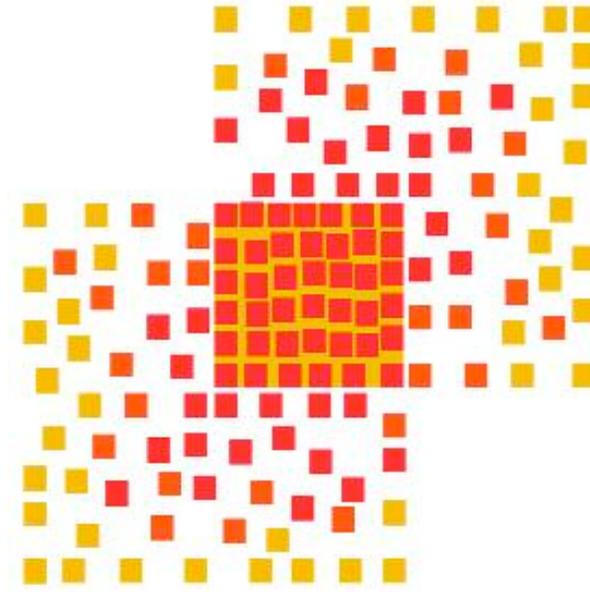


Is There Common Ground?



An Exploratory Study
of the Interests and Needs
of Community-Based
and Faith-Based Youth Workers





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Prepared by

**NATIONAL
COLLABORATION
FOR YOUTH**

An Affinity Group of the
National Human Services Assembly



with contributions from the American Camp Association



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This report focuses on finding common ground and building new relationships. We have appreciated the opportunity to do that with each other throughout this process.

Contributors to this publication: Pam Garza and Stephanie Artman (National Collaboration for Youth), Eugene C. Roehlkepartain (Search Institute), and Barry A. Garst and M. Deborah Bialeschki (American Camp Association)

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National Collaboration for Youth

1319 F Street, Suite 4022
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 347-2080
www.nydic.org

Search Institute

615 First Avenue Northeast
Suite 125
Minneapolis, MN 55413
612-376-8955
www.search-institute.org



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Youth workers in both community-based and faith-based settings are entrusted to focus on young people's successful development by addressing their gifts, needs, strengths and challenges. Yes, youth workers in each setting approach these issues from somewhat different vantage points, but their shared commitment to young people provides fertile common ground for strengthening their capacity to make a real difference in the lives of the young people in our communities, states, nation, and world.

Is There Common Ground? explores both the challenges and the benefits of finding this fertile common ground between community-based and faith-based youth workers. What emerges from information gathered from a series of focus groups, two Web-based surveys of youth workers, and a two-day consultation of national thought leaders is a remarkable degree of alignment around many youth work priorities as well as exceptions that leave room for unique accents and learning across differences.

By examining faith-based and community-based youth workers perspective side by side, some core questions about where there might be shared and divergent interest, needs, and priorities for professional development merge. It also surfaces priorities and needs of youth workers in the field based on the National Collaboration for Youth approved core competencies for front-line youth workers (plus two additions on religious diversity and spiritual development).

Faith-based and community-based youth workers see eye to eye on many of the competencies. This commonality appears to hold true across a variety of settings as well as when we compare directors of both religiously affiliated and secular camps. This finding suggests that, at least in the area of competencies, there is significant common ground across sectors and settings. At the same time there are important differences. The greatest is on “helping young people develop spiritually.” In both surveys this competency that had been added to the list had the widest gap (62-63 points) between the two groups of youth workers.

Knowing priorities is an important starting point for finding common ground. It also helps to frame potential training and professional development that might most engage yourh workers in educational opportunities.

Highest levels in learning opportunities

- Involving and empowering youth
- Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building
- Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth
- Caring for, involving and working with families and communities

Faith-based youth workers were more interested than community-based workers in professional development in the area of spiritual development—mirroring how they rate the importance of this added competency.

What role does spiritual development (and moral development) play in thinking about and building bridges between community-and-faith-based youth workers? Though the survey or focus groups only brought up spiritual development, the national thought-leaders began speaking of both moral and spiritual development together and a recommendation was made to focus on developing a framework that could be used to think about both of these as we proceed to find common ground. In the process of different organizations working in this area, a shared understanding of spiritual and moral development may help increase the interest in and comfort with the issue among community-based and faith-based youth workers.

To say that youth workers are interested in cross-sector learning opportunities does not imply that they do not also see significant challenges and barriers.

Summary of Obstacles in Finding Common Ground

- Exclusiveness, proselytizing, and dogmatism
- Perceived differing goals and training
- Fear of judgment
- Discomfort with religious/spiritual issues
- Legal issues
- Lack of mutual respect
- Too little time
- Different languages (definitions)

Although there are significant and important challenges in finding common ground, the opportunities are just as significant—particularly given that most youth workers say they would value cross-sector learning opportunities.

Summary of Benefits

- Enrich the lives of youth
- Tap into the unique strengths within each sector
- Increase opportunities through shared learning and resources
- Develop a community-wide approach

Even with the challenges and relative lack of knowledge about what models may already exist, participants in this work expressed widespread interest in building bridges to provide professional development opportunities across sectors. The recommendations are relevant for a range of audiences. Whether you work on the local level and can begin the dialogue and work across faith-based and community-youth organizations; as a local intermediary who wants to begin to work across the organizations; as a national organization that wants to begin to look at the broader picture of the workforce; or a funder who sees the need and opportunity to increase this work across these two important sectors that work with youth, there is work that is recommended and can be done.

Thread throughout all of the recommendations is the focus on and engagement of young people. This was repeated over and over throughout the collection of recommendations. It is through this focus and engagement that there may truly be a place to find common ground. Youth workers also recommend that further discovery on the existing models and networks already doing some of this work is an instrumental first step.

Summary of Recommendations

Work Locally

- Build relationships and communicate openly
- Create places and spaces
- Work for shared understanding and goals
- Share knowledge and opportunities

Create a Framework for Moral and Spiritual Development:

- Determine how moral and ethical development relate to spiritual and religious development
- Support youth workers to be better prepared with each other and with young people
- Find shared meaning through narratives

Integrate the Discussion about Qualifications and Preparation:

- Create definitions, common language, and understanding together;
- Define successful work with youth;
- Deepen the work on core competencies
- Understand more about professional development
- Create credentials, certificates and degrees together

Conduct Additional Research:

- Learn more about youth workers
- Explore the relevance of contexts, particularly nature

Develop Practical Tools:

- Create a tool kit
- Develop the needed materials
- Recommend a beginning bibliography

The exploratory work begins to lay out an agenda for dialogues and action aimed at strengthening youth work practice in both community-based and faith-based settings. It is only a start like the greeting and introductions in a long, significant working relationship. There is energy, enthusiasm and much work to do to build these bridges. All of us together can make the difference. Join in being catalytic in finding common ground.



Two groups of youth workers—community-based and faith-based—appear to operate in parallel universes. Both groups play significant roles in young people’s lives, but they generally have distinct professional development systems and opportunities, distinct peer networks, distinct credentialing and accountability systems, and, perhaps, distinct priorities and frameworks for their work.

At the same time, both groups of youth workers struggle with some of the same issues: retention through middle and high school; reaching marginalized youth; and attending to young people in ways that help them grow holistically. They also share professional concerns around inadequate support systems; inconsistent professional development opportunities; and needing clearer standards for effectiveness. Both groups can benefit from training, mentoring, peer support, and other methods of developing their skills as youth workers.

Perhaps they could learn together—and from each other.

On the other hand, there are reasons for caution or skepticism. Aren’t the goals, priorities, language, approaches, and training really quite different? How could you overcome barriers such as a lack of mutual respect, dogmatism, exclusiveness, and judgmentalism? Aren’t there legal issues (separation of church and state) that make keeping an arm’s distance necessary?

In 2006, with support from Lilly Endowment Inc., the National Collaboration for Youth and Search Institute began exploring these possibilities and challenges, asking questions such as:

- Can faith-based and community-based youth organizations find common ground in how they might prepare staff and volunteers to most effectively work with youth?
- What are the priorities, core competencies, and professional development interests and needs of both groups of youth workers? Where are they similar and different?

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY . . . ?

YOUTH WORKERS

Adults who work directly with young people in non-formal settings. They may be professionals or volunteers.

COMMUNITY-BASED YOUTH WORKERS

People who work with youth in organizations in communities (independent as well as affiliates of national organizations) that do not have a religious charter.

FAITH-BASED YOUTH WORKERS

Youth workers who work with youth in organizations that are religiously affiliated, including congregations (churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, etc.), para-church or para-congregation organizations, or faith-based social service organizations.

- What role does spiritual development play in the overall holistic development of youth?
- Are these groups of youth workers interested in finding common ground? What are any critical barriers that may interfere with building bridges? What do they see as the advantages?
- If there is interest, what might be done to facilitate mutual support and enhanced opportunities and systems for improving youth workers' competencies and effectiveness?

Is There Common Ground? explores these questions, building on a series of focus groups, two Web-based surveys of youth workers, and a two-day consultation of national thought leaders. (Figure 1 describes these activities.) What emerges across these learning projects is a remarkable degree of alignment around many youth work priorities of both community-based and faith-based youth workers—with important exceptions that leave room for unique accents and learning across differences. And though there is widespread interest in collaborative learning across sectors, there are also significant barriers, ranging from priorities for youth workers and, most significantly, mistrust and misunderstanding across the sectors.

Despite the challenges, the interests, benefits, and opportunities that emerged through this process merit full exploration. This publication seeks to unpack what we heard and learned, setting the stage for further dialogue, research, experimentation, and action. Our hope is that it will:

- Open up a new conversation among leaders in youth development, religious youth work, and related fields about a possible opportunity and resource that may not have been previously considered;
- Help to guide coalitions, partnerships, professional development providers, scholars, and researchers as they set their agendas and design portions of their work; and
- Encourage strategic leaders, funders, and policy makers to consider these opportunities and challenges as they set priorities and directions.

Thus, *Is There Common Ground?* seeks to bring together in conversation and action people from many different places and perspectives that touch the lives of young people. It is designed for senior leaders, policy makers, program planners, and staff development providers in national, regional, and local youth organizations, networks, and denominations; professors and students in youth development, youth ministry, and related fields; and other thought leaders and advocates in both community-based and faith-based organizations and networks.

The publication is organized as follows:

- **Youth Worker Preparation**—We look at how youth workers are currently prepared in both sectors as well as in camp settings (including camps that are religiously affiliated and secular). We focus here on the core competencies of youth workers, what they emphasize and where they see needs for ongoing professional growth and development. This section builds on the National Collaboration for Youth's approved framework of core Youth Development Worker Competencies (Appendix B). By examining the perspectives of community-based youth workers and faith-based youth workers side by side, we begin to

address some of the core questions about where there might be shared and divergent interests, needs, and priorities for professional development. This section includes a wide variety of information for people engaged in youth worker training and development in both community- and faith-based organizations. It also provides a helpful starting point for those engaged in youth worker preparation to gain perspective on the priorities and needs of youth workers in the field. Youth work practitioners will find it helpful to examine their own experiences, priorities, and competencies in light of the experiences of other youth workers who participated in this project.

- **Seeking Common Ground**—Even though youth workers may have overlapping priorities and needs, is there any interest in or benefit to building connections across sectors—particularly given some of the barriers? Building on survey data, focus group data, and findings from the national consultation of thought leaders, this section explores whether there is potential in building connections, highlighting the opportunities as well as the challenges or concerns of seeking common ground. This section is particularly relevant for scholars and executive leaders who set organizational direction. It also can stimulate a new set of conversations within and across faith-based and community-based settings about what each is doing to strengthen communities with and for young people.
- **Recommendations for Moving Forward**—Though the challenges in seeking common ground are real, the findings point toward significant opportunities and ideas to strengthen connections across sectors. This publication concludes by suggesting strategies and priorities for moving forward, based on the combined findings from the focus groups, survey, and convening. Recommendations include national agenda items as well as strategies to work across organizations locally. The focus remains on young people and how to tap into potential opportunities to do a better job of building highly skilled staff and volunteers to work with them. The recommendations have implications for youth worker preparation and development, community coalitions working with youth, funders that seek to support youth work in faith-based and/or community-based settings, and national religious and secular organizations that prepare, develop, and support youth workers.

Youth workers in both community-based and faith-based settings are all entrusted to focus on young people’s successful development by addressing their gifts, needs, strengths, and challenges. Yes, youth workers in each setting approach these issues from somewhat different vantage points, but their shared commitment to young people provides fertile common ground for strengthening their capacity to make a real difference in the lives of the young people of our communities, states, nation, and world.

FIGURE 2

Overview of Project Activities

Survey of youth workers– The broadest information base for much of this report is data from an online survey that was conducted between November 20, 2006, and January 9, 2007, through www.surveymonkey.com. Overall, 1,322 people participated in the survey. This report focuses on results from the total sample and from those from local youth development organizations (n=569) (“community-based youth workers”) and those working in either a congregation or other faith-based or parachurch organization (n=404) (“faith-based youth workers”). Thirty youth workers in the total sample indicated that they worked in both sectors, and 313 indicated that they work in public institutions, such as public schools. These latter two groups are included in data on the total sample, but are not reported separately in this report. *Though fairly large and unique, the sample is a convenience sample and should not be interpreted as nationally representative.*

The online survey that was conducted can be found in Appendix A. Detailed information on the sample as well as additional findings are provided in Appendix C.

Survey of camp directors– One of the challenges in the broad survey of youth workers (described above) is that the sample is from a very broad array of settings (congregations, youth recreation programs, mentoring programs, social service agencies, after-school programs, and more). That diversity limits the value of comparison, since there are so many variables that could be influencing findings. Thus, the camp community, through the involvement of the American Camp Association, provided insightful data using a survey of camp directors (n=305) who represented both community-based (or secular) camps (n=214) and faith-based (or religiously affiliated) camps (n=89). The camp directors completed an online survey between April and May 2007 through www.surveymonkey.com. Highlights of the camp director survey and comparisons with the youth worker survey are provided throughout this report.

A summary of the camp study findings is provided in Appendix D.

Focus groups– We conducted a series of seven focus groups in four cities: New Orleans, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, and Tucson. Most of the groups were a mix of faith-based and community-based workers. Most groups included three to six participants.

More information on the focus groups is provided in Appendix E.

National consultation of thought leaders– Finally, the information gathered above formed the basis for a two-day dialogue among two dozen national leaders in April 2007 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The faith-based and community-based sectors were equally represented at the consultation offering a spectrum of perspectives throughout the gathering. Through panelists, small group dialogues, and other discussions, these national leaders helped to frame the issues and recommend possibilities for future action.

An overview of the consultation and identification of all the consultation participants is provided in Appendix F.



Youth Worker Preparation: Priorities and Opportunities for Cross-Sector Learning

Many conversations are under way about youth worker preparation and support across the country and in different settings. These conversations need to involve front-line youth workers, young people themselves, national leaders, researchers, and policy makers. Critical questions include:

- Who are today's youth workers? What kinds of young people do they work with? Do they include people in all sectors, in both formal and informal roles and in a wide variety of roles and relationships with young people?
- What do youth workers need to know and do to maximize outcomes for young people?
- What do we actually know about who does youth work? What do they do? What makes them stay?
- What systems are needed to equip and sustain youth workers, whether professional or volunteer?

This project does not attempt to answer these questions. Rather, it seeks to add another layer to the conversation: Today's youth worker preparation and support systems are largely parallel tracks. For the most part, faith-based youth workers turn to faith-based systems for preparation, credentialing, and ongoing professional development and networking. Community-based youth workers do the same in their parallel systems. The question to be asked is whether these systems are serving the best interest of young people by operating along parallel tracks or are there opportunities for and benefits to finding or creating intentional links between these two worlds?

Do community- and faith-based youth workers have shared professional interests or goals? Do they need the same kinds of skills or competencies? If so, then there may be common ground for professional development in addressing skills or competencies that are essential for each group.

As a starting point, we utilized the Youth Development Worker Competencies, which are approved by the National Collaboration for Youth (Appendix B). This framework identifies ten skills that leaders in national youth-serving systems (including some faith-based national organizations) see as essential for effective frontline youth work. (For a complete list of the 50 National Collaboration for Youth members go to: <http://www.nydic.org/nydic/about/members.htm>).

For the youth worker surveys (one with a broad sample of youth workers; one with camp directors), we developed a set of simple questions that focused on each of these youth worker competencies. In addition, we added two other potential competencies.¹ One focuses on

¹ The following additional items were added to the competencies in the camp study: “enhancing youth’s moral and character development,” “providing youth with experiences that are novel, stimulating, and challenging,” “teaching youth about healthy life choices,” “helping youth to develop environmental awareness,” “providing a mechanism for youth and adult partnerships and shared decision-making,” and “passing down your traditions and stories.”

“respecting and honoring religious diversity” and the other focuses on “helping young people develop spiritually.” Respondents were asked to assess the level of importance for each competency in their work (“not important,” “somewhat important,” “very important,” or “essential”). Then they were asked to indicate their level of interest in training, resource, and/or educational opportunities to build their competencies—or if they “already feel prepared” in the area.

Similar Emphases in Each Sector

All groups of youth workers strongly endorsed at least half of the original competencies as “essential” and the rest were also broadly supported (Figure 2).

- Two-thirds of youth workers surveyed indicated that 5 of the original 10 competencies were “essential,” and about half believe the other 5 were “essential.” Almost none of those surveyed indicated that any of the original 10 competencies was “not important.”
- The community-based and faith-based youth workers were roughly equal in their level of affirming 6 of the 10 original competencies.
- All groups of youth workers (community-based, faith-based, and camp directors) were almost unanimous in endorsing developing positive relationships and communicating with youth as “essential.” All groups also endorsed being positive role models and involving/empowering youth as “essential.”
- Only 2 in 5 (38%) of both samples indicated that “respecting and honoring religious diversity” is an essential competency in their work with youth. Similarly, 47% of religiously affiliated camps and 42% of secular camps identified that “respecting and honoring religious diversity” is an essential competency in their work.

Thus, *faith-based and community-based youth workers see eye to eye on many of the competencies*. This commonality appears to hold true across a variety of settings as well as when we compare directors of both religiously affiliated and secular camps. This finding suggests that, at least in the area of competencies, there is significant common ground across sectors and settings.

ADDITIONAL CAMP INSIGHTS

Several other competencies were added in the camp director survey to the 10 core competencies for youth development professionals. Some highlights:

“Enhancing youths’ moral and character development” was widely endorsed, with 64% of secular directors and 69% of religiously affiliated directors identifying the competency as essential.

Although nearly one-third of the total camp sample felt that “providing a mechanism for youth and adult partnerships and shared decision-making” was an essential competency, there was a 19% gap between secular (35%) and religiously affiliated (16%) camp directors.

(For more information, see Appendix S.)

Different Emphases in Each Sector

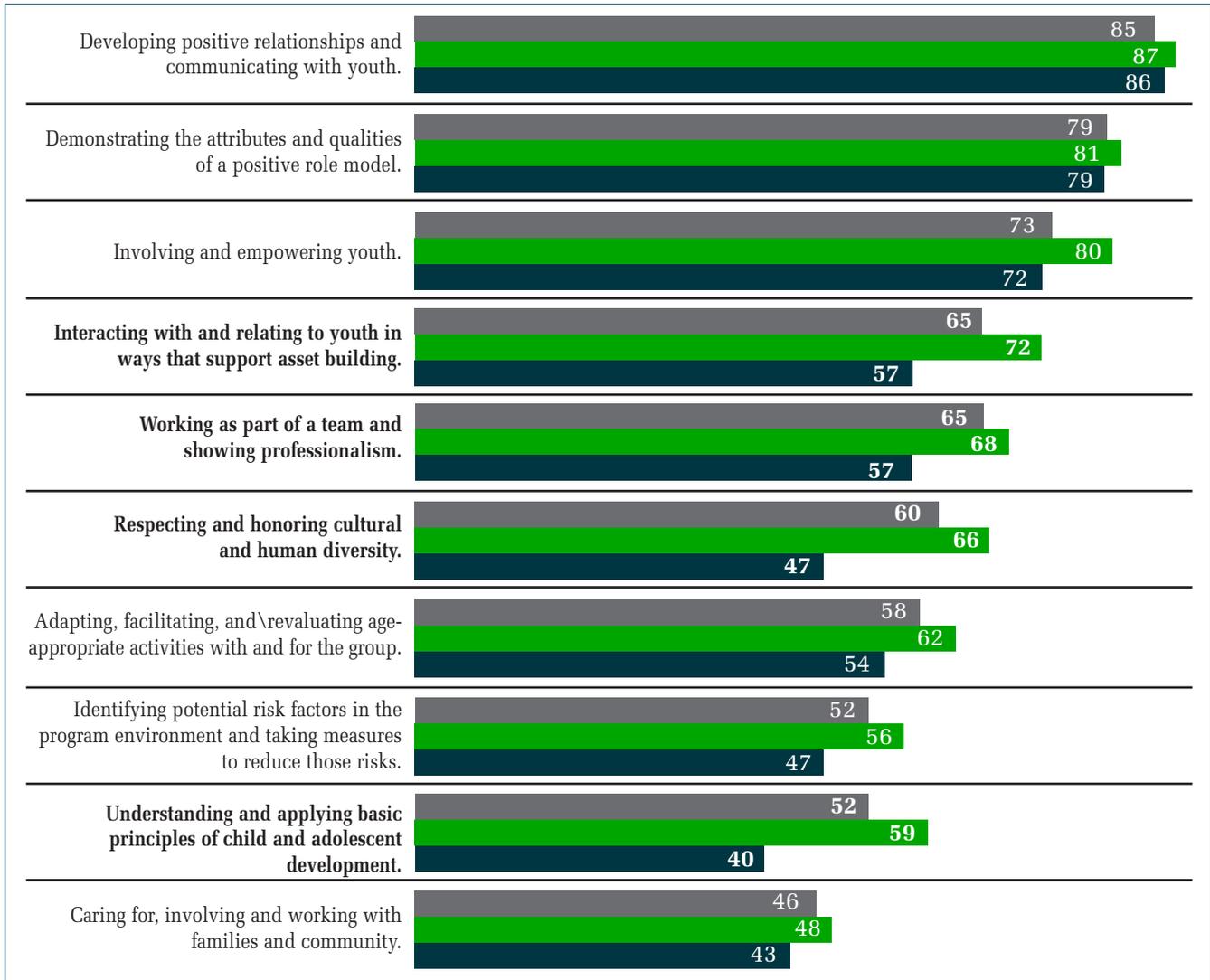
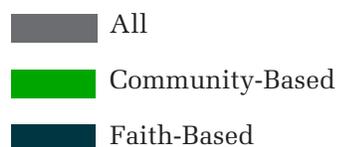
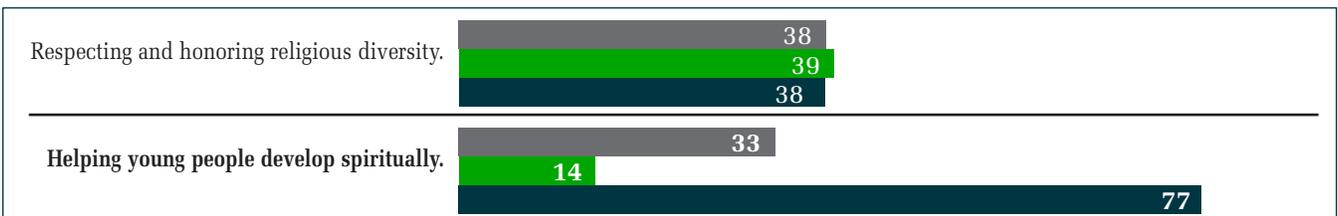
At the same time, there are important differences between groups. The greatest is on “helping young people develop spiritually.” Only 14% of community-based youth workers said this was “essential” to their work, compared to 77% of faith-based youth workers (a 63-point gap). The camp survey also found a similar gap. Twenty-three percent of secular directors and 85% of religiously affiliated directors (a 62-point gap) felt that this was an essential competency. Thus, faith-based youth workers are more than five times as likely as community-based workers to say that cultivating spiritual development is an essential part of their work with youth.

