



Cultivating Rooted Community

# **CITY HEIGHTS YOUTH FOR CHANGE: CASE STUDY PART I GENERATING AUTHENTIC DEMAND**

**William T. Oswald, Ph.D.**

Associate Executive Director  
Research and Evaluation

March 2015



## INTRODUCTION:

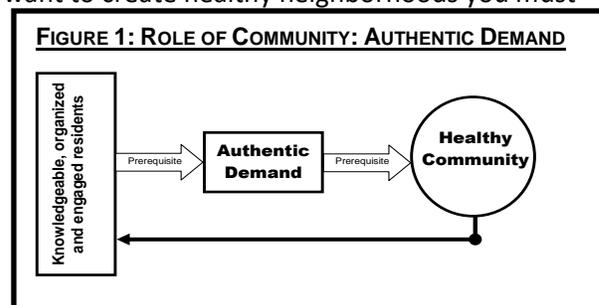
This case study tells the story of a group of refugee youth (aged 14 to 23) who made a commitment to confront the huge gaps in educational outcomes between schools in low-income neighborhoods, such as their neighborhood, and those in wealthier neighborhoods. It is the story of City Heights Youth for Change, a group that was formed near the end of 2013 by six young Bantu women<sup>1</sup> who came together under a grant from the California Endowment as part of its Building Healthy Communities Initiative (BHC). The initial conversations within the group focused on the difficulty they and other members of their community were having passing the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Statewide data show an approximate 30% difference in the CAHSEE passing rates between English Language Speakers and English Language Learners. As the conversation continued, the group began to examine high school graduation rates for English Language Learners in relation to native speakers and found that the differences in graduation rates were similar to those of the CAHSEE. Further research discovered that the disparities were not just between English Language Learners and native speakers but between high schools in low-income communities and those in wealthier communities. Seeing the differences these youth began the process of creating Authentic Demand for equity in their schools; for their schools to be on par with those in wealthier neighborhoods.

---

## Authentic Demand

---

Research indicates that where you live is the best predictor of your health, the quality of education available to you (or your children) and your upward mobility.<sup>2</sup> This research is feeding the growing acceptance of the idea that finding effective solutions to the social issues confronting us requires working with people living with these “social issues” within their communities to develop and implement solutions that come from them, i.e., creating place-based strategies. Stripped to its most basic, place-based strategies begin with the knowledge that unhealthy communities tend to produce unhealthy people while healthy communities tend to produce healthy people. People adapt to their environment and changes in the environment lead to changes in behavior. If you want to create healthy people you must create healthy neighborhoods. If you want to create healthy neighborhoods you must follow the lead of the people living in those neighborhoods. This new approach requires a different set of knowledge and skills than the traditional approach. It requires “Community Knowledge” and the skills to facilitate the community’s articulation of that knowledge in service of their agenda, i.e., their Authentic Demands.



The Figure 1 illustrates the role of residents in creating a healthy community. Transformation to a healthy community requires there to be Authentic

---

<sup>1</sup> Bantu, often referred to as “Somali Bantu,” are an ethnic, linguistic group of people from East Africa. While they are last from Somalia, they are not Somali and have a distinct culture and languages (Kizagua and Maay-Maay). Most Bantu do not speak Somali and very few Somali speak Kizagua or Maay-Maay. The Bantu arrived in San Diego in 2004 and there are approximately 600 to 800 Bantu presently living in San Diego.

<sup>2</sup> Ong, P.M. & Rickles, J. (2004). The continued nexus between school and residential segregation. *Berkley Women’s Law Journal*, 19(2), 260-275. Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY. (2003). Economic segregation of higher education opportunity 1973 to 2001, No: 136, October. Rumberger, R.W., & Palardy, R.J. (2005). Does segregation still matter? The impact of student composition on academic achievement in high school. *Teachers College Record*, 107(9), 1999. Kantor, H. (1999). Race, education and joblessness in the inner city, 1970-1990. *The Urban Review*, 31(3), 225-242. Hochschild, J. & Scovronick, N. (2003). *The American dream and the public schools*. New York: Oxford University Press; Where is the Land of Opportunity? *The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States*\*Raj Chetty, Harvard University and NBER Nathaniel Hendren, Harvard University and NBER Patrick Kline, UC-Berkeley and NBER Emmanuel Saez, UC-Berkeley and NBER

Demands for change arising from knowledgeable, organized and engaged residents. As the community becomes healthier, its capacity to build and maintain an infrastructure to support knowledgeable, organized and engaged residents is strengthened. **Authentic demand** is operationally defined as "... resident voices at decision-making tables, with competence and confidence to participate fully in the deliberations and who understand that they are connected to constituencies in their neighborhoods to whom they are accountable."<sup>3</sup> For there to be real accountability, these constituencies **must be organized**, i.e., a group of individuals who have come together based on a common interest, have an identity as a group, and have some level of formal structure that has some way of identifying its membership and some agreed upon decision-making process.

