in government, increasing emphasis on the role of civic participation, the globalization of markets and its impact on local economies and the quality of life, dramatic shifts in the labor market, increased hunger and poverty, advances in technology, and recognition that young people are a powerful force for change) require government, nonprofit and private sectors to re-examine assumptions and practices in order to identify strategies that create safe and sustainable opportunities for people to grow and communities to thrive.
- Socially responsible communities with all parts engaged, e.g., business, schools, universities, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and government, are possible and can be sustainable. Everyone must be involved in addressing issues of inequality and empowerment, elimination of poverty, and respect for the earth's living systems, and seek positive impact on future generations.

Youth, Families

- Attention to and application of best practices in youth development; work force development; education reform, including service learning and out-of-school time; employability; service learning; etc.
- Engagement of families and youth in key community institutions and systems that impact their lives, e.g., education, health, law enforcement, justice, transportation, social services, arts and entertainment, banking and business, town and urban planning, and recreation

Communities

- Adoption of human rights platforms, zero tolerance for hate crimes, and restorative justice approaches to violations of the law
- Establishment of CYD learning neighborhoods, communities and countries that network to share lessons
- Collaboration among community builders and activists; local, state and federal government; businesses, schools, universities, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations to address community issues

Policy

- Influence on three forces of policy making: the *rational* research base, ensuring lessons from local initiatives and scholarly research are accessible and timely; the *relational* by actively engaging local, state and national policy makers in their work; and the *political* by using the media, voting and overall participation in civic life
- Creation of regular mechanisms for dialogue among policymakers, and CYD educators and activists at local, state and national levels about implications of CYD for social policy

Systems

- **Management, Leadership and Governance Capacity.** Creation of well-documented practice fields for CYD learning, including tools and programs for systems thinking and change management, system and program design, facilitative leadership and innovative evaluation research methods
- **Knowledge Development.** Creation of a research agenda by engaging CYD leaders, university centers connected with the CYD practice field and a network of community building/action projects; formation of a coalition of active university/community partnerships that conduct joint research projects and network for cross-institutional learning
- **Communication.** Establishment of workshops and granting programs for CYD projects, such as for creative writers and film makers; creation of sustained vehicles for public awareness, knowledge building and integration of theory, research and practice, and a library of resources

Sustainability

- Connection between CYD leaders and movements for sustainable development, human rights, environmental justice, etc.
- Advancement of support and skills development networks of emerging young leaders; connection between them and CYD efforts
- Development of a national program to recognize and certify CYD socially responsible businesses, schools, communities, etc.

Youth, Families

- Visible and measurable improvement in quality of life indicators including, health and safety; economic security and asset accumulation; education and aspiration for post secondary education; employability skills and workforce participation; healthy relationships with family, peers and support networks; perception of opportunity; safe, adequate housing and food; and civic participation and volunteerism.
- Visible and measurable youth/adult partnerships addressing community issues and engaging in civic infrastructure.

Communities

- Citizens are free from fear and discrimination and have genuine freedom of expression, thought, religion and association.
- Positive neighborhood and community growth is accelerated as a result of support networks and sharing of information.

Policy

- All levels of government and the private sector value youth, families and communities as resources for a safe, just, prosperous and sustainable world.
- Flexible funding is provided for programs and services across levels of government and governmental agencies, the private and nonprofit sectors. The CYD approach is emphasized by government and philanthropic sources.

Systems

- **Management, Leadership and Governance Capacity.** Organizations, institutions, businesses and government utilize CYD-grounded policies and practices.
- **Knowledge Development.** The body of CYD knowledge created from scholarship and practice, evaluation and research expands and is catalogued and disseminated. An array of CYD field books is developed.
- **Communication.** Routine high visibility media coverage of CYD topics and activities and a public education campaign are instituted that enables communities to learn from each other.

Sustainability

- The “tipping point” for social change is accelerated by linkage of movements with similar values.
- Neighborhoods and communities enjoy cleaner air and water and more green space and reduce consumption of non-renewable natural resources.
- Certified CYD businesses, communities, etc. are more desirable places to work and live.

Shared prosperity: the condition of thriving, success, well-being.

Safe, just, and prosperous communities, countries, and world where young people are partners and contributors working with adults to positively influence the conditions affecting the security and quality of their lives.

Sustainable communities with deep, broad and mature CYD practices throughout the world.