In addition to the difference in emphasis on spiritual development, faith-based workers in the broader survey were at least 10% *less likely* to say that 4 of the original 10 competencies are “essential”:

- Understanding and applying principles of child and adolescent development (20-point gap)
- Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity (19-point gap)
- Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building (15-point gap)
- Working as part of a team and showing professionalism (11-point gap)

FIGURE 2**Essential Competencies for Youth Workers by Sector**

Percent of respondents in the youth worker survey who say each theme is “essential” to their work. **(Boldface indicates items for which the difference between community- and faith-based workers is 10 percentage points or greater.)**

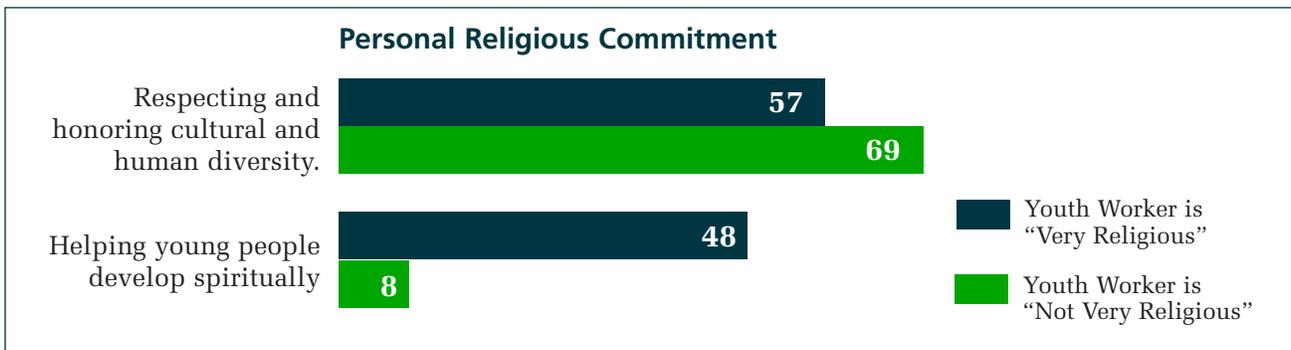
**ADDED COMPETENCIES**

Other Patterns and Differences

Beyond just comparing community- and faith-based youth workers, it is helpful to examine other characteristics of the sample to see where there might be other meaningful differences in support for the competencies. Do younger or older youth workers see them differently? What about urban or suburban or rural? And does the personal religious commitment of the youth worker affect how he or she views the competencies? Here's what we found:

Personal Religious Commitment

Given the focus on cross-sector perspectives, it is also important to examine whether youth workers' religious commitments (in both sectors) play a role in the priorities that youth workers place on the various competencies. When we analyzed data on the basis of youth workers' self-reported levels of religious commitment ("How active or devout are you in your own religious beliefs, participation, and practices?"), relatively few differences emerged. There were, however, two notable exceptions:



The camp sample showed greater differences on several competencies than did the larger sample when viewed from the camp directors' personal religious commitment. "not very religious" camp directors were more likely than "very religious" directors to identify these competencies as essential:

- Understanding child-adolescent development
- Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age-appropriate activities
- Identifying-reducing risk factors
- Providing challenging activities

On the other hand, "very religious" camp directors were more likely than their "not very religious" counterparts to rate the following competencies as essential:

- Developing positive relationships
- Helping young people develop spiritually

Thus, across sectors, youth workers who are most committed to a religious tradition are much more likely to endorse “helping young people develop spiritually” as an essential part of their work with youth, but are somewhat less likely to endorse “respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity”—though, it is important to note that a majority of religiously devout youth workers still see this competency as “essential.”

Age

At some level, all ages of youth workers endorsed the 10 original competencies. However, 5 of the 10 original competencies were more likely to be endorsed as “essential” by older youth workers. (None of the competencies were more likely to be seen as essential by younger workers than older workers.) Comparing twenty- to twenty-nine-year-old youth workers with those aged fifty to fifty-nine years, we found that older youth workers were more likely to endorse these competencies as essential:

- Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development (61% vs. 40%, a 21-point gap)
- Working as part of a team and showing professionalism (74% vs. 55%, a 19-point gap)
- Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building (72 % vs. 58%, a 14-point gap)
- Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity (66% vs. 52%, a 14-point gap)
- Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age-appropriate activities with and for the group (68% vs. 56%, a 12-point gap)

The camp sample showed similar age-related patterns, but in slightly different areas. A comparison of twenty- to twenty-nine-year-olds and fifty- to fifty-nine-year-olds showed that the older directors placed more importance on:

- Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age-appropriate activities
- Respecting religious diversity
- Enhancing moral and character development²

However, 77% of young directors viewed involving and empowering youth as “essential” compared to 60% of older directors (a 17-point gap).

Though we do not have data that explains the greater emphasis on many competencies, some may reflect differences in roles and perspectives, with older youth workers likely to have moved into leadership roles within their organizations. These areas may suggest opportunities for cross-age collaborative learning between seasoned and newer youth workers.

2 This competency was added to the camp director survey; it was not part of the youth worker survey.

Gender

There were potentially important differences between men and women in how they view several of the competencies. In all but one case (spiritual development) women were more likely to view each of the following competencies as “essential” to their work with youth:

- Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity (64% females vs. 46% males, an 18-point gap)
- Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group (63% females vs. 50% males, a 13-point gap)
- Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building (70% females vs. 58% males, a 12-point gap)
- Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks (56% females vs. 45% males, an 11-point gap)
- Involving and empowering youth (77% females vs. 67% males, a 10-point gap)

As said above, spiritual development was the one instance where men were more like than women to view the competency as “essential” to their work:

- Helping young people develop spiritually (30% female vs. 42% male, a 12-point gap, *with males being higher*)

Location

For most of the competencies, youth workers’ perspectives were fairly consistent across geographic settings (urban, suburban, rural/small town/reservation, and regional/national/ international). However, the youth workers working in urban areas were more likely than those in small towns to say that respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity was “essential” (66% urban vs. 53% rural/small towns).

Those who work in suburban settings were more likely than other groups to indicate that helping young people develop spiritually was “essential” (50% for suburban youth workers compared to 28% for both those who work in urban and rural/small town areas). This finding may reflect, in part, that the faith-based youth workers in this sample were more likely than community-based youth workers to work in suburban settings.

ADDITIONAL CAMP INSIGHTS

Even more differences by gender were evident in the camp director survey. The following list shows ten essential competencies that were rated higher (>10-point gap) by women when compared to men:

- Developing relationships
- Respecting cultural/human diversity
- Respecting religious diversity
- Empowering youth
- Working with families
- Teamwork-professionalism
- Asset building
- Providing challenging activities*
- Developing environmental behaviors*
- Shared decision-making*

Consistent with the broader survey of youth workers, the only essential competency rated higher by male than female camp workers was to help young people develop spiritually.

* These competencies were added to the camp director survey.

Interest in Ongoing Learning and Development

Knowing priorities is an important starting point for finding common ground as well as distinctions. However, if the focus is on training and professional development, it's also important to understand the areas where youth workers might be most interested in educational opportunities. Where might there be common interests that could be addressed in cross-sector learning?

Survey participants were asked how much they would be interested in training, resources, and/or educational opportunities related to each of the 12 competencies (including the two added items on religious diversity and spiritual development). We found that, *with a few exceptions, youth workers in both sectors were equally interested in training and professional development on specific competencies.*

Figure 3 shows the percentages of youth workers (total sample as well as each sector) who said that they were “very interested” in training, resources, and/or educational opportunities related to each of the competencies. Here are the highlights:

- The highest levels of interest in learning opportunities were *youth involvement/empowerment* and *asset-building approaches to working with youth*. About 3 in 5 youth workers in the total sample said they were “very interested” in opportunities to learn more about these topics. About half of the youth workers surveyed are also “very interested” in the next six competencies (Figure 3).
- Fewer than half of the youth workers surveyed indicated being “very interested” in the remaining four competency areas, including the two items that were added to the original set of 10 competencies (Figure 3).
- Levels of interest among community-based and faith-based youth workers in ongoing learning and development were comparable (less than 10 points difference) on seven of the 12 areas highlighted. However:

Community-based youth workers were more likely than faith-based youth workers to be interested in professional development related to asset building, relationships with youth, cultural and human diversity, and working as part of a team.

Faith-based youth workers were more interested than community-based workers in professional development in the area of spiritual development.

ADDITIONAL CAMP INSIGHTS

The highest levels of interest in learning opportunities for camp directors were in *youth involvement/empowerment* (69%) and *moral/character development** (67%).

The areas of least interest were in *passing down traditions** (31%) and *respecting religious diversity* (41%).

However, when viewed from the perspective of secular and religious camps, several differences (>10 points) in training interest emerged. More directors in secular camps than in religious camps wanted training in *respecting cultural and human diversity* (55% vs. 38%) and *asset building* (67% vs. 48%). More directors in religious camps wanted training in *helping youth develop spiritually* (66%) than did those in secular camps (47%).

*These competencies were added to the camp director survey.

FIGURE 3**Interest in Professional Development on Youth Worker Competencies**

<i>Percentages of respondents who would be “very interested” in training, resource, and/or educational opportunities in the following areas.</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Community-Based</i>	<i>Faith-Based</i>
Involving and empowering youth.	65	67	63
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	60	63	53
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	56	62	50
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	56	56	57
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age-appropriate activities.	54	57	50
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	52	55	51
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	49	55	42
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	46	48	47
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	39	42	32
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	39	43	35
ADDED COMPETENCIES			
Helping young people develop spiritually.	37	31	56
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	35	38	39

(Shaded areas indicate items for which the difference between community- and faith-based workers is 10% or greater.)

Already Feel Prepared

One factor that may reduce interest in additional training and development opportunities is that people already feel prepared in a given area. Therefore, when asked about their interests in ongoing development, youth workers were given the option of indicating that they “already feel prepared.” Figure 4 summarizes these responses. Several notable findings include:

- No more than 2 out of 5 of the youth workers surveyed indicated that they “already feel prepared” in any of the areas examined. (This finding should not be over-interpreted; youth workers may desire additional training and development while already being effective in working in that particular area.)
- Youth workers surveyed were *most likely* to “already feel prepared” to be role models and to work as part of a team.
- The two areas where youth workers were *least likely* to say they were “already prepared” related to caring for, involving and working with families and community (18%), and helping young people develop spiritually (14%).

In general, youth workers in both sectors said they “already feel prepared” at similar levels. The only area of substantial difference between faith-based and community-based youth workers related to spiritual development. Faith-based youth workers surveyed were almost three times as likely as community-based youth workers to indicate that they “already feel prepared” (27% vs. 8%).

There were relatively few differences by gender or age (shown in Appendix C) in the proportions of youth workers who indicated that they already feel prepared for each of the competencies.

ADDITIONAL CAMP INSIGHTS

The majority of camp directors did not feel particularly prepared in most of the competency areas. The areas that had at least 20% of the directors indicating they felt prepared were:

- Teamwork-professionalism (29%)
- Being a positive role model (27%)
- Identifying-reducing risk factors (27%)
- Passing down traditions* (23%)

The directors were least likely to say they are already prepared in the following areas:

- Empowering youth (11%)
- Asset building (11%)
- Helping young people develop spiritually (11%)
- Adult-youth shared decision-making* (10%)
- Working with families and communities (7%)

* These competencies were added to the camp director survey.

FIGURE 4**Areas Where Youth Workers Say They “Already Feel Prepared”**

<i>Percentages of respondents in the youth worker survey who said they “already feel prepared,” when asked about interest in professional development in the following areas</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Community-Based</i>	<i>Faith-Based</i>
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	40	39	41
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	36	36	38
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	28	24	32
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	25	24	22
Involving and empowering youth.	23	24	22
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	22	21	20
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	21	22	20
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	21	17	23
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	20	22	17
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age-appropriate activities with and for the group.	20	19	22
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	18	19	14
Helping young people develop spiritually.	14	8	27

(Shaded areas indicate the item for which the difference between community- and faith-based workers is 10% or greater.)

Readiness for Competency-Focused Learning

The above three perspectives on the competencies (how important; interest in training; and existing preparation) are all important factors in setting priorities for professional development opportunities for youth workers, with each touching on a different part of what might motivate youth workers to actually seek and participate in learning opportunities. (We have not factored in other critical variables, such as the cost and quality of available learning opportunities or the levels of institutional support that allows, encourages, or mandates training participation.) Any single perspective (such as how important a competency is perceived) is helpful, but inadequate on its own.

Using the data we have available, we created a simple formula to estimate “readiness for learning”—knowing that other factors also play a role in readiness. First we calculated the “felt need” by subtracting those who say they “already feel prepared” from those who said the competency is “essential.” Then we averaged the “felt need” with the level of interest (“very interested”) to reach a score for “readiness for learning.” Though the specific numbers are not meaningful in themselves, they suggest a priority ranking for professional development across the competencies.

For the total sample, the areas with the highest overall readiness for learning are:

- Involving and empowering youth
- Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth
- Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building

For the total sample, the areas with lowest overall readiness for learning are the two competencies that were added:

- Helping young people develop spiritually
- Respecting and honoring religious diversity

Using this calculation, some of the competency areas that are viewed as most “essential” remain areas where there may be a high readiness for learning—including the top three areas of readiness. But it is important also to note that some competency areas become more or less important when these multiple perspectives are combined.

For example, 4 out of 5 youth workers indicated being a positive role model is seen as “essential,” making it the second the

ADDITIONAL CAMP INSIGHTS

For the camp sample, the areas with the highest overall readiness for learning were:

- Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.
- Involving and empowering youth.
- Enhancing youths’ moral and character development*

The areas with the lowest overall readiness for learning were:

- Helping youth to develop environmental awareness and an ability to demonstrate environmentally friendly behaviors.*
- Providing a mechanism for youth and adult partnerships and shared decision-making.*
- Passing down traditions and stories.*

* Items added to the camp survey.

most important competency in the overall sample. However, it’s also the area where youth workers are most likely to be “already prepared,” and their interest in more professional development is lower. Thus, this competency falls to eighth place in terms of overall readiness for additional professional development. On the other hand, the competency on caring for, involving and working with families and community ranked as the lowest priority among the original 10 competencies in terms of whether it is “essential” to youth work. However, relatively few youth workers already feel prepared in this area (1 in 5), and many are interested in learning more. So the family and community competency rises from tenth to seventh place in the overall ranking of readiness for learning.

Similarities and Differences across Sectors

Using this “readiness for learning” calculation, we see more clearly **potential readiness for professional development** within each sector and across each sector. How similar and different are youth workers in the two sectors when all these pieces come together?

Figure 5 summarizes the calculations of readiness for learning for the total sample as well as each of the two sectors. (The detailed calculations for the broad youth worker survey are included in Appendix C. Findings from the camp directors survey are included in Appendix D.) Some of the highlights are as follows:

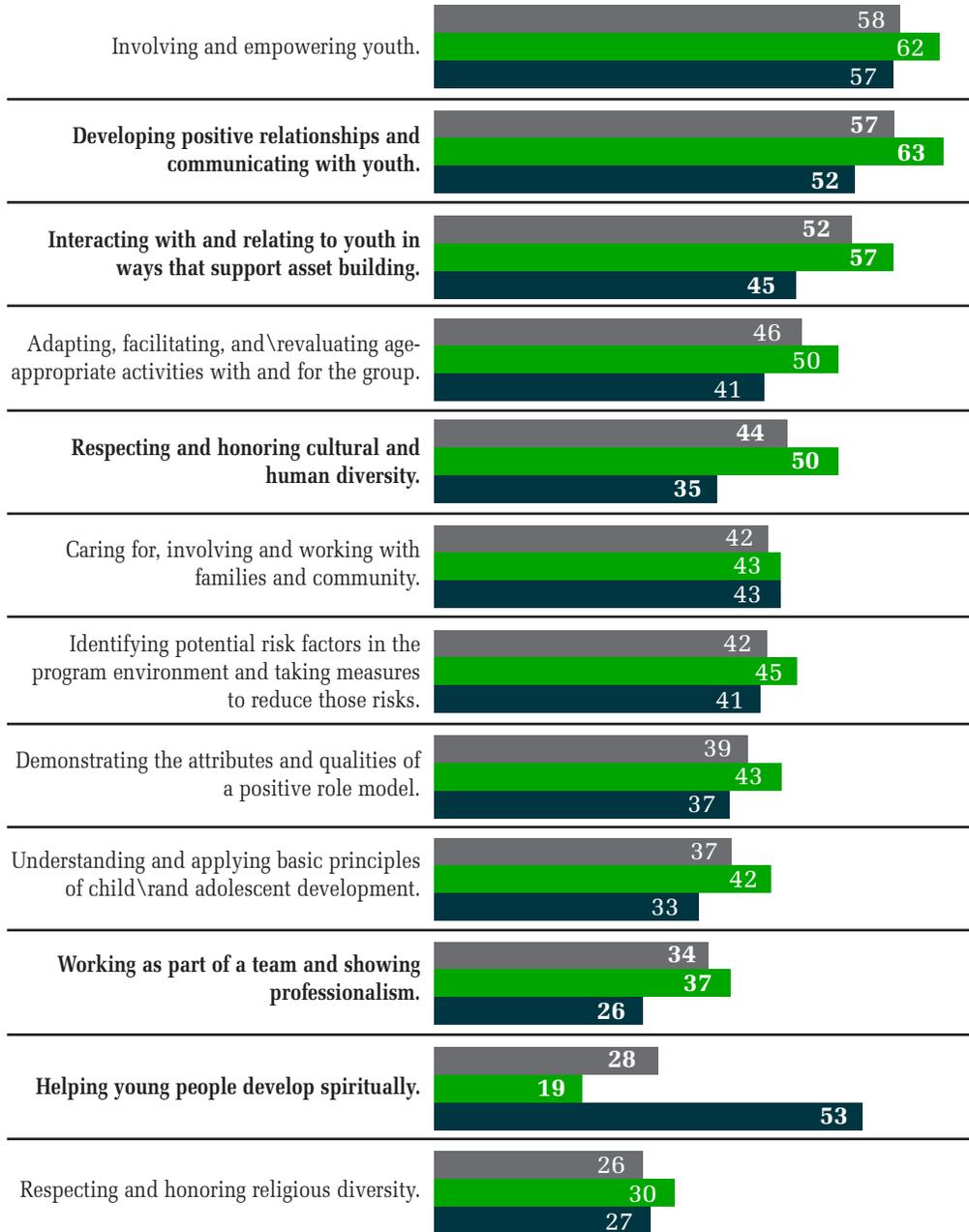
- Here are **the top five areas of readiness** for professional development in each sector:

<i>Community-Based Youth Workers</i>	<i>Faith-Based Youth Workers</i>
1. Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	1. Involving and empowering youth.
2. Involving and empowering youth.	2. Helping young people develop spiritually.
3. Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	3. Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.
4. Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	4. Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.
5. Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	5. Caring for, involving and working with families and community.

- The level of readiness for professional development is fairly strong and consistent across sectors on empowering youth, positive relationships, and asset building (though faith-based workers are somewhat less “ready” for professional development related to positive relationships and asset building).

FIGURE 5**Readiness* for Professional Development Across Sectors**

(Items in bold have a gap of greater than 10 points between community- and faith-based workers.)



* Readiness is the average percentage of “Felt Need” and “Very Interested.”



- Overall, the level of readiness for professional development is consistent across sectors (less than 10 percentage points difference) on seven of the twelve competencies. The competencies with meaningful gaps (10 points or greater) are:

Helping young people develop spiritually (34-point gap)

Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity (15-point gap)

Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building (12-point gap)

Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth (11-point gap)

Working as a team and showing professionalism (11-point gap)

If the “readiness for learning” calculation approximates opportunities for strengthening the capacity of youth workers, there are clear areas of potential cross-sector training. As a starting point, both groups of youth workers see high priorities around building relationships, empowering youth, and asset building.

Another possibility is to identify those areas where one group or the other, on average, has more experience or sees as a higher priority and then encourage dialogue across sectors so that each can learn from the other. For example, what would happen if community-based youth workers introduced faith-based youth workers to some of the principles and practices of dealing with human diversity among young people, then the faith-based workers shared their knowledge and experience related to spiritual development? Such an approach would likely be riskier and would require a strong foundation of relationship and trust across sectors to be effective. One can imagine, however, the creativity interplay of these two issues offering stimulating learning for both groups of youth workers.