---

## Community Knowledge

---

Authentic Demands emerge out of a knowledgeable, organized and engaged community. It is the organization that provides the space for the community to come together and critically analyze their situation in a way that creates the Community Knowledge. Organization is a necessary condition for Authentic Demand as it is where the accountability lies. The Community Knowledge then drives the engagement by the community. In general, this knowledge is encapsulated in the stories that are told about a situation and the people involved. It is gathered by talking with people in the community, reading local histories and community papers, listening to oral histories, etc. Because Community Knowledge is embedded in people's lived experiences it requires people to process those experiences in order to draw out the knowledge. Many people know a lot more than they think they do. It is this knowledge that often guides people's behavior but is only articulated in response to questions, questions that lead people to examine their lived experience and what they have learned from it. When people are unknowingly guided by this embedded knowledge we call it instincts. This case study reviews the process members of City Heights Youth for Change went through to articulate their Community Knowledge and then how they used that knowledge to develop a plan of action to bring their Authentic Demands into the public dialogue.

---

## The Model

---

The purpose of the project is to enhance the civic participation of the community by working with their youth using a popular education approach. The goal is to train the youth to be Popular Educators who, starting with their natural community connections, build and maintain Knowledge/Action Networks within the community, i.e., refugees within the Crawford Cluster of the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD). These knowledge/Action Networks have the capacity to keep community members connected to the public dialogue on issues of importance to them by regularly providing information and engaging them in dialogue. This network is also used to mobilize people to attend rallies, public hearing, and School Board and/or City Council meetings, etc. These Knowledge/Action Networks provide the basis for civic engagement by bringing the knowledge needed to be engaged to the people and creating access to the pathways to engagement.

**Core Strategy:** The core strategy is to build these networks for disseminating information, sharing knowledge, and engaging people in conversation for the purpose of increasing their involvement in the political life of their community. This strategy is based on the belief that:

---

<sup>3</sup> Nilofer Ahsan (2008). Sustaining Neighborhood Change: The power of resident leadership; social networks, and community mobilization. To download a pdf of this guide, please visit [www.aecf.org/mcguides.aspx](http://www.aecf.org/mcguides.aspx). ©2008, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland

1. Civic Engagement is an act of hope and faith. Engaging those who are disenfranchised requires building their belief that their participation is meaningful and educating them on how and assisting them with getting engaged.
2. Arguments in support of the status quo often make sense on the surface. Changing the status quo requires people going deeper and challenging the thinking behind the status quo. This only happens through informed dialogue.
3. Effective and sustainable change only comes when there are established democratic constituent organizations with the power to hold policy makers accountable. These organizations are a necessary condition for Authentic Demand.

In this instance, civic engagement is defined as “Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern.”<sup>4</sup> In very broad strokes, most communities have two components, a social and a political. Most people have some connection to the social life of the community while, in general, only a minority are active in the political life of the community. However, it is within the political arena that policy decisions and implementation plans are made that have enormous impact on the quality life within a community. The deep purpose of this project is to politicize community members by bringing political issues into the social life of the community. “Politics” is defined here as the art of turning the ideal into the real. Creating these Knowledge/Action Networks create the means for engaging the community in defining the “ideal” and shaping how it is to be converted into the “real.” For example, the ideal is that the graduation rates at high schools in low-income neighborhoods rise to those in wealthier neighborhoods. What needs to happen to close the gap? This process is designed to lift up and articulate the community’s answer to that question, i.e., the Community Knowledge. The goal is to **educate and activate** people. Based on the definition, being civically engaged can range from signing a petition or voting to being active in an established constituent-run organization that brings the community to the policy table in an organized way. This approach to civic engagement does not stop at making people aware or informed but facilitates their becoming engaged. Power comes from organization and the goal is to support the development and maintenance of constituent-run, democratic organizations.

