



Research and Evaluation Center

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INTERIM REPORT

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BACKGROUND

YouthBuild, USA is a non-profit organization whose programs service low-income youth aged 16 to 24. These young people are given the opportunity to pursue a high school diploma or GED while simultaneously developing job skills through the construction of affordable homes in their community. Additionally, the programs give students the opportunity to earn leadership development skills, participate in community service, and become part of a positive community of adults and youth. Started informally in 1988, and incorporated in 1990, YouthBuild now boasts 273 program sites in 46 states, Washington, DC and the Virgin Islands. Since 1994 when HUD granted 31 sites their first federal grants, 110,000 students have built 21,000 housing units. Currently, local YouthBuild programs and the main YouthBuild, USA program receive funding from a mixture of public and private, national and local sources. Local programs receive their primary funding from the U.S. Department of Labor.

In 2009, YouthBuild received a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to implement their mentoring efforts. The grant resulted in the YouthBuild, USA National Mentoring Alliance (NMA), which serves as a learning community for YouthBuild programs that currently participate in this mentoring initiative. YouthBuild completed an NMA needs assessment in June 2011, approximately halfway through the performance period, to identify gaps between NMA goals and YouthBuild's actual performance. The assessment indicated that between July 2009 and June 2011, YouthBuild has nearly met its goal of having 200 staff trained. It exceeded the goal of training 1,500 mentors by more than 40 percent. YouthBuild's goal of training 2,000 mentees has yet to meet the fifty per cent mark, which has slowed its goal of creating 1,500 successful mentoring matches. Despite these delays, YouthBuild is exceeding in almost all of their technical assistance and training goals, including the creation of new handbooks, providing training meetings, and hosting webinars. Finally, with this grant, YouthBuild initially hoped to enhance the 15 mentoring programs already in existence and establish 25 new mentoring programs to total 40 mentoring programs. As of June 2011, they have exceeded that goal by five programs and currently operate 45 mentoring programs.

YouthBuild takes a comprehensive approach to helping under-educated, unemployed low-income young people. Their program concurrently provides opportunities for:

- Alternative Schooling
- Job Training and Pre-Apprenticeships
- Community Service
- Leadership Development
- Civic Engagement
- Community Development
- Youth Development
- Positive Mini-Community (long-term)

YouthBuild's mentoring programs combine the education and vocation components of existing YouthBuild curriculums with an evidence-based mentoring model. Mentoring has been shown to

reduce risk behaviors and improve pro-social behaviors. Additionally, YouthBuild’s new mentoring component adds post-completion mentoring that continues after a student has graduated the nine to 12 month YouthBuild program. Post-completion mentoring will assist students as they transition from youth to adulthood. Each of the YouthBuild program sites will implement a mentoring component with four parts: (1) one-to-one mentoring relationships, (2) vocational and academic group mentoring activities, (3) group community-service and civic engagement activities, and (4) family strengthening.

MENTORING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The Research and Evaluation Center (REC) of John Jay College was hired as a subcontractor to assess YouthBuild’s mentoring initiative over a three-year period beginning in May 2010. The REC helped YouthBuild design and implement a self-administered questionnaire that YouthBuild students completed and are collaborating with YouthBuild to create an administrative database comprising information on YouthBuild’s programs and participants. The purpose of this data collection is to measure students’ perceptions of the role of mentors as part of YouthBuild and compare program participation of students in mentoring programs with that of students in non-mentoring programs.

Basic Survey Participants Demographics

- Time 1 Surveys Analyzed: 1,277
- Time 2 Surveys Collected: 30*
- Age Range: 13 to 25 years
- Number of Sites: 42

*Because of the small number, these surveys have not been analyzed at this time.

The self-administered survey questionnaire consists of 36 opinion questions on a 7-point Likert Scale ranging from “Disagree Strongly” to “Agree Strongly”. Each opinion question was designed to measure one of eight proposed factors – self-image, self-efficacy, social support, family functioning, pro-social peers, pro-social attitudes, perceptions of YouthBuild, and educational aspirations. The factors will later be confirmed or revised after all the surveys are collected and analyzed.

The survey will be administered by YouthBuild program staff on to all YouthBuild students on two separate occasions – once at the beginning of their time in the program (time-one survey) and again upon their graduation from the program (time-two survey). A third wave of the survey will be completed by students completing a mentoring program at 15 months post completion (time-three survey).

The REC also has provided survey administration training to YouthBuild program site staff and technical assistance to the YouthBuild, USA central office to ensure the surveys are administered properly and consistently. However, the research team at the REC has not been, and will not be, directly involved with any survey administration or student recruitment. YouthBuild program staff will recruit all incoming students to complete the first survey as part of their participation in the YouthBuild program. At this time, 1,277 students between the ages of 13 and 25 have been successfully recruited and have completed a time-one survey. Further demographic information will be available on these students

Age by Group	Count	Percent
15 Years and Younger	43	3%
16 to 17 Years	454	36%
18 to 20 Years	549	43%
21 Years and Older	201	16%
Missing	30	2%
Total	1277	100%

once the REC acquires and analyzes administrative data from the YouthBuild database.

