



2014 Nelson Chair Roundtable

On Networking
Community
Based Programs

March 27
& 28, 2014

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ROUNDTABLE REPORT

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Roundtable Mission

The Roundtable Mission is to create a supportive network of exceptional Community-Based Programs, expert consultants, and academics that have a shared commitment to valuable work in the community. Through this network the Roundtable will foster program-to-program mentoring and cultivate mutual resources as well as the sharing of knowledge and skills. Finally, the Roundtable will support participating programs by addressing challenges of leadership capacity building, implementation of strategic planning, staff development, and funding acquisition. Roundtable mission aims to define best practices and strengthen the ties between Community-Based Programs in a manner that enhances their capacity to effectively address the multitude of challenges facing the populations they serve.

Nelson Chair Special Colloquium

A colloquium featuring Dr. Denise Zinn, Executive Dean for the Faculty of Education, and Dr. Allistair Witten, Director of the Centre for the Community School at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, as well as Dr. Dennis Shirley and Dr. A.J. Franklin, Professors of Education at Boston College, was held on March 26th, 2014. Discussion focused on Dr. Zinn and Dr. Witten's presentation entitled "Re-creating the Schools We Need: The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's response to the educational challenges of South Africa," which addressed the inequities permeating the country's communities and schools and examined ways the University's Faculty of Education seeks to resolve such issues.



The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University of South Africa stands committed to carrying on Mandela's legacy by providing educational opportunities not only to its student body, but also to both impoverished and privileged youth in the surrounding communities. The achievement gap and resource inequities found between wealthy vs. township schools that serve 80% of the South African population were highlighted as persistent obstacles for students to accomplish their dreams. Through Paulo Freire's notion of "humanizing pedagogy," the University works to challenge the inequalities and restore hope for youth, communities and their schools.

In the University's efforts, the Centre for the Community School stands as a model for success. It aims "to contribute to educational improvement in South Africa by developing theoretical and practice-based approaches to school improvement that are relevant and responsive to the contextual realities of schools and the communities they serve." Rather than viewing the community and schools as their own, separate entities, the Centre for the Community School identifies schools as the center of education as well as the community. To re-create the schools that are needed, the Centre examines the instructional core of the schools, along with their capacity, resources, culture and organizational management, all within the context of the external environment.

Presenters noted that to improve schools, achieving a balance between the educational demands of the students and social needs of the parents and community is imperative. Engaging and partnering with parents and the community also ensures that the parents of all socio-economic backgrounds are given voices. Per Dr. Witten, this also "breaks the stereotype that poor parents do not care about education." In addition to diminishing inequities, such engagement and dialogue are vital to uncovering what the community members desire for action; this process is conducive to buy-in and sustainability. At the Centre, numerous examples now exist to demonstrate the effectiveness of this synergy among community, school, and parents. They include: the addition of food gardens at schools, development of nutrition programs, creation of centers for parents to receive basic training on job applications, implementation of a library, and formation of a clinic on school property providing parents with the training to become clinical workers.



Presenters concluded that with continuous improvements, hope and despair can coexist in a dialectical relationship and will have a positive influence on re-building the schools and communities in South Africa.

Themes from the 2014 Roundtable

On the sixth annual meeting of the Nelson Chair Roundtable the group was reminded that this event was created as affirmation of the belief that there are effective community based programs around the country addressing the conditions in their communities independent of traditional organizations and services. We understand that community programs do great work and that they often operate independently. The Roundtable is designed to help programs address community needs together. The model of the Roundtable is divided into

three phases. The first is to identify programs that are exemplary, and the second is to bring together the leaders of those programs in recognition that their knowledge and experience is a valuable resource that should be utilized by sharing best practices. The third phase, and the ultimate goal of the Roundtable, is to foster a network of community based programs where program leaders can continue to benefit from the shared knowledge and expertise. An additional benefit is that each program leader brings the information back to their respective local communities.



Over the years the Roundtable has centered on themes such as staffing and leadership challenges, taking programs to scale, integration with schools, tracking and measuring outcomes, program values, and challenges related to public policies. The discussions from year to year have yielded conclusions on the definition and components of an effective program. Programs must be comprehensive, theory-driven, and culturally relevant with thorough intervention and varied teaching methods. Positive relationships should be cultivated between program leaders, staff and participants, and there should be a method for outcome evaluations in place. All of these components are important factors and could pose a threat if not maintained, but the major threat to programs is sustainability with regards to overall funding, retaining visionary leaders, and public policy. Government legislation, which influences policies on youth development and education, can quickly upend the important work being done by community programs. In addition, a board of directors or a funding agency could pass a decision affecting the sustainability of such programs. One strategy is to become advocates by using our communities to form our own social policy; however, the threat of policy changes will have to become a critical component of our thinking in order for us to be ahead of the change. The challenge is that we do not have a sufficient voice at the table of policymakers, so programs with similar missions need to network and create a collective voice.

There were six primary topics of discussion at the Roundtable:

1. Meeting Community School Needs: Challenges and Strategies, Lessons from South Africa
2. Program Development, Diversity, Scale and Implementation
3. Staff Professional Development: Socio-Emotional Climate of Out of School Time
4. Program Impact and Outcomes: Evaluation, Research and Accountability Models

5. Program Sustainability: Funding Streams, Development Strategies and Maintaining Mission Integrity
6. Effective Leadership, Strategic Planning and Board Development

The group, led by Dr. Anderson J. Franklin, Honorable David S. Nelson Professional Chair, organized these focal topics to be discussed in an informal roundtable setting, enabling all to have a voice. The following is a summary of the valuable conversations on each of the six topics.



