

Collaborative Action Research: A Catalyst for Enhancing the Practice  
of Community Youth Mapping

by

Gordon Miller

BST, Kelsey Institute, Saskatchewan, 1975

BSPE, University of Saskatchewan, 1980

MA, University of Victoria, 1984

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Interdisciplinary Studies

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University of Victoria

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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### **Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Marcia Hills, Supervisor, (School of Nursing)  
**Supervisor**

Dr. Joan Wharf Higgins, (School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education)  
**Co-Supervisor**

Dr. Irving Rootman, (Faculty of Human and Social Development)  
**Member**

Dr. Les Foster, (Department of Geography)  
**Member**

## Abstract

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Using a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach, ten youth were involved as co-researchers in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project in the city of Surrey, British Columbia. Youth were trained to be co-researchers, involved in: Research design, recruiting interview respondents, collecting, transcribing, and analysing data as well as developing a knowledge-transfer strategy.

The research questions guiding this study were: 1. What is the experience of conducting a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project in order to gain an understanding of the opportunities and supports (through people, places and activities) for young people to build *elements* that facilitate positive youth development (PYD)? 2. What types of data are Youth Mappers able to collect using a variety of methods and technology? 3. What are the benefits to the youth participating in this study?

Youth Mappers collected data from 174 of their peers through key informant interviews and focus group sessions, mapping resources in the form of people, places and activities where youth found opportunities and support to build *elements* that facilitate PYD and examining potential explanatory themes underlying the qualitative data. Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) technology were used to map locations of people, places and activities (PPA) in the different neighbourhoods within the City of Surrey.

Youth Mappers reported gaining a broad array of benefits including: research, technological and communication skills, knowledge about positive youth development and changes in the way they perceived themselves as supporting youth in their community.

Some additional training and organizational support may have assisted the Youth Mappers in recruitment of respondents and in data collection.

The study found that youth's primary resources for building *elements* that facilitate PYD were found in informal settings such as malls, restaurants, friend's and their own homes, within the company of friends and family. Formal settings included work, schools and sport and recreation facilities with co-workers, teachers, coaches and team members. Fewer resources were reported for formal organizations. Youth are in need of more places to socialize together that are run similarly to church organizations but with non-religious affiliation, making membership more open to a diverse youth. Young people also want more opportunities to collaborate with adults within their communities on a formal and informal basis.

The Surrey Community Youth Mapping project was instrumental in providing the initial foundation for a broader Community Youth Development Initiative and immediately garnered the interest of schools and organizations within the community and provincially. Recommendations were made for modifying this kind of study for different audiences.

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## Preface

My relationship with the research topic is complex. As a former Research Officer and Senior Policy Analyst with the Ministry of Health, and Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD), I've been involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of numerous provincial children and youth health promotion initiatives including: Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities, Health Impact Assessment (HIA), and Youth Agreements (high-risk youth services). During this time and within my PhD studies my interests have focused on applying concepts of health promotion and positive youth development; applying community-based research and evaluation; measuring and operationalizing community capacity; involving youth as evaluators; and, the evaluation of health promotion and Community Youth Development (CYD) approaches.

I'm curious about the cohesive theoretical explanations which account for the effectiveness of a successful CYD intervention; key strategies that underlie positive youth development outcomes; how successful community-wide interventions facilitate or develop linkages among and within relevant systems (i.e. social ecological approach) to mobilize and build community capacity and social capital (e.g., public safety, health, education, parks and recreation, business, and social services); and, the barriers to meaningful youth participation, the nature of youth and adult roles which foster meaningful youth participation, and methods to empower youth to have a voice within their community. However, although my curiosity about CYD interventions is broad and inclusive, for the purpose of my PhD Dissertation, I conducted a feasibility study incorporating a Collaborative Action Research approach to involving youth in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project.

In the spirit of Action Research, it is my hope that the following research will provide assistance in meaningfully engaging youth and mobilizing and building community capacity in the initial start-up phase of developing and implementing a community-wide youth development initiative.

## Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge my co-researchers for their time, energy, and commitment to our inquiry especially the ten Youth Mappers and Dr. Donna VanSant who have significantly influenced the way I will continue to work with youth. We laughed and learned together, and in the end, we found greater purpose and meaning in our time together and in our group. We are stronger because of our collaboration, and we continue to grow.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Marcia Hills, my supervisor and Dr. Joan Wharf Higgins, my co-supervisor for their commitment to mentoring me through my interdisciplinary doctoral program and this dissertation. My sincere thanks go also to my committee members Dr. Irv Rootman and Dr. Les Foster for their guidance, support, flexibility, and responsiveness. I am grateful to have been able to work with such a group of caring and committed individuals.

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In Loving Memory of Dad

## CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM TO BE STUDIED

### Introduction

#### *Youth Involvement in Research*

Action Research provides a way to systematize experiential learning to assist in the construction of knowledge and the foregrounding of action, practice and experience (Brooks & Watkins, 1994). A central commonality of Action Research strategies is that they are based upon the lived experience of the main participants. Broadly speaking, Action Research is research where the emphasis is placed on collaborative, self-directed, participative knowledge-generation and application processes that focus on social change and social justice (Greenwood & Levin, 2000; Hart, 1992; Heron & Reason, 2001; Hills & Mullett, 2000, 2005; Ross, 1998). Perhaps the most important feature of Action Research is that it shifts the locus of control in varying degrees from professional or academic researchers to those who have been traditionally called the subjects of research. Scholars like John Dewey (1938) and Edward Lindeman (1926, 1989) pioneered theories of experiential learning in education that included the notion of reflection/action cycles. Their work was a forerunner to modern-day action research. Kurt Lewin, credited by some as the person responsible for first formalizing action research into a field, used the approach to explore “(racial) minority problems” back in 1946 (Brooks & Watkins, 1994, p.8).

Hart (2002) documents a number of examples of youth as Action Researchers, attributing school requirements of learning and interpretation as a conduit. He argues that given adequate support from adults, youth could use the school as a laboratory and community as a basis for discovering life.

Youth-led Action Research has its roots in many research and evaluation traditions. Youth development, youth empowerment, meaningful youth engagement, Participatory Action Research, youth leadership and community development are all traditional methodologies which gather “local knowledge” collected by “non-experts” closest to the research issue (Miller et al., 2006).

An earlier example of youth involvement in a community Action Research study is the Imagine Chicago effort (Imagine Chicago, 1993), based upon the work of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; McKnight & Kretzmann, 1990). Youth were trained to canvass the Chicago community to learn about the dreams and potentialities of residents, community leaders, business owners and entrepreneurs and others with whom they had contact.

There are many reasons to involve youth in Action Research studies. “Youth-engaged research and evaluation offers the opportunity to demonstrate the power of democratic, dialogic evaluation practice” (Goodyear, 2003, p.28). Involving youth in Action Research where they work alongside adults can enhance their Community Youth Development initiative on multiple levels: (a) Learning and informing others about the importance of positive youth development, (b) demonstrating youths’ skills and abilities, (c) presenting findings in a variety of ways from academic research journals to more practical, user-friendly methods, (d) development of partnerships in generating funding and understanding, and (e) evaluation as a means of validating improvement and gaining support for social and community change, (Miller et al., 2006).

Although the number of Action Research studies involving youth is growing, there is a dearth of information on the practice and benefits of such research. Checkoway et al.,

(2003) state that despite increasing interest, the work with youth remains relatively undeveloped as a field of practice. Action Research has the potential to offer opportunities for youth to gain skills and knowledge that can be applied to many other contexts.

Checkoway (2003) points out that through community research and evaluation processes youth are able to build critical thinking and writing skills, exercise their political rights and are prepared for active participation in a democratic society.