Preparing Youth Workers Together: Experience in the Field

The findings from the survey make a theoretical case that community- and faith-based youth workers do share a common base of interest and need related to professional development. But do these shared (and somewhat superficial) indicators translate into potential for on-the-ground training and professional development, or do youth workers approach these topics so differently that shared events (or even shared curricula) are impractical?

At the national consultation, Elaine Johnson of the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work (NTI) at the Academy for Educational Development described her organization’s youth development training curriculum³, which is delivered in a neighborhood or community context. The training focuses on community-level workers and includes a mixture of organizations—including both faith-based and community-based organizations—in most events. In her experience, the training effectively works across sectors and, in fact, stimulates important connections among youth workers at the community or neighborhood level.

3 AED/Center for Youth Development and Policy Research and the National Network for Youth (1995), *Advancing Youth Development: A Curriculum for Training Youth Workers*. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development. For information, visit <http://nti.aed.org/Curriculum.html>.

Building on that point, Tom East of the Center for Ministry Development suggested that an important framing issue for this dialogue is “to broaden the imagination of youth workers” (in both sectors) to include the web of relationships that are integral to their work and to the lives of young people. This includes colleagues, community partners, families, and the broader community. As long as youth workers view their role as only involving themselves and the youth in their program, it is difficult for them to see the value (or the essential need) for professional development and sharing with others.

Similarly, the consultation and survey findings noted the need for a focus on caring for and including families and community building as a core element. It is important, leaders affirmed, to understand how community and culture facilitate a young person’s development, and also

work to strengthen the community on behalf of (and with) young people. When they see the power of community and the potential for change, they are more likely to align themselves with other youth workers who share that commitment to youth in the community.

Diversifying Approaches to Youth Worker Preparation

Consistent with the broader definition of professional development to include more than training events, the national consultation participants provided input to how resources and other educational opportunities could be provided. Some possibilities include:

- Provide space for reflective conversation on being a youth worker. This requires developing expectations, structures, and supervisory systems that encourage doing this reflection. Current systems make this kind of reflection difficult, since youth workers are often accountable for running a plethora of activities that leave little time for anything else.
- Develop models (within and across sectors) of youth worker mentoring or apprenticeships. Adapt the idea of a teaching “hospital” to a teaching congregation or teaching community organization.
- Create and sustain coaching models that build relationships between seasoned and inexperienced youth workers.
- Work in higher education to support youth work as a legitimate and respected profession and vocation. In the process, equip these youth workers with the skills they need to be positive change agents in their organizations and communities—not just leaders who know

SURVEY PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS

■ **“Many of the effective tools and strategies for youth work are not specific to a certain setting, but are very adaptable principles which could be used in various places, with various groups. It seems wise to collaborate and bring the best minds together to share their successes and the things they have learned from their less positive experiences.”**

— *Faith-Based Youth Worker*

■ **“[An advantage to cross-sector learning includes] awareness of each other’s strength in areas where your organization is lacking. . . . We can’t all be the best in every area of need, so why not refer?”**

— *Faith-Based Youth Worker*

how to relate with youth (which is key), but also leaders who can help to affect the systems that affect young people.

- Create learning opportunities that are appropriate for volunteers who are critical to many youth development settings, both community-based and faith-based.

What Role Does Spiritual Development Play?

The “elephant in the room” in thinking about building bridges between community- and faith-based youth workers is the issue of spiritual development. It’s the lowest priority for community-based youth workers and among the highest priorities for faith-based youth workers. It’s clear that “spiritual development” is a critical point of difference between faith-based and community-based youth workers. As such, the issue generated conversation among the leaders gathered at the national consultation. It was also a point of conversation during the focus groups.

The online survey of youth workers did not examine spiritual development in any depth (thus we don’t know what these youth workers mean when they ranked it as “essential” or not). However, the focus groups gave participants an opportunity to indicate how they think about and define spiritual development, with people each having an opportunity to write down and share their own definition. The most frequent themes included the following:

- Spiritual development is building a personal relationship or connection with a higher power or God.
- Spiritual development is learning and the development of life skills.
- Spiritual development is a life-long process.

Other comments on spiritual development included:

- Spiritual development can take place in activities outside of religion.
- Spiritual development is the adoption of a religious doctrine and/or developing faith.
- Spiritual development is a connection with others and the universe.

Many in the camp community feel that the camp experience is an important environment for spiritual growth because of the nature-based context of many camps. Understanding how camp directors defined spiritual development was crucial to establishing a context for their answers. In the camping survey, camp directors were asked to define the term “spiritual development.” Their responses were highly consistent with the themes identified above, with the following additions:

- Christian evangelism/education with a focus on the Bible.
- Importance of connecting through nature and the natural world.
- Moral and character development tied to values and ethics.

Focus group participants were also asked to articulate how they understand the place of spiritual development in their own work with youth. The main themes included:

- As a youth worker, I serve as a guide to help young people create their own definition of spiritual development and spirituality.
- I incorporate spirituality in youth work.
- I am a role model to youth by trying to live a life that is an example of spirituality.
- My spirituality serves as a personal motivator when working with youth.

It is not clear the extent to which this range of understandings shaped the responses to the online survey. It may be, for example, that asking about spiritual development without any context, definition, or depth led many youth workers to respond to the items with an assumption that religious and spiritual development are somewhat synonymous. Hence, when faith-based youth workers indicated that spiritual development is a high priority, they likely thought in terms of their own tradition's approach to spirituality (or, more likely, faith formation or education), and community-based youth workers presumed it wasn't part of their responsibility.

However, there are models where dimensions of spiritual development have been successfully addressed in cross-sector contexts and spiritual development has long been a part of the definition of youth development. For example, Elaine Johnson from the National Training Institute for Community Work at the Academy for Educational Development described how her organization's *Advancing Youth Development* curriculum addresses three themes that are, from her perspective, part of spiritual development:

- *Connectedness*: Are young people aware of how their actions bring about consequences for others? Do they care about other people's well-being?
- *Compassion*: How do young people learn to care for others without a direct benefit to themselves?
- *Abundance*: How do youth workers help young people understand that they can share out of their abundance, knowing that there is a place for them in the world?

This is just one example of how the issue of spiritual development has been negotiated within a community context for youth development. In addition, the New England Network for Child, Youth & Family Services has done extensive work in listening to the spiritual perspectives and needs of vulnerable youth, then encouraging secular youth-serving agencies to address these questions more intentionally.⁴ Extensive work is also under way by Search Institute to deepen a shared understanding of spiritual development that resonates across communities and cultures, which will likely establish a platform for deeper analysis and dialogue.⁵ But when thought leaders discussed spiritual development they wanted it to go hand in hand with people considering the role of moral development with young people. In the process of different organizations working in this area, a shared understanding of spiritual and moral development may help increase the interest in and comfort with the issue among community-based youth workers and also help faith-based workers see the issue in a broader context.

4 For information on this work, visit www.nenetwork.org/initiatives/youth-spirit.html.

5 For information on this work, visit www.spiritualdevelopmentcenter.org.



Seeking Common Ground: Interests, Challenges, and Opportunities for Professional Development across Sectors

Although there are important differences between community-based and faith-based youth work, it is clear from the data on the core competencies of youth development professionals that there is, in fact, common ground. Both sectors of youth workers—including the sampled camp directors—see many of the same competencies as essential, and there are clearly topic areas where their readiness for professional development around particular competencies is high. For example, the three highest shared areas of readiness (described earlier in the section of this report on Youth Worker Preparation: Priorities and Opportunities for Cross-Sector Learning) could provide a focus for professional development that meets top needs in both sectors:

- Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth;
- Involving and empowering youth; and
- Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.

We should not, however, leap to the conclusion that, if both groups see a competency as essential and both want growth opportunities related to that competency, then joint opportunities make sense and would be valued. After all, these topics may already be addressed through training, tools, resources, and other professional development systems in both sectors. The ability to do work across these two sectors is more than just a shared interest. Some questions that are raised include:

- In the minds of youth workers, would cross-sector training, professional development, and other support, resources, and structures add any unique value to their work?
- Are both sectors really interested enough in doing this work together?

Are the barriers too high to justify the effort it would take to break out of each sector's institutional comfort zone, language, jargon, and boundaries?

The online survey explored this issue through a single forced-choice question to gauge interest. Then youth workers were asked open-ended questions about what they saw as the advantages and challenges of cross-sector opportunities. Finally, they were asked to indicate places where they have seen cross-sector professional development in action. In addition, at the national consultation, participants were asked to identify the challenges as well as the opportunities. What emerges is fairly strong interest in cross-sector professional development between all groups of youth workers—with some important caveats and obstacles to address.

Interest in Cross-Sector Learning Opportunities

“Ultimately, we are all working to better the lives of youth. We have limited resources, so the more we work together, the further we can go.”

– Faith-Based Youth Worker

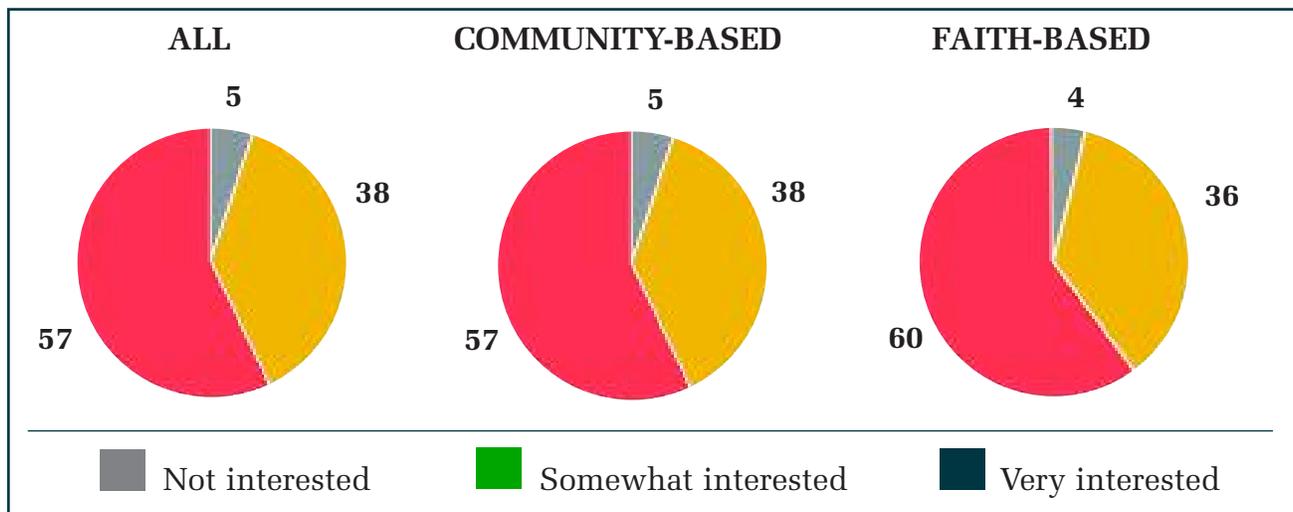
More than half of those participating in the youth worker survey said that they would be “very interested” in cross-sector training (Figure 6), with most of the rest being “somewhat interested.” Only a small percentage of youth workers in either group indicated that they were “not very” interested in such opportunities. This interest is remarkably consistent between community- and faith-based workers. It is also consistent for both female and male youth worker and for youth workers of all ages.⁶ Quotes from some of the youth worker survey participants surface some of the reasons for their interest:

- *“I think it would have a somewhat enriching effect [to] build networks of opportunities. At minimum, the youth workers would hopefully come to a fuller knowledge and respect of each other and their work and ways of working.”* –Faith-Based Youth Worker
- *“We all have a lot to learn from people in related but different fields, because our colleagues in different areas approach similar problems to ours in their own unique ways that can, in turn, help us see our problems in a fresh way.”* –Community-Based Youth Worker

FIGURE 6

Interest in Cross-Sector Learning Opportunities by Sector

If training, resources, or other professional development opportunities were offered that intentionally included both community-based and faith-based youth workers, how interested would you be in participating?



⁶ Interestingly, among the camp directors surveyed, only 41% indicated being very interested in cross-sector learning opportunities, compared to 57% of youth workers in the general survey. Only 13% of camp directors said they were “not interested.”

Differences in Interest in Cross-Sector Opportunities

Though interest in cross-sector learning opportunities is widespread, it is helpful to delve a bit deeper to see if there are other subtexts to be considered.

- Does interest in cross-sector training reflect a general greater interest in training and development?
- Do only those community-based youth workers who are themselves personally religious want to collaborate across sectors, or do even those who are not personally religious see value in cross-sector learning?
- Are faith-based youth workers from different religious traditions equally interested in collaborating for learning with community-based youth workers?

Additional analyses shed light on these questions:

- **Overall interest in training**– The interest in cross-sector training may reflect a general interest in *any* training and development. In this survey, youth workers who were most interested in cross-sector training tended to also be those who were most interested in training in each of the competencies. Indeed, those youth workers who indicated that they were “very interested” in cross-sector training were more likely also to say that they were “very interested” in training in all twelve of the competency areas examined (shown in Appendix C). Thus, *those youth workers surveyed who were most likely to value any training or development opportunities were also those who were most likely to value cross-sector opportunities.*
- **Religious commitment**– Among the community-based youth workers surveyed, those who were personally more religious (“very” active or devout) were somewhat more likely to be interested in this kind of joint professional development than those who indicated that they were not religious (Figure 7). However, a majority of both actively religious and those who were not religious or were “not very” active (all working in community-based settings) said they would be very interested in such opportunities. Thus, *one could conclude that the desire to connect across sectors is not driven merely by one’s own religious commitment, but is more related to the youth worker’s sense of what will be important and engaging in their own professional development.*
- **Religious affiliation**– When we looked within the faith-based sample, the vast majority described themselves as “very religious.” Hence, level of religious commitment isn’t a meaningful marker within this sample. However, given the growing plurality of America’s religious community (and concerns within some communities about intergroup relationships), it is useful to examine data through the lens of religious affiliation. (There was not enough diversity in the community-based sample to do a similar analysis in that group.)

Among faith-based youth workers, Christian youth workers were almost twice as likely as Jewish youth workers to be very interested in this kind of collaborative training. (The sample did not include enough youth workers from other traditions to do meaningful

analyses.) It is not that the Jewish youth workers surveyed were more likely to be “not interested,” but were most likely to be “somewhat interested,” reflecting what may be a level of caution about the prospect.

On the surface, this difference is surprising, particularly given the deep engagement of the Jewish community in social justice issues as well as interfaith efforts. And though the difference may simply be a result of a small sample size (there are only 68 Jewish respondents within the faith-based sample), it may also point to a critical challenge that has surfaced anecdotally in interfaith youth work. This finding may reflect some hesitation among Jewish youth workers (and, in fact, youth workers who are from other minority religious traditions or are not religious) to engage in more events and opportunities where the predominant frameworks, language, and approaches are Christian, while often overlooking the diversity within the religious sector and the broader community. We saw this dynamic manifested in focus groups where a church and Christian context were presumed—even when Jewish youth workers were in the group. Hence, our preliminary interpretation is that this difference underscores a compelling need to address and build comfort and competence for inter-religious engagement as well as cross-sector engagement so that all religious groups can participate fully and comfortably.

“It only takes one Buddhist in the school for the people in Waco, Texas, to realize not everyone goes to church on Sunday morning ... Faith formation now is going to take place in the context of and relationship with people of other faiths. . . . You can have profound difference in theologies but you can work together, relate in some kind of enriching and positive way.” – Interfaith Youth Worker

Finally, it is worth noting that we are not, in this preliminary study, able to distinguish the participating youth workers by their philosophical or theological orientation toward other religious traditions. For example, are those who are more exclusive in their understanding of faith within different religious traditions less likely to support cross-sector learning?

FIGURE 7
Interest in Cross-Sector Learning by Religious Differences

<i>Interest in cross-sector professional development</i>	a. Community-Based Workers		b. Faith-Based Workers	
	“Not Very” Active	“Very” Active	Christian	Jewish
Not very interested	8%	4%	2%	8%
Somewhat interested	39%	31%	30%	57%
Very interested	54%	64%	68%	36%

(Shaded areas indicate the item for which the difference between community- and faith-based workers is 10% or greater.)

These additional analyses confirm that the interest in cross-sector learning is widespread, and the interest goes beyond individual youth workers' personal religious commitments. It appears that many youth workers see such cross-sector cooperation as an important part of their work with youth. However, it is also important to address the growing diversity of the faith communities, and, in the process, establish expectations for appropriate inter-religious relationships and dialogue. In addition, the differences by religious affiliation need to be examined more deeply and broadly to determine whether other differences (such as theological orientation) would also be an important distinguishing variable for whether faith-based youth workers see value in cross-sector learning.

Challenges in Finding Common Ground

To say that youth workers are interested in cross-sector learning opportunities does not imply that they do not also see significant challenges or barriers. Respondents to the two online surveys, focus group members, and national thought leaders identified a number of challenges one might encounter in cross-sector professional development opportunities.

Exclusiveness, Proselytizing, and Dogmatism

“The key issue would be establishing a training session where all persons of faith could feel like they are respected and acknowledged as well as establishing such a session as a safe place for collaboration and learning—not for proselytizing.”

– Community-Based Youth Worker

Focus group members, survey respondents, and national thought leaders suggested that a key obstacle could be organizations being strident about their own perspective and not being open-minded. This was mentioned most frequently regarding faith-based youth workers, who are viewed as recognizing only one belief system and expecting to be able to proselytize.

Perceived Differing Goals and Training

“The greatest obstacle I see is the perception, whether accurate or not, that faith-based workers have their own agendas and that community-based workers lack a strong moral base. [This should be recognized] in order for the two groups to establish common ground.” – Camp Director

Many people mentioned that an obstacle or challenge would be the differing goals, missions, values, agendas, and belief systems of the two types of organizations. Though they may actually be different, one challenge that was mentioned was there really was lack of knowledge of missions, goals, assets/resources, staffing and what hinders us from working together. It was proposed that if we could hold our gaze long enough to understand our differences, we may actually find common ground.

SUMMARY OF OBSTACLES IN FINDING COMMON GROUND

- Exclusiveness, proselytizing, and dogmatism
- Perceived differing goals and training
- Fear of judgment
- Discomfort with religious/spiritual issues
- Legal issues
- Lack of mutual respect
- Too little time
- Different languages

Fear of Judgment

“We need to be careful to encompass faith in such a way that everyone is welcome and no one feels left out or wrong in their belief.” – Survey Participant

Youth workers in both sectors point toward fear of judgment from many places—harassment, political correctness, hostility, stereotyping, aggressive challenges to perspectives—as obstacles that keep them apart. Community-based youth workers indicated concerns that faith-based youth workers could be judgmental of youth and families who do not live within the moral constructs of a particular faith, and thus would be less open to allowing anyone to participate. A number of focus group participants indicated that they had felt ostracized by faith-based organizations.

Lack of Mutual Respect

In a related theme, there is a sense within both sectors of polarization, alienation, and mutual prejudice. On each side, there is a lack of understanding of each other’s values and backgrounds. Each sector may have a tendency to devalue the other’s work. In addition, there seems to be a lack of understanding of what work can be done collectively that can not be done separately.

Discomfort with Religious/Spiritual Issues

“The challenge would be to remove all aspects of religion/faith from the training. I’m willing to learn alongside anybody who is interested in the same topic, but I’m not willing to have their religious views or perspectives imposed on me or my work.”
– Youth Worker

Community-based youth workers are less comfortable with the language of spirituality and religion—which is the primary language utilized by many faith-based youth workers. Some focus group participants indicate that religious and spiritual concepts could be intimidating to them.

Legal Issues

A number of survey respondents noted legal issues or the need to separate church and state as a key obstacle or challenge. A community-based youth worker sees this challenge: “We operate pretty strictly with the ‘church and state’ thing around here – but that doesn’t preclude being trained together. I think you would just have to be sensitive to how you worded the training...My town board might be less apt to allow me to attend something billed for ‘faith leaders,’ for instance.”

Too Little Time and Resources

“[It] takes time, costs money, it is only one of a million other things we have to do.”
– Youth Worker

One issue that emerged was the fact that youth workers had no additional time to focus on trying to work across these two sectors. Already over-extended with multiple priorities, many mentioned that neither the time nor level of priority in their work would enable them to do this work with those from the other sector.

Different Languages and Guiding Approaches

Respondents indicated that currently there is no language that avoids division and brings people to the table. There would need to be careful and clear definitions of the words and concepts agreed upon by both groups. In addition, people would need to be mindful of using words that have judgmental or negative connotations, like “brainwashing,” “agenda,” “secular,” “saved,” and so on.

Benefit and Opportunities of Finding Common Ground

“To use training in the broad sense to organize, inspire, and equip a large number of loosely connected adults who are youth workers to tap an even larger number of youth into their power for them to go on and write a major chapter of American history.”

– National Thought Leader

Although there are significant and important challenges in finding common ground, the opportunities are just as significant—particularly given that most youth workers say they would value cross-sector learning opportunities. Among the respondents to the two online surveys, the participants in the focus groups, and the thought leaders, there was a widespread sense of readiness to tackle the difficult challenges and seek innovative ways to finding common ground.

Through the process, we have asked people to reflect on the benefits and opportunities they see in finding common ground for professional development between faith-based and community-based youth workers.

