POWERFUL YOUTH,
POWERFUL COMMUNITIES

AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF YOUTH ORGANIZING

Final Report on the Research Findings

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AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF YOUTH ORGANIZING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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VIGNETTE - COMMUNITY FORUM IN SAN FRANCISCO

Xochitl, along with other young people, educators, families and community members, is gathered at the launching event of the Solutions Not Suspensions campaign led by Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth. Coleman is holding a community-wide event where young people are encouraged to collectively reflect on and share their community experiences and insights.

Xochitl walks to the front of the room and introduces herself as a 10th grader at Brenner High. She begins to talk about her suspension from school the day after "eating another student's cupcakes." She describes how she was pulled into the principal's office and told to leave the school, but she was confused about the suspension. As it turns out, Xochitl had eaten a cupcake intended for her classmate's birthday. Xochitl recounts that she didn't know she had been suspended because no one had told her or called her home. She adds that she felt "stupid and embarrassed... that she didn't belong" at the school.

As she continues sharing the details of her experience and how it made her feel, Xochitl tears up. She turns around, covers her face with the sleeves of her hoodie, and begins to sob. Christina (an adult member of Coleman's staff) walks over and gives her a hug, gently rubbing her hand on Xochitl's shoulders and upper back until she regains composure. The room becomes silent as Xochitl sobs, and Keanu (another staffer) yells out "Deep breath Xochitl! You got this!" After a short pause, she turns around and continues to talk in a much stronger tone about her anger and frustration. She mentions that after several suspensions she didn't see the point of school so she stopped going. She had begun to believe that she really wasn't a good student.

Xochitl goes on to tell the audience that it wasn't until later in her involvement with Coleman Advocates that she began to realize that schools weren't just being unfair to her, but they were being unfair to many students of color. Xochitl concludes by saying that "schools need to change their policies and treatment of students, otherwise they risk pushing them out of schools." When Xochitl finishes, the people in the audience clap and Khalil (an adult staff member) walks to the front and thanks Xochitl for sharing her testimony.

This Coleman Advocates vignette is from an international research study that examined the experiences of young people engaged in social change activism in their schools and communities. As the first of its kind, the study takes an in-depth look at the developmental outcomes of youth organizing across global contexts, including the United States, South Africa, Ireland, and Northern Ireland. We sought to understand outcomes for young people's development, and processes that engaged young people in social justice work.

At a time when questions about how best to support youth educational attainment and address racial injustice and economic inequality are at the forefront of conversations in the US and globally, this research helps highlight connections between the fields of youth development and youth organizing by lifting up *what youth organizers learn* and *how they learn it.* In doing so, this research provides information and evidence to help funders, practitioners, and policymakers assess and enhance programming in youth-serving institutions.

About the Participating Groups

The groups represented three continents and diverse regions within the United States. They engaged young people in social change activism by creating spaces for youth to think critically about everyday social conditions, identify root causes of social problems, generate policy solutions, and mobilize peers and others in their community to build political power.

In the United States, campaigns focused on the right to quality education, freedom from criminalization, and dignity for young immigrants and people of color. Efforts in Ireland and Northern Ireland centered on fulfilling the promise of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and facilitating strong communication between youth and policymakers. In South Africa, the work focused on an intergenerational movement to create minimum standards for education to redress vast inequities stemming from the apartheid era.

Table 1. Names of organizations and cities

CITY	ORGANIZATION
Belfast, Northern Ireland	Where Is My Public Servant? (WIMPS)
Cape Town, South Africa	Equal Education
Chicago, USA	Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO)
Denver, USA	Padres & Jóvenes Unidos
Dublin, Ireland	FamiliBase
New Orleans, USA	VAYLA New Orleans
San Francisco, USA	Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth

Research Methods

This study relied on trained researchers in each city with backgrounds in youth activism or youth development and knowledge of local history and cultures to develop relationships with organizing groups and help us understand the role of the group in each sociopolitical context. "Local ethnographers" relied primarily on interpretive qualitative methods, such as observation and interviews, to understand the experiences of youth and processes in the organizations. To supplement these data, we also administered surveys to youth participants and analyzed documents and campaign artifacts from each organization.

Table 2. Data sources

SOURCE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Observations	Local ethnographers observed the practices of groups over the course of 18-24 months. Observation included internal trainings, meetings and external interactions with public officials and community members.	203 sets of typed field notes; >300 hours of observations
Interviews	Local ethnographers interviewed youth and staff in each organization.	102 interviews (~75 hours)
Surveys	The survey consisted of scales measuring a variety of youth attitudes and outcomes	186 total surveys
Media	We collected a wide range of materials, including photographs, press releases, news articles, and reports from the participating organizations.	Hundreds of items

FINDINGS: What Youth Organizers Learned

Xochitl's story, told at the beginning of this document, demonstrates the interplay of the three major outcomes of youth organizing identified in this study: 1) *critical thinking and analysis,* 2) *community leadership and action,* and 3) *social and emotional learning.* These represent a powerful combination of youth development outcomes and sociopolitical outcomes that enable democratic participation in an era of inequality.

Youth organizing promotes the <u>critical thinking and analytical skills</u> essential for success in school, civic engagement, and a career.

Field note from EE youth group meeting:
"Mbali began by asking questions about inequality.
She asked the equalizers to reflect on what they had learnt
in the last term and to discuss what caused inequalities."

Youth organizing offered young people myriad opportunities to examine and analyze their personal and shared experiences with other marginalized communities. They learned about the systems that impact their lives on a daily basis, developed an awareness and understanding of social and political systems, and gained skills to access and contribute to social change. As a result of these rich learning experiences within youth organizing groups, youth were able to do the following:

- examine their personal experiences within a larger social and political context;
- gain a systems-level understanding of social issues, such as the school-to-prison pipeline, school closures, school infrastructure, youth employment, and youth rights, which helped them broaden their range of strategies for addressing these issues;
- critically analyze and interpret data related to their campaigns and construct persuasive arguments for institutional and policy change;
- become fluent in a new language to make sense of the world and developing creative communication strategies to express their ideas about social issues.

Youth organizers developed their skills and confidence for community leadership and action.

Youth worked on sustained campaigns to change policies that directly affected their lives. Involvement in these campaigns and broader social movements helped young people develop and practice a range of leadership and organizing skills. Our research identified the following five "leadership and action" outcomes:

Public speaking opportunities were challenging because they generally pushed youth out of their comfort zone. Yet, as one veteran youth from Coleman reflected on her two years of personal growth as a public speaker, after the "sixth or seventh time, I got comfortable with it." As this youth became more comfortable talking to audiences, each successive speaking engagement became easier to the point where she said, "I emcee events and I'm constantly sitting in meetings with elected officials, talking about social justice and change."

- **Planning and Strategizing.** Youth organizers developed action plans, identified who had power related to specific issues, decided on strategy, and modified strategy in response to unexpected events.
- **Teamwork, Group-Decision Making, and Facilitation.** Youth gained extensive practice working with others on group tasks, such as recruiting new members, making decisions about campaigns, and preparing for presentations.
- **Evidence-Based Policy Arguments.** Across most sites, young people learned to analyze statistical information, search the internet for relevant facts, or design their own surveys.
- **Raising Awareness.** Youth organizers gained experience broadcasting their message using a variety of media, including video, Twitter, visual art, and performance.
- **Communication and Persuasive Speech.** Campaigns often included interactions with public decision-makers, such as elected officials, school district administrators, or police officers. These opportunities offered rich opportunities for youth to improve their public skills.

"How do we march? We go to town. We sing peacefully. We sing with big smiles on our faces. Then we tell them, "This is what we want." Then when they tell us, "Boo," we tell them, "We're not moving. This is what we want. We are standing our ground." I think these teachings have made me to stand my ground, to know what I want, but at the same time do it...with a positive spirit."
- Interview with EE participant

Youth organizing catalyzes healthy social-emotional development, particularly in the face of difficult experiences.
Through their organizing work, young people learned to channel their emotions into constructive action, maintain their composure, and stay focused on their goals—even when faced with difficult emotions, such as anger, anxiety, frustration, demoralization, and sadness. This finding represents important "news" for the field, as social and emotional development has not typically been studied in relation to organizing and civic engagement.

The challenges of community organizing are wide-ranging. "Emotional work" occurs before and after important events, such as rehearsing for a meeting with a powerful school official and then standing before that school official. Despite the practice, young people must often think on their feet, show confidence, and keep anxiety in check. All of these are among the social and emotional skills young people learn for handling difficult and unpleasant emotions.

PJU youth interview: "We listen to people even though they don't feel or think the way you do. It's like you learn from them. You learn their side of their story, but then they also need to learn how to listen to your side of the story. When you know both sides, you know how to approach things and you know how to solve the problem."
- Interview with EE participant

FINDINGS: How Youth Organizing Practices Led to Outcomes

Youth organizing groups offered rich ecosystems for development, characterized by supportive relationships, strong sense of belonging, and high-stakes work to change oppressive conditions in young people's everyday lives. While there were some differences across the seven sites in the study, a set of common practices across the groups included:

- **positive and affirming organizational culture,** which encouraged youth engagement and recognized young people's dignity and humanity;
- **cycles of preparation, rehearsal, performance and feedback** from peers and supportive adults; and,
- **meaningful opportunities for learning and action** that directly addressed topics relevant to youths' everyday lives and aspirations.

When youth experience a strong and supportive "youth organizing culture," they report beneficial outcomes.
Youth organizing culture refers to the web of supportive relationships and sense of belonging that undergirds youth organizing groups in all three of the study's outcome areas. Most of the youth who completed the study survey gave their organization's culture a 4.2 rating or higher on a 5-point scale. In a series of multiple regression analyses, there were statistically significant connections between the strength of these ratings and each of the seven youth outcomes listed below. In other words, the higher that youth rated the culture in their organization, the greater the benefits for their civic and holistic development.