**The Process:** Community doesn’t just happen. It is a living, breathing thing that requires constant nurturing. It is the culmination of all the relationships people have with each other. At the center of any community are the people who make the things happen that make those relationships possible. These are the people who volunteer in the schools and churches. They run Boy & Girl Scout troops, coach sports, etc. They are the “weavers” of community. Creating these Knowledge/Action Networks begin with identifying and recruiting a cadre of Popular Educators from among these weavers and investing in them so they can expand their activities to include engaging the people within their networks in the political life of their community. The key to the success of this strategy is the people recruited and the level investment made in them.

**Investment:** The “investment” in the Popular Educators involves:

1. A six to eight session training focused on Popular Education, the political process, specific issues, etc.

---

<sup>4</sup> American Psychological Association definition – see: [www.apa.org/education/undergrad/civic-engagement.aspx](http://www.apa.org/education/undergrad/civic-engagement.aspx)

2. Monthly meeting/training sessions
3. Assistance in formalizing, expanding and documenting their networks
4. Financial support, i.e., stipends and outreach budget<sup>5</sup>

In return for this investment, Popular Educators are expected to:

- Attend all sessions of the Popular Education training
- Participate in all monthly meeting/training sessions
- Attend community meetings and gatherings to share information when appropriate
- Develop and circulate through their network sharing information on relevant issues and engaging people in the conversation.
- Identify emerging and potential community activists and encourage and support their involvement in existing community efforts
- Mobilize their network for particular actions/activities, e.g., public hearing, City Council meeting, etc. when necessary
- Work with staff to formalize and document their network and maintain contact information and logs

It is estimated that the Popular Educator will commit 24 to 30 hours per month to the project.

## **THE PROJECT**

---

### **Recruitment**

---

Because it is operating in a refugee community, this project modified the initial recruitment strategy in order to match that community. Members of this community face unique challenges due to their experiences as refugees. First, they come to the United States with nothing and have no voice as to where they are placed. Secondly, the cultural gap between where they come from and the United States is often enormous and they have had little or no time to prepare for the change. As soon as they arrive their children enter American schools where they pick up the language and begin to assimilate almost immediately. In a very short time these youth have learned the language and can maneuver the American system better than their parents. This situation is both helpful and dangerous. It places enormous pressure on youth who are expected to support the family by being the interpreter, translator, cultural guide, etc. Many youth accept and carry out this responsibility with grace while others struggle with this demand as it can and does disturb the family hierarchy, a disruption that is often identified by the community as causing the problems they have with some of their youth. This cohort plays a very special and important role. They are the families' bridge between their previous life and their new life. The participants in this project were selected from this cohort.<sup>6</sup> Beyond the founding six members, the rest of the participants were selected by Community Elders to be part of this project. Seeing the importance of this cohort to their community's health, the Elders selected young people who had demonstrated a commitment to their community and the capacity to develop as future leaders.

---

<sup>5</sup> This element is strongly recommended, though it is possible to run the project without stipends. The youth in this project received \$25 per session for their participation in the Youth Leadership Academy

<sup>6</sup> This cohort generally consists of those youth who were born outside the United States but having arrived young enough to start school in high school or earlier

---

## Participants

---

While the Youth Leadership Academy officially began on September 29, 2014, the focus on the issues began in November 2014. The October meetings were spent dealing with logistics such as setting ground rules, sorting out which youth would be enrolled, setting the schedule, etc. The first meeting drew 27 youth. By the last meeting in October, the final 18 participants were selected and the first real training session began on November 3, 2014. Module 1 ended on December 22, 2014 and included eight training sessions. The second training module began on January 5, 2015 and ended on February 23, 2015 with a celebration on March 2, 2015. This module included six training sessions.

The original 18 participants consisted of:

- 14 females and 4 males between the ages of 14 and 24 with an average age of 19.4 years – a 5<sup>th</sup> male joined for the second module
- The female participants are two and half years older than the male participants (19.4 and 17.0 years respectively)
- The females were an average of 8.8 years old when they arrived in the United States while the boys were an average of six years
- Eight participants (47%) are in high school, eight (47%) are attending community college
- Nearly a third (31%) began school in the United States in pre-school or kindergarten, 44% started in Elementary School, and a quarter (25%) entered school in Middle School
- Half the participants reported attending school before coming to the United States
- 47% of the participants have passed the CAHSEE, 24% have not and 29% haven't taken it yet
- Of those who passed it, it took an average of 3 tries to pass the English and 4 tries to pass the Math
- All participants are fluent in English (rating fluency 4.8 out of 5)
- All but one participant is fluent in Kisagua (rating fluency 4.7 out of 5)
- Participants speak an average of 3 languages “Well enough to get by” to “Excellent” – 71% speak 3 to 5 languages
- Six of the fourteen females are mothers with one to three children