Enrich the Lives of Youth

For many participants in this project, the bottom line for collaboration is improved work with young people. People commented on the opportunity to better serve youth holistically and across the community. Some participants’ perspectives:

- *“Whether it be faith-based or community-based, people who work with kids all have the same passion in mind. We all need to work together for the betterment of our youth. And working together we have a better chance in reaching out and helping our youth!”*
- *“We all work in isolation from one another. Knowledge of resources would enable us to provide the highest quality of care to our youth.”*
- *“The more resources, assets, and perspectives that we all . . . can bring to the table, the more likely we are able to offer rich programs that resonate with youth and allow us to meet our ultimate objective of supporting the developmental needs of youth as they transition from adolescence to adulthood.”*
- *“There is a desperate need to collaborate in the urban setting. We are missing significant segments of youths’ lives due to our “silo” mentality and unwillingness to network with each other. There would be the opportunity to share resources and eliminate doubling in some areas.”*

Tap into the Unique Strengths within Each Sector

Focus group participants and thought leaders in the national consultation consistently emphasized that both groups of youth workers want what is best for all youth and have much to teach the other. Focus group participants suggested that each sector has unique strengths that could be shared with the other sector through cross-sector learning opportunities between community-based and faith-based youth workers. This may be a very simplistic list, but it provides another area that could be pursued for a better understanding of what unique strengths each sector could offer. Here are some examples of what they saw:

<i>What faith-based organizations offer</i>	<i>What community-based organizations offer</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled in time management and organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A realization of a bigger mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The credibility of research and research-based explorations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea of a systematic approach to producing adherents – systematic teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development workshops, classes and learning opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the spiritual and the needs of the whole person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth workers can bring a lot more of themselves into the situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in using community resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of spirituality and a belief system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based orgs have a larger reach in a community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilizing volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of volunteers

Increase Opportunities through Shared Learning and Resources

“There are so many resources in both community and faith-based groups. Sharing should mean that all would have access to more opportunity, therefore being more enriched.”
 – Youth Worker

Learning information, sharing resources, learning about each other, and broadening diversity were among the major advantages of shared professional development between community- and faith-based youth workers. *“To ignore collaboration and sharing with this group seems close-minded,”* said one camp director.

“It would help these youth workers form networks that might not have been formed otherwise. I think our society really separates out the spiritual and the secular to the point that the community organizations don’t necessarily see the faith-based workers as a resource and partner. I think both can learn from each other and can support each other’s work.” –Youth Worker

Developing a Community-Wide Approach

“If change is going to happen in our communities, it has to be a joint effort. If we are all working separately to achieve peace in our world-communities, then we are not using our resources wisely and, in turn, separating the community even more.” –Youth Worker

As in the above example, some respondents spoke about how the connections between faith-based and community-based youth organizations provide an opportunity to develop a more systemic, community-wide approach to working with youth. Two youth worker responded:

“It is a systemic approach that works. You cannot truly separate faith from community: faith is an integral part of every community, and attempts to segregate faith from community are futile.” –Youth Worker

*“We already see the advantages,” said a faith-based worker who has been involved in cross-sector collaboration. “At a base level, the networking of the two is invaluable for fundraising, community spirit, and to give the youth an idea how life works.”
–Youth Worker*



Recommendations for Moving Forward

“We should all be asking: ‘How can we all work together to achieve the common good?’”

— Faith-Based Youth Worker

Even with the challenges and the relative lack of knowledge about what models may already exist, participants in this work expressed widespread interest in building bridges to provide professional development opportunities across sectors. The recommendations are relevant for a range of audiences. Whether you work on the local level and can begin the dialogue and work across faith-based and community youth organizations; as a local intermediary want to begin to work across the organizations; as a national organization that wants to begin to look at the broader picture of the workforce; or a funder who sees the need and opportunity to increase this work across these two important sectors that work with youth there is work that is recommended and can be done.

When asked for their recommendations and hopes for the future, participants in the surveys, focus groups and national convening articulated a range of ideas. Throughout these recommendations you will find overlap with:

- The need to increase the dialogue and work on the local level;
- to take action and to increase our knowledge;
- to define and develop our language and share stories for common understanding of the work; and
- to create environments built on trust and communication.

Focus on—and Engage—Young People

“Set aside personal agendas and focus on youth.” – Survey Respondent

It almost goes without saying that all youth workers care about youth. However, as we focus attention on developing strong systems to support youth workers, people can easily get caught up in the systems and fear of the unknown and forget the ultimate goal: positive outcomes for our children and youth.

A consistent theme we heard throughout this process is that the best place to begin finding common ground is to focus on young people and their capacities, hopes, realities, challenges, and dreams. Understanding the needs of young people and how we might best meet these needs is certainly a reason for trying to work together instead of in silos in order to do this work most effectively.

As we already know, further dialogue about effective youth work must include more front-line youth workers as well as young people’s own perspectives and voices. The work ahead will only be effective when both groups are directly involved in the conversation and implementation of finding common ground and laying out an agenda for youth worker preparation and support. Only bringing all the stakeholders together will make this a movement with momentum and power.

Begin or Expand Work Locally

“I do think we need more research, but I think we can learn and act at the same time. By acting and learning together, we can learn a lot.”

– Community-Based Youth Worker

“I hope that we can create a model for collaboration and dialog that would help other groups do the same thing.” – Survey Respondent

Think about the work collectively as working for youth as a part of the same community. Youth are at the synagogue, mosque, temple and church while they are also at the local Y’s, Boys and Girls Clubs, Parks and Rec programs, 4-H and Scouts. Begin thinking about working together, often for the same population while learning more about the youth being served and expanding those numbers together. The real challenges and potential will only become evident when activity happens on the ground among youth workers from different backgrounds and sectors. Only then will we be able to make the following observations:

- Which of the potential benefits emerge as key?
- What barriers disappear as relationships form?
- What other barriers become significant, persistent challenges?
- What ground rules and practices create safe and stimulating space for learning for everyone?

Throughout our exploratory process, thought leaders, focus group participants, and survey respondents all recommended working locally. Some ideas include:

- **Build relationships and communicate openly.** Find or create opportunities to get to know each other, build trust, and develop partnerships. Keep an open mind, being nonjudgmental and discussing commonalities while not ignoring the differences. Integrate each other’s strengths into respective work with youth. Build a growing understanding between the two communities of youth workers. *Respect, compassion, listening, understanding* and *tolerance* were all words used.
- **Create places and spaces.** Develop the places and spaces where youth workers across systems and sectors can come together to share, define, reflect and develop practice strategies for promoting holistic development and deliberately promote the spiritual and moral development of children and youth.
- **Work for shared understanding and goals.** Have honest and open communication about differing goals. Determining shared goals includes establishing and communicating them together. Discuss belief systems and share and reflect on the differences and similarities of those belief systems. Dialogue openly with each other as well as ensure self-reflection to find those opportunities for common ground.
- **Share knowledge and opportunities.** Provide an opportunity for workers to get together and share what they are doing. Conduct joint trainings, workshops, and events. Share resources, best practices, program ideas, activities, and curriculum (including professional development curriculum).

Create a Framework for Moral and Spiritual Development

Young people struggle with their own identity particularly during adolescence. Adults who work with them have an important responsibility to be able to help them dialogue and explore the many facets of who they are as human beings. This includes their moral, ethical, and spiritual facets. Since both faith-based and community youth organizations are concerned with the development of children and youth, they are in a position to work together to address these multiple aspects of a young person. The language that is used and the major focus of work may be different, but, we may also find more similarities than differences as we expand our partnerships together. The framework needs to:

- **Determine how moral and ethical development relate to spiritual and religious development.** Develop definitions, narratives, and safe places where youth workers in all settings can create more intentional dialogues about these issues with each other and with young people.
- **Support youth workers to be better prepared to have these hard discussions.** Assist youth workers in developing knowledge and skills for responding to youth questions and concerns related to sensitive issues. Empower youth workers so that they feel prepared and comfortable in responding in ways that support youths' development.
- **Find shared meaning through narratives.** Remember that abstract definitions may do less to stimulate shared commitments than would shared experiences, stories, narratives, and actions. People will create meaning through these shared stories. Through stories and narratives, the work will come alive and have meaning for youth workers. Through action, it will become part of who they are.

While looking more broadly and across the sectors to find common ground, it is important that the particular priorities, issues, and challenges of specific groups not be marginalized or ignored. Within each of the sectors, there are a broad range of racial/ethnic, religious, geographic, gender, type of community, and other particularities for both young people and youth workers. The challenge is to find the creative interplay between what is held in common and what is unique. Furthermore, it is important to support the specific work needed in a particular community, culture, or tradition while also finding bridges and connections between that work and the broader community.

Integrate the Discussion about Qualifications and Preparation

“How do we create a movement of peaceful pluralism? I think we have the right pieces, the ten competencies plus two.” – Faith-Based Youth Worker

Both faith-based and community-based youth organizations are discussing and deciding about what is most needed to prepare highly skilled staff and volunteers to work with youth. The discussions are happening in local organizations and religious institutions; in local intermediaries and networks; on college and university campuses; and on the national level. Based on the information collected, there are clear areas of common ground around core youth worker competencies and shared commitments, at least on the surface. Yet this project only began to scratch the surface of the definitions, assumptions, and best practices available for

exploration. For example, whom are we talking about when we use the term “youth worker”? Is it just the professional, or does it include volunteers? What does it mean to empower youth, to communicate effectively or to work with them in ways that support asset building—the widely endorsed competencies?

Participants in this project identified a number of areas where more work needs to be done collectively to find common language and think about how we may move forward together as we think about the preparation of staff and volunteers who work with youth:

- **Create definitions, common language, and understanding together.** For example, define what it means to be a youth worker, who youth workers are and their roles in various settings, from informal to formal
- **Define successful work with youth.** Work together across sectors to generate a definition and indicators of what successful work with youth looks like. This can lead to a clearer sense of the common ground. Identify general practice or program standards.
- **Deepen the work on core competencies.** Develop a deeper interpretation and application of the core competencies by providing tips and strategies for strengthening each competency and creating additional competencies that may need to be added for a particular community. Explore the competencies in both faith-based and community-based youth organizations to ensure their relevancy to multiple populations.
- **Understand more about professional development.** Define the current quality, quantity, and content of training, technical assistance, and other learning opportunities within each sector and across sectors. Include pre-service training as well as in-servicing training.
- **Develop together credentials, certificates and degrees.** Look across the campus to see what is already occurring to prepare those who work with youth and think about inter-departmental work. Research existing degrees to find out if they are relevant and available to both faith-based and community youth workers and see if it is beneficial to expand the audience intentionally.

Conduct Additional Research

The need for additional knowledge and research is woven throughout the recommendations. In addition, to keep this work moving forward, research agendas should be designed in order to learn more about the common ground between faith-based and community-based organizations. The following are a few ideas that have already surfaced:

- **Learn more about youth workers.** Create an in-depth profile of youth workers with nationally representative samples that include youth workers from multiple sectors and settings. This work can build on an existing study and protocol done by the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition of front-line youth workers (www.nextgencoalition.org).
- **Explore the relevance of contexts, particularly nature.** Some contexts, such as the nature-based setting of many camp experiences, may be particularly important for certain aspects of youth development. Explore how specific contexts, such as nature, may impact positive youth development and how youth workers can be trained to facilitate these impacts.

Develop Practical Tools

“I think I got the theology right and I understand a lot about spiritual formation, but I don’t feel like I understand a lot about the other aspects about youth.”

–Faith-Based Youth Worker

To do this work, people will need hands-on tools, many of which may emerge most effectively from local innovations and experiments. These tools may include the following:

- **Create a tool kit.** Provide the tools that help youth workers understand spiritual development and moral/ethical development. Find common space for youth worker dialogue about spiritual development and moral development and then ways to apply what they learn into their specific setting.
- **Develop the needed materials.** Develop the people, practices, exercises, resources, Web, and print materials that would be used at local workshops and conferences so that these ideas and goals can spread through existing networks.
- **Recommend a beginning bibliography.** Identify the essential literature that should be read by youth workers in both sectors that can become a shared knowledge base about young people, adolescent development, and best practices related to the core competencies of youth workers (see Appendix G).

Tap into Existing Models and Networks

“Don’t reinvent the wheel; if there are programs/organizations out there that provide services or will train staff/volunteers, they should use them.”

– Survey Respondent

The national thought leaders recommended that we find examples of cross-sector training and professional development and capture the lessons already learned. Some of this information was already provided by survey respondents when they were asked to identify places and organizations that already offer “professional development opportunities, systems, or frameworks” that build bridges between faith-based and community-based youth-serving organizations. Some of the suggestions were relevant to both audiences, but may not be doing intentional work to bridge these two groups and may be key places to begin capturing lessons. (See Appendix C for a list of the various organizations named.) These included:

- Existing systems and practices that focus on both faith-based and community-based youth workers (e.g., American Camp Association)
- Local, state, or regional intermediaries, networks, coalitions and alliances
- Community-based asset-building efforts or coalitions
- Faith-based and interfaith/multi-denominational efforts

- Issue-oriented social justice and advocacy networks
- National community-based organizations
- Foundation- and government-initiated efforts

In short, find the examples of cross-sector training to capture lessons learned. There may be many organizations, particularly at the local level, that are doing innovative work that touches on the possibilities for cross-sector professional development. Some of those models are intentionally cross-sector; others are cross-sector simply because of who is involved and the nature of the community. Finding and learning from these examples provides an experiential foundation for future collaboration.

Begin the Conversations . . . and the Experiments

This exploratory project begins to lay out an agenda for dialogue and action aimed at strengthening youth work practice in both community-based and faith-based settings. Yet, in many ways, it is only a start—like the greeting and introductions in a long, significant conversation. It appears that we have something to talk about together, and people who have been engaged in this process have appreciated the invitation and the “space” to have these conversations.

Our hope is that these conversations will continue, be deepened, and spread to other people, settings, and networks. Frameworks and questions presented in this publication may be springboards for exploratory dialogues and new relationships.

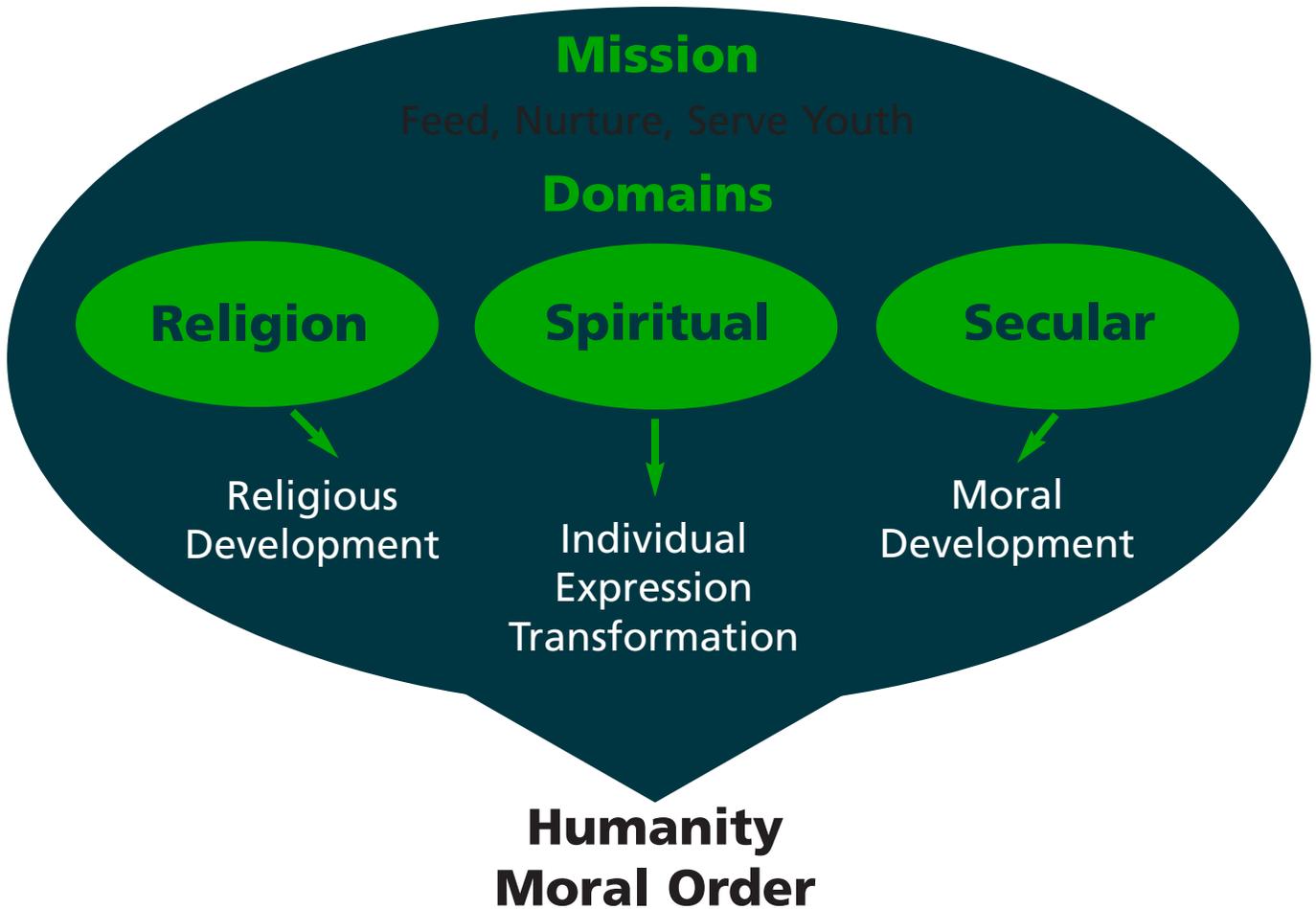
There is also a sense, though, that the conversation will only get us so far. It’s easy, for example, to spend so much time on the barriers and challenges of cross-sector engagement that you lose perspective on what really happens when people of good will come together for shared learning and action. It’s easy to forget about what you can do individually and together to support and engage young people in your organizations and communities. These conversations and learnings can lead to important new shared activities and actions—on-the-ground experiences based in relationships where trust, mutual respect, and shared stories can grow.

There is energy, enthusiasm, and much work to do to build these bridges. All of us together can make the difference. Join us in being catalytic in finding common ground.



Framework for Moral and Spiritual Development

Faith and Expression of Service (Ministry)



COMMON ELEMENTS:
People – Belief Systems ■ *Place – Community* ■ *Space – Learning*

One of the requests from participants in the national consultation of thought leaders was to provide a framework for moral and spiritual development. This is one that was developed at the meeting. This is only a starting point; additional efforts to build consensus would be needed.



Preliminary Reading List for Youth Workers

One of the requests from participants in the national consultation of thought leaders was to compile a reading list that would introduce youth workers in each sector to the foundational texts for their work with youth. Below is a preliminary list of titles that surfaced through nominations from consultation participants as well as the editors' knowledge of the fields. This list is only a starting point; additional efforts to establish criteria and build some consensus would be needed to develop a reading list that is not limited by the knowledge and perspectives of the creators.

General Youth Development

Benson, P. L. (2006). *All kids are our kids: What communities must do to raise caring and responsible children and adolescents (rev. ed.)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, B. B., Larson, R. W., & Sarawathi, T. S. (Eds.) (2002). *The world's youth: Adolescence in eight regions of the globe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hamilton, S., & Hamilton, M. A (2004). *The youth development handbook: Coming of age in American communities*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development: Committee on community-level programs for youth* (J. Eccles & J. A. Gootman, Eds.) [Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Board on Children, Youth and Families]. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Villarruel, F. A., Perkins, D. F., Borden, L. M., & Keith, J. G. (2003) *Community youth development: Programs, policies, practices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Adolescent Spiritual Development

Roehlkepartain, E. C., King, P. E., Wagener, L. M., & Benson, P. L. (Eds.) (2006). *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Smith, C., with Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, M. (2004). *A part of you so deep: What vulnerable adolescents have to say about spirituality*. Burlington, VT: New England Network for Child, Youth & Family Services.

Faith-Based Youth Work

Multi-Faith Perspectives

Patel, E., & Brodeur, P. (Eds.) (2006). Building the interfaith youth movement: Beyond dialogue to action. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Roehlkepartain, E. C. (1998). Building assets in congregations: A practical guide to helping youth grow up healthy. Minneapolis: Search Institute.

Christian Perspectives

Clark, C. (2004). Hurt: Inside the world of today's teenagers. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Dean, K. C., & Foster, R. (1998). The Godbearing life: The art of soul tending for youth ministry. Nashville, TN: Upper Room.

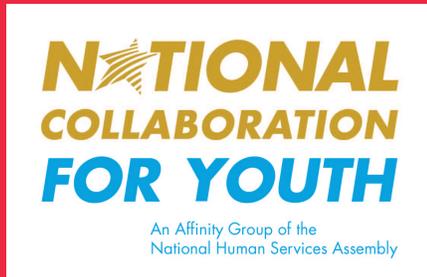
McCarty, R. J., Delgatto, L., & Dunne, T. (2005). The vision of Catholic youth ministry: Fundamentals, theory, and practice. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press.

Wimberly, A. S. (2005). Keep it real: Working with today's Black youth. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005.

Jewish Perspectives

Kadushin, C., Kelner, S., & Saxe, L. (2000). Being a Jewish teenager in America: Trying to make it. Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University.

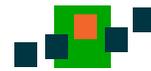
Prepared by



with contributions from the American Camp Association



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Youth Worker Survey

1. Exploring the Interests and Needs of Community-based and Faith-based Youth...

The National Collaboration for Youth and Search Institute are exploring whether and how youth workers in different settings might learn from and with each other about how to prepare staff to work effectively with young people. Results from this survey will be combined with other information to highlight the opportunities and challenges in building bridges between youth workers in local youth organizations and faith-based youth workers. This project is supported by Lilly Endowment, Inc.

Your responses to this survey are anonymous. Your responses will not be linked back to you, but will be combined with other responses to find patterns.

2. Your Work with Youth

1. Which of the following best describes the PRIMARY organization where you work with youth?

- Local youth development organization (not religious)
- Public institution (e.g., public school)
- Congregation (e.g., church, mosque, synagogue, temple, etc.)
- Other faith-based or parachurch organization (e.g., Salvation Army, Young Life)
- Other (please specify)

2. What is the scope of your organization's work with youth?

- Local
- Statewide or regional
- National
- Other (please specify)

3. Briefly describe the young people your organization primarily serves (e.g., age range, number of youth you reach, racial/ethnic background, economic level, etc.).

4. What kind of community does your organization primarily serve? (Check all that apply.)

- Urban/major city
- Suburban
- Small town
- Rural
- Reservation
- Other (please specify)

5. How much emphasis does your organization place on the following areas of development? Please rank them from 1 to 5, with 1 being the greatest emphasis.

	1	2	3	4	5
Physical development	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social development	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Emotional development	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Cognitive development	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Spiritual development	<input type="checkbox"/>				

3. Priorities

6. In YOUR work with youth, how important are each of the following?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Essential
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involving and empowering youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping young people develop spiritually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Please comment or expand on your responses to any of the above items.

4. Interest for Ongoing Learning and Development

8. How much would you be interested in training, resources, and/or educational opportunities that would increase your effectiveness in the following areas?