Tony mentioned that if he hadn't gotten involved with YMAC he probably would have dropped out of school and wouldn't be graduating this upcoming Spring. He added that he was very disappointed in school and didn't have any interest and motivation to go because he was always getting in trouble and felt misunderstood. He added "Since being in YMAC...I learned how to talk in a way that allowed me to be heard and not get in trouble, to speak without losing my mind, and to become a better leader and student." Tania mentioned similar things, and added "Coleman is like a family who is there for me to provide support, both emotional and social."
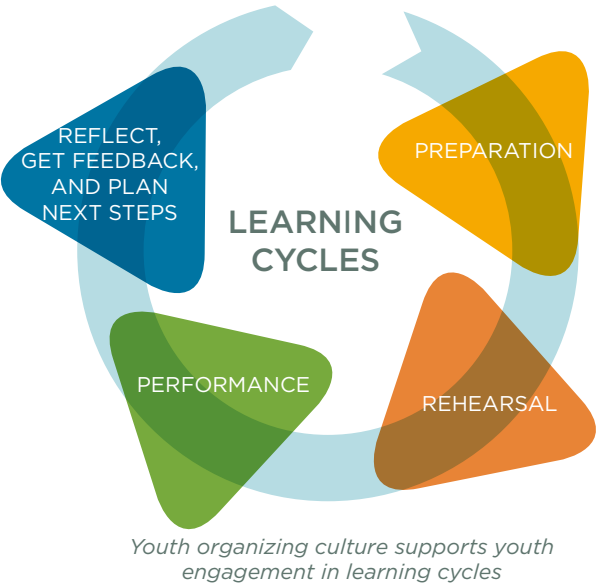
These relationships are listed in order of the strength of relationships found:

- Racial and Social Identity
- Academic Empowerment
- Civic Empowerment
- Hope

- Critical Thinking about Justice
- Hope
- Commitment to Future Civic-Political Engagement
- Leadership

These survey results were supported by qualitative data showing how important supportive relationships were for young people.

Youth developed their skills for political participation through cycles of preparation, rehearsal, performance, and reflection.
Preparation included workshops about issues related to their campaign, and learning how to gather and analyze data. Youth rehearsed for interactions with policymakers and deepened their ability to advocate and speak up in public settings. This preparation and practice culminated in what we call performances, where youth met with public officials, led peers in demonstrations, or spoke at press conferences. Group reflection and feedback often accompanied these performances.

LEARNING CYCLES

REFLECT, GET FEEDBACK, AND PLAN NEXT STEPS

PREPARATION

PERFORMANCE

REHEARSAL

Youth organizing culture supports youth engagement in learning cycles

PREPARATION includes workshops about issues related to the campaign, political education, campaign strategy, data collection and analysis

REHEARSAL: Youth rehearse for interactions with policymakers, practice public speaking and scenarios

PERFORMANCE: Youth organizers meet with public officials, lead peers in demonstrations, lead press conferences

Everyday life issues drew young people to organizing.
Youth participants learned about topics and actions that could improve their schools and communities. Meaningful issues framed the whole enterprise of youth organizing; young people saw the relevance of their activities to themselves and their peers. The complex subjects and aims they discussed were rarely something that could be completed in one semester or even a year. Equal Education youth worked on their Minimum Norms and Standards Campaign for more than three years. It took a similar span of several years to disrupt components of the "school to jail" track in the United States

What really inspired me is that they were working on a program called Colorado ASSET. It's for undocumented students to get in-state tuition in the State of Colorado. I'm an undocumented student who is gonna have to pay out-of-state tuition and I knew I couldn't afford it. It was triggered—I was, "I want to work on this. I need to do this. 'Cause I understand what other kids are going through. I'm going through this." I did work in the capitol, in the office. Calls. Talking with senators. Everything. Testifying. That's when I started getting really, really involved.

Conclusion and implications

Young people across the sites developed as individuals and effective civic and political actors, with the common themes being critical thinking and analysis, community leadership and action, and social emotional learning. These areas of functioning overlap and work together to promote a more holistic form of youth development. Learning processes were cyclic—*preparation* and planning for action that included rehearsal; *performance* (the enactment of the plan) and *reflection* on the results. Essential to these outcome areas was a supportive social context we called youth organizing culture, where insights and skills can be nurtured and affirmed. The study's findings confirm and strengthen prior research about the impact of youth organizing and civic engagement experiences (Kirshner, 2009; Rogers & Terriquez, 2013; Shah, 2011).

What stands out in this study as "news" for the field, are the social and emotional benefits of youth community organizing and its rich ecosystems for learning and developments that correspond more to the cycles of campaign work than the school calendar. Resources that support youth organizing should recognize this complexity.

At a time when questions about how best to support youth educational attainment and address racial injustice and economic inequality are at the forefront of national debates in the US and globally, these findings underscore the importance of strong organizations that facilitate youth activism and voice. Youth organizing groups contribute to both positive youth development and more just and high quality public systems, especially in the realm of schools and education. Therefore, while our analyses bring insights for practitioners of organizing, they also are relevant to the funders, policymakers and system leaders grappling with how best to address these urgent problems. This research about *what youth organizers learn* and *how they learn it* provides critical information for the health of civil society and how youth-serving institutions can nurture human development.

INTRODUCTION

Powerful Youth, Powerful Communities

Young people across the globe are asserting their claims to political power, quality education, and equality. They are demanding accountability and inclusion in decisions by public institutions that affect their lives. In the United States, we see Black Lives Matter, activism by undocumented student DREAMers, and community organizers improving neighborhood schools and dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline. In South Africa, members of the intergenerational Equal Education movement confronted racial inequality and convinced their national government to delineate "minimum norms and standards" for education. Youth in Dublin and Belfast waged campaigns to increase youth participation and voice in democratic self-governance. Although growing up in very different locales, all of these young people face similar challenges linked to a global economy that has diminished the safety net, increased the cost of higher education, and reduced opportunities for gainful employment.

In response to these challenges, youth organizing groups are mobilizing young people to take an active role in addressing barriers that prevent them from achieving their greatest hopes and dreams. Young people learn to identify root causes of social problems, generate policy solutions, and mobilize their peers and community members to build the collective political power needed to advance social justice. They are gaining critical thinking skills that will allow them to be better prepared in school and, eventually, in the workplace. Prior research indicates that participation in efforts like these can dramatically effect patterns of civic engagement in early adulthood and enrollment in four-year colleges (Rogers & Terriquez, 2013). In addition, it can profoundly shape young people's sense of their own capacity and aspirations for long-term educational and community engagement (Shah, 2011). Although these outcomes are important for all youth, we argue that they are particularly so for marginalized young people living in poverty and especially vulnerable to racism and other forms of systemic discrimination.

For these young people, youth organizing provides a place to learn about the sociopolitical factors that give rise to the inequality and injustice they face and to engage in collective action to transform the institutions whose policies jeopardize their well-being.

About the Research

Our study examined the processes and outcomes of youth organizing efforts in the United States, Ireland, Northern Ireland, and South Africa to shed further light on how youth participation in grassroots organizing contributes to significant social, emotional and political developmental outcomes for youth, elements we identify as central to positive youth development.

From 2012 through 2015, we conducted in-depth research about the practices and learning trajectories of youth organizing groups in seven cities: Belfast, Cape Town, Chicago, Denver, Dublin, New Orleans, and San Francisco. Each had a history of sustainability as an organization, a commitment to marginalized youth, and significant successes in their work.. They all recruited young people to be active participants in creating better worlds for themselves and their communities through civic and political engagement. History and culture shaped the varying forms of marginalization young people experienced, but a common feature across all seven settings was that young people sought a greater voice in their democracies and the institutions that affected them.

CITY	ORGANIZATION
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South Africa

Equal Education in South Africa started out in the Western Cape, focusing on organizing young people in Khayelitsha primarily. Since these origins, EE has expanded to work on national issues and has active membership in multiple provinces across South Africa. The organization focuses on changing systemic inequities in the education system originating from Apartheid's legacy. The core members of the multigenerational organization are its high school *equalizers*. EE's focus during the study was to hold the government accountable to provide minimum norms and standards for schools.

Northern Ireland and Ireland

In Belfast, Northern Ireland and Dublin, Ireland, the context for youth organizing was quite different. Neither organization described themselves as "organizing" groups in the same way we used this term for the US and South African organizations. Yet, their primary aim was youth civic earning and engagement (Belfast) or youth wellness and holistic development (Dublin). In Belfast, Where is My Public Servant (WIMPS), used new media to foster communication and accountability between youth and policymakers. Young people worked in teams to identify public problems, study them, and raise awareness or take action using media tools and participation in policy settings. Youth were organized in chapters drawn from young people in Protestant and Catholic communities in Belfast neighborhoods and other cities in Northern Ireland. WIMPS was a project of its parent organization, Public Achievement. When Public Achievement ceased operations in 2016, the lack of funding forced WIMPS to do so as well.

In Dublin, Ireland, the participating organization, called the Base at the start of the study, was a multi-service youth center located in a working class suburb. The center offers a range of programs and services to young people, including support groups for young mothers and fathers, opportunities to perform and record music, and support for mental health and wellness. The emphasis on youth voice and leadership at the Base has created multiple opportunities for youth groups to form and be sustained via work on community issues or participation in political forums. In 2014 the Base merged with a family services organization and became Familibase, with a mission to provide services to families, young mothers, and arts-related activities. Despite the different local context and terminology, we sought to include Belfast and Dublin groups in the study because they shared with the other groups an emphasis on youth leadership and voice.

United States

The four research sites in the US work directly with institutionally marginalized youth in urban settings. KOCO works primarily with low-income, working class African American youth and families and is regarded as a multi-generational organization. Youth work in KOCO focuses on training and developing the youth leaders by actively involving them in campaigns, meetings and organizing work that centers on eradicating the criminalization of youth and the school-to-prison pipeline. KOCO also offers direct services to youth and families. The organization has had great success in its organizing campaigns, particularly in the area of increasing youth employment opportunities in Chicago.

Denver's Padres & Jóvenes Unidos is the multi-generational, multi-racial, member-led organization committed to organizing efforts on racial justice, immigrant rights, healthcare access and educational excellence for all people. Specific campaign issues addressed by youth include ending the school to jail track and immigrant student rights. The organization has experienced significant wins in these areas and has garnered national attention for its efforts.

VAYLA is a progressive, youth-led, multi-issue, multi-racial organization in New Orleans. Its focus is on educational justice, language access and environmental justice. It provides youth with tools, skills and resources to build their power. The organization also provides support services for youth and their families. It has garnered national attention in its educational advocacy in post-Katrina New Orleans.