---

## Pre-Leadership Academy

---

The Youth Leadership Academy emerged out of the group's experience during its first year. Between its founding in late 2013 and the beginning of the Youth Leadership Academy in the Fall of 2014, the founders worked to build the group and develop its identity. During that time that they named themselves, held an open meeting that drew over 30 youth from a variety of refugee communities, and selected the disparities in educational outcomes as their focus.

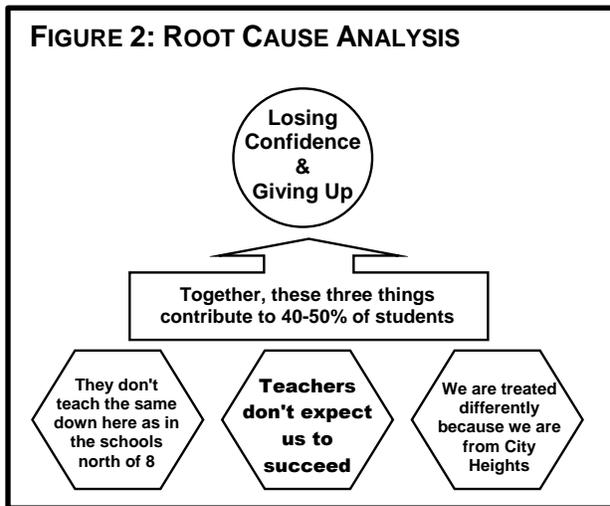
**Root Cause Analysis:** In order to understand why these disparities exist and what youth could do about it the group conducted a Root Cause Analysis in its early days. This process included the following:

Youth were presented with the disparities in educational outcomes between the two high schools in their community (Crawford and Hoover) and two high schools in wealthier communities (La Jolla and Scripps Ranch) and asked why they thought these disparities existed.

Their initial reaction was to blame the students for the disparities. They didn't do their homework; they took drugs; were disrespectful to teachers and others, etc. The youth were encouraged to drill deeper by asking them if those things only happened in their high schools and not in the others. Did all the unmotivated, dumb students go to their schools and all motivated and smart students go to the other schools? Responding to these probes, the youth began to talk about some of the challenges they face in their community, how some of the teachers treat them, the Schools' lack of understanding of who they are culturally, etc. As refugee youth, this later point has particular meaning for them. What emerged from this process was a clear sense of the root cause of the disparities, i.e., "The Schools don't expect us to succeed."

The youth's root cause analysis, i.e., their explanation as to why so many students are not succeeding, is shown in Figure 2. As can be seen, the youth identified "**Loss of Confidence and Giving Up**" as the root cause of so many students not succeeding academically. Three things were named as contributing to this Loss of Confidence. These are:

1. Teachers don't expect us to succeed
2. We are treated differently because we are from City Heights
3. Teachers don't teach us the same way here that they teach in schools north of I-8



The teachers not expecting them to succeed was identified as the most important of the three factors. The group spent time clearly defining and describing the ways in which this lack of expectation is communicated to them. They identified particular facial expressions, body language, and personal interactions that communicated the teachers' negative feelings toward them. They also identified seventeen different teacher behaviors that encourage them. A survey among the seventeen youth

- Stereotypes**
1. We're Black
  2. We are not serious
  3. We all take drugs
  4. We are lazy
  5. We are poor
  6. We are uneducated
  7. We care less
  8. We don't care about education
  9. We are dirty
  10. We are thieves
  11. We have swag

participating in the group at the time showed that three-quarters of them experienced and/or witnessed the negative behavior by teachers. They also said that half to most of the teachers do things that encourage them. The youth had no clear explanation for their contradictory responses other than; while some teachers do try the general feeling among students is that the teachers are there for a paycheck only.

Exploring the experience of being treated differently led to a discussion of stereotyping and how it affects them and their community. The list of stereotypes to the left was generated by the youth in describing the stereotypes that affect them. They saw stereotyping, particularly the one that they don't care about education, has having a large influence on how the Schools treated them and their parents. They often reported that the

teachers assured them and their parents that they were doing fine in school while receiving grades of “C” and “D.”