	Not interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested	Already feel prepared in this area
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involving and empowering youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping young people develop spiritually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Please comment of expand on your responses to any of the above items.

5. Bridging Between Faith-based and Community-based Youth Work

10. If training, resources or other professional development opportunities were offered that intentionally included both community-based and faith-based youth workers, how interested would you be in participating?

- No very
- Somewhat
- Very

11. What do you think would be some of the ADVANTAGES or OPPORTUNITIES of bringing together community-based and faith-based youth workers for professional development?

12. What do you think would be some of the OBSTACLES or CHALLENGES of bringing together community-based and faith-based youth workers for professional development?

13. Please tell us about any professional development opportunities, systems, or frameworks that you know that already build bridges between faith-based and community-based youth-serving organizations.

14. What three recommendations do you have for how community-based and faith-based youth workers could work together to better prepare staff.

1.
2.
3.

6. More About You

15. Where you live and work:

Name of organization:
City:
State:

16. Your age:

17. Your gender:

18. How do you describe yourself? (Mark all that apply to you.)

- African American, Black, or African
- American Indian or Native American (including Alaska Native)
- Arab or Arab American
- Asian or Asian American
- Hispanic, Latino, or Latina American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White or European American
- Other (please specify)

19. Your personal religious affiliation:

- None
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Other (please specify)

20. If you chose Christian, please list the denomination below:

21. How active or devout are you in your own religious beliefs, participation and practices?

- No very
- Somewhat
- Very

22. If you would like to know the results of this project or would be willing to be interviewed as a follow-up to this survey, please give us your name and how we might contact you:

Name:

Email:

Phone:

23. I would be willing to be interviewed, if requested.

Yes

No

7. Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Best wishes in your ongoing and important work with young people.



Youth Development Worker Competencies

(Approved by the National Collaboration for Youth, January 2004.

Download at: www.nydic.org/nydic/library/publications/ncypubs.htm)

The following core competencies include knowledge, skills and personal attributes needed by entry-level youth development workers for effective youth development practice. Youth development core competencies are the “demonstrated capacities” that form a foundation for high-quality performance in the workplace, contribute to the mission of the organization and allow a youth development worker to be a resource to youth, organizations and communities.

Understands and applies basic child and adolescent development principles.

- Understands ages and stages of child development.
- Applies fundamentals of positive youth development.
- Takes into consideration trends and issues that affect children and youth.

Communicates and develops positive relationships with youth.

- Listens, in a non-judgmental way.
- Uses the language of respect.
- Exhibits concern for the well being of others and interest in the feelings and experiences of others.

Adapts, facilitates and evaluates age-appropriate activities with and for the group.

- Relates to and engages the group.
- Initiates, sustains and nurtures group interactions and relationships through completion of an ongoing project or activity.
- Teaches and models effective problem solving and conflict negotiation.
- Guides group behavior in an age-appropriate manner.

Respects and honors cultural and human diversity.

- Exhibits an awareness of commonalities and differences (such as gender, race, age, culture, ethnicity, class, religion, disability) among youth of diverse backgrounds and shows respect for those of different talents, abilities, sexual orientation and faith.
- Builds on diversity among and between individuals to strengthen the program community, and the community at large.
- Serves as a role model for the principles of inclusion and tolerance.

Involves and empowers youth.

- Actively consults, involves, and encourages youth to contribute to programs and the communities in which they live.
- Organizes and facilitates youth leadership development activities.

Identifies potential risk factors (in a program environment) and takes measures to reduce those risks.

- Identifies basic risk and protective factors in youth development.
- Designs and monitors emotionally and physically safe program environments, interactions, and activities for youth and intervenes when safety demands it.
- Identifies potential issues (and possible signs and symptoms) with youth that require intervention or referral (e.g., suicidal tendencies, substance abuse, child abuse, violent tendencies, eating disorders, obesity, sexually transmitted diseases).

Cares for, involves and works with families and community.

- Understands and cares about youth and their families.
- Actively engages family members in program and community initiatives.
- Understands the greater community context in which youth and families live.
- Communicates effectively with youth and their families – one-to-one communications as well as in group settings.

Works as part of a team and shows professionalism.

- Articulates a personal “vision” of youth development work (to co-workers, volunteers, and participants) and expresses current and potential contributions to that vision.
- Adheres to ethical conduct and professionalism at all times (confidentiality, honoring appropriate boundaries).
- Acts in a timely, appropriate, and responsible manner.
- Is accountable, through work in teams and independently by accepting and delegating responsibility.
- Displays commitment to the mission of the agency.

Demonstrates the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.

- Models, demonstrates and teaches positive values like caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
- Incorporates wellness practices into personal lifestyle.
- Practices stress management and stress reduction.

Interacts with and relates to youth in ways that support asset building.

- Challenges and develops values and attitudes of youth in a supportive manner.
- Designs program activities, structure and collaborations that show evidence of asset building.

Youth Worker Survey: Methods, Sample, and Detailed Tables

The National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) and Search Institute (SI) developed a brief (45-item) online survey to explore the interests, priorities, and opportunities for building bridges between community-based and faith-based youth workers. The survey gathered basic information on the youth workers and their organizations. A series of items explored their sense of priorities and training interests in 12 youth worker competencies (based on a prior framework from the National Collaboration for Youth, Appendix B), and then asked about the survey participants' interests, concerns, hopes, and experiences with cross-sector training and development.

Data were gathered between November 20, 2006 and January 9, 2007 through www.surveymonkey.com. Survey respondents were invited to participate in the survey through broadcast emails from both NCY and SI to their constituencies in both faith-based and community-based organizations. Others, such as 4-H and Interfaith Youth Core, also chose to forward the email invitation to their networks. Data are filtered in the report below to focus on community- and faith-based youth organizations.

Overall, 1,322 people participated in the survey. This report focuses on results from the total sample and from those from local youth development organizations (n=569) (hereafter “community-based youth workers”) and those working in either a congregation or other faith-based or parachurch organization (n=404) (hereafter “faith-based youth workers”). Thirty youth workers in the total sample indicated that they worked in both sectors, and 313 indicated that they work in public institutions, such as public schools. These latter two groups are included in data on the total sample, but are not reported separately in this report. Search Institute conducted data analyses.

Because this survey relied on a self-selected convenience sample, it cannot be considered nationally representative, though it is fairly large and diverse. Thus, findings cannot be accurately generalized to all youth workers. It is intended to be a preliminary exploration of the issues involved in seeking common ground between community-based and faith-based youth workers.

The following pages include tables of detailed findings from the youth worker survey. Following the tables are the responses to open-ended questions in the survey.

Table C-1
Characteristics of Participating Youth Workers

	Sample Size* (N)	Percentages		
		All	Community-Based	Faith-Based
Gender				
• Female	752	72%	75%	65%
• Male	298	29	25	35
Race/Ethnicity				
• African American, Black, or African	109	10	11	8
• American Indian or Native American (including Alaska Native)	23	2	3	1
• Arab or Arab American	4	0	1	0
• Asian or Asian American	13	1	1	2
• Hispanic, Latino, or Latina American	42	4	5	3
• Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	5	0	0	1
• White or European American	863	81	79	85
Age				
• 20 – 29	218	22	21	28
• 30 – 39	242	24	27	28
• 40 – 49	235	24	24	20
• 50 – 59	244	25	22	20
• 60+	53	5	6	3
Religious Affiliation				
• None	105	10	15	1
• Buddhist	9	1	1	<1
• Christian	785	76	73	70
• Jewish	98	9	2	23
• Muslim	9	1	1	0
• Multiple or other	34	3	8	6
Level of Religious Engagement (How active or devout are you in your own religious beliefs, participation, and practices?)				
• Not very		13	19	4
• Somewhat		27	32	15
• Very		60	49	84

* Does not sum to total sample due to missing data.

Table C-2
Organizational Characteristics

	Total Sample	Cmnty-Based	Faith-Based
Primary organizational affiliation of sample			
• Community-based organization	43	100	—
• Public institution (e.g., public school)	24	—	—
• Congregation (e.g., church, mosque, synagogue, temple, etc.)	22	—	55
• Other faith-based or parachurch organization (e.g. Salvation Army, Young Life)	9	—	45
• Both (self-report that they are both community-based and faith-based)	2	—	—
Scope of organization's work and type of community primarily served			
• Local			
○ Urban/major city	18	19	15
○ Suburban	20	11	34
○ Small town/rural/reservation	24	25	20
• Statewide or regional	17	19	13
• National/international	21	26	20

Table C-3
Importance of Each Competency, by Sector

In your work with youth, how important is each of the following?	All	Community-Based	Faith-Based
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.			
• Not important	1	0	0
• Somewhat important	11	11	15
• Very important	36	29	46
• Essential	52	59	39
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.			
• Not important	0	0	0
• Somewhat important	1	1	1
• Very important	14	11	13
• Essential	85	88	87
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.			
• Not important	1	0	1
• Somewhat important	6	7	4
• Very important	35	31	41
• Essential	58	62	54
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.			
• Not important	1	0	1
• Somewhat important	8	6	15
• Very important	31	27	37
• Essential	60	67	47
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.			
• Not important	4	2	6
• Somewhat important	25	27	21
• Very important	33	32	35
• Essential	38	39	37
Involving and empowering youth.			
• Not important	0	0	0
• Somewhat important	2	1	2
• Very important	24	17	28
• Essential	73	82	72
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.			
• Not important	2	1	2
• Somewhat important	13	9	19
• Very important	34	32	32
• Essential	52	57	47

In your work with youth, how important is each of the following?	All	Cmnty-Based	Faith-Based
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.			
• Not important	2	1	2
• Somewhat important	14	13	14
• Very important	39	37	42
• Essential	46	49	42
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.			
• Not important	0	0	0
• Somewhat important	5	3	10
• Very important	29	30	33
• Essential	65	67	59
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.			
• Not important	0	0	0
• Somewhat important	2	1	2
• Very important	19	18	19
• Essential	79	80	80
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.			
• Not important	1	1	2
• Somewhat important	5	2	8
• Very important	28	25	32
• Essential	65	73	57
Helping young people develop spiritually.			
• Not important	18	26	1
• Somewhat important	30	42	5
• Very important	19	20	16
• Essential	33	12	78

Table C-4
Interest in Ongoing Learning and Development, by Sector

How much would you be interested in training, resource, and/or educational opportunities to increase your effectiveness?	All	Cmnty-Based	Faith-Based
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.			
• Not Interested	4	4	5
• Somewhat interested	25	24	25
• Very interested	46	47	48
• Already feel prepared in this area	25	25	23
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.			
• Not Interested	2	2	2
• Somewhat interested	14	13	14
• Very interested	56	59	51
• Already feel prepared in this area	28	27	32
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.			
• Not Interested	3	3	3
• Somewhat interested	22	22	25
• Very interested	54	55	51
• Already feel prepared in this area	20	20	21
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.			
• Not Interested	5	3	10
• Somewhat interested	24	20	29
• Very interested	49	54	41

How much would you be interested in training, resource, and/or educational opportunities to increase your effectiveness?	All	Cmnty-Based	Faith-Based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already feel prepared in this area 	22	22	20
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Interested 	13	12	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat interested 	31	32	26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very interested 	35	38	38
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already feel prepared in this area 	21	18	23
Involving and empowering youth.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Interested 	1	1	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat interested 	11	8	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very interested 	65	67	63
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already feel prepared in this area 	23	24	21
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Interested 	4	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat interested 	23	22	27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very interested 	52	51	51
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already feel prepared in this area 	20	24	17
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Interested 	4	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat interested 	22	22	24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very interested 	56	54	58
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already feel prepared in this area 	18	21	13
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Interested 	5	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat interested 	21	17	26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very interested 	39	41	32
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already feel prepared in this area 	36	37	37
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Interested 	4	4	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat interested 	17	16	19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very interested 	39	39	36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already feel prepared in this area 	40	41	41
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.			

How much would you be interested in training, resource, and/or educational opportunities to increase your effectiveness?	All	Cmnty-Based	Faith-Based
• Not Interested	4	2	8
• Somewhat interested	16	14	21
• Very interested	60	61	53
• Already feel prepared in this area	21	23	18
Helping young people develop spiritually.			
• Not Interested	22	32	4
• Somewhat interested	26	30	15
• Very interested	37	29	57
• Already feel prepared in this area	14	9	24

Table C-5**Perspectives on Competencies, by Personal Religious Commitment**

Core Competency	Focus	Personal Religious Commitment		
		Not Very	Somewhat	Very
		Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	Essential to youth work	57
	Very interested in training	47	47	48
	Already feel prepared	29	20	26
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	Essential to youth work	90	82	85
	Very interested in training	60	61	54
	Already feel prepared	24	22	31
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age-appropriate activities with and for the group.	Essential to youth work	62	60	58
	Very interested in training	60	58	53
	Already feel prepared	17	17	22
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	Essential to youth work	69	59	57
	Very interested in training	57	56	46
	Already feel prepared	24	14	22
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	Essential to youth work	40	34	40
	Very interested in training	34	34	36
	Already feel prepared	16	14	24
Involving and empowering youth.	Essential to youth work	74	73	75
	Very interested in training	67	68	64
	Already feel prepared	20	20	24
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	Essential to youth work	53	54	52
	Very interested in training	56	53	53
	Already feel prepared	22	18	21
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	Essential to youth work	43	45	47
	Very interested in training	59	57	57
	Already feel prepared	15	12	19
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	Essential to youth work	63	69	64
	Very interested in training	39	45	36
	Already feel prepared	35	28	39
Demonstrating the	Essential to youth work	82	77	81

Core Competency	Focus	Personal Religious Commitment		
		Not Very	Somewhat	Very
attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	Very interested in training	39	42	38
	Already feel prepared	48	33	42
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	Essential to youth work	74	64	66
	Very interested in training	61	62	60
	Already feel prepared	23	17	21
Helping young people develop spiritually.	Essential to youth work	8	18	48
	Very interested in training	25	30	46
	Already feel prepared	3	4	20

Table C-6
Perspectives on Competencies, by Age

Core Competency	Focus	Age				
		20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	Essential to youth work	40	57	51	61	70
	Very interested in training	50	48	48	44	43
	Already feel prepared	18	25	25	30	28
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	Essential to youth work	89	89	80	84	85
	Very interested in training	58	53	56	57	51
	Already feel prepared	27	30	29	26	28
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	Essential to youth work	56	61	53	68	47
	Very interested in training	58	52	55	55	49
	Already feel prepared	18	22	20	21	23
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	Essential to youth work	52	59	55	66	70
	Very interested in training	47	46	51	52	49
	Already feel prepared	18	20	20	24	21
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	Essential to youth work	37	37	38	39	45
	Very interested in training	34	35	35	36	43
	Already feel prepared	20	17	18	25	26
Involving and empowering youth.	Essential to youth work	75	79	70	71	80
	Very interested in training	68	62	62	68	60
	Already feel prepared	19	25	24	23	31
Identifying potential risk factors in the program	Essential to youth work	45	53	54	56	52
	Very interested in training	54	53	51	55	43

Core Competency	Focus	Age				
		20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	Already feel prepared	18	19	23	21	28
	Essential to youth work	46	42	49	46	42
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	Very interested in training	54	55	55	62	62
	Already feel prepared	18	17	19	18	19
	Essential to youth work	55	67	64	74	64
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	Very interested in training	34	34	40	45	48
	Already feel prepared	35	39	35	35	40
	Essential to youth work	77	83	76	81	81
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	Very interested in training	36	34	38	44	37
	Already feel prepared	40	45	38	38	45
	Essential to youth work	58	72	66	72	68
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	Very interested in training	56	60	60	64	66
	Already feel prepared	17	20	21	21	25
	Essential to youth work	38	41	29	32	21
Helping young people develop spiritually.	Very interested in training	41	39	36	40	33
	Already feel prepared	11	16	13	15	14

Table C-7
Perspectives on Competencies, by Gender

Core Competency	Focus	Female	Male
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	Essential to youth work	56	48
	Very interested in training	48	44
	Already feel prepared	25	24
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	Essential to youth work	86	82
	Very interested in training	57	53
	Already feel prepared	26	32
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	Essential to youth work	63	50
	Very interested in training	56	52
	Already feel prepared	21	19
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	Essential to youth work	64	46
	Very interested in training	52	44
	Already feel prepared	21	21
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	Essential to youth work	41	32
	Very interested in training	37	30
	Already feel prepared	19	23
Involving and empowering youth.	Essential to youth work	77	67
	Very interested in training	66	61
	Already feel prepared	22	26
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	Essential to youth work	56	45
	Very interested in training	54	50
	Already feel prepared	21	19
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	Essential to youth work	47	43
	Very interested in training	59	51
	Already feel prepared	17	19
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	Essential to youth work	68	60
	Very interested in training	39	37
	Already feel prepared	37	33
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	Essential to youth work	81	75
	Very interested in training	38	39
	Already feel prepared	41	38
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	Essential to youth work	70	58
	Very interested in training	61	60
	Already feel prepared	21	19
Helping young people develop spiritually.	Essential to youth work	30	42
	Very interested in training	37	41
	Already feel prepared	12	19

Table C-8
Perspectives on Competencies, by Location

Core Competency	Focus	Urbanicity			
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/ Sm. Town/Res	Not Local
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	Essential to youth work	50	51	49	54
	Very interested in training	50	47	46	44
	Already feel prepared	24	23	24	26
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	Essential to youth work	85	88	84	84
	Very interested in training	59	51	58	57
	Already feel prepared	27	31	26	26
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	Essential to youth work	58	60	53	61
	Very interested in training	56	55	54	53
	Already feel prepared	20	15	22	22
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	Essential to youth work	66	56	53	63
	Very interested in training	55	46	49	49
	Already feel prepared	27	16	19	24
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	Essential to youth work	43	33	34	40
	Very interested in training	40	34	34	34
	Already feel prepared	22	16	20	23
Involving and empowering youth.	Essential to youth work	72	72	73	76
	Very interested in training	64	66	68	62
	Already feel prepared	26	22	18	25
Identifying potential risk factors in the program	Essential to youth work	55	48	50	53
	Very interested in training	57	47	56	50

Core Competency	Focus	Urbanicity			
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/ Sm. Town/Res	Not Local
environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	Already feel prepared	19	18	17	24
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	Essential to youth work	46	40	47	48
	Very interested in training	62	58	60	50
	Already feel prepared	20	12	17	20
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	Essential to youth work	64	65	64	66
	Very interested in training	39	35	43	38
	Already feel prepared	38	35	32	38
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	Essential to youth work	77	81	80	77
	Very interested in training	41	35	42	39
	Already feel prepared	42	40	38	40
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	Essential to youth work	65	61	66	67
	Very interested in training	58	62	61	59
	Already feel prepared	27	14	19	22
Helping young people develop spiritually.	Essential to youth work	28	50	28	30
	Very interested in training	37	45	38	32
	Already feel prepared	16	14	11	16

Table C-9**Perspectives on Competencies, by Interest in Cross-Sector Training**

Core Competency	Focus	Interest in Cross-Sector Training		
		Not Very	Somewhat	Very
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	Essential to youth work	42	48	57
	Very interested in training	19	37	55
	Already feel prepared	25	25	25
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	Essential to youth work	81	81	88
	Very interested in training	38	50	62
	Already feel prepared	31	27	30
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	Essential to youth work	63	55	61
	Very interested in training	36	47	61
	Already feel prepared	22	21	20
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	Essential to youth work	57	56	62
	Very interested in training	28	43	55
	Already feel prepared	29	19	22
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	Essential to youth work	31	33	41
	Very interested in training	9	24	44
	Already feel prepared	21	20	21
Involving and empowering youth.	Essential to youth work	64	70	77
	Very interested in training	50	60	70
	Already feel prepared	24	22	23
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	Essential to youth work	42	48	56
	Very interested in training	40	42	61
	Already feel prepared	40	42	17
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	Essential to youth work	37	42	50
	Very interested in training	38	47	65
	Already feel prepared	16	19	17
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	Essential to youth work	68	61	69
	Very interested in training	31	31	44
	Already feel prepared	39	37	35
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	Essential to youth work	78	76	82
	Very interested in training	23	34	44

Core Competency	Focus	Interest in Cross-Sector Training		
		Not Very	Somewhat	Very
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	Already feel prepared	46	39	44
	Essential to youth work	63	62	70
	Very interested in training	45	53	67
Helping young people develop spiritually.	Already feel prepared	24	21	20
	Essential to youth work	24	28	38
	Very interested in training	10	26	48
	Already feel prepared	10	13	15

Table C-10**Levels of Readiness for Professional Development, by Sector**

	Essential	Already Prepared	Felt Need*	Very Interested	Readiness
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth. ^[s2]					
Community-based sample	87	24	63	62	63
Faith-based sample	86	32	54	50	52
Involving and empowering youth.					
Community-based sample	80	24	56	67	62
Faith-based sample	72	22	50	63	57
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.					
Community-based sample	72	22	50	63	57
Faith-based sample	57	20	37	53	45
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.					
Community-based sample	62	19	43	57	50
Faith-based sample	54	22	32	50	41
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.					
Community-based sample	66	21	45	55	50
Faith-based sample	47	20	27	42	35
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.					
Community-based sample	56	22	34	55	45
Faith-based sample	47	17	30	51	41

Caring for, involving and working with families and community.					
Community-based sample	48	19	29	56	43
Faith-based sample	43	14	29	57	43
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.					
Community-based sample	81	39	42	43	43
Faith-based sample	79	41	38	35	37
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.					
Community-based sample	59	24	35	48	42
Faith-based sample	40	22	18	47	33
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.					
Community-based sample	68	36	32	42	37
Faith-based sample	57	38	19	32	26
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.					
Community-based sample	39	17	22	38	30
Faith-based sample	38	23	15	39	27
Helping young people develop spiritually.					
Community-based sample	14	8	6	31	19
Faith-based sample	77	27	50	56	53

* “Felt Need” is the gap between the percentage of youth workers who say that it is essential to their work with youth and those who say they are “already prepared.”