In San Francisco, Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth is a multi-racial, member-led community organization `with a bottom-up approach toward social change. It links community activism with policy advocacy and leadership development The organization engages youth in adult partnerships and intergenerational advocacy, focusing on education justice, economic justice and broad civic engagement. The organization has gained national recognition for much of its work, including recent work to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline.

Methods

We observed meetings and public events related to each organization's campaign as part of its extensive field. Engaging local ethnographers based in each city enabled the study to benefit from each ethnographer's knowledge of the local contexts. Moreover, ethnographers were able to put in the steady work of building relationships with program staff and members to enable a more holistic understanding of organizational routines and practices. Except where noted, we use pseudonyms for all young people named in this report.

In addition to the fieldwork and interviews with members and program staff, the study included a survey component. The survey provides information on several youth outcomes of interest, along with other variables related to their attitudes and experiences. Survey administration took place over the course of the study; youth completed a total of 184 surveys.

See Appendix for additional information on the data analysis methods.

Data Sources

METHOD	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Fieldwork: Observation	Local ethnographers, with advanced training in qualitative research, observed the practices of groups over the course of 18-24 months. Observation included internal trainings, meetings, and external interactions with public officials and community members.	203 sets of typed field notes; >300 hours of observations >720,000 words of typed text
Fieldwork: Interviews	Local ethnographers interviewed youth about their experiences, primarily as members of their organization, and what they felt they had learned through their participation.	102 total Interviews (~75 hours)
Surveys	The Survey consisted of scales measuring a variety of youth attitudes and outcomes related to their experiences in youth organizing, including critical thinking on sociopolitical issues, leadership and teamwork, hope, and civic and academic self-efficacy (i.e., feelings of competence).	186 total surveys
Media	We collected a wide range of materials, including photographs, press releases, news articles, and reports from the participating organizations.	Hundreds of items
Youth Voices	Youth produced multimedia artifacts about their experiences and aspirations.	In production

FINDINGS PART I: Sociopolitical and "Positive Youth Development" Outcomes

VIGNETTE - COMMUNITY FORUM IN SAN FRANCISCO

Xochitl, along with other young people, educators, families and community members, is gathered at the launching event of the Solutions Not Suspensions campaign led by Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth. Coleman is holding a community-wide event where young people are encouraged to collectively reflect on and share their community experiences and insights.

Xochitl walks to the front of the room and introduces herself as a 10th grader at Brenner High. She begins to talk about her suspension from school the day after "eating another student's cupcakes." She describes how she was pulled into the principal's office and told to leave the school, but she was confused about the suspension. As it turns out, Xochitl had eaten a cupcake intended for her classmate's birthday. Xochitl recounts that she didn't know she had been suspended because no one had told her or called her home. She adds that she felt "stupid and embarrassed...that she didn't belong" at the school.

As she continues sharing the details of her experience and how it made her feel, Xochitl tears up. She turns around, covers her face with the sleeves of her hoodie, and begins to sob. Christina (an adult member of Coleman's staff) walks over and gives her a hug, gently rubbing her hand on Xochitl's shoulders and upper back until she regains composure. The room becomes silent as Xochitl sobs, and Keanu (another staffer) yells out "Deep breath Xochitl! You got this!" After a short pause, she turns around and continues to talk in a much stronger tone about her anger and frustration. She mentions that after several suspensions she didn't see the point of school so she stopped going. She had begun to believe that she really wasn't a good student.

Xochitl goes on to tell the audience that it wasn't until later in her involvement with Coleman Advocates that she began to realize that schools weren't just being unfair to her, but they were being unfair to many students of color. Xochitl concludes by saying that "schools need to change their policies and treatment of students, otherwise they risk pushing them out of schools." When Xochitl finishes, the people in the audience clap and Khalil (an adult staff member) walks to the front and thanks Xochitl for sharing her testimony

This vignette is one of many examples of how young people engage in youth organizing to confront the despair and marginalization they face. In this case, Xochitl, a fifteen-year old organizer of Central American heritage, shared her experiences with punitive school disciplinary policies and offered a call to action to those in attendance. The purpose of this community meeting was to launch a campaign—Solutions Not Suspensions—to remove punitive disciplinary policies in school, and implement restorative justice practices and positive behavior support programs in the San Francisco Unified School District. This effort to change school discipline policies was part of a national movement for which Chicago's Kenwood Oakland Community Organization and Denver's Padres & Jóvenes Unidos also played leading roles.

Xochitl's story demonstrates the interplay of the three major outcome themes we identified relate to sociopolitical and youth development: 1) *critical thinking and analysis,* 2) *community leadership and action,* and 3) *social and emotional learning.* Xochitl referred to a shift from feeling "stupid and embarrassed" about her suspension to her later realization, after involvement with Coleman, that the schools were being "unfair to all students of color." She changed from initially blaming herself to gaining insight about the collective impact of policies and practices on students of color. By stepping up and speaking about her personal experiences in a public setting, Xochitl demonstrated leadership. Xochitl's moment speaking was emotionally intense for her, and she needed to pause to compose herself. In that moment of turning her head and covering her face, Xochitl, with the support of her older colleagues from Coleman, regained her poise and was able to speak with greater strength. Having the opportunity to speak in solidarity with other youth allowed Xochitl to reaffirm the goals and struggles of the campaign and the collective experience of disenfranchisement. An analysis of systemic aspects of life experiences, recognition of injustice, a desire to resist it, and feelings of solidarity include, but go beyond, the typical confines of positive youth development. Xochitl's growth indicates sociopolitical development.

As Xochitl publicly retold her experience, she moved beyond the trauma of her suspension experience. She demonstrated a combination of critical analysis, community leadership skills, and emotional maturity. All of these qualities were essential in her quest to take constructive action with her peers to address problems she saw in her schools and the policies that shaped them. Xochitl's combination of structural analysis with constructive action illustrates what some scholars call "transformational resistance," which is grounded in a critical analysis of social problems and motivated by the desire to work for social justice (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). Our survey research supports this link: higher levels of critical thinking about sociopolitical issues were associated with being an effective civic actor ($r = .46$).

This vignette also raises compelling questions about Coleman as a learning environment. What kinds of activities did youth such as Xochitl participate in that led them to formulate a new analysis of school disciplinary policies? Were the kinds of social and emotional support that Christina, Keanu, and Khalil offered typical of youth organizing groups generally? This report addresses questions such as these after elaborating on what we mean by the three outcomes.

Critical Thinking and Analysis

Youth organizers' emphasis on critical thinking and analysis skills mirrors their importance in school and work environments. They are among the academic skills highlighted in the Common Core State Standards and in the 21st Century Framework for Learning, which sets educational goals for competing successfully in a knowledge-based economy. These benchmarks also prepare youth for community leadership.

There is a link between critical thinking about social justice issues—as emphasized in youth organizing— and a young person's plans to continue political and civic activism in the future. Survey findings for this study revealed a significant relationship ($r = .30$) between young people's critical thinking skills related to sociopolitical issues and their predictions about being active five years in the future.

We saw four sub-themes of Critical Thinking and Analysis: (1) awareness of social and political systems and the way institutions exercise power; (2) a vocabulary for discussing and analyzing social justice; (3) methods for collecting and interpreting evidence; and (4) reflection and analysis through the arts.

Principal Outcome Themes
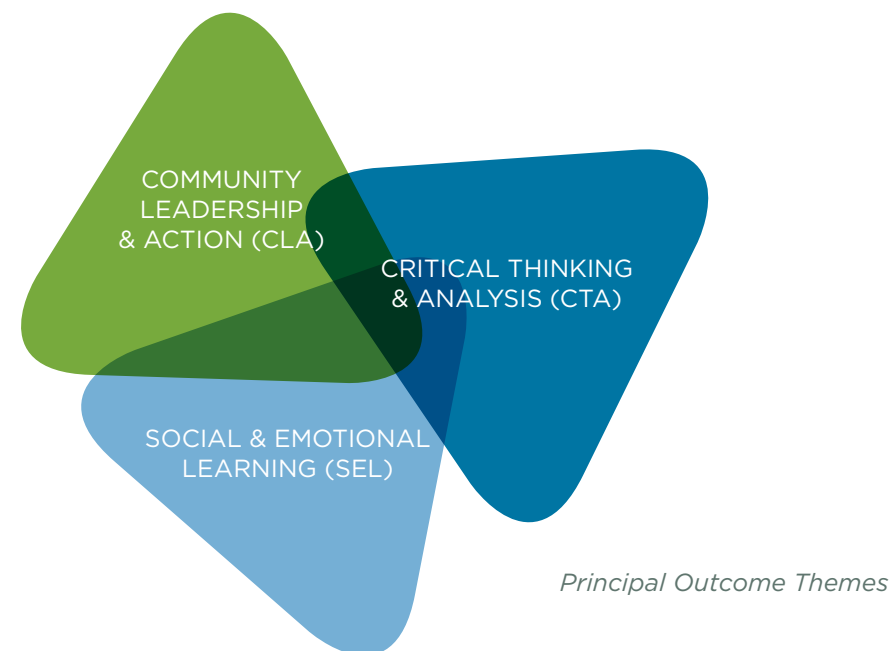
Greater awareness of social and political systems. Young people develop critical thinking skills by examining their personal lives and experiences in a larger sociopolitical context (Watts, et al, 1999). This was evident when Xochitl saw a link between her suspension, her involvement in Coleman Advocates, and the larger structural problem of unjust suspensions of young people. Similarly, youth in other organizations had an opportunity to tackle systemic issues and develop a more complex understanding of the structures that perpetuate systemic oppression. Youth at VAYLA, for example, demonstrated an awareness that the issues they experienced within their community were reflective of experiences of other Black and Brown youth across the country. Young people in South Africa drew connections between the education inequalities that started with apartheid-era schools and ongoing contemporary inequalities in minimum norms and standards. In Denver, youth organizers had extensive opportunities to develop their critical thinking and analysis skills, particularly in relation to school discipline policies and how those relate to broader social and economic systems.