The youth saw the issue of the teachers teaching differently north of I-8 as an accountability issue. The degree to which a School feels accountable to the parents is directly related to the amount of engagement and advocacy by the parents. Parents with children in the schools north of I-8 have greater resources which they use to engage in the schools and advocate for their children. Because the parents in low-income communities have access to much less resources, they are less able to be engaged in the schools and to advocate for their children. Without the engagement and advocacy the Schools become less accountable to the parents. The stereotyping identified above reinforces the lack of accountability by interpreting the lack of parent engagement and advocacy as lack of interest rather than lack of resources.

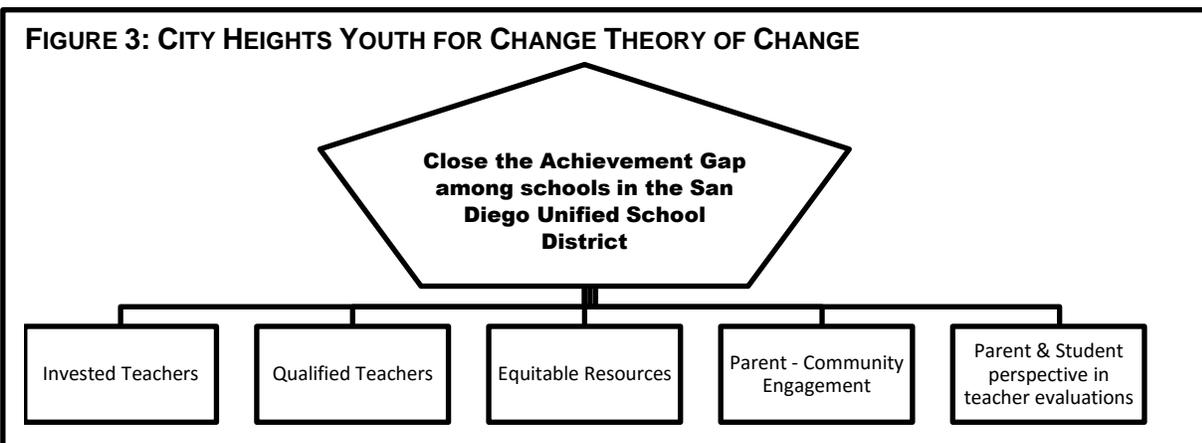
---

### Leadership Academy – Module 1: Assessing the District

---

**Evolving Theory of Change:** In 2013 the State of California radically changed how it funded schools. This change had two very important components. First, it allocates money based on school district need as defined by the percent of low-income students and English Language Learners rather than just using average daily attendance. This change will result in SDUSD receiving an increase of approximately 75% in funding over the next three to five years. The second change is that the community must be engaged in development of the school district’s budget. Each district has to have a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) that informs the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) that are both developed in collaboration with the community. This new process created a window of opportunity for the community to have a collective voice in shaping their children’s education.

The Youth Leadership Academy is designed to support City Heights Youth for Change in taking advantage of that window and becoming a voice for refugee youth in addressing the disparities in



educational outcomes within the San Diego Unified School District. Through their work to date they have begun to build their Theory of Change as depicted in Figure 3.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the ultimate goal of the group is to close the achievement gap that exists between schools in low-income communities and those in wealthier communities. Through the activities involved in Youth Leadership Academy, the youth identified five conditions that must exist in order to close that gap. These are:

- Teachers are personally invested in their students' academic success
- All teachers are certified and teaching in their area
- Resources are distributed equitably so that schools with the greatest need get the greatest resources
- Parents and community are engaged in the schools
- Parent and student perspective are included in teacher evaluations

As suggested by the title of this section, the Theory of Change is a work in progress that will continue to evolve as the group moves forward on their campaign.

**Assessing the District:** The Theory of Change emerged from the activities of the youth as they learned about the LCAP, the LCFF and assessed how well they thought the District's plan aligned with their needs. The sessions focused on the LCAP involved the following activities:

The process began with the youth grading six high schools in the District without knowing what school they were grading on two broad criteria, i.e., academics and institutional support. The youth were presented with data from each of the high school's School Accountability Report Card (SARC) issued by the State. On academics the three schools south of I-8 received the grades of D, D, D+ respectively while the three schools north of I-8 received the grades of B, A, A+. On institutional support the schools south of I-8 were graded C, D, B while those north of 8 received the grades of B, A, A+. In their reflection of the disparities, the youth expressed that they felt that the District invested more in the schools north of I-8 than they did in the schools south of I-8. Much of the difference was seen in the level of education and experience the teachers had and the variety of opportunities they had access to.