### *Why Community Youth Mapping?*

Of interest to this study are examples of youth involvement in Action Research from an innovative method termed Community Youth Mapping, a phrase and form of research first reported by the Center for Youth Development & Policy Research in Washington, D.C. Community Youth Mapping (CYM) is similar in methodology to Participatory Rural Appraisal (Chambers, 1991; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) in which researchers involved youth in mapping community resources under the guidance of an ethnographer. Most CYM efforts have involved youth primarily as data collectors and not as co-researchers, taking a leadership role in decision-making, implementation and analysis. Testimonials from youth suggested that CYM was a good experience, having provided them with exposure to community adults (e.g., adults from various occupations, program directors, parks and recreation coordinators, city council, chamber of commerce), teamwork, the broader geographical community, and built skills such as self-discipline, problem-solving, and perseverance (Miller et al., 2006; Newman, 1998; Perkins & Jones, 2002).

The feasibility of involving youth from the onset in a Community Youth Mapping study as co-researchers would therefore be a logical extension of this approach. Assessing

their peers' reports of resources which play a supportive role in their lives could be focused around a framework using a combination of 'Personal and Social Assets that Facilitate PYD Framework' developed by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (Eccles & Gootman, 2002) and the 'Five C's' (Lerner, et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). This would be a good place to begin in helping youth define the parameters of such a study, so that they could discover people, places and activities which facilitate positive youth development within their community. Finally, this approach is distinctively participatory in nature to avoid the pitfall of adults making research decisions which exclude youth.

#### Problem Statement

Young people in Canada are gaining some of the important resources they need to develop positively (Health Behaviour in School Aged Children, 2005; BC Adolescent Health Survey, 1998, 2003; National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, 2003). While this is reassuring, significant indicators have come out of the results of more than 500,000 surveys conducted by Search Institute and communities across North America which show that youth report having fewer than half of the protective factors (assets) known to promote positive youth development (i.e. 18 of 40 identified developmental assets) (Scales, 2004). Youth who report having more of these factors also report having fewer negative youth behaviours (e.g., substance abuse, violence, antisocial behaviours, sexual intercourse, gambling), as well as having more thriving behaviours (e.g., succeeds in school, values diversity, maintains good health) (Scales, 2004). A significant finding from the Search Institute survey implemented in the community of Summerland, BC, demonstrated that only

14 percent of the youth had a sense of connectedness and belonging in their community (Miller et al., 2006).

Youth in communities rich with developmental opportunities are exposed to fewer risk factors and display increased rates of positive development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner et al., 2005; Perkins & Jones, 2002; Pittman et al., 2000, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Scales, 2004; Theokas et al., 2005). Such communities not only support adolescent development but also meet the needs and attract the interest of youth (Miller et al., 2006; Perkins & Jones, 2002). It is often the case though that community resources remain untouched either because of a lack of awareness or because such information sits untouched and unused and data eventually become outdated (Academy for Educational Development/Centre for Youth Development and Policy Research, 2001; Miller et al., 2006). Community Youth Development (CYD) initiatives frequently begin with recognizing the capacities of the individuals, associations and institutions within the community and then mobilizing these assets around a particular vision. Once an inventory of community resources is mapped, community partnerships are built and assets to support community development surface (Israel & Ilvento, 1993, 1995; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Miller et al., 2006).

It became apparent in conducting an extensive review of literature (Miller, 2005), and an extensive evaluation of four CYD initiatives in BC (Miller et al., 2006), that there is a need to know where or how most youth receive or are exposed to key *elements* of positive youth development within their neighbourhoods or communities, and a need to develop resources that will meaningfully engage youth in active involvement in decisions that affect their lives and in processes of community mobilization and change within their communities.

## Research Questions

The goal of this research project is to examine the effect of engaging young people in Collaborative Action Research (CAR) involving them in developing and implementing a Community Youth Mapping project. The purpose was to learn about where and how young people gain access to local resources, especially in relation to people, places and activities which provide support and opportunities to build *elements* that facilitate PYD.