A vocabulary for discussing and analyzing social justice. Once youth gain an awareness of their personal experiences within a larger social and political context, youth organizing groups provide them with vocabulary to understand specific institutions and how they affect the lives of youth and their families. Many organizations used "power mapping" (also called power analysis) to cultivate this understanding. Often with the aid of diagrams and charts, power mapping helped young people visually and metaphorically connect the dots among various actors and institutions within a policy context. For Padres, this meant understanding the different roles played by the police and school personnel in school discipline, as well as distinctions between city and state-level legislative authority. For Equal Education, analysis of power meant learning about the relationship between the national education ministries and various provincial authorities. In the end, that aim was to pinpoint the people with the power to make a decision on the issue of concern. As part of learning how to identify the institution and officials with the power to change a policy, these exercises help youth examine the distribution of power, power relationships, institutional versus people power, and power-building strategies.

An expanded vocabulary was essential for young people in understanding institutional power and analyzing social systems that affected their lives. Young people in our study discussed privilege, power, self-interest, systemic oppression, racism, sexism, and homophobia as part of sociopolitical development activities. This field note from KOCO provides some flavor of discussions that both introduce new ideas but also draw on youths' experiences and knowledge.

Field note entry – KOCO

Adult Leader: "we deal with people's self-interest in organizing." What is self-interest?

Youth start to brainstorm issues affecting them directly at their school and how these represent types of self interest:

- Not being able to use phone
- Coming in through the back door (-adult leader)
- Can only use half the building (all classrooms are in one hall –two levels- and to get from one side of the building to the other you have to go all the way around the school you cannot walk through the hall)
- "prison like environment"
- Zero tolerance (any teacher can write you up for whatever they want)
- Uniform

Shannon then asks youth if these are district wide or school policies, and that they need to be selective about what they attack. He uses the metaphor around the card game "spades" in which you cannot lead with your best card.

Our observations indicate that many young people were unfamiliar with social justice and activism terminology (sexism, oppression, institutional policy, etc.). Critical thinking requires a vocabulary that facilitates analysis and dialogue. Youth organizing settings provided opportunities to engage in discourse and evaluate historic and current events in depth. Critical thinking often led to new insights about widespread and unfair social policies and practices. However, we believe that community leadership and action, described in the next section, mitigated feelings of hopelessness or demoralization. To be beneficial, CTA must promote empowerment and hope, as well a better understanding of oppression. The survey findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship ($r = .68$) between hope and critical thinking on sociopolitical issues.

Collection, interpretation, and use of evidence. Research was a powerful critical-thinking and empowering practice for young people. Campaigns taught young people to collect and analyze information related to social policies and legislation. Critical analysis was essential for the interpretation of those data and to formulate credible arguments for the institutional changes they sought to make. These skills were cultivated through youth's production of research-based publications, including VAYLA's *Reed Renaissance Student Blueprint* for Sarah T. Reed, Padres y Jovenes Unidos' *Accountability Report Card*, and numerous other policy briefs and research reports. Research skills help youth unpack campaign issues and develop strategies to move their agenda. EE used multiple research strategies, ranging from photography to structured observation, to documenting problems with school infrastructure. For example, a team of Equalizers from Tembisa, a township near Johannesburg, completed an audit of bathrooms demonstrating a high percentage that were broken; this audit led to national attention and pressure to address the broken sanitation.

Young people also used data and statistics in workshops for raising awareness among other youth. For example, we saw two youth leaders from Padres & Jóvenes Unidos weave together their analysis of quantitative data with a call to action in a workshop for students about the school-to-jail track. After defining racism as a "way to dehumanize people," another youth leader shared data about disproportionate discipline and referrals for youth of color in schools:

PJU youth leader: Over the past ten years, over 10,000 students have been referred to the police. Black and brown students are punished more severely. As you can see, for every one white student, three black students [were referred to the police]. It is institutional racism. These institutions are school and jails… [We need to] end racial disparities in discipline and limit the role of police [in schools]. We believe these two steps are the heart of ending it. (Field note entry: Denver)

Reflection and expression through the arts. Organizations made extensive use of visual and theater arts to engage youth of various backgrounds and skill sets in sophisticated analytical practice. Learning and expressing through artistic media allow them to demonstrate their understanding of social issues (Watts, & Abdul-Adil, 1997). It also allowed them to convey important messages to diverse audiences using forms of communication often excluded in standardized testing and other assessments in school settings. These skills and experiences were particularly helpful for youth who struggled with writing or public speaking.

WIMPS made extensive use of video production to engage youth in contemporary political issues and get their message out to the public. Using an activity called "vox popping," youth would hit the streets to record interviews on civic issues. Youth in EE participated in filmmaking workshops to create documentaries about their everyday experiences and apply a critical media literacy lens. Young people at the Base recorded songs about their experiences and aspirations. VAYLA made extensive use of arts, including visual art, photo-voice, poetry, and videography for youth to express themselves on issues of school closures, language access, and environmental justice. The local ethnographer documented these observations in a field note:

> Young people used storyboards/cartoon boxes to examine several themes including "Education outside of the classroom" and "education equity/justice." In one of the storyboards addressing education outside of the classroom, they drew pictures of young people in school, queued in straight lines, with the same clothes on. Another box showed pictures of instruments and people dancing. In this instance, the pictures were meant to draw a contrast between their in-school experience (e.g., dull and regimented) to their out-of-school learning experiences (depicted as engaging and creative). In an equity and justice cartoon box, I saw themes that dealt with language access. There was a picture that depicted the experience of a youth from a limited English proficient family attending a school where there were no interpreters for parents and where youth were asked to play the role of interpreter. (VAYLA, New Orleans)

Visual arts, as described through this field note from VAYLA, could be a vehicle for engaging young people in critical conversations about their everyday experiences with school. This type of activity can inform how educators can more effectively introduce youth to complex material and concepts to boost learning and engagement.

Relationship between critical thinking and analysis, and other desirable outcomes. Survey responses showed a significant relationship between variables associated with critical thinking and analysis and other desirable effects. The survey research included a measure of "intellectuality" because political education and an interest in ideas, possibilities and thoughtful discourse are so important to social change work (Watts & Hipolito, 2015). The intellectuality scale probed for intellectual activities youth seek out on their own and unrelated to schoolwork. We found significant relationships between intellectuality and civic self-efficacy ($r = .53$), as well as hope ($r = .23$). These connections suggest a synergy between the intellectuality of critical thinking and analysis, a sense of civic agency, and emotionally beneficial attitudes such as hope.

Community Leadership and Action

Youth used insights from their critical analysis of social issues to inform their efforts to change institutions and their policies. The common thread in the United States and South Africa was quality education. Youth developed campaigns to protect their neighborhood schools for closure, established restorative justice practices in schools, and instituted minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure. In Ireland and Northern Ireland, the struggles we observed focus more on access to elected officials. They aimed to hold elected leaders accountable to young people and their rights as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Organizers developed strategies and actions to solve problems identified through reflection and discussion; these strategies ranged from leading short-term campaigns to building long-term movements. Youth learned how to exercise leadership among their peers and take action. Their community leadership and action skills are an important part of their personal development, and equally important for the health of civil societies struggling with social divisions and their government's responsibilities. Democratic societies need leaders and members with the courage to speak up for their interests and use teamwork to reach shared goals. Leadership, deliberation and dialogue on complex problems that lead to action are central to youth organizing. These activities enable a new generation of youth develop the skills and confidence the tools needed to formulate policy and have a voice in democracy.

Communication and persuasive speech. This theme was the one most frequently mentioned by young people in interviews about their learning; they valued the chance to grow their confidence, improve their public speaking, and have a voice in public discourse. Our findings confirm the central role of "voice"—and a voice that is *heard*—in youth development. Campaigns often included interactions with public decision-makers, such as elected officials, school district administrators, or police officers. We observed young people practice for these presentations so that they could do more than just recite a script, but also respond to questions and counter inaccurate assertions by public officials. Young people in KOCO, for example, spoke up at public meetings about education, employment, and policing. One youth leader from KOCO recounted:

> I was a core youth [member] with three or four other close friends, sharing tasks and prepping for conferences. As a group, we would go to the Illinois Senate, and the House, to our congresswomen and our congressmen, to talk about our experiences…what we were trying to get passed, what we were trying to do.

Youth from The Base participated in community meetings about improving relations with the police and attended a parliament convening on the social ramifications of national budgetary cuts to youth services. Coleman youth drew parallels in community meetings between their own experiences of the problem schools have with suspending students based on race and their systemic analysis of the so-called school to jail track. VAYLA youth regularly spoke with principals and other school district officials in an effort to prevent them from closing their schools.

These public speaking opportunities were challenging because they generally pushed youth out of their comfort zone. One young person from PJU described the process of gaining more confidence and persisting through the challenge:

I used to not be able to stand in front of ten people. If there was ten people's eyes on me, I would freeze and look away or I wouldn't want to be there. I'd be like "Okay I'm getting a phone call" or "Oh I need to use the restroom" and disappear for the amount of time that I had to stand in front of people. That was one of the difficult things I've had to go through with Padres was speaking in front of a lot of people, but thanks to them I broke out... I broke out of that isolation of speech that I had. Now I can be at least standing in front of at least 20 people and talking (interview, PJU).

A veteran youth from Coleman offered a similar reflection about her growth as a public speaker, saying after the "sixth or seventh time, I got comfortable with it." As this youth became more comfortable talking to audiences, each successive speaking engagement became easier to the point where she said, "I emcee events and I'm constantly sitting in meetings with elected officials, talking about social justice and change." Consider the vignette about Xochitl, for example, who spoke at a community meeting about her experiences with school discipline and her call to action for people in attendance. This certainly gave her the chance to improve her public speaking skills, but our analysis of data suggests it was much more than just public speaking. She was also asserting her identity as a political actor. For others, as well, public speaking was linked to related feelings of confidence and civic agency. Consider this statement by a young person from Equal Education:

How do we march? We go to town. We sing peacefully. We sing with big smiles on our faces. Then we tell them, "This is what we want." Then when they tell us, "Boo." We tell them, "We're not moving. This is what we want. We are standing our ground." I think these teachings have made me to stand my ground, to know what I want, but at the same time do it with—I don't know, with a positive spirit.

We further address the relevance of this point in a later section on Social and Emotional Learning.