When a student is given a survey to complete, a YouthBuild program staff member will record the student's name and assigned ID number in a survey log notebook designed by the REC. This unique ID number is a combination of site and survey numbers and used to place a curtain of anonymity between the REC and the YouthBuild students' identities. The survey log will serve as the only link between student name and ID number and YouthBuild will never share the log book with the REC research team. After the student has completed the survey, he or she will seal the survey in an envelope and place it in a collection box. The collection box assures students that the YouthBuild program staff will not see their responses and affirms that their responses are confidential.

Once each site has completed its survey administration, the collection box and survey log book are mailed back to YouthBuild, USA for verification by a YouthBuild USA central office staff member. The staff member then mails only the completed surveys to the REC for data entry and statistical analysis. At this time, REC research staff has conducted preliminary frequency counts and cross tabulations on data from time-one surveys, and have performed factor analysis to determine correlations between the various survey items. When the REC receives time-two graduation surveys and time-three 15 month surveys, research staff can analyze change over time and conduct further statistical analyses with the data set.

FINDINGS

NOTE: At this time, REC research staff has performed preliminary analyses on 1,277 time-one surveys. The REC has not yet received enough time-two graduation surveys to perform statistically meaningful analyses.

Six Factors Pulled from Time-One Surveys:

- Pro-Social Attitudes
- Pro-Social Bonds
- Pro-Social Peers
- Attitudes towards YouthBuild
- Attitudes towards Education
- Attitudes towards Law Enforcement

Note: Nine survey items did not fit into any of these factors.

From the 36 items on the time-one survey, six factors have emerged: Pro-Social Attitudes, Pro-Social Bonds, Pro-Social Peers, Attitudes towards YouthBuild, Attitudes towards Education, and Attitudes towards Law Enforcement. The factors were created using exploratory factor analysis and encompass 27 of the survey items. Reliability factors (Cronbach's Alpha) indicate a moderate (0.55 – 0.80) to high (0.80+) correlation among all the factors, with higher correlations indicating that the elements of each factor measure a single construct. The remaining 9 items did not significantly correlate with any of the factors. See the tables in Appendix 1 for a full summary of time-one survey item responses by factor and

Appendix 2 for the pattern matrix used to determine the factors along with individual factor reliability scores.

Research staff performed ANOVAs (analysis of variance) to determine if student responses to the factored items differed significantly by respondent age. Respondents were divided into two groups –17 and under (n=497) and 18 and over (n=750). Please note that age is indeterminable for 30 respondents

and an equal median split of the sample was not possible. ANOVA indicates statistically significant differences between the two age groups in terms of how they responded to Pro-Social Attitudes items, Pro-Social Peers items, Attitudes towards YouthBuild items, and Attitudes towards Education items. Older students tended to more strongly agree with survey items in these factors compared to younger students. While at this time it is not possible to isolate the additional variables that account for these differences, we speculate that developmental maturity, length of time spent in other pro-social programs, criminal history, and educational experience could account for some of the variation. It is interesting to note that older and younger students do not significantly differ in their attitudes on items in the Pro-Social Bonds factor or the Attitudes towards Law Enforcement factor. Students' home environments, upbringing, experiences in their neighborhood, and the degree of community cohesion may account for this lack of statistical significance. Again, further individual level and program level data will be useful for future analyses to better explain these differences.

NEXT STEPS

The REC will continue to enter surveys received from YouthBuild, USA until the time-three 15 month completion survey concludes. Once all surveys have been entered and the survey database has been finalized, the individual level and program level administrative database created by YouthBuild will be linked with the survey data to create a comprehensive dataset for this mentoring program assessment. REC research staff will perform change over time analysis, cross-program analysis, and other comparative analyses to look for indicators of mentoring program effectiveness and variables that account for differences in student responses.

Appendix 1 – Time-One Survey Responses by Factor

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	No Opinion	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Agree Strongly	Missing
FACTOR 1: PRO-SOCIAL ATTITUDES								
I like to help other people.	1%	1%	1%	6%	14%	22%	54%	1%
I'm the kind of person that other people trust.	1%	0%	0%	9%	9%	22%	56%	1%
I will achieve something important one day.	1%	0%	0%	5%	6%	12%	75%	1%
It makes a difference just knowing someone cares.	2%	1%	1%	9%	11%	16%	60%	1%
I'm good at learning new things.	1%	0%	1%	4%	11%	23%	57%	2%
I learn things faster when someone helps me out.	3%	1%	2%	9%	15%	21%	48%	1%
I want to do something to help my neighborhood.	4%	2%	3%	21%	16%	16%	37%	2%
I will have a better life than my parent(s) did.	2%	1%	2%	25%	10%	14%	46%	1%
Getting more school would help me get a good job.	1%	0%	0%	5%	7%	15%	70%	1%
Getting a job is mainly about how lucky you are.*	33%	13%	12%	20%	8%	5%	8%	1%
FACTOR 2: PRO-SOCIAL BONDS								
My family takes the time to really listen to me.	8%	6%	7%	18%	15%	18%	27%	1%
I can talk to my family about almost anything.	8%	4%	6%	14%	16%	17%	34%	1%
My family is proud of me.	3%	1%	3%	18%	12%	18%	44%	1%
I'm on my own; nobody really cares about me.*	44%	13%	9%	17%	7%	3%	6%	1%
My family always knows where I am.	13%	9%	10%	16%	11%	14%	26%	1%
FACTOR 3: PRO-SOCIAL PEERS								
Most of my friends steal at least a little.*	23%	10%	7%	35%	10%	6%	9%	2%
Most of my friends have used drugs at some point.*	7%	3%	4%	23%	14%	13%	35%	1%
Most of my friends drink alcohol.*	11%	8%	9%	24%	15%	12%	19%	1%
Most people shoplift from stores at least once.*	9%	5%	5%	30%	14%	11%	25%	1%
My friends get into trouble more than I do.*	11%	7%	7%	35%	13%	11%	15%	1%