Meeting Community School Needs: Challenges and Strategies, Lessons from South Africa

The first session began with a presentation about the Centre for the Community School at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa. Dr. Allistair Witten, Director, described the Centre's efforts to optimize the schools impact within the context of community, family and society. Dr. Witten started off by pointing out that schools are not the only organization with a responsibility or mission to educate and support the growth and development of children. The emphasis that society places on schools downplays the other important community programs that exist, thus the Centre's goal is to bridge the gap between programs and schools. In order to cultivate young people who can become "active and empowered citizens in our countries", schools should strive to engage with outside interventions which would enhance their effectiveness. The challenge is motivating principals and teachers to collaborate, since this is not part of their training. Dr. Witten described the essential elements of a Community School which include strong leadership across the school system, agency (the ability to recognize a need and act upon it), partnership, integration, and a mandate to support the development of the community. The challenges facing the *Community School Collaborative Model* are the failure to recognize voices within the community, neglecting bottom-up solutions, creating unrealistic

expectations, and rushing to solve problems without carefully assessing needs. For Dr. Witten, the most important part of his work is building relationships with the power to cooperatively get things done.



Following the presentation was a discussion on the challenge of bringing concept to reality. The Community School movement has gained traction in the U.S. and around the globe, but in the U.S. school systems have a history of failure which raises the question whether it is realistic to believe that schools could become the center of the community and integrate community functions. There are a number of concerns with the concept of Community Schools

with regard to privileged communities vs. poorer communities and the varying definitions of community within a densely populated area, such as New Orleans. Dr. Witten explains that within the context of the Community School model in South Africa, there are requirements for the schools to address in order to integrate the community. In addition, there is the argument that it may be unfair to place such a large burden on the schools when in reality it is the adults in the community who need to have an investment in not only their children but also each other's children.

In the U.S., the Community School model may not be possible with respect to the current structure of school systems which have limited resources and funding. One program leader shared a discussion from her local program network that again challenges the Community School movement in the States. With schools at the center of the community, there is a lack of sustainability since superintendants, principals and teachers frequently change. Thus, it should be the charge of community programs to do what schools cannot and be experts on youth development. Further to the point, if community programs are entwined with schools, then programs may be bullied by the school's bureaucracy and funding sources.

A representative from a true Community School here in the Boston area talked about the importance of continued discussions on how to move forward and continue serving children and the community as originally intended. This means consistently bringing new and indigenous voices to the table, promoting conversation, and acting upon the needs of both school and community. Other participants brought up the challenge of being open and listening to honest discussions about the true problems that continue to exist in the community such as racism and poverty.

In South Africa the success of the *Community School Collaborative Model* depends upon elements which can be applied to the success of any school-community relationship such as partnership and integration. In Dr. Witten's model the relationship between schools and communities is participatory, so its success relies on the investment of multiple factions. There is a need to consider the obligations of communities and families to support all young people rather than blaming schools for social problems. Instead schools must share the responsibility with the community at large.

Program Development, Diversity, Scale and Implementation

In thinking about the development of effective programs that reflect community voices, the group discussed challenges and strategies related to creating and maintaining diversity in program staff and participants. The discussion began by addressing the most basic questions related to diversity: what is it and why is it important? A body of people is considered diverse when comprised of individuals from a variety of backgrounds and experiences



including race, religion, color, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and geographic origin. Diversity is crucial in order to create a "thinking environment" with a multitude of perspectives. In an inclusive environment participants are more likely to feel that they belong and to develop a positive attitude towards others who are different. There must be a level of comfort, openness, and trust for all voices to be heard in a diverse environment, but it is in this climate that positive change can best be achieved.

The challenge is that in most cases the creation of a diverse organization must be intentional. Hiring managers will need to purposefully bring on new staff members who are different from the rest and who can offer a new perspective. The maintenance of a diverse organization can also be very challenging for program leaders since personalities could become unwieldy; however, one participant made the point that organizations do not always function well when members are boxed in by their own like-mindedness. Diversity can effect change. In addition, programs will have an easier time partnering and creating program networks when their culture is one that is open and accepting.

It is important to recognize that there is great diversity within groups. For example, each school within the Boston Public School system is very different and a group of students could not easily transplant from one school to another. Also, when a group of people has

similar backgrounds it does not mean that they are all alike. It is crucial not to make assumptions about other people. As important as diversity is, we should not get caught up in the stereotype of diversity and instead look for the diversity within the existing community. Another example is only hiring program staff with college degrees, since there are many capable people without the access or funds to obtain a college degree. These are often the types of people who deserve a chance and can offer a unique perspective and work ethic to an organization. Lastly, the program staff should be able to relate to the children and families they serve, as well as to encourage them to open their minds. Programs should work to realize the need for youth to be supported in explorations outside their communities, since many do not have the opportunity to venture out of their limited world.



Participants talked about how youth are living in traumatic environments that present a different reality than one in which education is seen as the path to success. For example, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans has had a profound effect on communities and families and has brought the need for a restructuring of the educational system; however, the city has struggled to successfully create a new structure and charter schools have moved in to fill the gaps. In this disconnected system of schools, many young people are “lost” and they make poor decisions as a reflection of their environment and the trauma they have experienced. These youth are criminalized rather than given support to rise above their situation. If the schools are unable to meet this need, then community programs may have to step in and meet the socio-emotional development needs of the youth. In addition, an understanding of the cultural values of the community where children live is important in order to devise a strategy for supporting them. We must present youth with options that are doable and involve parents in the solution. Programs will need to enlist staff members who are not only passionate and dedicated, but also connected with the youth’s community.