Planning and strategizing. Youth participants had many opportunities to plan or strategize for their work. They needed to decide, for example, how much time to allow a political official to respond to policy demands or determine who in the local policy ecosystem had power and authority over a particular issue. They often changed plans in response to changes in the policy landscape. After successfully persuading the state legislature to pass the Safe Schools Act in Colorado, Padres & Jóvenes Unidos shifted its strategy from establishing a new law to ensuring that school districts complied with existing policy. This pattern showed up in other campaigns as well: first, there is a long period of building awareness, then proposals for policy change, and finally, if victorious, the victors must monitor compliance and fairness in the policy's implementation. At the local level, youth organizers also had to think strategically about how to   gain support for their school chapters from schoolteachers and principals who sometimes felt threatened by the existence of student activists in their schools.

Teamwork, group-decision making, and facilitation. Youth gained extensive practice working collectively on group tasks, such as recruiting new members, making decisions about campaigns, and preparing for presentations. In interviews, they reported gaining new interpersonal skills related to empathy, tolerance, handling constructive criticism, and keeping people motivated to persist through challenges. Although it could be time-consuming, the opportunity to work collaboratively with others was a valued practice. A young person from KOCO described it this way:

How do decisions get made in campaigns?
Interviewee: Consensus. [Laughter]
Interviewer: Okay. Tell me more.

Interviewee: Everybody needs to agree on the same thing. I just wish it could be my opinion sometimes so it could be final, but everybody gotta agree on it. Meanin' if we gotta sit down at a table for hours and hours, we just gonna sit there.
Interviewer: Okay, and when you say "we", who is that?
Interviewee: The other youth.

We observed a range of decision-making strategies within organizations, from majority voting to consensus to decisions made by professional staff. The collective focus of campaign work brought into the forefront the importance of being able to facilitate group discussions and meetings. For example, a young WIMPS member recalled an occasion when a youth worker gave her a chance to practice chairing a steering committee meeting. This prepared her for additional responsibility later when she "ended up as the chairperson one day when [the adult staff person] wasn't well."

Evidence-based policy arguments. In an era where data play a major role in policy analysis and institutional decision-making, learning how to marshal evidence to make policy arguments is a critical skill for creating social change. Young people across multiple sites supported their proposals or policy arguments through effective use of data. Members of Equal Education in South Africa published reports drawn from rigorous evidence that the news media cited widely. Often young people were the researchers; in one case, they documented the prevalence of non-functioning toilets in schools in Tembisa, near Johannesburg. Several of the United States sites had a similar practice of holding "accountability meetings," where they invited school administrators and presented them with evidence on the success of school policies

Raising public awareness. Bringing attention to an issue and generating interest in finding solutions is a key element of civic participation. Youth participants gained experience with messaging and storytelling by practicing with a variety of artistic and digital media, such as videography, Twitter, visual art, and performance. Although all sites engaged in public messaging, WIMPS of Belfast specialized in video production and social media to educate the public about issues. In one case, a member of WIMPS helped edit film material for a city-wide meeting on youth issues. In this way, young people were able to include their voices in the ongoing adult-centered discussion of what kinds of services youth most appreciate or need. Youth also learned how to find ways to reach the public in the absence of social media. Consider this example from a brainstorming session at Equal Education:

The other question to emerge in the discussions was how EE members would make sure that everyone in the community had access to the plans (by education departments). A facilitator said that we could go to every public space, taxi ranks, and all to tell people about them. A parent seconded the suggestion by saying "you could give us the plans and we could give to other parents at church, at burial societies, at Stokvels and in the streets." Then there was an equalizer who said, "I know we do not have money but TV would be quite powerful to use. We only need an hour." Thereafter the group discussed strategies like the use of pamphlets, local radio stations, marches, and the placing of stickers on all the mini buses that EE uses and educating the people on the street corners. The facilitator then requested everyone to go back to the hall for a report back on the strategies that had been suggested.

Such brainstorms, where people of different ages and roles in the organization suggested ideas for how to broadcast their message, enabled youth to develop skills for raising public awareness in creative ways.

Accelerated leadership. Groups created a set of practices for incorporating new members quickly, so they could contribute to the work soon after joining. We saw many examples where newcomers were invited into leadership roles, especially for speaking at public events. In providing these opportunities, groups provided scaffolding to less experienced youth that enabled them to participate, even if they were nervous or shy. For example, speakers might use a script or notecards, during their first time experience speaking in public. Sometimes, however, speaking engagements were far less scripted, and they invited improvisation during interactions with adult policymakers. This recollection from a youth organizer from San Francisco captures the accelerated opportunities to step up and play important roles:

> At Coleman you get a lot of like, "Hey, we're going to the meeting, you're facilitating and you got to talk to like 30 people…" So you got to learn how to improv… Like cuz you are put in a lot of different situations, "Okay, we have to be here in 12 minutes and you need to know this whole pack of information." You'll be like, "Oh man." You just learn to move kind of high-paced.

Similarly, a youth leader from KOCO described the prevalence of opportunities to speak and lead:

> Interviewer: Okay. How has KOCO helped you develop into a leader?
>
> Interviewee: 'Cause, working with KOCO, you forced to become a leader 'cause they just throw you a lot of—you got to lead people all the time and lead groups of people all the time. It's like you learn to be a leader in the process. You have to be—learn to be a leader.

Some aspects of community leadership presented thus far are directly applicable to school performance. This is especially true for information gathering, persuasive speech, and group work. As one person from Coleman said, "every time we have groups [in school], I'm also the leader." Skills related to teamwork, communication, strategic thinking, and messaging are also central features of professional work in the global knowledge economy (Child Trends, 2015).

Youth participants who become more skilled as leaders also articulate a sense of newfound agency and confidence. This development of agency and confidence is expressed artfully by a member of EE:

> If it wasn't for EE, I wouldn't have learned how to put together people and try to, excuse me, how to put together learners and bring them in one spirit that, "Okay, if we're fighting for education, this is how we fight for education. We go peacefully. This is what we do and non-violent." I wouldn't have learned that and I wouldn't have …gained, the confidence in myself that people are actually trusting me, to actually elect me to be part of the Leadership Committee and say that, "Okay, so, K., you're going to be the one to take the money that we pay for camps and you take it to the office." That… bolsters my confidence because you know that people are trusting me, and you won't do anything to actually jeopardize that.

The survey results support the idea that youth organizing experiences likely contribute to self-confidence into other settings; we found a statistical relationship between academic self-efficacy and an interest in future civic and sociopolitical work ($r = .32$).

Social and Emotional Learning

Handling difficult emotions, experiencing positive ones and developing social skills are an essential part of growing into adulthood and an important outcome for this study. The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004) defines socio-emotional development as, "The ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behavior."

We grouped emotions into two categories—difficult and positive emotions. Typically, difficult emotions like anger, anxiety, self-doubt, frustration, contempt, demoralization, and sadness are also unpleasant. Positive emotions, such as happiness, bemusement, pride, self-confidence, love, and contentedness and calm are typically pleasant. A single event, as illustrated in Xochitl's testimony, often involved a mix of pleasant and unpleasant emotions. To make things even more complicated, some of the words used to describe feelings are not necessarily "pure" emotions they can include thoughts. When young people "feel prepared" and "confident" for a meeting with powerful officials they are also recalling the rehearsal and study they did, which moderates difficult emotions like anxiety.

A fuller understanding of social and emotional learning requires an appreciation of the impact of oppression and an understanding of sociopolitical context. For example, anger comes in many varieties; the anger a young person experiences when a friend reneges on a promise is very different from the indignation that Xochitl experienced after her suspension. Marginalized young people must grapple with their emotional reactions to a variety of experiences of stigma, stereotypes, and disrespect within the institutions that are part of their lives. These intergenerational experiences have produced what researchers have described as "cultural mistrust" (Terrell & Terrell, 1981).

Emotional Endurance

The difficult emotions Xochitl described at the beginning of this report, including anger, frustration, demoralization, and sadness, are part of being human. Similarly, challenging encounters with powerful officials or the frustrations of dealing with intransigent institutions often trigger difficult emotions but YCO practices provide young people with the support needed to develop "emotional endurance." Emotional endurance is about perseverance that keeps people focused on a task or goal despite unpleasant feelings. Emotional endurance is an asset in short-term, and long-term tasks. Reflecting on her experience with youth organizing, A youth leader from Padres:

> Yeah, sometimes it's a bit intense because of all the work you have to do to be able to achieve something or do something. I guess it's really understanding how stuff [works]—it's not always going to be easy. Like, we have to work for something and [there's] emotion or passion or be[ing] intense—or active—on something.

Such situations require them to maintain their composure, and stay focused on their goals—even when faced with feelings of anxiety, anger or self-doubt. Experiences that promote skills for handling these emotions effectively are what we call *emotional* work.

YCO supports the emotional work of young organizers in many ways. To reduce anxiety in anticipation of meetings with powerful officials, YCO staff use rigorous preparatory practices. Youth must research the relevant facts of the issue at hand and rehearse their position in role-plays that include feedback and encouragement from staff and their peers. YCO is a collective effort, also characterized by mutual

expressions of support. When meetings with officials take place, for example, young organizers are ready to think on their feet, exude confidence, and keep their anxiety in check. Later, during "debriefing" sessions, young people reflect on their experiences—learning from what went well, and what did not. There are also other opportunities to reflect on life experiences, such as the session where Xochitl gave her personal testimony. The love and respect she received from staff and her peers is essential to learning how to give and receive social support, and foster collective resistance.

Campaign work provides many opportunities for the emotional work that leads to emotional endurance. In an interview, Darius (a youth organizer from KOCO), reflected on the challenges of sustaining and persisting on a campaign that required years of work. He acknowledged that there are "Those moments when you want to quit." But he added,

> You just take a step back, you take a breather, and try to look for the bigger picture, even if you don't want to look at the bigger picture. It was so many times that I'd rather go play basketball or go to a party. There were millions of times I wanted to do that. At the same time, I was thinking [the campaign] was bigger than me, bigger than what *I* want to do.

Darius's comments underscore the power that comes from collective effort and feeling part of something "bigger." Ultimately, the efforts he and other youth in KOCO worked on to restore summer jobs for young people were successful:

> "Next summer... we were able to hire those 40 students [we needed, and] we were able to send people out to different places like Walgreens, [Marshalls, and other] stores. We belief successes large and small, build the endurance necessary for perseverance in future long-term challenges."