This research study involved a variety of community partners and youth situated in defined neighbourhoods within the City of Surrey, British Columbia. In order to fully engage youth and community in the research, the study followed the general principles of Collaborative Action Research (CAR); a form of Action Research and more specifically a Co-operative Inquiry Approach (Hills & Mullett, 1995, 2000, 2005). Deriving its approach from Co-operative Inquiry (Heron & Reason, 2001), its philosophical basis from community development, and applying the rigor of Action Research, CAR is a planned, systematic approach to issues relevant to the community that requires community involvement in the research; has a problem-solving focus; is directed at societal change; and makes a lasting contribution to the community. Employing a CAR approach, the research will be grounded in the youths' and communities' need for trust, voice, open communication, self-determination and collaborative decision-making (Assistant Deputy Minister's Committee on Prostitution and the Sexual Exploitation of Youth, 2000; Brown, 2001; Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2002; Clarke, 1997; Driskell, 2002; Strickland & Strickland, 1996).

The overall research questions guiding the study are:

1. What is the experience of conducting a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project in order to gain an understanding of the opportunities and supports (through people, places and activities) for young people to build *elements* that facilitate positive youth development (PYD)?
2. What types of data are Youth Mappers able to collect using a variety of methods and technology?
3. What are the benefits to the youth participating in this study?

In responding to these questions, this study will:

1. Examine how training of Community Youth Mappers and research team reflection/action cycle meetings provide young people with the research skills and knowledge to participate fully in the study as co-researchers. Describe the contributing factors to sustaining youth co-researchers' commitment in this study.
2. Describe how youth are able to collect data from their peers about people, places and activities where they have an opportunity to build *elements* that facilitate positive youth development within their community. Describe the youths' perceptions of utilizing different technology (Global Positioning System, Global Information System, and digital photography, etc).
3. Determine benefits to the Youth Mappers in terms of their change in comprehension/ knowledge/experience/skills, beliefs and attitudes, and understanding of the

opportunities and limitations within their community and identify which features of the process were most helpful to participants in supporting their growth.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Societal Trends Affecting Youth

The role communities play in supporting their youth to thrive is not as evident as it once was. A number of social forces have changed both the landscape of family and community life and expectation for youth in North America. Today's world has become increasingly complex, technical and multicultural, requiring young people to become highly educated and trained in social and emotional skills to gain employment in an exceedingly competitive environment. To compound the problem for youth, while life is getting more complex, the support structure within the informal community has become weakened. This includes: high rates of family mobility; greater anonymity in neighbourhoods, where more parents are at work and out of the home for longer periods, schools which have become larger and more diverse (including socio-economically and culturally); extensive media exposure to themes of violence and heavy use of drugs and alcohol; and in some cases, the deterioration and disorganization of neighbourhoods and schools as a result of crime, drugs and poverty (Allen, 1997; Benson, 2002, 2004; Blum, 1998, 2004; Catalano, 2004; Driskell, 2000; Eccles et al., 2003; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Garbarino, 1995; Hall et al., 2003; Hawkins et al., 2002; Jessor, 1998; King et al., 2005; Lerner, 1996; Lerner et al., 2002, 2005; Masten & Coastworth, 1998; Moore & Zaff, 2002; Perkins, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Scales, 2003; Theokas et al., 2005; Villarruel et al., 2004).

In British Columbia, it has been estimated that one out of five youth are at serious risk of not achieving "productive adulthood" and face such risks as substance abuse, adolescent pregnancy, school failure, and involvement with the juvenile justice system (McCreary Centre Society, 1998). More than 18,000 youth in B.C. are reported missing, run

away or forced to leave their parental home and community each year (Canadian Police Identification Centre, 2002) and currently there are an estimated 8,000 youth classified as high risk (Ministry for Children and Families – Management Analysis and Reporting System, 2002). The recent BC Adolescent Health Survey III (McCreary Centre Society, 2003) found that less than half of the youth surveyed feel safe at school and that one in ten ran away from home in the past year, and are at danger for virtually every risk: abuse, poor health, suicide, pregnancy, and alcohol and drug use. Also, provincial findings from an initial measurement of assets in youth in four large communities showed that youth have fewer than half of the 40 developmental assets measured and on average, only 20 percent of youth feel valued by their community (Miller et al., 2006).