The themes of racism and poverty were also raised during multiple Roundtable discussions since these conditions continue to hinder the ability of schools and community programs to create open-minded and empowered young people. These are fundamental issues which need to be addressed more frequently and more carefully by schools and communities. It is important that organizations are honest about the existence and complexity of poverty and the topic of race.

Staff Professional Development: Socio-Emotional Climate of Out of School Time

This topic centered on the growing need to integrate socio-emotional learning into the classrooms and programs in order to understand and work with the traumatic realities that youth face in their communities. Lack of support from schools and communities brings on poor decision making and dangerous situations, such as gang involvement, which may result in police-youth interaction. These experiences create trauma with which youth and their families have to learn to cope.



While pressure from funding sources to focus on academics remains at large, out-of-school time (OST) programs also recognize that children often come tired of school and have difficulty adjusting to less structured time. In some cases, children have medication wearing off by the time they arrive at OST programs. Emphasis was placed on the need for training and support for the staff who are burdened with high expectations for meeting the students' complex emotional and behavioral challenges. The group discussed the importance of preparing teachers and out of school time workers to identify possible traumatic triggers within and outside conventional school time and to encourage open conversations in response to trauma. There may be a need for program staff to participate in a mentorship program, and for the site directors to receive supervisory training and coaching. In addition, it was discussed that the organizational structure and culture itself can be restructured to meet the socio-emotional needs of the children.

In South Africa there is a huge need for support in this area. Dr. Witten explained that a school psychologist may only visit a school of one thousand students once a year. In most cases the students do not have access to any support at home or through their community. Currently Dr. Witten's program is asking for assistance from the NMMU's departments of Social Work, Human Sciences, and Psychology to support and coach teachers on dealing with the needs of the students.

One participant pointed out that not all youth need a dedicated psychologist, since all humans have "issues", but rather that schools and programs need to be environments that embrace and support youth with all their range of needs. It's possible to teach problem solving on a higher level in a lesson about math or science. Another strategy is to use behavioral data from your program or school to inform staff professional development. Children will be supported if programs are changing their strategies in response to the needs

of the children. The challenge is getting teachers and OST workers trained which always requires additional time, funding, and resources. The key is to educate staff that children come with a “backpack full of issues” and we have to try to address their feelings in a humanizing way.

In New Orleans, there has been some positive collaboration between schools and after school programs. One of the most troubled schools has developed a system called the “emotional meter”. Before each class, teachers will check in with all students on their “emotional meter”, which reminds both teachers and students that it is okay to have a bad day. These systems are integrated into the after school programs as well. It is essential that school leaders support these types of developments, and that it becomes engrained in the staff meetings and teacher environment.

Additional approaches may include adding a staff member or recruiting new personnel with a social work or mental health background to address socio-emotional needs. Programs may invite clinical consultation to the program, and hold informal conversations to provide feedback to staff and share suggestions. Lastly, site directors must build trust with staff and support them, as staff members may be affected by trauma in the community as well.

Although it has been generally challenging to provide empirical evidence for socio-emotional needs, measures have been developed to concretize abstract skills and concepts. Below are some available resources that can be found online:

- Youth Program Quality Instrument (YPQI)
<http://www.cypq.org/ypqi>
- Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)
<http://www.centerforresilientchildren.org/>
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
<http://www.casel.org>
- Gallup Student Poll
<http://www.gallupstudentpoll.com/home.aspx>

Program Impact and Outcomes: Evaluation, Research and Accountability Models



With the growing accountability demands from funding institutions, programs now need to provide evidence-based programming and ongoing evaluation. Dr. Lauren Bierbaum, former Director of Partnership for Youth Development in New Orleans, illustrated an example of post-Hurricane Katrina reorientation where programs came to see evaluation as valuable rather than as an unnecessary burden. In efforts to meet a set of practice standards and

quality expectations, organizations started to map the landscape of existing resources and create a shared definition of success. The first line of evaluation is for program leaders to ask themselves whether they are accomplishing what they set out to do and whether they doing it well. Program by program, director by director, the organizations incrementally came to realize the importance of evaluation and data-driven decision making for program development, management, and improvement.

Dr. Bierbaum pointed out that programs may be able to partner with a local university for guidance on evaluation and measuring outcomes. Oftentimes these academic partnerships are a “free” resource, which may even have funding to help support a new project. Of course, one of the challenges to initiating an evaluation process is time and staffing resources. Programs will have to set aside time and staff, as well as staff training, in order to successfully create a system for evaluation. Some participants pointed out that starting at a very basic level can be extremely valuable with limited time commitment. In fact, it can be extremely helpful to simply document what program leaders are already doing to meet articulated goals, since many times leaders aren’t capturing valuable data from their current practices.