Setbacks afford opportunities for emotional work as well:

> When you lose the campaign, like it hurts, but you always have to find a win in like every little step. Like we actually made it this far—cause a lot of people don't even get this far, like to make sure that you still encourage the youth. Like I know that we actually didn't win, but we still got supporters far enough this way. We could still be able to do something else with this work and try to still come back and do it again, work it out." (Coleman Advocates, Interview)

Similarly, in another context, young people at Equal Education discussed their relational approach of caring for and looking out for each other in the context of doing organizing work. They validated each other's emotions, while affirming for themselves the necessity to remain calm and conscious of their goals:

> I had to comfort her, calm her down and say, "Look, we don't have to be all emotional. We must get angry, but at the very same time, conscious of what we are saying," Because, really, some of the things that she said might have gotten her arrested. Because, the police were also simultaneously angry. They were very much despondent. (Equal Education, Interview)

Research on youth development has revealed that well-designed, well-implemented social and emotional learning (SEL) programs are associated with positive social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for children and adolescents. However, the impact is generally modest, even for the most promising interventions. Why? "Perhaps most importantly, and often overlooked, is the fact that SEL programs are rarely integrated into classrooms and schools in ways that are meaningful, sustained, and embedded in the day-to-day interactions of students, educators, and school staff". (Jones and Bouffard, 2012).

Unlike school settings where SEL is often relegated to sessions in a highly structured curriculum, youth organizing centers SEL are part of the ongoing, routine culture and relational practices of groups. In youth organizing, we saw numerous opportunities for young people to do the emotional work needed for SEL and engage in teamwork on campaigns. By definition, teamwork requires extensive social interaction. It can also be emotional when the stakes are high, as with the campaigns that take on issues affecting youth well-being in their schools and communities.

In youth organizing, telling personal stories of injustice while maintaining composure is part of preparing young people to speak before powerful officials or audiences who are unfamiliar with youth's concerns. Xochitl's experience is one example of that, but it is also an example of the trauma marginalized young people experience. Sometimes young people react to trauma by being aggressive or lashing out, and several young people described how youth organizing has helped them refrain from emotional responses that can be counterproductive to organizing work and long-term goals:

> In Coleman, like in school, they teach you certain things, but [at Coleman] you feel more comfortable being able to ask like why, or [say] you don't get it... You have more options... they teaching how to better handle certain situations to know what reaction is fit for what situation. Like, "Okay, although you don't like it, I don't need to like flip the table over and walk out... you need to sit there and be like, okay, excuse me, this isn't right, da-da-da-da-da." [or] maybe I shouldn't say da-da-da.

Senior organizers encourage social and emotional learning through opportunities for reflection in relation to youth's organizing work and by bringing out connections between goals, action, and emotions. Transformation of difficult emotions into action occurs when young people use unpleasant emotions as catalyst for community organizing. Our local ethnographer for Coleman observed an example of this during a so-called "Check In" used by many youth organizing groups. They began with a prompt or issue that required each person in the circle to respond. In this instance, the prompt was "Why do you organize?"

> Youth were seated around the couches, and responded by stating his or her name and answered the question about why they organize. Maria talked about organizing as an outlet, she mentioned that she was tired of getting angry and she started to organize as a way to get that anger out of her and channeling it into action to make something happen, to fight "oppression," "change inequalities," "taking action instead of waiting around to see things happen." Responses by other youth included: "for a better future..." "to be a leader," to "show [others] we can be somebody," "struggle for change," turning "anger into action" (Field note, 2012, Coleman Advocates)

Social and Emotional Learning and Civic Discourse

Social and emotional learning also includes skills for civil discourse and leadership. The ability to engage in respectful dialogue with others who hold different views is a valuable civic, social, and leadership skill. In this interview, the local ethnographer in Belfast asked Glenda about the role she played at a meeting of youth to discuss the relationship between the United Kingdom and Europe:

> Well, I was one of the main representatives for Northern Ireland, with other ones from WIMPS... Every country within the U.K. had a group of representatives over to show what they thought... I met a guy called Damian, who is very against Europe, and [it] was weird talking to him because he is.... such a nice person, but to have such differences in opinion, and [for me] to be able to sit there and just debate with him for about an hour—really! [and it] interested me.

Survey Findings on Social and Emotional Learning

The survey findings show a strong relationship between critical thinking and analysis and   (r = .46) and a sense of hope (r = .68), a finding that is consistent with the work of others who posit the important of fomenting a sense of radical hope among youth from structurally marginalized communities (Ginwright, 2015). In addition, young people prepare, strategize, and practice before taking high-stakes campaign action, which reduces anxiety and gives them confidence as they confront powerful officials.

Most of the "emotional work" (52%) associated with beneficial SEL outcomes occurred in situations involving community leadership and action, as shown in the diagram. Examples include preparation and rehearsal sessions before a campaign, engaging in an action, or reflecting on it during a debriefing session. Leadership and speaking out to authority figures, exercising their own power, and making a difference personally or collectively also trigger strong emotions.

Critical thinking analysis experiences accounted for another 32%. Insights about social inequality and marginalization, as in Xochitl's case, can trigger unpleasant emotions. Staff work with young people can transform these feelings into thoughtful, constructive, and planned action. It may seem ironic that social and emotional learning-related activities had the lowest rate for emotional work (15%). This is likely due to the low frequency of structured social and emotional learning practices. Unlike other youth settings, where social and emotional learning is based on a formal curriculum, youth organizing integrates SEL into all phases of the work.

Where "Emotional Work" Gets Done Principal Youth Organizing Practices

CRITICAL THINKING AND ANALYSIS THEMES *ACCOUNTED FOR 32% OF ALL EMOTION CODES*	Discussion and analysis of sociopolititcal topic, including education, community issues, social power, and other intellectual activity (117/369 experiences)
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND ACTION THEMES *ACCOUNTED FOR 52% OF ALL EMOTION CODES*	Situations requiring public speaking, leadership activity, group facilitation, agency and action (193/369 instances of SEL experiences)

Summary

Evidence from interviews, observations, and surveys show that participating youth community organizing groups offered rich environments for young people to develop and practice Critical Thinking and Analysis, Community Leadership and Action, and Social and Emotional Learning. The first two of these themes have surfaced in prior research about youth organizing (e.g., Conner, 2011; Shah, 2011). This study offers an important contribution to prior research by confirming and strengthening these themes. This underscores the robustness of these features of youth organizing settings since different researchers have found them in different organizations.

Our findings about social and emotional learning offer a new contribution that has not received much attention in prior research on youth organizing or youth civic engagement broadly.

FINDINGS PART II: Learning and Development Processes

Evidence of young people's critical thinking, leadership, and social emotional learning raise questions about processes: What was it about the broader learning environment that fostered youth engagement and belonging? How did young people learn and develop as powerful civic actors?

Youth Organizing Culture Supports Learning

The significance of youth organizing culture is underscored by Xochitl's opening story and the section on social and emotional learning. They illustrate how a supportive group within a community youth organization can create both a safe and brave space necessary for young people to engage with their emotions, and do the emotional work needed to work through difficult feelings, especially in the context of organizing to address inequities. People learn and model the social skills necessary to create community, and therefore an affirming environment of social support. It can also promote the belief that collective action makes a greater impact and encourages the sense of agency needed to take on social injustice. Lành, a young Vietnamese member of VAYLA, used a metaphor that we heard across many sites:

> I go to VAYLA almost every day so that's my family now. I can't go without seein' my family for two weeks... It's beautiful in the way it's run. I've never, ever been in a place where... so many students [are] so passionate about the same thing.

Similarly, a young person at FamiliBase in Dublin, shows how youth organizing culture can create supportive relationships:

> We've grown into a whole little family [and] it's amazing that we hang around with each other outside, inside and go away together, go on holidays together that we pay for, go on exchanges that The Base pays for... we're so close, that's how close we are.

When it comes to sociopolitical development, many of the sites emphasized building a culture of relationships first. Reflecting on his experience, one youth leader from KOCO stated the importance of relationships as a precursor to political action.

> You have to build that connection first before you try to push them into a world they're not used to.... We did a lot of things called ice breakers to get us on common ground with each other... go on retreats just to get to know each other. It just a lot of fun. What I see now in a lot of organizations they try to put too much on youth, which turns them off. You need to build that bond before you even try to bring [political work] into the conversation. (—youth leader at KOCO).

Our survey findings suggest these feeling can promote other desirable outcomes. There was a substantial association between the experience of community, feeling hopeful about the future (ß = .45), and feeling more competent in civic activities (ß = .44). Findings on a scale of organizational "climate" indicate that young people who saw their organization as supportive and appreciative of their contributions, and as a place where "adults and youth work together," reported higher scores on all the major youth outcomes of interest in this study (see diagram on next page). All of this leads us to conclude that youth organizing is

potentially as effective as traditional youth development programs in building social skills and resilience, along with its emphasis on sociopolitical development.

The distinctive learning space these youth organizing groups created can be understood as a function of organizational culture (Schein, 2010) in combination with novel learning practices. It has implications for a variety of youth environments. "Youth organizing culture"—the web of positive relationships, respect, and feelings of agency—undergird outcomes in all three of the study's outcome areas—CTA, CLA, and SEL. The story of Xochitl at the beginning of this report illustrated youth organizing culture in action in each of these domains. The majority of the youth who took part in the study's questionnaire gave their organization's culture a 4.2 rating or higher on a five-point scale. Questions in the YCO scale included:

- I feel like my ideas count when I am there.

- It is a place where I can learn a lot about improving society and communities.

- I feel like I belong there.

- I like to hang out there even when I don't have to be there.

- Adults in the organization don't really listen to me. (scored in reverse)

- Adults and youth work together well and share power and decision-making.

- There are adults there who I can talk to about personal problems.

- Some of the young people there are good friends of mine.