A recent Canadian report from the Health Behaviour in School Aged Children study (HBSC, 2005) highlighted the results of a survey conducted to examine the health behaviour and attitudes of youth. This survey was first carried out in 1990 and has been conducted every four years since then. The most recent survey in 2002 polled 7000 Canadian students ranging from grades 6-10. The HBSC (2005) results indicated that a good relationship with parents was linked with positive psychosocial functioning and less involvement in risk taking. Students who were well integrated socially and had positive peer influence reported higher life satisfaction and fewer risk-taking behaviours than did students who had poor social integration and negative peer influence. Most students in the 2002 survey enjoyed school but the proportion of students who liked school has steadily dropped since 1994. Secondary students' perception of school tended to be more negative than that of elementary students and boys had more negative views of school than girls. Being happy at school was related to the perception of having good and fair teachers, supportive relationships with

teachers, and an increased sense of autonomy in the classroom. A major finding was that students who had positive experiences at school were less likely to be involved in health risk behaviours such as smoking, drinking, and using marijuana (Social Program Evaluation Group at Queen's University in partnership with Health Canada and sponsored by the World Health Organization, 2002).

A positive trend identified in the survey was a reduction in smoking rates in older girls. Rates of alcohol consumption have increased between the ages of 12 and 14 years. Both girls and boys reported engaging in binge drinking which indicates excessive alcohol use may be a feature of youth's social events. Marijuana use increased among grade 10 boys and those who used marijuana were more likely to smoke, drink, engage in sexual risk taking and report poor relationships with their parents and negative feelings at school. Data also showed that one-quarter of students in grade 10 have had sexual intercourse. However, only two-thirds of those sexually active students used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse and just under one-half used birth control pills. Healthy living data indicated a significant gender difference in physical activity both in and out of school indicating that engagement in sports is still a male domain, and that schools could do more to involve girls in physical activities. Levels of television watching can be an indication of a sedentary lifestyle with a high number of students reporting several hours or more of watching TV each day. Also, more than two-thirds of older students spend an hour a day on computer. The report concluded that federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, professional and business sectors need to pay more attention to youth and make efforts to engage youth in policy and program development initiatives.

Current literature on youth development speaks to the extended time and growing complexity involved in transitioning successfully into adulthood. As recently as thirty years ago adolescence ended around 18-21, signalled by movement into permanent jobs, marriage and rearing families. There used to be a limited number of fairly well-defined pathways from youth into adulthood across all social classes, which is no longer the case (Arnett, 2004; Mortimer & Larson, 2002). In contrast, today's youth are faced with an unclear passage into adulthood, training in an ever-increasing range and number of post secondary programs as new career choices emerge, extending entrance into the labour market until the mid-twenties. Similarly, marriage and child bearing are occurring later, in the late twenties. Youth are aware that they may train in up to four different occupations over the course of their lifetime, in careers that are likely to be very different from the jobs of their parents or other adult mentors. Nor are our youth likely to live in the communities they grew up in or form a permanent intimate partnership with one other person and raise a family with that person (Elder & Conger, 2000; Giddens, 1990, 1992; Gleick, 1999).

In addition to the changes in the length of time it takes to transition into adulthood, youth are being barraged with and influenced by images of adult behaviour through the mass media in terms of substance use. They see adults using alcohol as having little or no effect or only positive personal and social outcomes from the alcohol consumption (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Gerbner, 1996). Seventy-five percent of eighth graders think that alcohol is either "fairly easy to get" or "very easy" (National Institute of Drug Abuse, 1996). Access to drugs is easier and the properties in drugs are more dangerous sometimes being mixed with household agents such as cleansers. Rave drugs such as ecstasy have become popular at night clubs, rock concerts, and late-night parties, particularly in urban and suburban

neighbourhoods and among white middle-class young adults. A critical issue in Canada is the increasing number of youth using the destructive drug Crystal Meth, which will now have tougher penalties for trafficking (presentation by RCMP in Saanich Schools, Victoria, BC, 2005).