The youth were then introduced to the District's Vision 2020 and LCAP as the District's strategic plan. The five Visions are what the District hopes to achieve and the LCAP is their plan for achieving it. The youth assessed the LCAP by responding to the question: *From your perspective as students, alumni and parents, what is in the LCAP that addresses each of the visions and what is missing?* In general, the youth saw a great deal of alignment between Vision 2020 and the LCAP. The things named as missing included wanting smaller class sizes and more counselors in high schools in low-income communities, more personal investment by teachers, teaching staff that is ethnically representative of the community, greater voice in policy for parents and students.

Timing of the Leadership Academy coincided with the District Superintendent delivering her State of the District Address, providing an opportunity for the youth to attend. In preparation for the Address, the youth created their criteria for assessing the Address. The process involved them responding to the following: Last year in her State of the District Address, Cindy Marten said that the District would be making "a focused, specific, actionable effort to close the achievement gap." *From your perspectives as students, alumni, and parents what "focused, specific, actionable effort" does the District need to engage in in order to close the achievement gap?* The five conditions in the Theory of Change described above was the outcome of this process.

The youth attended the State of the District Address and met the following week to analyze it. This process involved reviewing what was said and then to assessing how well it aligned with the group's five

conditions. In general, the group felt that the District's plans were in alignment with the things they identified as needed.

Working from what they have defined as the necessary conditions for closing the achievement gap, the youth then assessed the LCAP based on how and how well it addressed those five conditions. First they identified what, in the LCAP, was intended to address each of the conditions and then they assessed each planned action as helpful, hurtful or having no impact on the condition. Their assessment was a positive one. In general, the youth felt that the District's plan addressed their issues.

The final session had the youth prioritize the five issues, reflect on the experience and be recognized for their work. Six youth were especially recognized as the founders of City Heights Youth for Change.

The outcome of the prioritization was:

1. Teachers personally invested in student success
2. All teachers certified and teaching in their area
3. Parent-Community Engagement
4. Equitable distribution of resources
5. Parent-Student Perspective included in teacher evaluations

In reflecting on the experience the youth were asked to identify at least two peaks in the experience and at least one pit, i.e., at least two positive experiences that stand out and at least one thing that didn't work or make sense or we could have done without or have done better. The peaks spoke to the level of commitment of people, the sense of moving forward on their agenda, having meetings start on time, etc. The pits referred to the need to become more of a team, show more respect to each other and have more order in meetings.

---

## **Leadership Academy – Module 2: Improving Educational Outcomes**

---

Where the first module was focused on the youth articulating their educational needs and assessing the District's efforts to address those needs, the second module was focused on how to advocate for those needs. In an article written in 1984, *A Theory and Design of Social Service Reform*,<sup>7</sup> Edmonds makes the argument that to be effective in creating change the community must be very specific in what it asks for from any institution. It must use the "language of minimums."

It is the responsibility of the intuition to pursue lofty goals and take fullest advantage of the body of knowledge and sets of skills the staff represent. It is the responsibility of the community to know precisely what service it seeks, and have criteria for determining whether or not that service is being made available. (p. 62)

Using broad and abstract terms such as "equity in education" leave it up to the institution to decide what "equity in education" is and how it should be achieved. By being precise in asking the schools to produce a specific outcome or set of outcomes the community creates the operational definition of "equity in education." It also provides the institution and the community with the capacity to assess the degree to which the institution has addressed the needs of the community. The overall goal of this

---

<sup>7</sup> Edmonds, R. (1984). A theory and design of social service reform. *Social Policy*, Fall 1984, 57-64.

module was defining the “Ask,” what exactly did the youth want the District to do to address the achievement gap.