Programs will need to ascertain their own rhythms in order to determine an evaluation cycle (e.g. number of times per year), remembering that it can take a few years of trying various approaches. Dr. Bierbaum recommends “Mixed Methods” research, which includes quantitative data to help track long-term goals, as well as qualitative data to capture the narrative and culture of the program. Evaluations could include program leaders and staff, children participating in the program, and parents. One question is how to measure whether children are doing better as a result of their participation in a program. This is a challenging aspect of program evaluation. Dr. Bierbaum mentioned a youth well-being

survey that is accessible from Gallup, but programs will need a funder to help implement this type of survey. Another available tool is called the Dessa (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment), which is comprised of a survey for measuring the social-emotional competence of children in kindergarten through 8th grade. Some programs use a survey for measuring grit (through UPenn), which is a gauge of perseverance for long-term goals. Casel is an organization based in Chicago which provides some guidelines for evidence-based social and emotional learning. Programs may need to be creative in measuring how children are reacting to their efforts. For example, documenting children who are unable to share and speak openly on day 1 and then tracking their progress throughout a year of participation.

Program Sustainability: Funding Streams, Development Strategies and Maintaining Mission Integrity

During this session participants discussed the need for sustainability in leadership, funding, evaluation, and the maintenance of mission integrity. Sustainability was examined in regards to changes in visionary leadership. Discussion highlighted the need to distribute leadership responsibilities, plan for succession, and have a strong Board with members who deeply understand the organization. There is a need for increased power in community work in order to avoid the influence of government, local politics, or other philanthropic funding sources which can cause “mission creep”, the blurring of an organization’s original vision and mission. The group discussed both internal and external data collection and evaluation strategies that can help develop a convincing narrative for funding sources that supports sustainability. Programs should collect simple and robust data which demonstrates consistent learning and improvement in the organization. Many programs feel pressure from the demand for accountability, i.e. evaluation and reporting outcomes; however, programs can benefit from these tools for internal development. Dr. Zinn spoke about evaluation as a chance for her organization to document and celebrate achievements, which encourages staff to continue their work and create new goals.

The group further discussed the value of participatory action research with youth and their families, not only to promote their agency, but also to help sustain the program’s mission, all while adapting to the continually changing political and economic contexts. Given that outside evaluations can be expensive, encourage internal participatory action research as it allows all members to be engaged in the research process and empowers participants by giving voice to their own lives as well as some ownership of the evaluation and research process. Catherine Wong, Director of Urban Outreach Initiatives at Boston College, pointed out that programs can learn about the unrealized strengths of their youth participants, such

as having two languages or volunteering with their church. The group also acknowledged the importance of programs working collectively to improve their leverage in acquiring resources and representing their mutual interests in youth development.

With regards to funding, one strategy may be to move towards the use of collective cooperative funding (“funding stream model”) and aligning with other non-profits in order to have more control over funding. Until organizations can control resource generation, they cannot be free from the “push and pull” that comes from funding sources. Programs must also find funders who align with the mission and vision of the organization. It is detrimental to depend on funders who do not understand or support their original mission.

The group went on to discuss the need for experienced program leaders and experts to share their knowledge and experience with the newer leaders since many of the challenges they face are repeated over time. As one attendee pointed out, “sustainability is in the action and the value of generations listening to each other and respecting each other.” It is the passing on of hard work and values, with the older generation providing consultation. The collective work of people both young and old is what brings on change.

Effective Leadership, Strategic Planning and Board Development

During the final discussion period participants engaged in a strategic planning exercise where they identified the many challenges and key issues that have come up throughout the Roundtable. More importantly, the group generated strategies for addressing these challenges which is an essential component of effective leadership.

The challenges identified were:

- Risk of a program’s vision and mission becoming watered down by “mission creep”, as well as a program leader’s own aspirations
- Absence of a plan for the leader’s succession
- Navigation of the system and “code switching”
- Maintaining integrity and truth telling
- Achieving buy-in to the mission by program staff
- Staying in touch with the pulse of the community
- Providing emotional substance for the work

Since the success of a program requires constant buy-in from all parties, program leaders may struggle to incorporate all voices in the operational staff while simultaneously taking into account the diversity of the population and the youth’s perspectives. One strategy is to involve everyone from early on, especially youth throughout the evaluation process and

invite youth and their parents to strategic meetings so they can share personal experiences. Leaders should be mindful of “adultism” which imposes what adults think is right for youth without consulting them. In addition, donors, staff, and youth should be involved and invited to all events. This will help maintain continuity across the organization, and allow leaders to continuously communicate the same vision and story to all groups. When programs achieve major goals, it is important to include all staff in the recognition. This is another way to maintain buy-in from staff. Programs can maintain the integrity of their mission and avoid mission creep by including past leaders and community experts as advisors in their conversations about strategic planning. It is also important to revisit the original mission frequently and evaluate whether the primary goals are being achieved.

Programs can address the issue of navigating the system by being cautious and considering the implications for trying to bring about change. It is important to equip youth with code switching skills, so that they know how to make the system work for them and they avoid being confined by their culture or locale. Strategies for effective leadership may include distributive leadership and the careful documentation of policies and procedures.

Program staff can experience “burn out” from their work load if they become overwhelmed by the community’s needs, so it is important to cultivate emotional substance in their work. Leaders should ensure that staff members are trained on personal mental health and their own socio-emotional needs. It is also helpful to provide opportunities for the release of stress, such as staff events and celebrations, recreational space, and vacation time.

Participating Programs and Participant Profiles

Anderson J. Franklin, Ph.D.