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	No Opinion	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Agree Strongly	Missing
FACTOR 4: ATTITUDES TOWARDS YOUTHBUILD								
YouthBuild is a good program for me.	2%	1%	1%	11%	5%	13%	65%	1%
YouthBuild makes me think about my future.	1%	1%	2%	11%	7%	16%	61%	1%
You can learn a lot about life in YouthBuild.	2%	1%	2%	14%	10%	16%	54%	1%
FACTOR 5: ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION								
Getting good grades is important to me.	0%	0%	1%	5%	8%	17%	67%	1%
I plan to get more education.	1%	0%	0%	4%	5%	13%	76%	1%
FACTOR 6: ATTITUDES TOWARDS LAW ENFORCEMENT								
Most police officers try to do the right thing.	22%	9%	10%	29%	11%	8%	11%	1%
Most police in my town do not like people my age.*	11%	4%	3%	33%	12%	10%	26%	1%
NO SIGNIFICANT FACTOR LOADING								
I can do a lot if I really try.	1%	0%	0%	2%	4%	13%	79%	1%
Being respected by others is important to me.	1%	1%	1%	4%	4%	13%	76%	1%
I don't like school.*	37%	12%	10%	17%	9%	6%	8%	2%
My friends think YouthBuild is a waste of time.*	43%	10%	6%	29%	4%	2%	4%	1%
We fight a lot as a family.*	26%	12%	12%	23%	9%	7%	9%	1%
It's ok getting into a little trouble to have fun.*	25%	10%	10%	27%	11%	8%	7%	1%
I have people in my life that want to help.	1%	1%	2%	7%	12%	17%	58%	1%
Getting a job is mainly about how hard you work.	3%	2%	2%	11%	12%	18%	51%	1%
Most of my friends are honest.	7%	3%	5%	26%	17%	16%	25%	1%

*These items were reverse coded for the factor analysis. Higher scores were given to more positive responses.

Appendix 2 – Factor Pattern Matrix

Factor Name	Alpha Level	Questionnaire Item	Pattern Matrix					
			Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Factor 1: Pro-Social Attitudes	0.802	I like to help other people.	.750					
		I'm the kind of person that other people trust.	.688					
		I will achieve something important one day.	.593					
		It makes a difference just knowing someone cares.	.580					
		I'm good at learning new things.	.494					
		I learn things faster when someone helps me out.	.488					
		I want to do something to help my neighborhood.	.477					
		I will have a better life than my parent(s) did.	.456					
		Getting more school would help me get a good job.	.430					
		Getting a job is mainly about how hard you work.	.422					
Factor 2: Pro-Social Bonds	0.781	My family takes the time to really listen to me.		.910				
		I can talk to my family about almost anything.		.767				
		My family is proud of me.		.688				
		I'm on my own; nobody really cares about me.*		.538				
		My family always knows where I am.		.441				
Factor 3: Pro-Social Peers	0.704	Most of my friends steal at least a little.*			.706			
		Most of my friends have used drugs at some point.*			.683			
		Most of my friends drink alcohol.*			.633			
		Most people shoplift from stores at least once.*			.493			
		My friends get into trouble more than I do.*			.464			
Factor 4: Attitudes towards YouthBuild	0.865	YouthBuild is a good program for me.				.848		
		YouthBuild makes me think about my future.				.819		
		You can learn a lot about life in YouthBuild.				.790		
Factor 5: Attitudes towards Education	0.669	Getting good grades is important to me.					.637	
		I plan to get more education.					.560	
Factor 6: Attitudes towards Law Enforcement	0.566	Most police officers try to do the right thing.						.746
		Most police in my town do not like people my age.*						.543

*These items were reverse coded for the factor analysis. Higher scores were given to more positive responses.

The following items did not significantly load on any factor (*Reverse-coded items for factor analysis):

- Getting a job is mainly about how lucky you are.*
- Being respected by others is important to me.
- We fight a lot as a family.*
- My friends think YouthBuild is a waste of time.*
- I don't like school.*
- I have people in my life that wants to help.
- Most of my friends are honest.
- It's ok getting into a little trouble to have fun.*
- I can do a lot if I really try.