** “Average Need and Interest” is the average percentage of “Felt Need” and “Very Interested.”

Table C-11
Readiness for Learning about Core Competencies, Total Sample

	Essential to Work	Already Prepared	Felt Need*	Very Interested	Readiness**
Involving and empowering youth.	73	23	50	65	58
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	85	28	57	56	57
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	65	21	44	60	52
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age-appropriate activities with and for the group.	58	20	38	54	46
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	60	22	38	49	44
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	52	20	32	52	42
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	46	18	28	56	42
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	79	40	39	39	39
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	52	25	27	46	37
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	65	36	29	39	34
Helping young people develop spiritually.	33	14	19	37	28
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	38	21	17	35	26

(Shaded columns are calculations.)

* “Felt Need” is the gap between the percentage of youth workers who say that it is essential to their work with youth and those who say they are “already prepared.”

** “Readiness” is the average percentage of “Felt Need” and “Very Interested.”

Table C-12

Qualitative Results, Advantages or Opportunities

Below is a sample of verbatim responses to open-ended questions on the youth worker survey, organized into themes. Original spelling and grammar were retained.

What do you think are some of the ADVANTAGES or OPPORTUNITIES of bringing together community-based and faith-based youth workers for professional development?

Out of 1,322 respondents, 893 responded to the question about advantages and opportunities.

Learning information, sharing resources, learning about each other and broadening our diversity, collaborating

Overwhelmingly people saw as an advantage of working together across faith-based and community-based organizations the opportunity to learn from each other, share resources, to provide greater diversity to the work and to possibly do further collaborative work together. They also saw this as an opportunity to share resources and provide leads to youth they may not already be serving.

- Would be beneficial to discuss best practices in influencing youth to value interfaith dialogue.
- Ultimately, we are all working to better the lives of youth. We have limited resources, so the more we work together, the further we can go.
- Advantages would be connecting people within the community and church. Many do cross over, and taking advantage of those crossovers can show kids how their faith life and secular lives intersect. Difference of opinion and experience can also be shared, plus how people can work together despite those differences.
- Often times we are working with the same young people and it would be good to support each other in these efforts.
- I believe religious organizations used to provide more of these services that community based orgs do today – there are many parallels and much common ground in terms of goals.
- Bringing people from different areas together could provide unique perspectives that might be crossover ideas that can be adapted. It would also be interesting to hear how the different groups affect each other – directly or indirectly.
- Provide the opportunity for groups to learn about each other's concerns, work and strategies, and laid the basis for collaboration; sharing power; increase awareness; provide opportunities for networking and sharing information; support youth development.

- I think it would have a somewhat enriching effect, build networks of opportunities. At minimum, the youth workers would hopefully come to a fuller knowledge and respect of each other and their work and ways of working.
- The biggest one I can think of is mutual respect and understanding of faith, religious, racial and cultural backgrounds, which is and will be increasingly important in this pluralistic world.
- Awareness of each other's strengths in areas where your organization is lacking ...we can't all be the best in every area of need, so why not refer!
- We all have a lot to learn from people in related but different fields, because our colleagues in different areas approach similar problems to ours in their own unique ways that can, in turn, help us see our problems in a fresh way.
- Networking. Discovering common goals and brainstorming ways to accomplish them together. Especially in a small community, like the one I work in, it would be great to enable groups to come together to bring up numbers by having occasional combined events. Interfaith dialogue is always good.
- I actually had the chance to do this with a colleague who works as a community-based youth worker. The advantages were to be found in the combination of our skill sets...synergy!
- Bridging cultural and religious gaps. Broaden perspectives by meeting people outside your culture.
- I come at this from an academic position that highly values the social sciences and theology. The two must be in conversation with one another. Youth ministry is naturally interdisciplinary.
- Often we, in the faith-based world, work within the realms of our respective faiths instead of through a large, sort of, "big picture" perspective. The community-based initiatives are great at bringing outside resources to their programs, which we may overlook because of our focus on spiritual learning.
- I believe that any time you get people with the same goal together you set up an environment for learning and networking. We are always stronger together. I also believe that youth work in many places is very lonely and people don't realize they aren't alone.
- It would enrich our awareness of a variety of religious worldviews and build bridges of understanding and mutual respect.
- I think if change is going to happen in our communities it has to be a joint effort. If we are all working separately to achieve peace in our world-communities then we are not using our resources wisely and in turn separating the community even more.

- This is relationship that is only casually attended to in our community; needs to be heightened as we have so much in common.
- I think that we can learn a lot from each other – the best practices in each environment. We also can realize that we have common goals and language that cuts across barriers.
- Professional development would help prepare both groups: for the real world; to develop interpersonal skills; to become tolerant; to understand that it's okay to disagree.
- Faith-based or not, there are many things that youth workers have in common. Our similarities outweigh our differences. And we are often not funded to do things together.
- Both can learn from one another. We started out to be almost exclusively spiritually oriented, but have since developed an appreciation for a more comprehensive youth development approach.
- Often community and faith based youth workers have passion and commitment without the advantage of professional development.
- It would help these youth workers form networks that might not have been formed otherwise. I think our society really separates out the spiritual and the secular to the point that the community organizations don't necessarily see the faith-based workers as a resource and partner. I think both can learn from each other and can support each other's work.
- Many of the effective tools and strategies for youth work are not specific to a certain setting, but are very adaptable principles which could be used in various places, with various groups. It seems wise to collaborate and bring the best minds together to share their successes and the things they have learned from their less positive experiences.
- The potential for community-based youth workers to gain awareness of spiritual development and spiritual needs of youth and the potential for faith-based youth workers to benefit from the youth development experience of community-based youth workers who may have had more access to research-based youth development information and greater exposure to effective youth development practices.
- All organizations that support youth have, in many cases, the same goal for the population they serve. It is very important that representatives of all organizations meet together for the sharing of ideas, for solutions to problems experienced by all organizations and for an understanding of the roles that each organization has in working with youth.

Having a greater impact on children and youth – and the whole child

People commented on the opportunity to better serve youth holistically and across the community so that one child was not torn between services. Instead, these youth workers saw the importance of working together to better serve children and youth.

- All agencies must work together to benefit the child and meet his/her needs effectively.
- Coordination of initiatives ideally helps to avoid duplication of services resulted in more services to more youth.
- Deeper impact on the community and better all-around social skills for those participating, to work together to the benefit of all youth.
- The more resources, assets and perspective that we all (faith-based and professional development specialists) can bring to the table, the more likely we are able to offer rich programs that resonate with youth and allow us to meet our ultimate objective of supporting the developmental needs of youth as they transition from adolescence to adulthood.
- We are all working with the same kids, when it comes down to it, and what is important is to serve them in the best manner possible. Leveraging all the resources in an area or community makes that a more realistic possibility – and it would help to create partnerships to strengthen the community as a whole.
- To provide a better opportunity for youth to develop into morally and strong and caring adults.
- Whether it be faith-based or community-based, people who work with kids all have the same passion in mind. We all need to work together for the betterment of our youth. And working together we have a better chance in reaching out and helping our youth!
- Our youth do not function solely in faith-based or community-based environments and if those working with the youth were given the chance to make networks and learn alongside those who work in the various communities it could enrich the opportunities that are then presented to the youth.
- Most teens that I work with are involved in community and faith-based programming. The joint development would help us to better understand each other and be the best possible resources to our youth.
- With both groups working together for the betterment of teens, all of us can help them be more open-minded toward other religions and also other economic backgrounds.
- I think several of our hopes for kids are common hopes. I don't think you can separate community and faith.

- We already see the advantages: at a base level, the networking of the two is invaluable for fundraising, community spirit, and to give the youth an idea how life works.
- Sharing and helping to incorporate ideas into the field to help expand and develop a base to support our youth.
- Our youth need us NOW! And we need each other. We all hold a piece of the answers.
- It would help for both groups to have and develop goals with children being in the center. The more healthy we can make our youth, the more likely they will be successful adults.
- We all work in isolation from one another. Knowledge of resources would enable us to provide the highest quality of care to our youth.
- A community is inclusive, no one should be left out. We all need to work together for the common good of helping young people grow to become nurturing, productive citizens.
- It would increase the community support youth have available, and give them something to believe in.

More community-wide efforts, systemic and coordinated

Some respondents spoke about the connections between faith-based and community-based youth organizations providing an opportunity to develop a more systemic, community-wide approach to working with youth.

- Faith centers can't be seen as separate from the community, although they may cater to a subset of the community. The larger role faith plays in community can only be understood if it is involved in the community.
- Our community has started a connection with these two groups and it is vital for us to be able to care for our community. We all need to know what is going on with young people and their families, not community can work without both groups working together.
- There is a desperate need to collaborate in the urban setting. We are missing significant segments of youths' lives due to our "silo" mentality and unwillingness to network with each other. There would be the opportunity to share resources and eliminate doubling in some areas.
- It is a systemic approach that works. You cannot truly separate faith from community: faith is an integral part of every community, and attempts to segregate faith from community are futile.

Table C-13

Qualitative Results, Obstacles or Challenges

What do you think would be some of the OBSTACLES or CHALLENGES of bringing together community-based and faith-based youth workers for professional development?

Of the 1,322 respondents, 879 completed the question on obstacles and challenges.

Respondents were concerned that the differing beliefs, values and goals would be a challenge and specifically as those differences created a judgmental and exclusive environment.

A few respondents, in addition to proposing an obstacle or challenge, provided a suggestion for how to meet that challenge. For example:

- Expenses of bringing everyone together. Subjects of interest may pertain to some and not others. Time. Perhaps an online knowledge bank could resolve the above. Best practices could be taken down here. Experts in specific areas could write their insights.
- Different opinions, practices, and attitudes will always bring about conflict, but we should all be willing to keep our minds open to other perspectives.
- Theological, ethical and philosophical differences among workers means that we will all have different reasons for serving our young people, but I think that if loving youth is the most important thing we can work through the differences of approaches and beliefs.
- For some churches, it may be difficult to set aside the spiritual aspect in discussing youth. I wouldn't have difficulty doing that knowing that when I take things back to my church I know I could add that back in.

Different values, belief systems, agendas and goals

Many people mentioned that an obstacle or challenge would be the differing goals, missions, values, agendas and belief systems of the two types of organizations. This difference and the fear of a lack of open-mindedness or distrust of imposing one specific agenda were sometimes hard to differentiate.

There were also comments in this theme concerning the different preparation of staffs in both sectors that could present obstacles.

- I think they have two different missions and therefore that could present a challenge. They are each looking to accomplish a goal in their own way.
- We have different agenda items. My focus is to help the teens develop their Jewish identities. That is a very narrow focus and may be contradictory to a community program.

- Different paradigms, methods, and approaches to work with youth, as well as different expectations for outcomes.
- Conflicting ideas on how risk-taking teens can take in their self-exploration vs. teaching them a set of values and expected behaviors.
- Religion plays a major role in the work that I do and that would be taken out of the equation.
- The concern of some community-based institutions to mention faith issues. The concern of faith-based institutions to see a child or adolescent holistically – believing that if we deal with their spiritual lives, they will be fine.
- Each has their primary focus or ‘agenda’ and some of the needs for faith-based youth workers vary. The secular and church offices are not always run the same.
- Speaking a “faith-based” language in a secular environment could prove challenging, depending on the openness of sharing one’s faith perspective in a public forum.
- Different methodologies. Different worldviews and understanding of the core roots of some of youth struggles.
- The different ideologies of working with youth that are based on theory and not Bible.
- Have a different view of what youth development is; come from different backgrounds/experiences.
- Finding a common ground. Much of what I do relies on faith. Without it I would have a hard time teaching kids what to do.
- Faith-based youth workers may want to apply best practices and evidenced-based learning to meeting the needs of their youth congregation, however, these approaches may be viewed by the church as being in direct conflict/contradiction to church doctrine. The religious side of working with churches may be difficult for some non-church going folks to appreciate, e.g. opening and closing prayer.

Challenge of creating a safe, non-judgmental space open to change and the fear of both organizations being judgmental, exclusive and proselytizing and not being open to different religious beliefs or values

Respondents suggested that a key obstacle or challenge would be organizations being strident about their own perspective and not being able to be open-minded. This was mentioned most frequently of faith-based organizations and the fact that their focus may be to expose only one belief system at the expense of teaching a diversity of belief systems. In addition, that work with youth should be done in only one way (religious or secular).

- Many faith-based workers, like me, feel that they should only work in Christian settings and in Christian language because the church supports them. Any straying from that could be misunderstood by funders.
- Some people do not believe in God or a higher power. This setting would be difficult for faith-based youth workers. It is a conflict of interest.
- The greatest obstacle is the doctrine and religious teachings of various faiths. A true meeting of the minds must happen prior to implementing a collaborative program. The spirit of religion must be evident without criticizing each other for not having the same understanding of doctrines as the others.
- Establishing a training session where all persons of faith could feel like they are respected and acknowledged as well as establishing such a session as a safe place for collaboration and learning – NOT for proselytizing.
- Potential issues if there were faith-based youth workers who felt they could not set aside specific religious traditions/beliefs in the interest of working in the wider community without evangelizing.
- Their human arrogance and assumption that only their views are the correct ones. This self-centeredness is perhaps the root of all evil, since it leads to ethnic cleansing. How do you teach tolerance?
- Creating a truly safe and non-judgmental space.
- The major challenge is this by and large means Christian, which I am not and find incredibly stifling to be around. If it were faith in a global sense, great, but if it means dominated by Christians and Christian thought... that drops my interest level significantly.
- Tolerance of the “truth” everyone believes they are the sole possessor of and the others who do not “possess” the “truth” or at least the right truth.
- Religious organizations that would try to recruit and an intolerance for religious activities on the other side.
- My focus is Jewish youth. I teach respect for other religious beliefs. But, because the foundation of our programs is Jewish law and ethics, I could foresee conflicts in approach with non-Jewish youth workers. Some of what I teach, for example such as the importance of marrying Jewish and raising children Jewishly, could be perceived as not respecting “diversity”.
- Issues such as birth control, abortion, etc. Moral issues; if the community-based organizations do not honor Christian principles with regards to moral issues, there would be problems.

- Some are afraid that the faith-based groups will evangelize and don't understand that we are bound by the same confidentiality issues.
- Me first agendas – churches not respecting the culture of validity of another's work.
- Tendency towards denominationalism and separatism.
- There are some faith based youth workers that think that faith based work they do cannot be compared or contrasted due to its faith base. There are some community based youth workers that feel most of all faith based work is tainted (by religious impulse and motivation) and don't want to engage in communication.
- Reluctance to include the faith aspects in the program. Reluctance to give up control/share control of the program.
- Each would need to respect the other. Churches have a tendency to be untrusting and skeptical of the integrity of those who do not share their faith. Non-faith based individuals can be judgmental and dismissive of church's motivations.
- I think there are many areas where both groups are trying to reach the same youth and teach the same thing, but there might be some fear that the other group would provide negative influence or take clients away from the existing group.
- I think that the heavy religious proselytizing connected with many faith-based organizations is an almost insurmountable obstacle to working with them. I respect their faith, but I find it very difficult to work with people whose world view is so completely different from mine AND who seem bent on forcing their world-view on to me.
- Many individuals who are working from a faith based approach feel uncomfortable, judges and “recruited” when attending training or events that are faith-based or focused. I know living in NYC Faith and religion are very personal issues that need to be addressed in very controlled and guided manners. Also as a gay person, organized religion can be very unwelcoming, conservative and judgmental, thus creating an unwelcoming environment.
- Based on our experience there is not very many. What it does call for is that the facilitators know the resources of both, including the fact that many ministers are now trained in ‘urban youth ministries.’ The challenge for us is to craft a ‘rural’ version. Also the theological basis for work. Also how to practically handle issues of separation of church/state and charitable choice laws.
- Of course when spiritual based organizations come together the biggest obstacle will be differences of opinion. This cannot be the main focus. The main focus needs to be recognizing the need for spirituality in youth people AND being tolerant of others peoples faith. Just because I disagree with a group's spiritual perspective does not mean they cannot be just as effective as I in developing youth spiritually.

- Sometimes I think our religious preferences get in the way of doing what's best for the kids we work with.
- Youth workers have a poor reputation for being professional. They have little to bring to the table – only experience hanging with kids.
- People on both sides can be very closed minded and/or afraid.
- Strong (established?) opinions/theories and close-mindedness getting in the way of developing/accepting/willingness to try new methods.
- Mutual fear and suspicion not certain of the real value of learning to listen and appreciate what the other is doing being too pre-judgmental.
- Faith-based workers may get frustrated with the secular theories. If the community-based workers are not Christians, they may not have an open-mind.
- We need to be careful to encompass faith in such a way that everyone is welcome and no one feels left out or wrong in their beliefs.
- The challenge would be to remove all aspects of religion/faith from the training. I'm willing to learn alongside anybody who is interested in the same topic, but I'm not willing to have their religious views or perspectives imposed on me or my work.
- Some faith-based groups have tunnel vision and are not open minded.

Challenge of time, money and planning the logistics

- Takes time, costs money, it is only one of a million other things we have to do.
- Time constraints, redundancy, being talked to about things that we already know/don't apply to our congregations.
- Time, a sense that the need for such professional development is not necessary as the % of kids who may need this kind of emotional support are so small that it would take away from other priorities ...
- The cost of events in which this type of professional development might occur is always a concern. The timing of such an event is also an issue. There are very intense times of year for all of us, and they do not always fall at the same time so availability might be an issue.
- Recruiting faith leaders to an event because of their extremely busy schedules.
- Schedules – trying to find a time that works for the majority – however, there is a way to get people to see the extreme importance of it then not matter when it is will be a priority.

- The biggest challenge is having enough time together to develop a relationship. People tend to put up walls and obstacles for those they don't know. Some people need time to overcome preconceived opinions.

Separation of church and state

People mentioned legal issues, or the need to separate church and state, as a key obstacle or challenge.

- We operate pretty strictly with the “church and state” thing around here – but that doesn't preclude being trained together. I think you would just have to be sensitive to how you worded the training ... My town Board might be less apt to allow me to attend something billed for ‘faith leaders,’ for instance.

Please tell us about any professional development opportunities, systems, or frameworks that you know that already build bridges between faith-based and community-based youth-serving organizations.

Though a number of people answered this (491 out of 1,322, at times, it was hard to tell whether it was truly opportunities that build bridges or just professional development opportunities or any connection to faith-based or community-based organizations. Answers seemed to fall in some major areas:

- **Intermediaries, networks, alliances and coalitions** such as Indiana Youth Institute; McCoy; South Bay Youth Workers network in San Diego; Youth Development Network in Grand Rapids, MI; Reclaiming Futures & Anchorage Youth Development Coalition; Hampton Roads; and New Haven City Wide Youth Coalition Youth Development Training and Resource Center. Many mentioned the use of the Advancing Youth Development curriculum.
- **Asset building efforts** such as Portage County Alliance for Youth in Stevens Point; WI that has worked with faith groups to build assets; asset development network of Pasadena; Dayton United Way; Faces Action; and HUBBA – Helping us Build Assets.
- **Faith-based and interfaith/multi-denominational efforts** such as Younglife; Youth for Christ; Interfaith Youth Core (mentioned multiple times); Texas Christian University; Youth Specialties; Campus Crusade for Christ; Institute for Youth Ministry out of Princeton Theological Seminary; Milwaukee Interfaith; St. Vincent de Paul Village in San Diego; the Episcopal diocese of Kansas – Youth Coordinator work; Center for Ministry Development in Connecticut; Certification schools provided by the Center for Youth Ministries, Wartburg Theological Seminary; St. Michael Lutheran Church, Harrisburg, Penn; Win our World Urban Ministries; DOOR Ministries in Denver Duke Divinity Youth Works; and organizations that were formally National Coalition of Christians and Jews.

- **School districts** in some communities are also building bridges by meeting monthly with local clergy members to discuss issues, concerns, and other things dealing with youth in the community.
- **Topic specific efforts** are being pursued by communities, such as the Tucson Planning Council for the Homeless working for the homeless; MOCK – Mentoring Oneida County Kids is working to heal racism or other racism/diversity; and the Youth Studies Department of the University of Minnesota. Other topics are also being pursued through efforts of street outreach teams mentoring; working for child abuse; using youth as resources; pursuing youth philanthropy efforts; and attending National Issues Forums.
- **National organizations** were mentioned for their current efforts of this work. For example, YMCA of the USA was listed as a key national organization for their Christian Leadership Conference. Other organizations were also mentioned for their work, such as Boy Scouts of America; The Salvation Army; Boys & Girls Clubs of America; American Camp Association; Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Amachi Initiative; 4-H; and Girl Scouts of America for their many faith-based earned awards and recognitions.
- **Funding and government efforts** such as 21st CCLC; Chicago’s Department of Children and Youth Services; United Way; DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation; Children’s Board; Annie E. Casey Foundation Making Connections; and Strengthening Partners Initiative (Office of Partnerships and Grants Development).
- **Specific efforts** in this area were also mentioned, such as the Youth Development Institute – Adiran Ruiz – Sacramento area; National England Network for Youth that has done a monograph on spirituality and youth/youth work; Communities that Care; Clemson University online Masters program; and Buckeye Leadership workshop.

What three recommendations do you have for how community-based and faith-based youth workers could work together to better prepare staff?

Out of 1,322 respondents to the survey, 572 gave a first choice for this question. Below are just the top five themes that emerged from these responses, most frequently they centered on the key areas below. This only includes their number one choice while 632 responded with their second choice and 472 responded as their third choice.

Communicate with an open-mind and be non-judgmental

- Keeping an open-mind, being non-judgmental and discussing commonalities while not ignoring the differences came up in a number of ways. Respect, compassion, listening, understanding and tolerance were all words used.
- As a group, generate a definition of what successful work with youth looks like ... based on shared values (so we can see beyond the “faith-based” and see our common ground.

- Be open about preconceptions of one another.
- Have honest and open communication about differing goals.
- Communication – don't just ignore differences.
- Broaden definitions and/or perceptions of what constitutes spiritual work in the world.
- Understanding the different and diverse socio-economic and cultural groups in local areas.
- Be prepared to listen without comment.

Meet together for forums, networking and discussions on a regular basis to get to know each other, build trust and partnerships

Respondents recommended community hosting forums and roundtable discussions as a way to get to know each other in order to alleviate fear, build partnerships, and come together as learners. At times people were specific about frequency like monthly community wide gatherings or once a week in a non-religious atmosphere like a coffee shop.