Honorable David S. Nelson Professional Chair
Professor of Psychology and Education, Department of
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Dr. Anderson J. Franklin is the Honorable David S. Nelson Professor of Psychology and Education in the Department of Counseling, Developmental and Educational Psychology at Boston College Lynch School of Education and Professor Emeritus of Psychology from The Graduate School of The City University of New York. Dr. Franklin holds a Ph.D. in Counseling



Psychology from the University of Oregon. He directs the Nelson Chair Roundtable for Networking Community Based Programs and the Boston College Collaborative Extended Learning Project strengthening ties between schools, families and community partners engaged in out of school time activities to address the achievement gap and mental health of students.

Dr. Franklin was the speaker at 2010 Lewis and Clark College Commencement during which he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. He received the 2010 Outstanding Alumnus Award from the University of Oregon's College of Education. Recently Dr. Franklin was honored for his civil rights legacy by the Commonwealth of Virginia General Assembly, The Mayor's Office of the City of Richmond, and Virginia Union University as a member of the "Richmond 34" students who by civil disobedience through Sit-Ins and arrests led to the desegregation of Richmond and the State of Virginia. Dr. Franklin also received the Groundbreakers Award from All Stars Project Annual Gala at Lincoln Center, New York City in 2012. In 2013 he was a Visiting Scholar at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape South Africa. He is co-author with Dr. Nancy Boyd-Franklin of *Boys Into Men: Raising our African American Teenage Sons* published by Dutton. His last book is *From Brotherhood to Manhood: How Black Men Rescue Their Relationships and Dreams From the Invisibility Syndrome* by John Wiley & Sons which was placed on Essence magazine best sellers list.

Faculty of Education, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Port Elizabeth, South Africa



Education remains central to the realization of South Africa's democratic aspirations, especially in the efforts to build a just and more equitable society. However, despite the transition to democracy in 1994, the public education system continues to fail many children and young people, denying them the opportunities to fulfill their human potential and participate as engaged citizens in the country's nation-building processes. The 'born free' generation thus faces the prospect of becoming another 'lost' generation, leading to a situation that will have implications for South Africa's future.

The South African government has made the improvement of the education system a national priority and has called on key stakeholders, including universities, to collaborate around addressing some of the challenges in the system.

The Faculty of Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University has developed a bold approach to educational improvement that seeks to be relevant and responsive to the

contextual realities of schooling in the province. As Dean Zinn explains in her presentation, this engagement approach is firmly rooted in the philosophy of a humanizing pedagogy, where the important elements of 'voice' and 'agency' are located within schools and the communities they serve. These school-university interactions and partnerships have led to the implementation of school improvement initiatives based on the concept of the Community School, in which networks of support are built around the academic and psycho-social development of children and young people.

Denise Zinn, Ed.D.

Professor and Executive Dean, Faculty of Education, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Port Elizabeth, South Africa



Denise Zinn is the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. She started her career as a high school teacher of English and Mathematics in Port Elizabeth's township schools, before receiving a Harvard South African Scholarship in 1991 to study for her Master's degree which she earned in 1992. This was followed by a Ed.D. which she earned at Harvard's Graduate School of Education in 1997, where she also served as board member and co-chair of the Harvard Education Review from 1993-5.

Upon her return to South Africa at the end of 1996, she worked for an NGO to support teachers in community schools in historically disadvantaged communities. She took up a position in Higher Education from 1997, and has worked in the university sector since then as a teacher, researcher and consultant. In 2006 she became the Dean of the Education Faculty at the Fort Hare University, South Africa's first historically black university, based in the Eastern Cape. Since 2009, she has been Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth. The focus of her work has been on issues of equity and transformation in education, including higher education, teacher education, multi-lingualism and literacies, and humanising pedagogies. She initiated and is the university driver on the institutional research theme on Humanising Pedagogies. As Dean of the Faculty of Education, her current focus is on the renewal and transformation of curricula in teacher education to be more relevant to the contexts of schooling for the majority of South African schools.

Centre for the Community School

Faculty of Education, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Port Elizabeth, South Africa

The Centre for the Community School (CCS) is an entity within the Faculty of Education of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University that aims to promote, strengthen and support the work of community schools in the Eastern Cape. These are schools that are actively involved in building partnerships with parents, the broader community, and other education stakeholders to support the academic and social development of children and young people.

The Centre subscribes to the principles of “Asset-Based Community Development” and focuses its work around the contexts of schools and the communities they serve. CCS aims to contribute to educational improvement in SA by:

- Developing theoretical and practice-based models of school improvement that are relevant and responsive to the contextual realities of schools.
- Disseminating information around these models through its convening capacity and research publications.
- Supporting community schools in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere in the country.
- Collaborating with other institutions and organizations with a similar focus around school improvement locally and internationally.

Teaching: The Centre will facilitate the development and offering of modules at both under and postgraduate levels on the historical, sociological and practical aspects of the community school in South Africa. A course on the community school teacher will focus on the knowledge, dispositions and skills required by current and aspiring educators in the community school.

Internships: NMMU Education students will undertake internships in community schools as part of their course requirements. Due to the cross-disciplinary focus of the Centre, internships will also be offered to students in other NMMU faculties or departments (e.g. Social Work, Psychology, and Counseling).

Partnerships and Networking: The Centre seeks to establish relationships with groups and organizations nationally and internationally in order to support and promote the concept of the community school. The Centre will also be co-host of the *Manyanyo Community Schools Conference* that brings together education practitioners, scholars and policymakers to share

emerging research on community schools and practice-based models of school improvement.

Allistair Witten, Ed.D.