Youth today are growing up in a world saturated with the mass media (television, movies, magazines, music, computer games, and the internet). They are surrounded by a popular culture distributed through the mass media that sees young people as a market ripe for exploitation. Traditional communication research has found that youth are affected by what they read, see, and hear in the media and that the media contribute to increased levels of aggression and violence, unhealthy attitudes about sexuality, and negative stereotyping of minority youth. According to Huston et al. (1992) by age 18 the average youth will have viewed an estimated 200,000 acts of violence on television alone. Large numbers of studies have established that exposure to media violence is related to increased fear, desensitization, and aggressiveness among viewers. More than 1,000 studies using various scientific methods with a range of populations over three decades converge on the conclusion that viewing violence on television increases the probability that viewers will be fearful, desensitized to real-world violence, and violent themselves (Friedrich-Cofer & Huston, 1986). Some analyses have suggested that 5% to 15% of violent behaviour in the United States could be attributed to viewing violence on television (Comstock & Strasberger, 1990). In the United States incidents involving gangs in schools have almost doubled between 1989 and 1995 (Howell & Lynch, 2000).

Another trend for concern is the up to 20-25 hours per week of unsupervised time an increasing number of youth are reported as spending, especially between the hours of 3pm –

6pm. Evidence points to youth being more likely to engage in sexual intercourse, alcohol or drug abuse, smoking, violence, and gang related behaviour (Zill et al., 1995). The more time youth spend alone and unsupervised the greater the risk. In addition, within school settings, youth who participated in school-sponsored activities for 1-4 hours a week were 33% less likely to drop out of school before they reached the 12<sup>th</sup> grade than youth who did not participate at all. The most recent national time use survey conducted in 1998, showed that 80% of Canadian youth (15 to 24 years) spent over 14 hours of their free time each week involved in passive leisure, primarily watching television (Statistics Canada, 1999).

A trend working against Community Youth Development (CYD) is the lack of post secondary expectations and opportunities. Eccles and Gootman (2002) state that unlike many European and Asian industrialized countries, there is very little institutional support for the transition from secondary school to work creating what the W.T. Grant Foundation labelled a “floundering” period (W.T. Grant Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, 2000). High costs of post-secondary tuition and high competition to enter these institutions have delayed and possibly prevented the ability for youth to pursue occupations of their choice.

To summarize, a number of societal trends are having a deleterious effect on the development of young people, namely: the erosion of family, school and community supports for youth especially in terms of connectedness of youth to meaningful adults; the amount of time youth are unsupervised, particularly in the after school hours because of parents’ need to work, and the negative influence of mass media in terms of violence, pro-sexual behaviour and positive portrayal of substance use. These trends create a case for active support for growing capacity of young people by individuals, organizations, and

institutions, especially at the community level; and by examining where resources exist in communities that assist youth in building supportive relationships where they feel safe and connected within their community.

### Community Youth Development (CYD)

The goals of CYD are to integrate youth and young adults into all spheres of community life and to ensure that their voice and actions are valued and utilized in efforts aimed at social or community change (Zeldin et al., 2000). Youth governance, or youth decision-making, is a strategy used to help achieve the goals of CYD. This notion of youth governance refers to youth-adult partnerships in organizations, institutions, or coalitions where youth have an active role in setting the overall policy directions. This type of policy-making involvement is exemplified by boards of directors, advisory groups, committees, and other planning bodies that include youth members (Villarreal et al., 2003; Zeldin et al., 2000).