- Implement an infrastructure to promote communication between workers.
- Foster regular interactions to build relationships and trust.
- More community building – getting to know each other so not to fear each other.
- Foster regular interactions to build relationships and trust.
- Series of team building trainings bringing groups together.
- Understand collaboration process in the community.
- Provide an opportunity for workers to get together and share what they are doing.

Focus on the goal/purpose/child

Keeping focused on the child, the purpose and youth needs and focusing on common and shared values came up as a theme. At times respondents were specific about creating those common goals together and focusing on the shared goals including establishing and communicating them.

- Focus on child and adolescent development – that is a common need.
- Show us how to safely work with our youth to build healthy spiritual behaviors.
- Set aside personal agendas and focus on youth.

- Focus on the youth's overall personal development, rather than just religious beliefs.
- Conduct joint trainings, workshops and events
- A number of people recommended joint training, workshops or events as their top recommendations.
- I think central city agencies are eager for this linkage. I think it is important that leadership of the effort include people of color.
- Don't reinvent the wheel; if there are programs/organizations out there that provide services or will train staff/volunteers, they should use them.
- Provide youth of faith/non-faith with opportunity to develop training.

Share resources and information

Sharing resources came up as a specific recommendation along with sharing specifics like best practices; program ideas, activities and curriculum (including professional development curriculum); and the expertise of both doing projects together and sharing facilities.

- Come up with general practice or program standards that will define what a model youth worker should be and should possess.
- Start by working on issues that we know we share (e.g. fitness/nutrition, basic literacy, program evaluation)
- Mutual online program base (interactive)
- Have a website for people to post their program ideas and discussion boards.
- Establish online list serves/networks/blogs

Spirituality, Camps, and Youth Development Survey Summary Report

Prepared by the American Camp Association

In 2006, Search Institute and the National Collaboration of youth conducted an exploratory study using a Web-based survey and several focus groups of faith-based and community-based youth workers to explore the interests and priorities of both groups as well as the opportunities and challenges for cooperative learning. The American Camp Association (ACA) became a partner in this exploration, and agreed to survey a sample of camps (both religiously affiliated and secular) to examine similarities and differences on the same key questions.

ACA Sample and Response

Data were gathered between March 8, 2007, and April 2, 2007, through www.surveymonkey.com. ACA directors and affiliated members (approximately 2,600) received an email solicitation from the ACA national office requesting their participation in a survey that explored spirituality and youth development in camps. A total of 305 people completed a survey for a response rate of 12 percent.

In this report, respondents who identified themselves as religiously affiliated are identified as “RA camps.” All respondents who identified themselves as not being religiously affiliated are identified as “secular camps.” Two respondents did not identify their affiliation. Thus, when RA camps and secular camps are compared, the total number of respondents equals 303.

Respondents tended to be female (53%) for secular camps and male (71%) for RA camps. The overwhelming majority of respondents were White/European American; 90% for secular camps and 96% for RA camps. Christianity was the most common religious affiliation across both groups. Ninety percent of RA camp respondents said that they were “very” devout in their religious beliefs, participation, and practices compared with 46% of secular camp respondents.

Both RA and secular camps identified offering “primarily outdoor-based programs and activities.” A majority of campers in both types of camps spent between 7-8 hours (32%) or more than 8 hours a day (47%) outdoors. Secular camps tended to be “independent not-for-profit camps” (39%), “agency camps” (33%) or “independent-for-profit camps” (22%).

Below are key findings that mirror or complement the broader findings of the youth worker survey by National Collaboration for Youth and Search Institute. A detailed report that addresses other factors that were examined in this study is available from American Camp Association.

Key Findings

Table D-1: When asked to rank various dimensions of child development (social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual) on a 5-point scale (5=most emphasis), respondents placed the highest overall emphasis on social development (4.31) and emotional development (3.90). Cognitive development (3.07) and spiritual development (3.14) were the lowest priority for the overall sample.

Table D-2: Respondents from secular camps selected social development (64%) and emotional development (35%) as their top priorities. However, respondents from RA camps selected spiritual development (78%) and social development (37%) as their top priorities.

Table D-3: Respondents were asked to identify the competencies that are essential for youth workers at camp. The *top five* were: developing positive relationships and communicating with youth (86%); demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model (85%); identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks (70%); enhancing youth's moral and character development (66%); and working as part of a team and showing professionalism (63%). The *bottom five* were: teaching youth about healthy life choices (35%); helping youth to develop environmental awareness and an ability to demonstrate environmentally friendly behaviors (35%); providing a mechanism for youth and adult partnerships and shared decision making (29%); caring for, involving and working with families and community (27%); and passing down your traditions and stories (24%).

The greatest differences between secular camps and RA camps in the essential competencies were in the areas of: helping youth to develop spiritually; respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity; and impacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.

Table D-4: With regards to the competencies, respondents were asked to identify the areas for which they were most interested in training. The *top five* were: involving and empowering youth (69%); enhancing youth's moral and character development (67%); developing positive friendships and communicating with youth (66%); providing youth with experiences that are novel, stimulating, and challenging (66%); and adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group (62%).

With regards to interest in training, the greatest differences between secular camps and RA camps were in the areas of: involving and empowering youth; helping youth to develop spiritually, and respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.

Table D-5: Respondents were asked to identify the competencies for which they already felt prepared. The five areas for which there was the least amount of feelings of preparedness were: involving and empowering youth (11%); interacting with and relating to youth in ways that supports asset building (11%); helping young people develop spiritually (11%); providing a mechanism for youth/adult partnership and shared decision-making (10%); and caring for, involving, and working with families and community (7%).

In terms of feeling prepared to deliver specific competencies, the greatest differences between secular camps and RA camps were in the areas of respecting and honoring religious diversity; adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group; and helping young people develop spiritually.

Table D-6: Presents a comparison of essential competencies, interest in training, and feelings of preparedness for the total sample, secular camps, and RA camps.

Table D-7: By comparing priorities, interests, and current competencies, a measure of “felt need” can be calculated (see section 2 of the report). The *top five* areas of professional development weaknesses for youth workers at camp (based upon “felt need” of the entire sample) were:

- Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth (70%)
- Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model (58%)
- Enhancing youth’s moral and character development (51%)
- Involving and empowering youth (51%)
- Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks (43%)

Table D-8: Forty-six percent of respondents said that they would be “somewhat interested” in training, resources, or other professional development opportunities that intentionally included both community-based and faith-based youth workers. Thirteen percent were not interested and forty-one percent were very interested.

Defining Spiritual Development

Respondents were asked to define spiritual development in an open-ended question.

- Relationship with God/Higher Power/Jesus Christ (66)
- Importance/connection with nature (37)
- Study (37)
- Instilling religious traditions, developing faith (32)
- Promotes values, morals, ethics, character development (31)

- Develop community-relationships-connections, not alone (30)
- Individualistic, personal growth (22)
- Love, care, Golden Rule (21)
- Internal-self awareness (19)
- Respect for all things, tolerance (11)
- Christian principles in practice/Christian role model (10)
- Spiritual journey (8)
- Appreciation for all things (5)
- Holistic process (3)
- Christian evangelism, Christian education, share faith, bible
- Service (to others) (2)
- Wonder, peace, harmony (2)
- Support-guidance opportunities (1)

Table D-1

Program Emphasis: Ranking Child Development Dimensions

These tables show data from the same items in two different ways. The first shows the ranking of each child development dimension. The second chart shows the percentages of respondents who selected each option as their top priority.

<i>How much emphasis does your organization place on the following areas of development? (Please rank them from 1 to 5, with 1 being the greatest emphasis.)</i>	Total Sample (N=305)	Secular Camps (N=214)	RA Camps (N=89)
• Social development	4.31 (1st)	4.38 (1st)	4.16 (2 nd)
• Emotional development	3.90 (2 nd)	3.95 (2 nd)	3.80 (3 rd)
• Physical development	3.26 (3 rd)	3.38 (3 rd)	2.96 (4 th)
• Spiritual development	3.14 (4 th)	2.52 (5 th)	4.61 (1st)
• Cognitive development	3.07 (5 th)	3.17 (4 th)	2.84 (5 th)

Table D-2**Program Emphasis: Percentage of Camp Youth Workers Who Selected Each Dimension as Their Top Priority**

<i>Percent saying each area is the area of greatest emphasis out of the five.</i>	Total Sample (N=305)	Secular Camps (N=214)	RA Camps (N=89)
• Social development	56%	64%	37%
• Emotional development	30%	35%	19%
• Spiritual development	31%	12%	78%
• Physical development	13%	14%	8%
• Cognitive development	10%	14%	1%

Table D-3**Competencies of Camp-Based Youth Workers Identified as “Essential to Youth Work”**

	Total Sample	Secular Camps	RA Camps
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	86%	85%	88%
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	85%	86%	83%
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	70%	72%	64%
Enhancing youth’s moral and character development.*	66%	64%	69%
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	63%	65%	57%
Involving and empowering youth.	62%	63%	61%
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	60%	64%	49%
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	55%	58%	48%
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	52%	57%	41%
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	49%	51%	46%
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	45%	47%	42%
Providing youth with experiences that are novel, stimulating, and challenging.*	45%	49%	36%
Helping young people develop spiritually.	41%	23%	85%
Teaching youth about healthy life choices.*	35%	37%	29%
Helping youth to develop environmental awareness and an ability to demonstrate environmentally friendly behaviors.*	35%	36%	33%
Providing a mechanism for youth and adult partnerships and shared decision making.*	29%	35%	16%
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	27%	31%	19%
Passing down your traditions and stories.*	24%	26%	18%

* Competencies added to the camp survey that are not part of the broader youth worker survey.

Table D-4**Competencies that Camp-Based Youth Workers Identified as “Very Interested in Training”**

	Total Sample	Secular Camps	RA Camps
Involving and empowering youth.	69%	72%	62%
Enhancing youth’s moral and character development.*	67%	69%	60%
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	66%	68%	60%
Providing youth with experiences that are novel, stimulating, and challenging.*	66%	67%	62%
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	62%	62%	60%
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	61%	67%	48%
Helping youth to develop environmental awareness and ability to demonstrate environmentally friendly behaviors.*	60%	60%	58%
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	58%	60%	54%
Providing a mechanism for youth and adult partnerships and shared decision making.*	57%	57%	57%
Teaching youth about healthy life choices.*	56%	58%	50%
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	53%	54%	49%
Helping young people develop spiritually.	53%	47%	66%
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	50%	50%	47%
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	49%	55%	38%
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	46%	45%	47%
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	45%	47%	41%
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	41%	44%	34%
Passing down your traditions and stories.*	31%	32%	28%

* Competencies added to the camp survey that are not part of the broader youth worker survey.

Table D-5**Competencies of Camp-Based Youth Workers Based on Preparedness**

	Total Sample	Secular Camps	RA Camps
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	29%	32%	23%
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	27%	26%	29%
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	27%	27%	29%
Passing down your traditions and stories.*	23%	24%	22%
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	20%	18%	23%
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	19%	14%	29%
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	16%	16%	17%
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	16%	19%	10%
Helping youth to develop environmental awareness and ability to demonstrate environmentally friendly behaviors.*	16%	18%	13%
Enhancing youth's moral and character development.*	15%	14%	17%
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	13%	14%	12%
Providing youth with experiences that are novel, stimulating, and challenging.*	13%	16%	6%
Teaching youth about healthy life choices.*	12%	12%	12%
Involving and empowering youth.	11%	11%	9%
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	11%	10%	13%
Helping young people develop spiritually.	11%	5%	25%
Providing a mechanism for youth and adult partnerships and shared decision making.*	10%	10%	11%
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	7%	7%	9%

* Competencies added to the camp survey that are not part of the broader youth worker survey.

Table D-6**Comparison of Essential Competencies, Interest in Training, and Feelings of Preparedness among Camp Directors**

		Total Sample	Secular Camps	RA Camps
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	Essential to youth work	49%	51%	46%
	Very interested in training	58%	60%	54%
	Already feel prepared	13%	14%	12%
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	Essential to youth work	86%	85%	88%
	Very interested in training	66%	68%	60%
	Already feel prepared	16%	16%	17%
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	Essential to youth work	55%	58%	48%
	Very interested in training	62%	62%	60%
	Already feel prepared	16%	19%	10%
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	Essential to youth work	60%	64%	49%
	Very interested in training	49%	55%	38%
	Already feel prepared	20%	18%	23%
Respecting and honoring religious diversity.	Essential to youth work	45%	47%	42%
	Very interested in training	41%	44%	34%
	Already feel prepared	19%	14%	29%
Involving and empowering youth.	Essential to youth work	62%	63%	61%
	Very interested in training	69%	72%	62%
	Already feel prepared	11%	11%	9%
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	Essential to youth work	70%	72%	64%
	Very interested in training	53%	54%	49%
	Already feel prepared	27%	27%	29%
Caring for, involving and working with families and community.	Essential to youth work	27%	31%	19%
	Very interested in training	45%	47%	41%
	Already feel prepared	7%	7%	9%

		Total Sample	Secular Camps	RA Camps
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	Essential to youth work	63%	65%	57%
	Very interested in training	46%	45%	47%
	Already feel prepared	29%	32%	23%
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	Essential to youth work	85%	86%	83%
	Very interested in training	50%	50%	47%
	Already feel prepared	27%	26%	29%
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	Essential to youth work	52%	57%	41%
	Very interested in training	61%	67%	48%
	Already feel prepared	11%	10%	13%
Helping young people develop spiritually.	Essential to youth work	41%	23%	85%
	Very interested in training	53%	47%	66%
	Already feel prepared	11%	5%	25%
Providing youth with experiences that are novel, stimulating, and challenging.*	Essential to youth work	45%	49%	36%
	Very interested in training	66%	67%	62%
	Already feel prepared	13%	16%	6%
Enhancing youth's moral and character development.*	Essential to youth work	66%	64%	69%
	Very interested in training	67%	69%	60%
	Already feel prepared	15%	14%	17%
Helping youth to develop environmental awareness and ability to demonstrate environmentally friendly behaviors.*	Essential to youth work	35%	36%	33%
	Very interested in training	60%	60%	58%
	Already feel prepared	16%	18%	13%
Passing down your traditions and stories.*	Essential to youth work	24%	26%	18%
	Very interested in training	31%	32%	28%
	Already feel prepared	23%	24%	22%
Providing a mechanism for youth and adult partnerships and shared decision making.*	Essential to youth work	29%	35%	16%
	Very interested in training	57%	57%	57%
	Already feel prepared	10%	10%	11%

		Total Sample	Secular Camps	RA Camps
Teaching youth about healthy life choices.*	Essential to youth work	35%	37%	29%
	Very interested in training	56%	58%	50%
	Already feel prepared	12%	12%	12%

* Competencies added to the camp survey that are not part of the broader youth worker survey.

Table D-7
Linking Priorities, Interests, and Current Competencies

	Essential to work	Already Prepared	Felt Need *	Very Interested	Readiness**
Developing positive relationships and communicating with youth.	86%	16%	70%	66%	68%
Demonstrating the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.	85%	27%	58%	50%	54%
Enhancing youth’s moral and character development.***	66%	15%	51%	67%	59%
Involving and empowering youth.	62%	11%	51%	69%	60%
Identifying potential risk factors in the program environment and taking measures to reduce those risks.	70%	27%	43%	53%	58%
Interacting with and relating to youth in ways that support asset building.	52%	11%	41%	61%	51%
Respecting and honoring cultural and human diversity.	60%	20%	40%	49%	45%
Adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age appropriate activities with and for the group.	55%	16%	39%	62%	51%
Understanding and applying basic principles of child and adolescent development.	49%	13%	36%	58%	47%
Working as part of a team and showing professionalism.	63%	29%	34%	63%	49%
Providing youth with experiences that are novel, stimulating, and challenging.***	45%	13%	32%	66%	49%
Helping young people develop spiritually.	41%	11%	30%	53%	42%

Helping youth to develop environmental awareness and an ability to demonstrate environmentally friendly behaviors.***	35%	16%	19%	60%	40%
Providing a mechanism for youth and adult partnerships and shared decision making.***	29%	10%	19%	57%	38%
Passing down your traditions and stories.***	24%	23%	1%	31%	16%

* The “felt need” is the gap between the percentage of camp leaders who say that it is essential to their work with youth and those who say they are “already prepared.”

** “Readiness” is the average percentage of “Felt Need” and “Very Interested”

*** Competencies added to the camp survey that are not part of the broader youth worker survey.

Table D-8**Bridging Between Faith-Based and Secular Youth Workers**

<i>If training, resources, or other professional development opportunities were offered that intentionally included both Secular and faith-based youth workers, how interested would you be in participating?</i>	Total Sample	Secular Camps	RA Camps
• Not interested	13%	18%	3%
• Somewhat interested	46%	47%	42%
• Very interested	41%	35%	55%

National Consultation: Overview and Participants

In April 2007, Lilly Endowment Inc., National Collaboration for Youth, and Search Institute convened 20 national thought leaders to discuss this report and implications for the field. Their dialogue shaped the interpretation and recommendations in this report. The group included a balance of people whose work focuses primarily in community-based youth development, those who focus on faith-based youth work, and those whose work bridges these sectors. The meeting sought to:

- Highlight key understandings of today's adolescents and their implications for equipping community-based and faith-based youth workers.
- Identify unique strengths and expertise that attendees bring to working with youth and preparing youth workers to work with youth.
- Learn from each other about what is happening to develop youth workers in each sector.
- Interpret findings from an exploratory study of community-based and faith-based youth workers' priorities and development needs as well as their interest in and reservations about building bridges across sectors.
- Identify potential common ground for equipping faith-based and community-based youth workers.
- Create recommendations for next steps.

Participants in National Consultation

- Kiarash Afcari, *Director, Academy for Transformation, YouthBuild USA, Oakland, CA*
- Iyad Alnachef, *Director, Youth Programming and Services, Islamic Society of North America, Plainfield, IN*
- Stephanie Artman, *Project Assistant, National Collaboration for Youth, Washington, D.C.*
- Peter L. Benson, Ph.D., *President and CEO, Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN*
- Willis Bright, *Director, Youth Programs, Lilly Endowment Inc., Indianapolis, IN*
- Christopher Coble, Ph.D., *Program Director, Religion, Lilly Endowment Inc., Indianapolis, IN*
- Steve Culbertson, *President and CEO, Youth Service America, Washington, D.C.*
- Tom East, *Director, Center for Ministry Development, Gig Harbor, WA*

- Pam Garza, *Director, National Youth Development Learning Network, National Collaboration for Youth, Washington, D.C.*
- Kay Hong, *Senior Projects Manager, Office of the President, Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN*
- Elaine Johnson, *Vice President and Director, National Training Institute for Community Youth Work, Academy for Educational Development, Washington, D.C.*
- Reed Larson, Ph.D., *Pampered Chef Ltd. Endowed Chair in Family Resiliency, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL*
- Rev. Roland Martinson, S.T.D., *Carrie Olson Baalson Professor of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN*
- Fred Oduyoye, *Director, RELOAD Training Tour, Urban Youth Workers Institute, Cincinnati, OH*
- Eboo Patel, Ph.D., *Founder and Executive Director, Interfaith Youth Core, Chicago, IL*
- Paul Patu, *Youth Development Specialist, World Vision, Federal Way, WA*
- Karen Pittman, *Executive Director, Forum for Youth Investment, Washington, D.C.*
- Jane Quinn, *Assistant Executive Director for Community Schools, Children's Aid Society, New York, NY*
- Michael Resnick, Ph.D., *Professor and Giesela and E. Paul Konopka Chair in Adolescent Health and Development, Director, Healthy Youth Development Prevention Research Center, Division of Adolescent Health and Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, University of Minnesota, St. Paul Minnesota*
- René Rochester, Ed.D., *Community Collaborative Advisor to the President, Youth for Christ USA, Franklin, TN*
- Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, *Senior Advisor, Office of the President, Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN*
- Paul Schmitz, *President and CEO, Public Allies, Milwaukee, WI*
- Rev. Mark Scott, *Director of Community Partnerships, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boston, MA*
- Peg Smith, *Executive Director, American Camp Association, Martinsville, IN*
- Luis Villarreal, *Executive Director, Save Our Youth, Denver, CO*
- Melanie Wilson, MSW, *Director, Research and Public Policy, New England Network for Child, Youth and Family Services, Merrimac, MA*
- Anne Wimberly, Ph.D., *Director, Youth Hope-Builders Academy, Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, GA*

Themes from this meeting are interwoven into this document. To read the draft notes of the full meeting, go to:

<http://www.nydic.org/nydic/staffing/workforce/EquippingEffectiveYouthWorkers.htm>

Consultation Discussion about Today's Young People

Before engaging in the core topic of finding common ground across sectors for the professional development of youth workers, consultation participants engaged in dialogue about realities and trends among today's adolescents. The consultation sought to surface central themes, trends, and issues in current research that community-based and faith-based youth workers need to understand to engage effectively with today's youth. Four scholars (see box on next page) brought important insight to the dialogue through a panel discussion, and their work frames the information presented here.

No brief discussion can do justice to the many varieties of experience among today's adolescents or the rich body of research on adolescent development. Rather, we seek to highlight some of the salient themes that emerged in the dialogue at the consultation that provide a foundation for exploring how community-based and faith-based youth workers approach today's youth.

Trends and realities of today's youth

Whenever we talk about adolescents broadly, there is a creative tension between what young people hold in common (the broad trends and issues) and the particularities of a particular group of young people—or even a specific young person. As one consultation participant noted, unless we hold both the commonalities and the particularities in mind, the dialogue can be reduced to stereotypes and meaningless generalities.