Director, Centre for the Community School, Faculty of Education,
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Port Elizabeth, South Africa



Al Witten is the founding director of the Centre for the Community School, which is located in the Education Faculty of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He has been involved in the field of education for almost 30 years, and has more than 20 years of experience as a teacher and principal in township schools in Cape Town.

More recently, he held the position of interim director at The Principals' Centre at Harvard University, where he was involved in leadership training and development for school leaders in the United States and across the world. Witten was responsible for the design and implementation of the School Leadership Initiative—a collaboration between Harvard University and the University of Johannesburg to train school and district leaders in South Africa.

Al Witten holds degrees from the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. He obtained a doctorate in education at Harvard University. Al has extensive practice-based and training experience in the areas of school leadership and management; organizational change and development; and systemic school improvement.

The current focus of his work is on developing the concept of the community school as a theoretical and practice-based model for school improvement in South Africa. He has facilitated the establishment of the Manyano Network of Community Schools, a grouping of schools that are focusing on improving teaching and learning while simultaneously addressing some of the social challenges to these core functions. Current interventions in the network range from curricular support for teachers and learners to community-based programmes aimed at encouraging greater parental and community involvement in the schools.

Urban League College Track

New Orleans, LA



Urban League College Track is an after-school, college access program that works to close the achievement gap and create college-going cultures for students who are historically and currently underrepresented in higher education. Through a three-tiered approach of direct services, community partnerships, and advocacy, Urban League College Track is working to serve a

critical mass of high school students and helping to transform low-income communities into places where college readiness and college graduation are the norms. Established in 2008, Urban League College Track currently serves 150 students grades 9-12 in the greater New Orleans area.

Urban League College Track actively engages students from the summer before 9th grade through college graduation. We provide seamless, longitudinal services including after-school programming and college advising support that build habits and skills necessary to succeed.

- **Academic Affairs:** Provides students with tutoring, small-group academic workshops in all subject areas, SAT and ACT preparation, and academic counseling.
- **Student Life:** Enables students to gain leadership skills, be involved in extracurricular activities, participate in cultural and artistic events, and engage in community service.
- **College Affairs:** Supports students and parents through the college application and selection process and helps students and parents build a sustainable financial aid portfolio.
- **College Success:** Helps students once they are in college to ensure that they are academically, socially, and financially able to complete their degree. For each of these programs, we have established a set of clearly defined student goals and expectations that are mapped to college acceptance requirements and structured to best prepare students for the academic, social, and financial demands of college. Over the course of four years, our secondary support services amount to the equivalent of one extra year of high school.

Sherdren Burnside

Site Director, Urban League College Track
New Orleans, LA

Sherdren Burnside is the founding Site Director of the Urban League College Track. Burnside, a New Orleans native, has eighteen years of experience in teaching and grassroots organizing. She served as K-16 Director of Education Initiatives at the Urban League of Greater New Orleans. There, she led the revitalization of the organization's summer program and pioneered the partnership with College Track, Inc.



Prior to returning to New Orleans, Burnside served on the design and implementation team for the Castlemont Business and Information Technology School (CBITS) in Oakland, CA. As an instructional leader, Burnside mentored teachers in the conversion process from a large comprehensive high school to a small autonomous school, and steered initiatives in technology integration through her work with the Urban Dreams Technology Grant and the New Technology Foundation. She also coordinated and implemented the school's first Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, designed to help middle range students prepare for college. Ms. Burnside received her Bachelor's degree in English and Political Science from Loyola University, New Orleans, and her Masters degree in English Instruction from Teachers College, Columbia University.

She and her husband, Robert, are the founding pastors of Journey Ninth Ward Assembly of God church. The Burnside's reside in the lower Ninth Ward with their three children Robert, Jr., Alexis, and Bethany.

Grow Dat Youth Farm

New Orleans, LA



The Mission of the Grow Dat Youth Farm is to nurture a diverse group of young leaders through the meaningful work of growing food.

On our farm we work collaboratively to produce healthy food for local residents and to inspire youth and adults to create personal, social and environmental change in their own communities. We envision a vibrant New Orleans where youth and adults transform their communities, their environment, and themselves by engaging in the meaningful work of growing healthy food.

Grow Dat Youth Farm creates job opportunities for high school students in the field of urban agriculture. The farm creates a healthy and supportive work environment for high school-aged youth from New Orleans who face limited job opportunities. With a focus on developing a sense of responsibility, community, environmental stewardship, and service among participants, the farm enhances leadership and teamwork abilities through the collaborative work of growing food.

The farm works with high schools and youth organizations throughout New Orleans to recruit a diverse and committed group of youth. Through a structured application process, Grow Dat conscientiously recruits a mix of students: 20% of whom have already demonstrated leadership skills inside or outside of school, 20% of whom are at-risk of poor performance at school, and 60% of whom are students that are neither excelling nor failing at school. Programmatic success is defined by students' consistent participation in the program, their increased ability to communicate effectively with other students and staff, and their ability to achieve production goals on the farm.

In the pilot year in 2011, Grow Dat partnered with New Orleans Outreach and Science and Math Charter School to recruit applicants for thirteen paid internship positions. Now Grow Dat provides 40 positions in our paid leadership program and cultivates two acres of land. Following the programmatic structure of two nationally recognized youth farm models, The Food Project in Boston and Urban Roots in Austin, Grow Dat recruits, interviews and hires youth during the fall semester and operates between January and June.