A series of multiple regression analyses showed statistically significant connections between the strength of these ratings and each of the seven different beneficial youth outcomes shown as green ovals in the diagram below—the higher the youth organizing culture ratings, the greater the benefits. The relationship between the seven outcome measures and youth organizing culture are listed in order of the strength of the relationship:

1. Racial and Social Identity (ß = .59),

2. Critical Thinking about Justice (ß = .54),

3. Academic Empowerment (ß = .47),

4. Hope (ß= .45),

5. Commitment to Future Civic-Political Engagement (ß = .44),

6. Civic Empowerment (ß= .44),

7. Leadership (ß = .26).

Learning through Cycles of Preparation, Rehearsal, Performance, and Reflection

Youth organizing groups offered dynamic learning environments that combined rigorous intellectual work with an emphasis on relevance and purpose. They were distinct from conventional school classrooms in important ways. For example, we did not see students obtaining their information from textbooks that simplify historical narratives or present knowledge as if it were fixed and settled. Instead, groups drew on varied curriculum sources, including articles and video documentaries, to inform participants about local issues and their historical roots. We did not see students sorted into categories, such as "honors," "advanced," or "basic"; instead, young people of different ages and levels of school achievement worked together on shared projects. We saw no testing where students sat down in private to demonstrate their knowledge for a grader; but we did see assessment in the form of varied authentic performances where youth demonstrated skills in high-stakes settings. In this sense, these were compelling learning environments that offer important implications for educators and designers.

To characterize these learning processes with greater clarity, we draw on a perspective developed from research on learning in community settings outside of schools, pioneered by scholars, such as Barbara Rogoff (2013), Milbrey McLaughlin (2000), and Shirley Brice Heath (1999). We add to that framework by underscoring the unique focus in these settings on critical thinking, humanizing relationships, and political activism.

Learning happened in cycles governed by various demands of the campaigns. These cycles varied in length of time, but they followed a pattern of preparation, rehearsal, performance, and feedback. Short versions of this cycle might occur over the span of a day or two, such as when members of a group prepared for an upcoming meeting by reviewing statistics about discipline disparities and role-playing how the meeting might go the next day. Young people who were in the role-play would then lead the meeting and afterward

reflect on how it went in an informal debrief with staff members. It is possible to observe the same cycle over a longer period and a wider scope of activities. For example, young people in South Africa prepared for participation in the multi-year Minimum Norms and Standards campaign by participating in workshops about media strategy and by reading the history of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. They performed their developing skills and displayed their knowledge at a series of public events that called for young people to present ideas to political officials or participate in public rallies. After major events, group members had opportunities to reflect on what they achieved and discuss what would happen next.

The organizations created a range of engaging activities that contributed to the preparation phase of the learning cycle. These activities included group discussions, trainings and workshops, skits, reading circles, and artistic expression. Preparations were often followed by rehearsal, where young people practiced what they were going to say and sometimes role-played different scenarios.

During the performance phase of the learning cycle young people expressed their policy proposals or social change agendas to public audiences, such as school boards, government ministers (Ireland and South Africa), community members, city councils, or law enforcement officials. According to interviews, these moments of performance were associated with some of the most powerful learning, including emotions of nervousness and vulnerability, as well as courage and pride.

Although we did not observe feedback and reflection after every public action, we saw it with enough frequency to mention it as a common practice across sites. Debriefs were often facilitated by a young adult staff person who acted as coach or mentor to the youth leaders. Typically, these debriefs were quick and informal, such as after leaving a meeting, in which a staff person asked youth to talk about how it went and reflect on what could be improved. The following is a typical example:

> Kris (adult) asked if there were any other thoughts or impressions from that day, and Francisco added that he felt good that he was able to go up there and talk; he added that he felt good about himself, "I had a part in this too." Roxanna added that even though she had spoken at other events, she still felt nervous to talk in front of "old white people." Karen asked her what made her nervous, and Roxanna said that she knew that they had a lot of power, and it was hard for her to keep calm and communicate effectively about something she cared about and was affected by. Kris added that all of the youth who showed up were powerful speakers (Field note, San Francisco).

In other examples, we observed discussions about whether the group had achieved its goals and where they had fallen short. Staff at Padres & Jóvenes Unidos were particularly mindful of how people in positions of power wielded power not only by intimidation or hostility, but also by making friendly overtures or giving out cell phone information to youth. Staff provided feedback or coaching about how to hold people accountable even when the political figure was friendly or claimed good intentions.

Topics Relevant to Everyday Struggles and Aspirations

Youth participants learned about topics relevant to their everyday lives for the purpose of asking questions about them, crafting solutions, and taking action to see those solutions realized. This purpose framed the whole enterprise of youth organizing; young people saw the relevance of their activities to themselves and their peers. Consider this example from Colorado, where a PJU youth leader described their motivation to work on immigration issues;

> What really inspired me is that they were working on a program called Colorado ASSET. It's for undocumented students to get in-state tuition in the State of Colorado. I'm an undocumented student who is gonna have to pay out-of-state tuition and I knew I couldn't afford it. I was, "I want to work on this, I need to do this!" 'Cause I understand what other kids are going through. I'm going through this." I did work in the capitol, in the office. Calls, talking with senators. Everything. Testifying. That's when I started getting really, really involved.

Relevance was central to what motivated many youth. It also poses a contrast to normative practice for many youths' experience of formal schooling, where topics and academic content can too often feel removed from everyday life.

Humanizing Relationships and Sharing Power

Participating groups demonstrated relational practices that affirm the dignity and humanity of oppressed youth and their communities. Trusting, intergenerational relationships and mutual support contributed to sustained youth participation over time. These qualities provided a safe, intellectual space for dialogue on ideas, debate, and reflection.

One common practice was to try to apply a more egalitarian or democratic set of norms related to power differences based on age. As youth organizing groups tended to be intentional about the relevance of age as a social category and how age should be taken into account for organizational decision-making. Groups used terms such as intergenerational, youth-adult partnership oriented, or youth-centered, each with slightly different meanings, to characterize their approach.

Young people's experience of voice and power often contrasted with their experiences in school. One of the members of WIMPS, for example, contrasted her power relative to adults there with the lack of power and choice she experienced at her school:

> (It's) very stressful to learn something that you don't really want to learn. It's not gonna happen, and then you get—you literally get shouted at for not learning it, when you can't learn it. Because if you don't want to learn it, you're not gonna listen to it. You're not gonna take it in. With WIMPS it's literally, what do you want to do? How do you want to do it, and when do you want to have it done by? It really is what you want, and it's really what your voice wants to say. I think that's a big difference.

This young person explained the importance of youth as decision-makers within WIMPS, as opposed to the more hierarchical relationships between adults and youth in school settings. An example from Coleman underscored this difference. At one meeting, a youth organizer asked youth if they ever felt oppressed by

a teacher or an adult in their schools. The conversation that unfolded showed experiences with double standards in enforcement of dress codes and the negative interpretation of the behavior of Black and Latino youth in schools.

Youth organizing culture provides a more supportive and collaborative power structure. In the groups we studied, it positively affected youth-adult relationships and prepared youth to be colleagues with adult supporters. The following excerpt from a young person in EE highlights the uniqueness of this experience:

> This organization was so different from any organization I've been to. Like, education is important. I wanted to be part of this organization; there is no other organization that is working with youth and encouraging youth to stand on their own to do something with their schools.

Organizational structures and practices also enabled people to be vulnerable with each other and deal with personal challenges. In San Francisco, we observed a meeting where one of the youth organizers recounted tragedy in his life. This example illustrates how positive relationships between staff people and youth helped build community, trust, and support:

> Cesar began to read his crumpled up piece of folded paper. As he rapped about his life, he mentioned the death of his younger brother and what that loss was like for him. He talked about his feelings and emotions, and how he promised to make each day count and make each moment worth it, because he has a chance and his little brother didn't. There was a lot of emotion; several people were in tears as they listened to Cesar's deep voice shatter a bit as he fought to keep his tears inside. Toya asked Caesar if he wanted to continue and Cesar said that he didn't know he was going to feel that way. Paul said that he really appreciated Cesar putting himself out there and talking so deeply about his emotions, and he added, "It takes courage."

Cesar's willingness to be vulnerable was illustrative of a process we observed at multiple sites. Deep and intentional relationships focused on healing and solidarity and engendered trust, a sense of family, as well as commitment to transforming systems of oppression.

A Note on Variation Across Countries

Although we identified common patterns, we also observed a great deal of diversity across sites, due to their different histories and sociopolitical structures. For example, appeals to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child were more prevalent in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and South Africa than in the United States. Youth engagement strategies varied as well: some groups placed greater emphasis on training youth to create videos and using social media to advance campaign issues, whereas others placed greater emphasis on data collection and analysis for purposes of accountability. In South Africa, young people spent time learning the history of the anti-apartheid movement and discussing the connections to their own struggle for quality education. This kind of direct engagement with history was less typical across sites.

We also observed that organizations used the category of "youth" in different ways across the regions, and age was not the sole consideration in determining role and status. In the US, the term "youth" tended to refer to those under 21, but status as a college student often affected their role in the organization. The upper range of age for "youth" was higher in South Africa, Ireland, and Northern Ireland, where it could go well into the twenties. We highlight this diversity as a way to show the wide range of creative and successful methods available but not widely recognized across national boundaries

Summary & Conclusion

Young people across the sites developed critical understanding and analysis of their sociopolitical context and core skills for leadership, community engagement, and democratic participation. These findings confirm and strengthen prior research about the impact of youth organizing and civic engagement experiences (Kirshner, 2009; Rogers & Terriquez, 2013; Shah, 2011; Watts, et al, 2003).

Youth learned how to manage emotions and channel them into constructive action. Social and emotional learning refers to an array of non-cognitive skills, such as emotional regulation, persistence, and relationships associated with positive school and career outcomes. This represents important "news" for the field, because social and emotional learning has typically not been studied in relation to civic engagement and organizing. Opportunities to handle emotions and relationships in the context of ongoing, meaningful activity is consistent with best practices called for by socioeconomic learning researchers, who have critiqued SEL interventions that limit programming to discrete blocks of time or bounded activities (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). This potent combination of social skills, leadership, and emotional intelligence has been linked in other research to long-term persistence in school and higher lifetime earnings (Belfield et al., 2015; Durlak et al., 2011).