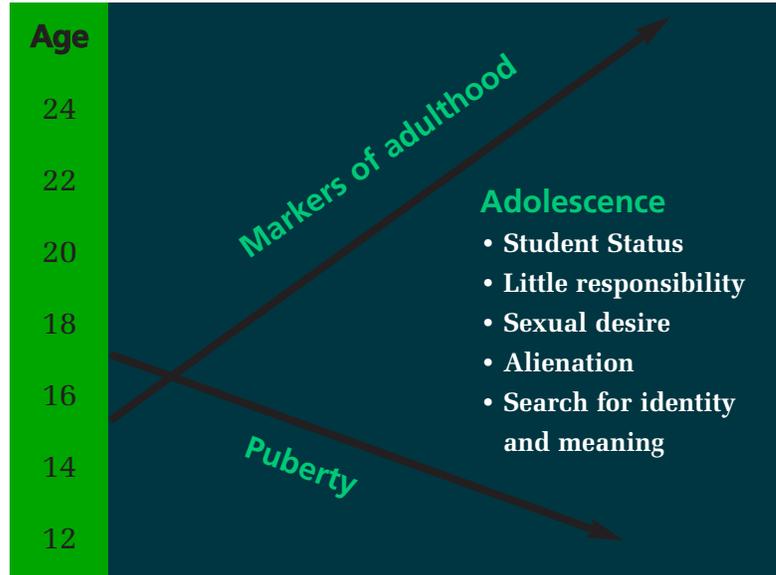
The national consultation sought to hold these dynamics in tension by offering two distinct windows into the worlds of youth. First, Reed Larson offered highlights from an international study group that looked at the emergence of adolescence as a life stage for virtually every population of young people around the world, due in large measure to globalization. As a counterpoint to this sweeping perspective, Anne Wimberly highlighted her work with African American youth, building insights out of her lived experience with young people at Hope Builder's Academy. Other participants particularized their comments to the specific populations with whom they work: young people in institutional settings; young people on the margins of society; and young people serving as leaders within a particular organization or tradition. Several themes emerged out of these perspectives, which are described below.

Scholars Presenting Insights on Today's Youth

- Michael Resnick, Ph.D.,
Professor of Pediatrics and Director, Healthy Youth Development Prevention Research Center, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Anne Wimberly, Ph.D.,
Founder, Youth Hope Builders Academy, Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia
- Rev. Roland Martinson, S.T.D.,
Carrie Olson Baalson Professor of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Reed Larson Ph.D.,
Pampered Chef Ltd. Endowed Chair in Family Resiliency, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois

The growing “wedge” between childhood and adulthood

Larson presented findings from the global youth study that shows, in most countries, a growing period of time between childhood and adulthood. In most societies, the markers of adulthood are getting later. Young people are staying in school longer, waiting longer to take their first job, marry, and have children. At the same time, puberty is coming earlier, particularly in industrialized societies. The result is a growing “wedge” between childhood and adulthood (see illustration on this page) during which young people are students, have little responsibility, experience sexual desire, and, too often, feel a sense of social isolation and alienation. Their status presses them to search for identity and meaning. After his presentation, Larson posed to the group, how does society deal with this wedge? How do we create meaning, structure, and continuity during this increasingly longer time that we call adolescence?



This growing period of adolescence calls for re-examining several aspects of youth work, particularly to ensure that young people have the supports they need to bridge the gap between childhood and adulthood. They need, among other things, opportunities to engage in the search for identity and meaning through meaningful service and action, rites of passage and markers, and safe, nurturing places to “practice life” across this age span.

The broadening age span also presents significant challenges to youth workers. Several consultation participants noted the lack of adequate positive developmental experiences for sixteen- to twenty-two-year-olds, for example. Some consultation participants suggested that these adolescents have already left many programs and organizations and, thus, are ignored. However, it’s inadequate to think that you can simply create the kind of programming for younger ages available for these older adolescents; they need a distinct set of opportunities that likely emphasize leadership, service, and civic engagement.

These and other changes in the nation’s social fabric require that we think about youth development in new ways. And all of these changes require that we think about healthy youth development in a different way. We need, what Resnick calls, “intentional, deliberate strategies for providing support, relationships, experiences, resources and opportunities that promote positive outcomes for young people.”

Relationships, isolation, and technology

Anne Wimberly quoted Edward Wimberly, who writes in his book *Relational Refugees* (Abingdon, 2000), “Human identity is formed in a matrix of relationships. We discover ourselves in and through our encounters with others. Our sense of ‘me’ is dependent on the existence of a ‘you.’ We can only see our own eyes in the reflection of another’s . . . Adolescents sort through a jumble of messages, both internal and external, as they arrive at some sort of self-understanding. . . . Some [teenagers] get the idea that to be of significance, they have to be someone other than themselves. They strive for affirmation by fitting themselves into someone else’s prescribed set of expectations that are often alien to who they truly are. Those who insist on defining themselves by the standards of others will become ‘relational refugees.’”

There is also a paradoxical need for young people to have their own space and subculture while also being embedded in a web of caring, intergenerational relationships. For many young people, the social networking world of the Internet has become a significant way that this new generation of youth is creating its own space and subculture. In a sense, then, social networking, instant messaging, cell phones, and the other technological innovations that are second nature to a growing number of young people are both sources of connection as well as isolation and alienation.

At the same time, this electronic world is inaccessible to many young people who live on the other side of the digital divide. While this lack of access may reduce some of the dangers that come with technology, it also reduces

Nurturing Young People’s Resilience

We probably all can think of amazing stories of those who, against all expectations, in the face of overwhelming odds, are healthy, engaged people. How did they do it? What happened along the way to redirect them away from a downhill path? What kept it from becoming their destiny?

The best way to think about resilience is to envision a bridge. After all, the concept of resilience originated in physics and metallurgy; and those who were interested in resilience before the 1970s were builders and scientists who focused on the capacity of physical materials to resist stress. Picture a bridge on a cold winter’s day in my home state of Minnesota, supporting hundreds of cars and trucks. That bridge is exposed to cold, wind and vibration. And we know that the bridge is able to perform its function because of two resources: internal strengths, and external supports like cables and concrete footings. The evidence is clear today that caring, competent adults are a critical source of that external support that strengthens the resilience of our youth, and increases the likelihood that they, too, will grow up to be caring, competent and engaged adults.

Our challenge is to develop in young people the same strengths that help that bridge to function on a cold winter’s day: the internal resources they need, along with the external supports that nurture positive development. These are the nutrients communities can provide to our youth. This requires advocacy, strategic investment, and knowing the evidence about what works.

(Excerpted from Michael Resnick’s presentation at the national consultation.)

opportunities, reducing these young people’s readiness for work and life in a world that is, for both better and worse, increasingly digital.

The technology issue is only part of the challenge when it comes to young people’s web of relationships. Social connections are clearly foundational for healthy development. Resnick reviewed research studies from the United States and 26 other nations that identify clear protective factors that appear again and again in the research. These include three critical factors involving relationships:

- A strong sense of connectedness to parents and family (all kinds of families – single parent, dual parent, extended family, adoptive families);
- A strong sense of connectedness to other adults and organizations outside of the family (adults who value and reward positive, pro-social behaviors, not anti-social behaviors); and
- A strong sense of connectedness to school, where young people report: my teachers are fair; my teachers are interested in me as a person; my teachers have high expectations and care about my success.

On the flip side, social isolation and alienation is a powerful predictor of anti-social behavior. Resnick also noted that social isolation and disconnection is as big of a risk factor for early death as is cigarette use.

Within this context, it is troubling that many young people are less embedded in their communities than they once were. Young people in industrialized nations, such as the United States, are far more separated from adults and from community organizations than their counterparts in other countries.

Consultation participants raised concerns about whether this web of relationships, when it exists, is really sustained and sustaining or are most relationships in young people’s lives short and fleeting, limited to a particular program year or activity? Furthermore, do the adults who work with and care about young people have the skills needed to foster deep, sustaining relationships?

Meaningful roles and voice

One powerful strategy for addressing the “rolelessness” of adolescence is to ensure that young people have meaningful roles in their organizations and communities and that they have opportunities to speak for themselves. Young people, Wimberly suggested, are bombarded with numerous images and stereotypes of who they are, what they should be, and how they should act. They want—in fact, need—to share the realities of their lives from their own perspectives.

A widely supported strategy for powerful youth engagement is service-learning with its positioning of young people as actors, agents, and leaders in the efforts. Consultation participants noted that young people are volunteering at record high rates, yet the systems still resist giving young people the power to lead and learn through these efforts.

Service-learning is not just promoted for ideological reasons. Resnick reported on research

showing that young people are more likely to have successful outcomes when they have opportunities to develop skills, and then learn how to use those skills to help someone else. To be successful, youth must also have the opportunities to reflect upon and find meaning in these opportunities—which suggests vital roles for youth workers. People who are involved in service to others during their adolescent years are more likely to be engaged as adults, involved in their community, in community organizations and networks that join them with others.

Service-learning brings together action with cognitive and spiritual development. It creates a lifestyle with an ideology. You can actually do something, not just talk about it. Furthermore, the narrative of service is a counter-veiling message to the prevailing materialistic message. The power happens when you shift from serving kids to giving them space to serve.

Religion and spirituality

In thinking through cross-sector collaboration, it is important to get broader perspectives on religion and spirituality during adolescence, particularly since the “conventional wisdom” is not always accurate. The National Study of Youth and Religion (led by Chris Smith, now at the University of Notre Dame) provides new insights into the religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers. Roland Martinson reported some of the key findings:

- Though the vast majority of American teenagers identify themselves as Christian (95%), they exhibit a wide array of religious and spiritual beliefs, practices, and attitudes. Only 8% of youth could be described as “spiritual, but not religious.”
- For a significant subgroup of youth (between 8% and 23%), religion is a core, defining part of their identity. However, most American teenagers (62%) are inarticulate or confused about their faith. Smith labeled their perspective as “moralistic, therapeutic deism.”
- Most youth (70%) are involved in conventional religious practices. Most are quite like their parents in this sphere of life. They tend to be relatively positive about their religious institutions. But in the pressure of competing opportunities for youth, religious involvement “occupies a weak and losing position.”

Resnick reminded consultation participants that a sense of spirituality, in which young people describe a sense of connectedness to a creative power in the universe greater than themselves, is a core factor supporting young people’s resilience. The challenge for the field is coming to terms with how it understands spirituality and spiritual development within a secular and pluralistic society. (This issue is addressed in more detail in the full report.) 1

Shaping Life Narratives

A theme that emerged at the consultation out of the dialogue about today’s young people was the theme of narrative. What are the forces in young people’s lives that are shaping their life stories and connecting them to larger stories? Who are the narrators who tell stories that are compelling and powerful to young people? And how do these stories give a sense of meaning, purpose and direction?

For many young people, it was suggested, these life narratives are being written through the world of media, which is engaging young people in powerful (though not always healthy) messages. The danger is that the messages being offered by youth organizations and faith communities are generally boring in comparison.

In some sense, every youth-serving organization has an opportunity to claim its role in shaping young people's narratives. It involves shifting from merely providing services to engaging young people fully in writing their own stories through their experiences. It involves helping young people find something to do that taps into their passion and commitment.

Different contexts have different impacts

In thinking through the “common ground” across sectors, Reed Larson presented research that reminds us that both sectors play important roles in young people's development, and that each sector's area of impact is somewhat unique. A study of 2,200 youth examined both their involvement in six different types of activities and the impact of those activities on various developmental outcomes, such as identity formation, initiative, emotional regulation, teamwork and social skills, positive relationships, and adult networks.

Researchers found important differences in the kinds of outcomes that were associated with each type of activity. For example, sports and arts were higher than others on initiative (setting goals and applying effort), while community-oriented activities and service activities were higher on adult networks and social capital. Faith-based youth groups were found to stand out as a setting in which youth reported higher rates of experiences across five of the six developmental domains.

Integration vs. silos

The reality, though, is that young people do not think in terms of sectors and how each sector helps them developmentally. Rather, they negotiate and integrate the many parts of their lives, seamlessly and dynamically. Yet, most institutions in communities approach their work with young people from one specific silo.

From young people's perspective, even the dialogue about common ground is artificial. They are focused on trying to figure out their own lives. How would the field be different if we started with that same perspective in thinking through our roles as youth workers? A different approach would be for youth workers, regardless of where they work, to come together not for professional development and networking, but for shared action on behalf of and with young people. As one consultation participant put it, youth workers spend too much time within their own agencies or organizations, and not enough time building their community.

¹ See Smith, C., with Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. New York: Oxford University Press.



Summary Findings from Focus Groups

In addition to the survey, seven focus groups were conducted by Pam Garza between September 2006 and December 2006 in four cities: New Orleans, Indianapolis, Minneapolis and Tucson. Most of the groups were a mix of faith-based and community-based youth workers. The groups were small (between three and six participants in most groups).

Consistent with the survey findings, there is a remarkable degree of alignment around youth work priorities. And though there is expressed interest in collaborative learning, there are also significant barriers—once again driven by mistrust or misunderstanding between the groups of youth workers.

Focus Group Participants

Focus Group #1 New Orleans

- Harold Davis
TALKS Mentoring
- Cassandra Moore
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle TN
- LaKesha Wallace
CLUSTER Community Services
- Matthew Watts
HOPE Community Developmet Corp
- Candace Wheeler
Restoration Ministries

Focus Group #2 Indianapolis

- Trish Barton
Murray Calloway County Community of Promise Coalition
- Kimberly Bash
ECLIPSE Partnership
- Barbara Brahm
Ohio State University Extension
- Janis Hagey
National Education Association
- Marty Rothey
The Findlay-Handcock County Community Foundation

- Mary Beth Thaman
Partners for Healthy Youth

- Andrea White
Partners for Healthy Youth

Focus Group #3 Minneapolis

- Arthur Brown
Center for 4-H Youth Development
- Arnoldo Curiel
CYD
- Juliet Mitchell
The Camphor Foundation
- Robert Osburn
MacLaurin Institute
- Marika Pfefferkorn
Minnesota Youth Work Institute
- Kimberly Roam
Center for 4-H Youth Development
- Dr. Margaret Stimmler
St. Joan of Arc

Focus Group #4 Minneapolis

- Kathy Buss
Association of Alaska School Boards
- Michael Clark
Center for Strength-Based Strategies
- Gary Eagleton
Tape

Focus Group #5 Minneapolis

- Wendy Acosta
Possibilities Unlimited, LLC
- Hannah Anker Williams
Partners in Education
- Lydia Bloom
H.S. Jacobs Camp
- Mark Holman
Ventura Missionary Church
- Marlys Johnson
- Timothy "Scott" Wood
Butler Church of Christ

Focus Group #6 Tucson

- Georgia Eddy
Community Justice Board
- Linda Lammers
Anger Management Intervention
- Sun Lee
University of Arizona
- Damaris Linares
Our Family Services
- Laurie Mazerbo
Our Family Services
- Megan Sanes
Our Family Services
- Jason Thorpe
Open Inn, Inc

Focus Group #7 Tucson

- Precious Amey
Our Family Services
- Regina Barnes-Gillis
Our Family Services

- Larissa Basaldu
Our Family Services
- Mark Hollinger
Wright Flight Inc
- Pamela Moseley
Marana HS/PCAO Community Justice Board
- Marie Scofield
Tanque Verde Extended Care Program

Informal Discussions

- Mark Farr
Points of Light Foundation
- Major Gary Miller
The Salvation Army National Headquarters
- Carter Savage
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- Mark Scott
Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Lt. Colonel Terry Griffin
The Salvation Army Western Territory
- Major Charles McCarty
The Salvation Army Central Territory
- Major Richard Munn
The Salvation Army Eastern Territory
- Lt. Colonel Charles White
The Salvation Army Southern Territory
- Major Gary Miller
The Salvation Army National Headquarters

Definition of Spiritual Development and Youth Development and Their Roles in Youth Work

To get an understanding of where individual youth workers came at the issues of spiritual development and youth development, focus group participants were asked to give their individual definition. To get as individual a response as possible, focus group members were asked to write down their own definition and then share with the focus group. These were groups below. (The numbers following statements indicate the number of participants who mentioned each statement out of the total number who completed the exercise.)

There was not any one definition or much consistency between individuals' understandings of spiritual development. Since these were personal answers, the question provided an array of different perspectives about what spiritual development and positive youth development meant to youth workers. Given that, there were a few themes that emerged around the definition of spiritual development:

- Spiritual development is building a personal relationship or connection with a higher power. (13/31)
- Spiritual development is learning and the development of life skills. (4/31)
- Spiritual development is a life-long process. (3/31)

Other understandings of spiritual development included:

- Spiritual development can take place in activities outside of religion.
- Spiritual development is the adoption of a religious doctrine.
- Spiritual development is a connection with others and the universe.

There were also a few themes that occurred around the definition of positive youth development:

- Youth development involves multiple types of development (i.e., cognitive, physical, spiritual, skill, etc.) (9/38)
- Youth development is preparing youth for adulthood. (6/38)
- Youth development is providing resources and access to opportunities. (4/38)
- Youth development is preparing a young person to become a member of society. (4/38)

Other understandings of positive youth development included:

- Youth development is getting to know young people and building relationships with them. (3/38)
- Youth development is reinforcing the good in young people. (3/38)
- Youth development is helping young people develop their voice. (2/38)
- I do not know what youth development is. (2/38)

To understand what place spiritual or youth development might have in their work with youth, we asked for each person to answer this question after they had given their definition. The main themes for spiritual development included:

- As a youth worker, I serve as a guide to help young people create their own definition of spiritual development and spirituality. (11/39)
- I incorporate spirituality in youth work. (7/39)
- I am a role model to youth by trying to live a life that is an example of spirituality. (7/39)
- My spirituality serves as a personal motivator when working with youth. (5/39)

The main themes for the place positive youth development plays in their work included:

- I implement youth development through programs and teaching. (7/27)
- I actively engage youth in leadership and focus on the importance of youth voice. (5/27)
- I provide the basic needs (i.e., counseling, resources, money, family, faith, etc.) they will need for their transition to adulthood. (4/27)
- I am available to young people and build relationships with them. (4/27)

Skills Needed to Be a Youth Worker

Many skills were identified as necessary in working with young people. Below are consistent themes that were mentioned.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDE	BEHAVIOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of different information reception • Education • Diversity • Know the lingo • Knowledge of appropriate age-related activities • Stages of youth development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to community resources • Collaborate • Creativity • Flexibility • Listen • Patience • Relational skills • Resourceful • Technology skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance • Experience • Passionate for youth • Recognize the different gifts youth have • Sacrifice their time • View youth as equal partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have fun • Honesty • Humility

Bridging Between Faith-Based and Community-Based Youth Workers

Along with specific strengths of each group of youth workers, a common theme throughout the focus groups was that both types of organizations have similar goals. In preparing staff, both groups of youth workers want what's best for youth and there may not be as many divisions as one might expect.

Faith-based organizations:

- Have a thorough understanding of the spiritual development of young people.
- Are disciplined in their goals because of their focus to fulfill a mission.

Community-based organizations:

- Are skilled in the training and professional development of their staffs.
- Have a larger reach throughout the community because their services are not narrowed based on denomination. This also gives more access to community resources.

The most common responses regarding what either faith-based or community-based organizations have to offer included:

WHAT FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS OFFER

- Discipline and structure
- A realization of a bigger mission
- The idea of a systematic approach to producing adherents – systematic teaching
- Address spirituality and the needs of the whole person
- Youth workers can bring a lot more of themselves into the situation
- An understanding of spirituality and a belief system
- Mobilizing volunteers

WHAT COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS OFFER

- Skilled in time management and organization
- The credibility of research and research-based explorations
- Professional development workshops, classes and learning opportunities
- Education
- Experience in using community resources
- Community-based orgs have a larger reach in a community
- Training of volunteers

Pitfalls or Dangers in Trying to Connect Youth Workers

Focus group members identified a number of pitfalls and dangers one might encounter in working with a faith-based organization or a community-based organization and the common challenges that may arise in creating collaboration between the two groups of youth workers. Some common themes include:

- The exclusiveness of faith-based organizations.
- Ownership issues of each community.
- A lack of understanding and respect for each other’s work.
- The ownership issue of who will get credit for the work.

Pitfalls in working with faith-based organizations	Pitfalls in working with community-based organizations	Common challenges that may arise in creating collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division among religious groups in faith-based organizations • Judgment of youth and families who do not live within the moral constructs of a particular faith • Aren’t as open to allow “anyone” to participate • More focused on their message than necessarily what the people in their program need • Religious/spiritual concepts can be intimidating for some youth • Many people have felt ostracized by faith-based organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be difficult for community-based orgs to adopt an all-inclusive spirituality language • A misperception of who faith-based organizations are and what they do • Pass judgment on the faith community when public leaders “fall off the wagon” of their faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership issues • People do not talk to one another. We are turning people off that way. • Devaluating of each other’s work • Getting over the hesitancy – “Am I the target for this?” • Suspicion of each other’s goals and work • A lack of understanding of each other’s values and backgrounds • Misunderstanding • Polarization, alienation, and mutual prejudice • Not respectful of differences • If a collaboration were created, where would it physically be located? Church, community center?

Moving the Conversations Forward

Focus group participants had suggestions for how to move the conversations forward. Some common themes among the focus groups included

THEME	EXAMPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunity to get to know each other.• Integrate each other's strengths into their respective work with youth.• Look together for solutions to make a difference with youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth workers from faith-based and community-based organizations simply need to get to know each other.• Faith-based organizations can learn how non-profit organizations can assist in legal issues and how they train in certain aspect of working with youth.• Faith-based organizations can learn how to transfer their spiritual activity into the real world.• Comparing faith facts with the physical facts of something to provide the youth with well-rounded information, so that they can better make choices for themselves.• We need to start looking at solutions.• How to look for the best youth workers in each setting.• Bring a community together to address community issues (i.e. gang problem).• We need to just put action behind our words in order to reach youth.

In addition, there were groups mentioned that should also be a part of finding common ground.

- Legal entities (judges, probation officers, courts)
- School systems
- Local pastors of different faith traditions
- Funders
- Youth
- Parents and guardians
- People who attend congregations (churches, mosques, synagogues, etc.)

Three Wishes for Finding Common Ground

Focus group participants expressed an interest in faith-based and community-based youth workers to work together for the betterment of youth, but only with the foundation of mutual respect and understanding for each other's work. The top wishes were:

THEME	EXAMPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a growing understanding between the two communities of youth workers.• Establish a mutual respect for each other.• Create a collaboration to make a difference with young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get at the table to clear up any misunderstandings.• Secular organizations understand that faith-based organizations are not the enemy.• Break down the perceptions of each group.• Create understanding and tolerance.• Setting our prejudices aside in working towards a common goal so that we're united and respecting the work.• Respect for one another.• Greater communication that will lead to respect and honoring each sector.• Greater collaboration to pull strengths to solve global community issues.• Willingness to collaborate and support one another.• Realize we all want to make the community better.• Share ideas and resources.• That we approach it from finding a common ground and building from there.