Grow Dat staff have created a curriculum that includes lessons on leadership, financial literacy, sustainable agriculture, food justice and food access, cooking and nutrition, and communication and team-building which includes an anti-oppression view at the agricultural history of our region. Working in rotating teams, students take on the responsibility for selling food at farmers' markets and preparing food for homeless or underserved populations. Students also participate in a highly-structured system for enhancing their communication skills called "Real Talk". Modeled on a highly effective program developed by The Food Project, "Real Talk" is the method through which Grow Dat staff provide feedback to participants about the quality of their work and the tool that trains participants to communicate effectively with peers and supervisors. In addition to improved communication skills, students are also trained on time management, effective strategies for team work, and public speaking—all skills that can be broadly applied in future jobs.

Johanna Gilligan

Founder and Executive Director, Grow Dat Youth Farm
New Orleans, LA



Johanna Gilligan has worked in the field of food education since 2003. She began her career at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, where she taught inquiry-based plant science to students in Title 1 schools. In 2006 she moved back to New Orleans and worked as the Educational Programs Manager with the New Orleans Food and Farm Network while simultaneously launching her own business, Clean Plate Projects, LLC. As a consultant, she has worked with many organizations, most notably with Rethink—a non-profit whose mission is to develop civic engagement among youth by bringing their voice to school reform. Her school food reform work with Rethink students generated national attention for its innovative approach and hard-hitting successes, eventually being profiled on the HBO documentary series, “Weight of the Nation”.

Johanna founded Grow Dat Youth Farm in collaboration with Tulane University and many additional partners and individuals in 2011. Johanna was a 2012 Urban Innovation Challenge Fellow at Tulane University, and has also been a finalist for Echoing Green and the Kellogg Foundation’s Food and Society Fellowship. In 2012 she was a nominee for City Business Woman of the Year and a recipient of City Park’s Presidential Awards.

All Stars Project, Inc.

New York, NY



The All Stars Project is a 33-year-old national nonprofit youth development organization with an innovative and successful approach to fighting poverty. The All Stars Project was co-founded in 1981 by Dr. Lenora Fulani and Dr. Fred Newman.

The All Stars uses performance and play to help young people and their families create success in their lives. In All Stars programs, people learn new performances onstage and off. They try new things, they become more worldly, and begin to create new possibilities for themselves and their communities. Seeing—and acting on—new possibilities *is* development, and development is what All Stars is all about.

The All Stars offers a wide range of programs that include hip hop talent shows, training in theatre and the arts, and programs where it partners with the business community to help

young people create a professional performance, as well as a free university-like school offering workshops, courses and cultural outings for people of all ages and educational backgrounds. Every year, All Stars afterschool development programs reach 10,000 inner-city young people between the age of 5 and 25 and thousands of adults from all walks of life. All Stars National Headquarters is in New York City, in a 31,000-square-foot performing arts and development complex on West 42nd Street. The center has four theatres, spaces for classrooms and events. It has had more than half a million people come through its doors since it opened a decade ago. Each year around the country, All Stars touches 40,000 kids and their families in New York, Newark, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay area, Dallas, and, starting this year, in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The All Stars is bringing out pioneering ideas about development and performance through building new university partnerships and extending its interface with and leadership of the growing field of afterschool development in order to impact nationally on educational and social policy, thus working to multiply and magnify the impact it is having on the lives of inner-city young people, their families and communities.

Lenora B. Fulani, Ph.D.

Co-founder, All Stars Project, Inc.

Founder, Operation Conversation: Cops & Kids

New York, NY



Lenora Fulani is a prominent grassroots educator, community organizer, and leading youth development specialist. Fulani earned her Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. In 1981, she co-founded the All Stars Project with the late Dr. Fred Newman. Over the years she has worked closely with corporate volunteers, CEOs and partners in Fortune 500 companies to build All Stars Project's innovative programs. Dr. Fulani currently serves as the dean of UX, the All Stars' free-of-charge center for developmental learning open to people of all ages.

Dr. Fulani is the founder of Operation Conversation: Cops & Kids, a series of dialogues and performance-based workshops with police and inner-city youth to help them improve and develop their relationship. She founded the program in 2006, and has held 87 workshops involving 2,090 police officers and inner-city youth. In addition to her monthly workshops at the request of former New York City Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly Dr. Fulani has conducted four demonstration workshops for 2,430 new probationary police officers since July 2012.

Dr. Fulani has twice run for President of the United States and has been active in independent politics for three decades. In 1988 she became the first woman and first African American in U.S. history to appear as a presidential candidate on the ballot in all 50 states. In 1994 she co-founded IndependentVoting.org, a national strategy center for independent voters and she is a founder of the Independence Party of New York State.

RESOURCE PEOPLE

Saliha Nelson, M.S.

Vice President, URGENT, Inc.
Miami, FL



Saliha Nelson, MEd is an experienced non-profit executive and agent for social change specializing in strength-based approaches with low-income urban youth, youth participatory action research and forming cross-sector coalitions that engage in systems-level change. Ms. Nelson currently serves as Vice President of URGENT, Inc. a non-profit youth and community development organization dedicated to empowering youth to become agents of change and volunteers as the Chairwoman of the Overtown Children and Youth Coalition and Vice Chair of the Miami Dade County Public Schools Student Services Advisory.