**Developing the “Ask”:**

Module 2 began by reviewing the Theory of Change and the priorities identified at the end of Module 1. The youth were presented with the five conditions they named and asked to identify things that could be done to create those conditions. After a process of listing, sorting, and prioritizing possible ways to create the five conditions, the youth identified three targets:

1. Reduce Counselor to Student ratios from approximately 400 to 1 to 100 to 1.
2. Reduce class sizes to 18 to 25
3. Offer more programs for Newcomers

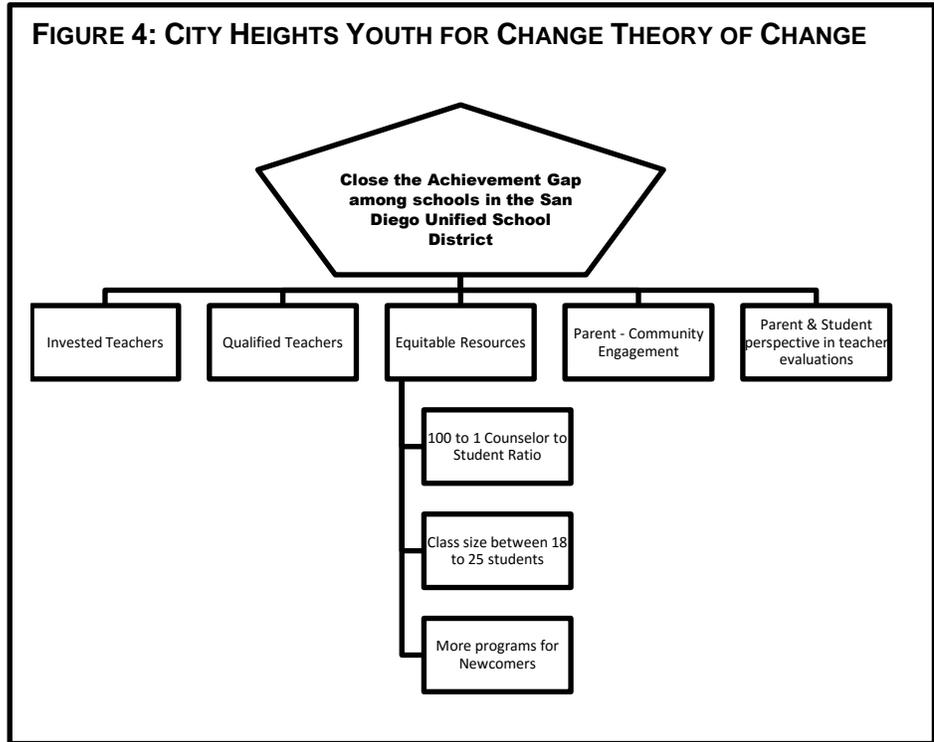


Figure 4 illustrates the new layer to the Theory of Change. Achieving these three outcomes will make the distribution of resources more equitable that will, in turn, contribute to closing the achievement gap.

**Identifying the Network:** The purpose of the project is to develop Knowledge/Action Networks and this component of the Academy focused on making participants conscious of their social networks. Youth were asked to name people in their close circle (friends, family), people they interact with regularly (teachers, fellow students, people in the neighborhood), and people they interact with occasionally (store clerks, people at bus stops, people in the neighborhood). People are generally not conscious of who and how many people they interact with during their week, making this exercise more difficult than it seems. The nineteen youth participating in this exercise named over 165 people in their combined networks. These networks included family, friends, schoolmates, teachers, neighbors, etc.

**Why this “Ask”:** Naming a community concern and proposing how to address it are necessary but not sufficient steps to bring about the changes being called for. It requires building the political will to make the changes. Building political will requires not only being precise in what is being asked for, it also requires being able to articulate why the changes are important and what benefits will be accrued if the changes are made. Being clear on the latter is necessary for both building support within the

community and for advocating with the relevant institutions. The youth had identified more counselors as their primary Ask. To develop their argument, the youth were asked, “How would regular meetings with an academic counselor help you complete high school and go on to college or technical school?” The youth answered this question with, they need counselors who:

- Prepare us for the next stage in life
- Mentor & Inspire us within long-term relationships
- Help us understand & fulfill graduation requirements
- Provide motivation to keep us going

Throughout this process the youth have consistently returned to the theme of “relationship.” It emerged in their root cause analysis as “teachers are there for a paycheck only,” in the Theory of Change in naming “invested teachers” as a necessary condition, and in their Ask where they call for greater access to teachers and counselors with whom they have some level of personal connection.