A CYD orientation involves a shift away from concentrating on problems towards concentrating on strengths, competencies, and engagement in self-development and community development. CYD has been defined as “purposely creating environments that provide constructive and encouraging relationships that are sustained over time with adults and peers, while concurrently providing an array of opportunities, supports, and services that enable youth to build their competencies, confidence, connections, character, caring and compassion, and to become engaged as partners in their own development as well as the development of their communities” (Villarreal et al., 2003, p. 6).

The next section discusses a framework for defining CYD that was developed through an extensive evaluation of four communities within the province of British Columbia (Miller, Mullett, & VanSant, 2006).

*A Framework for Examining Community Youth Development (CYD)*

A recent comprehensive evaluation of four existing Community Youth Development initiatives within British Columbia, Canada (Summerland, Vernon, Prince Rupert, and Tri-City) was conducted over a two year period (Miller et al., 2006) The evaluation was supported by the BC Ministry for Children and Families and the National Crime Prevention Strategy – Community Mobilization Project in order to engage community members in identifying how the services/programs in the communities support the healthy development of youth; identify strategies to increase partnerships and collaboration among various community groups and youth; determine how the successful strategies could be enhanced; identify successful approaches for youth involvement; and, develop community capacity for community action research/evaluation.

The evaluation found that community respondents agreed that youth must be able to experience a set of supports and opportunities that facilitate their positive development across all of the settings in which they spend their time. Numerous examples were found of strategies to strengthen the capacity of youth and adults in the community to optimize youth development outcomes in families, schools, and neighbourhoods. This was also evident with the strong collaborations forged with schools, parks and recreation, RCMP, community service agencies, and the business community. One of the major outcomes of this evaluation project was the development of a framework supporting the successful development,

implementation and evaluation of future CYD initiatives within any community identified as the “CYD Evaluation Framework”.

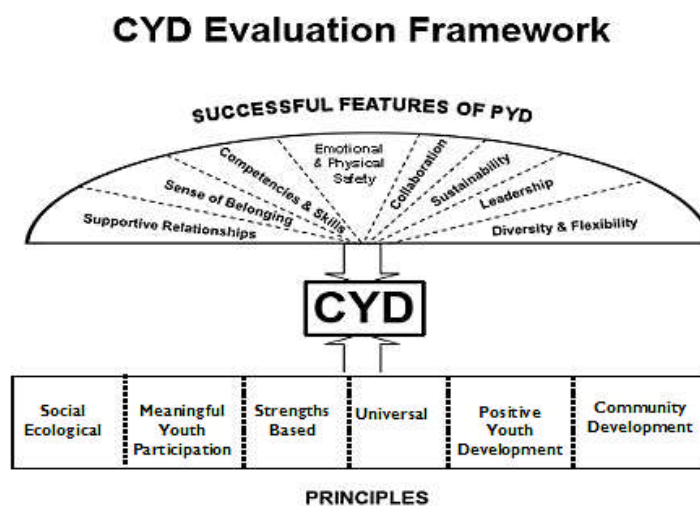


Figure 2.1 - CYD Evaluation Framework (Miller et al., 2006, p.6)

This framework represents the cumulative findings from the data collected within the four very different community sites. The community sites consisted of: a small geographically isolated setting with a large native population, experiencing economic issues due to loss of industry, substance abuse problems and youth leaving; a fairly small but economically strong rural setting with easy access to main cities and the united political motivation to support youth; another almost identical rural setting in close proximity to the previous one with issues of poverty, transiency and less political support for youth; and lastly a burgeoning urban multi-cultural community ten times the size of the smallest community with little interest in supporting youth due to the constant pressures of building and need for new services at every level.