Participating organizations offered powerful *learning environments* that enabled youth to translate reflection, research, and dialogue into political activism. By emphasizing *how* positive youth development outcomes were realized in youth organizing, the study complemented other longitudinal studies (Rogers & Terriquez, 2013). Recurring patterns in these organizations included:

- Cycles of practice, performance, reflection, and feedback;
- Relevance to everyday lives and aspirations;
- A youth organizing culture of supportive relationships and power sharing that affirm young people's dignity and humanity.

There was also diversity in strategies for engaging and mobilizing youth across sites, particularly across nations. This international research was a strength of the study. This diversity is important because it can contribute new strategies for youth organizing groups, particularly with regard to youth development and learning. For example, certain educational practices in Equal Education that helped young people learn about their connection to historical struggles and building a national movement may be of interest to youth workers outside of South Africa. Similarly, the ability of groups, such as Padres & Jóvenes Unidos and Coleman Advocates, to achieve new state and city legislation dismantling the school to prison pipeline is important for groups that wish to make deep policy impact (Fernandez, Kirshner, & Lewis, 2016).

At a time when questions about how best to support youth educational attainment and address racial injustice and economic inequality are at the forefront of national debates in the US and globally, these findings underscore the importance of strong organizations that facilitate youth activism and voice. Although the details in each city differed, each of the organizations organized young people to address deep divisions of wealth, educational access, and political power.

We hope that this systematic study about *what youth organizers learn and how they learn and apply it* provides critical information for the health of civil society and the ways that youth-serving institutions can best nurture its development.

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Appendix — Data Analysis

The necessary approvals to conduct this research were obtained from the institutional review boards of The Graduate Center of City University f New York (the primary institution) and the University of Colorado, Boulder. Field staff collected completed assent or consent forms for youth under and over eighteen years old (respectively), along with parental permission forms for the former. Comparable approved forms were used for the on-line survey version.

This study drew on multiple data sources to support the conclusions described in this report. The research procedures of our mixed-methodology had two parallel strands, but most of our time and resources went to collecting and interpreting the rich trove of fieldwork data. The survey research was secondary and limited in this report to descriptive and bivariate statistical analysis. Survey findings were used to triangulate and confirm ideas developed from the fieldwork. In some cases, survey findings were presented on them own as a way exploring relationships among variables and linking the findings to existing research literature.

Procedures and Interpretive Analysis of the Qualitative Data Sources

Fieldwork and Reflective group conversations. Fieldwork began in the summer of 2012, and data exploration began just a few months later. Nearly all of the fieldwork was completed early by December 2014. With varied degrees of frequency, but with a priority given to events each site saw as significant, ethnographers visited bi-weekly on average. They participated in bi-weekly or monthly video calls with the senior research staff to discuss their participant observation, including the local political context, dilemmas, or challenges arising from this very intimate involvement with the operations of the participating organizations. These on-going reflective discussions were the first critical efforts to explore emergent themes across sites. One theme that we discussed pertained to the mobility of youth participants at some sites, which led to a framework for on-going "cycles of learning and accelerated leadership."

Codebook Development. After a year of fieldwork, the senior research team and the graduate student researchers, began inductive and deductive open-coding based on the reflective conversations and our research goals. This led to a codebook for the systematic analysis of field notes and interviews. It evolved over multiple iterations and group discussions. The final coding scheme included three superordinate categories Practices, Outcome Talk, and Youth Organization Culture. All three had a deductive component, in that our initial framing aimed to be practical, meaningful, and consistent with the literature on community organizing and youth development. However, the inductive element of the analysis led to

major and sometimes surprising changes in our concepts and focus. For example, the themes of social and emotional learning and youth organizing culture were very minor elements of the preliminary, deductive coding scheme. Table 1 summarizes the major themes in the final codebook these categories below:

TABLE 1: Codebook Categories for the Qualitative Research

THE THREE SUPERORDINATE CATEGORIES		
1. **ORGANIZATION PRACTICES AND ACTIVITIES**	**2.** **OUTCOME TALK BY YOUTH**	**3.** **RELATIONSHIPS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**
CATEGORIES* • Social Events & Celebrations • Racial/Ethnic/ Religious Practices • Personal Support of Youth by Adults • Youth Facilitation/ Leadership* • Group Planning and Strategizing* • Team Builders • Ice Breakers and Warm-ups • Trainings and Workshops*	• How Got Involved; Arts & New Media; Political/ Civic Engagement Agency and Values • Critical Thinking and Analysis • Education/Intellectuality • Reflections on Emotional Experiences • Talk about the Organization • Public Speaking • Relational Power • Social Identity • Youth Facilitation/ Leadership - Outcome • Other Claims about Learning	• Caring and Warm Relationships • Hostile or Disrespectful Relationships • Other descriptions of Relationships • Humor/Jokes • Physical Descriptions of Setting

* Tertiary categories are not included.

From the earliest stages, the senior researchers explored "super" codes 1 and 2, due to prior interests, experience, or knowledge of community organizations. Theories informing these themes included sociopolitical development, positive youth development, and Sociocultural Learning They were helpful in proposing connections between the larger organizational setting, practices, and learning. We tested our initial hunches against observations in the field, with the inductive observations playing a central role in the ongoing evolution of the coding scheme.

Coding. Once the codebook was refined to the point where the research team felt there were no more substantive changes to the codebook, did systematic coding began. To ease the cognitive load of mastering all the codes, we created two teams that specialized in a different set of codes. Teams used

Dedoose's calculation of inter-rater reliability to improve codes with the lowest in inter-rater agreement. In some cases research team members double-coded the same data sets to ensure comprehensiveness and the inclusion of false positives rather than the exclusion of false negatives.

The Codebook and analysis. The super codes of Practices and Outcome Talk generally correspond to two distinct data sources—field notes and interviews, respectively. Field notes concentrated on what we saw people do. Specifically, activities and recurring activities we called practices. The interviews were a "talk" data source and reflected how people thought about their experiences. Through an iterative cycle of team meetings, we resolved significant discrepancies among us and refined the codebook. We used Dedoose. com's on-line software for the analysis. NVivo, and the sorting and search capabilities of Microsoft Word and Excel were also used for fine-grained analyses related to social and emotional development. It was during this software-aided, inductive analysis that t super code 3 surfaced and become significant.

One limitation of our data is that they do not permit us to make definitive, causal claims about "outcomes." For many audiences, such claims require an experimental design. Instead, we triangulated the qualitative and quantitate findings to infer associations between practices, experiences, learning and outcomes. Using the high credibility of direct observation methods, in addition to survey and interview self-report, we inferred links between what we saw in organizing practices and outcomes based on young people's personal accounts of learning and development. We saw how skills youth practiced over time improved. This method was consistent with a sociocultural theory of learning (Rogoff, 2003). Nonetheless, we take a conservative stance and caution against thinking about simple causal relationships and "outcomes" as fixed or final, or generalizable across all youth community organizing contexts.

Quantitative Analysis of Survey Responses

Our original intent was to incorporate a repeated-measures, longitudinal component into the survey research design, but we were unable to do so due to very wide seasonal and circumstantial variations in the operations at the seven sites. We could not establish a common time period when we could administer the surveys to all sites, nor could we find a uniform interval between time points one and two for all the sites. Thus, we decided to collect data whenever and wherever it was possible to do so. The results presented in this report were based on 109 items from the original survey, which included additional descriptive, demographic and sociopolitical questions. Psychometric information on the scales appear in Table 2. Minor improvements were made to some scales post hoc to increase their internal consistency. Some scales were collections of behaviors, such as listings of disparate behaviors that nonetheless reflected interest in a particular topic. We called these "index" scales, and for them high intercorrelations were not a priority. Except for the scale "Thinking Critically about Justice" all scales met or exceeded our .70 criterion for internal consistency. Because if its relevance, we included it as an exploratory measure and so results associated with it should be interpreted accordingly. Similarly, missing data was prevalent in this dataset. Consequently, our use of survey findings in this report was limited to corroborating, exploring or extending findings established by the fieldwork or existing literature.

Table 2: Survey Scale Name (Scale Terminology in the Report)

Information on these scales correspond by number to the Scale References below	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	MEAN INTER-ITEM CORRELATION
1. Mean Inter-Item Correlation	.88	.48
2. Team Work and Social Skills (Leadership)	.91	.56
3. Youth Organizing Culture (Youth Organizing Culture)	.88	.41
4. Commitment to Future Engagement (Commitment to Future Engagement)*	.86	.38
5. Social Identity (Social Identity)	.85	.40
6. Academic Efficacy (Academic Empowerment)	.85	.58
7. Critical Consciousness of Inequality (Critical thinking about social justice or sociopolitical issues)	.78	.38
8. The Children's Hope Scale (Hope)	.90	.57
9. Youth Intellectual Orientation Inventory (Intellectuality)	.87	.38

Supplement to Table 2: Survey Scale References and Notes By Scale Names

Sources correspond by number to items in Table 2

1. Adapted from *Competence for Civic Action in Flanagan, C., Syvertsen, S. & Stout, M. (2007). Civic Measurement Models: Tapping Adolescents' Civic Engagement.* CIRCLE Working Paper 55. Available on-line: https://civicyouth.org. The version we used is available from rjwatts@tion-research.co

2. Critical Civic Inquiry Project (CCIP): Carlos Hipolito-Delgado and Shelly Zion, University of Colorado at Denver; Ben Kirshner University of Colorado, Boulder.
Adapted from the *Team Work and Social Skills scale: Hanson, D & Larson, L. (2005). The Youth Experience Survey 2.0: Instrument Revisions and Validity Testing.* Department of Human and Community Development, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Available on line: http://youthdev.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/YES-2.0-Instrument.pdf

3. Adapted from CCIP's *Class Belonging Scale* (see #2 for source).
Available from: rjwatts@tion-research.co

4. Roderick Watts. Available from: rjwatts@tion-research.co

5. Roderick Watts. Available from: rjwatts@tion-research.co

6. Midgley, Maehr, Hruda, et al., (2000). *Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales,* University of Michigan School of education. Available on-line: http://www.umich.edu/~pals/PALS%202000_V12Word97.pdf

7. The *Critical Consciousness of Inequality Scale* was adapted from a set of scales revised and analyzed by Bullock, H., Williams, W. & Limbert, W. (2003). Predicting Support For Welfare Policies: The Impact Of Attributions And Beliefs About Inequality. *Journal of Poverty,* 7, 35-56.
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