**Reflection & Follow-up:** The second module of the Youth Leadership Academy ended with an exercise that asked the youth to name what, from all they have learned over the two modules, is important for them to know and what is important to be shared with the rest of the community. The group produced 15 responses to the first question and 13 responses to the second. Their responses fit into the six categories shown in Table 1. For “Important to know,” 73% of the comments referred to three

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Important to Know</b>	<b>Important to Share</b>
<b>1. North-South – Unequal Resources</b>	20%	8%
<b>2. Community Voice</b>	13%	46%
<b>3. Resources</b>	33%	31%
<b>4. Teacher-Student Relationship</b>	20%	0%
<b>5. Parent-Teacher Contact</b>	0%	15%
<b>6. Student Responsibilities</b>	13%	0%

categories (1, 3, 4) with a third of the comments (33%) related to the need for resources. The rankings in response to “Important to share” were slightly different as nearly half (46%) of the comments referred to the importance of parents and students raising their voices. The issue of resources was second most mentioned (31%). Each response set had one category that had no responses. For “Important to Know” it was Parent-Teacher Contact and for “Important to Share” was Student Responsibilities.

These responses suggest that the youth see that it is important for them to understand the resources within the District and how they are distributed but that the community most needs to know that it can have a voice in the District if they become engaged. The importance the youth see in having the community engaged is reinforced by their responses to the question as to what they could do personally to bring about the changes. Nine out of 12 (75%) who responded stated they would continue to stay involved and work to engage their community. In addition, all participants in the Leadership Academy attended the follow-up meeting focused on the next steps in the project.

**Closure:** After celebrating their accomplishment a follow-up meeting was held. This meeting came with no stipend and no pressure to attend. It was presented to the nineteen graduates of the Academy as a meeting to discuss how to apply what they have learned and what needs to happen next to advocate for their Ask? Twenty youth attended the meeting, all but one of the original nineteen plus two others who knew about the group. The youth attending meeting committed themselves to a two-point strategy, i.e.:

1. Building and strengthening their base: The group agreed to conduct a Participatory Action Research (PAR) Project. The goal of the research is to document the community's perspective on what is needed to improve educational outcomes based on the Theory of Change developed by the youth. Participants in this project will go through a six sessions in order to develop the research protocol, the instrument(s), and receive training on surveying and interviewing. Data collection is expected to take four weeks with a draft report produced within three weeks of completion of the data collection. The PAR will also be used as means for educating and enlisting the support of the community about the issue.
2. Building a Community Platform: As stated earlier, creating change requires more than knowing what needs to be done. It requires building the political will to carry-out the changes called for. This component of the strategy calls for bringing all of the refugee groups within the Crawford Cluster together to create a common agenda and to plan for advocating for this agenda within the District. This plan involves participating within the District's existing structure (e.g., ELAC, DLAC, Cluster Meetings, etc.) to press the agenda. Participants in the Community Platform would receive training on the LCAP and School Budget to inform the development of their Platform. The youth agreed to form a leadership circle to guide their involvement in the Platform. Seventeen of the twenty youth attending the follow-up meeting signed up to be part of the Leadership Circle.

## **CONCLUSION**

Over the life of City Heights for Youth for Change, the participating youth have:

- Completed a Root Cause Analysis that defined institutional expectations as the key causal factor for poor educational outcomes at their school
- Examined their own experiences and created a Theory of Change that identifies five conditions that must exist if the District is to close the achievement gap
- Studied the LCAP to assess how well it addressed the conditions identified in the Theory of Change
- Identified three specific changes they want to see in service of increasing the equity with which resources are distributed within the District
- Agreed upon a strategic framework for moving their Authentic Demands forward

The opening paragraph of this case study states that it tells the story of City Heights Youth for Change and its campaign to address the gross disparities in educational outcomes between schools in low-income neighborhoods such as theirs and those in wealthier neighborhoods within the same School District. It describes the process of generating Authentic Demand from within the community. The key word in that sentence is "generating." That word is important for two reasons. First, Authentic Demand often does not rise out of the community spontaneously, but is a response to some catalyst. In this case it was making the youth aware of the disparities between their high school and others in wealthier neighborhoods. Second, creating change not only requires raising Authentic Demands, but it also requires successfully advocating for the changes called for. This case study is entitled Part I because it only covers the generation of Authentic Demand. It ends with the launching of the advocacy strategy that emerged from this experience. Part II will examine the implementation of that strategy.

The task/challenge before the group in continuing to develop its Authentic Demand is to ensure that it strengthens and documents its connection to its constituency and creates ways of establishing their accountability to that constituency.