Ms. Nelson has been recognized for her work. Most recent recognition include being named as the MCCJ Student Silver Medallion Award for community-based leadership, service and advocacy; an ICABA Honors Community Leader and one of South Florida's top 40 under 40 Black Professionals by Legacy Magazine. Ms. Nelson was also awarded the City of Miami's Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet commendation, acknowledged as a South Florida Freedom's Sisters by Ford Motor Company Foundation, and received the Alliance for Aging's Intergenerational Award. Ms. Nelson is a member of the American Psychological Association, Society for Community Research and Action, National Afterschool Association and National Association of Professional Women.

Saliha studied at the American University of Cairo, received a Bachelor of Science in Social Policy and Education from Northwestern University and earned a Master's of Education in Community and Social Change from the University of Miami.

Margaret Rose Giloth

President, Phenomenal People
Devonshire, Bermuda

Margaret is the president of Bermuda-based charity PHENOMENAL PEOPLE whose purpose is to positively influence people by providing educational seminars, development workshops, and charitable events to unite, empower and inspire individuals of all ages to become their personal best.

Margaret has served as an empowerment agent, mentor and personal development coach to individuals ranging in age from 4 years to adult for over 25 years in Bermuda, the U.S and UK. She has positively touched the lives of hundreds of people with her unique gift of seeing the BEST and helping to develop that which is wonderful in them.

Margaret is constantly seeking creative ways to positively impact the lives of the people of Bermuda, particularly the young, to preserve the social character that makes the island the jewel of the Atlantic.

In her professional career, as the director of the government-run afterschool program, she has oversight of over 500 elementary-age children and 80 adults whom she trains and develops to exacting standards.



Eric Jensen

Deputy Director, Partnership for Youth Development
New Orleans, LA

Eric Jensen is currently the Deputy Director of the Partnership for Youth Development, a youth development intermediary in New Orleans. Eric joined the Partnership for Youth Development in January 2009 as the Director of Youth Engagement. Eric has a profound experience in authentic youth engagement and out of school time strategies. At PYD Eric is managing two city wide collective impact youth system efforts to improve youth outcomes in New Orleans and also developed user-friendly online resource map for youth, families, and resource providers to use as a community engagement tool. It was awarded a New Orleans CityBusiness



Innovator of the Year award. Eric has also has a large knowledge base and experience in youth participation strategies, leadership, and participatory action research models.

Prior to working for the Partnership for Youth Development, Eric focused on youth development with the dropout prevention agency, Communities In Schools of New Orleans. He is also a founding member and leader of the nationally based Young Planners Network, which advocates for bringing young people to the table of planning conversations. Eric arrived in New Orleans in 2003 through the Teach For America program where he taught social studies at both Booker T. Washington and Sarah T. Reed high schools. Eric is a graduate of Michigan State University where he earned a B.A. in Political Science.

Lauren Lafferty

Director of Extended Learning Time, Gardner Pilot Academy
Boston, MA

Lauren Lafferty has served as the Director of Extended Services at the Gardner since 2008. She previously worked for The Village for Families and Children, in Hartford, CT. Throughout her work in the field, Lauren has experience working in schools, community agencies and universities with the goal of improving and sustaining programming to support the whole child. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Connecticut and a Master's in Education from Harvard University.

Catherine Wong

Director, Urban Outreach Initiatives, Lynch School of Education,
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA

Catherine Wong joined the Lynch School of Education at Boston College in 2007. In her role as Director of Urban Outreach Initiatives, Catherine oversees the Donovan Urban Teaching Scholars' Program, an intensive one year master's degree cohort program in teacher preparation for urban schools, the College Bound-STEM Program, a pre collegiate youth centered out of school time program that uses scientific inquiry to address social and environmental justice issues, as well as facilitates a series of cross university, school and community collaborations. In her work, Catherine leads teams of faculty, college students, community activists, K-12th grade students and their families to build innovative partnerships that address the most prevalent



urban issues in their schools and communities. Her approach involves schools and community stakeholders working courageously together at the boundaries of their disciplines. By integrating multiple perspectives and knowledge that arise from their own lives, cultural identity and educational underpinnings, these teams effect change agency for themselves and for succeeding generations.

Catherine is also a cross-cultural consultant who brings together interdisciplinary teams to enhance their capacity to lead and learn from a culturally competent, social justice and equity stance. Highlighted consultancies have included; academic director, Teacher Education Institute-University of the Middle East Project, visiting professor, School of Education-Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, the Domestic Violence Unit - Massachusetts Department of Social Services, WGBH-PBS Television, and the Human and Civil Rights Division - National Education Association. Catherine is a former public school counselor and director, School Counseling Program at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Catherine earned her graduate degree in Counseling Psychology with a specialization in Cross Cultural Counseling from Boston University. Catherine was raised on the island of Oah'u, Hawai'i and grew up with the dramatic storytelling of her great grandmothers and extended family. Their stories of bringing disparate groups together despite prejudice and stereotypes instilled in her the desire to become a cultural bridge builder. Catherine honors her ancestors' legacy, as she continues to grow and refine her craft as a consultant and educator.

Hayley Yaffe

Program Administrator, YMCA of Greater Boston
Boston, MA

Hayley has a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Vermont and a Master of Education from Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has been working in the field of Out-of-School Time for almost 20 years, including camps, schools and community organizations. She has been at the YMCA of Greater Boston since September 2009, working to increase the academic, physical and socio-emotional health of children and families as well as improving the communities they live in. Hayley is passionate about education and lifelong learning, and works to instill the same feeling in those she works alongside.