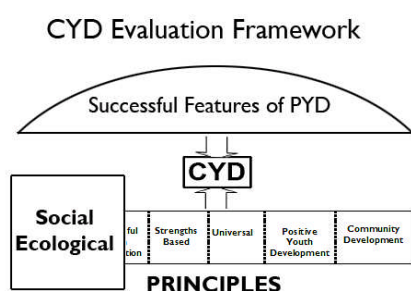
A number of approaches were gleaned as essential for CYD and provide the structure, base or starting point for communities considering involving youth in a CYD initiative. These approaches have been coined “*principles*” because of their foundational nature and thus are located at the base of the Framework. Using a settings approach embraces a contextual perspective of youth within the larger community in which they live; a meaningful youth participation approach avoids barriers and exemplifies youth empowerment and participation; a strengths-based approach is stressed which views youth as ‘resource-full’, as opposed to a traditional deficit model which would view them as ‘resource-empty’; a universal approach encompasses all youth as opposed to targeting at-risk youth populations creating stigma and exclusion; a positive youth development approach seeks to provide youth with a safe and nurturing environment to develop the competencies and skills they need to be fully prepared for adulthood; and a community development approach provides an environment where are invited to be valued contributing members and are supported to thrive academically, socially, physically and vocationally.

Data collected from the four community sites also demonstrated the following “*successful features of PYD*” (found at the top of the Framework). The features stress the importance for youth to develop positive connections within their community for developing skills, building capacity, and increasing self-confidence; engaging youth through a youth centered approach that focuses on a youth driven agenda; physical and psychological safety; supportive and empowering relationships; collaborations between school, parks/recreation, and community services; fostering youth motivation by looking at future possibilities rather than past difficulties; developing funding and sustainability strategies; building youth-adult relationships based on nurturance and friendship; and lastly, diverse programs that attract and

retain a variety of youth with different backgrounds. Refer to “[www.youthbc.ca](http://www.youthbc.ca)” for the full report “Community Youth Development – An Evaluation of Four Communities in the Province of British Columbia” (Miller et al., 2006).

## Principles of CYD

### *A Social Ecological Approach*



A social-ecological approach recognizes that youth exist and interact within complex sub-systems including family, peer groups, organizations, community, culture, physical and social, economic, and political environments. These various systems can enhance or damage the health and development of individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1998, 2005; Brown, 1991; Gottlieb & McLeory, 1994; Krieger et al., 1993; Krieger, 1994; Lantz et al., 1998; McKinlay, 1993; Mullen et al., 1995; Nutbeam, 1998; Sorensen et al., 1998; Stokols, 1992, 1996; Susser & Susser, 1996a, b; Williams & Collins, 1995; World Health Organization, 1986). Of note in this section is the similarity in meaning between social-ecological, settings and systems theory which all speak to the relationship between individuals and their environment in the context of healthy development.

Youth development is affected by the changing reciprocal and dynamic relations between: (a) Individual factors including: cognitive development (i.e., shifting from concrete to formal-logical thought processes), temperament (i.e., mood, activity levels, excitability),

biophysical characteristics (i.e., biological, neurological, and physiological), the experience of puberty (i.e., perceptions and expectations affecting adjustment), and, gender (i.e., affecting relationships, expectations, competency, connectedness) (Eccles & Gootman, 2002); and, (b) multiple contexts within which youth live (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1998, 2005; Lerner, 1990, 1995, 2005).

Young people develop as the result of their core experiences with diverse people, systems, communities, and the institutions in those communities. These core experiences are comprised of mutually influential relationships between the developing youth and his or her biological, psychological, and ecological niche. These relationships are bi-directional and assume the presence of “plasticity” which legitimizes an optimistic view of the potential for positive youth development. Plasticity is an important factor in human development, particularly at an age when youth are faced with making decisions and choices which affect their transition into adulthood. Specifically, life-span development psychology (Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 2004), bio/social ecological developmental psychology (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Lewin, 1952), and life course sociology (Elder, 1998; Lerner et al., 2002) have demonstrated the possibility of optimizing individual and group change by altering bidirectional relations between individuals and their ecologies to capitalize on this plasticity. These models of human development avoid the reduction of individual and social behaviour to fixed genetic influences and instead stress the relative plasticity of human development and argue that this potential for systematic change in behaviour exists as a consequence of mutually influential relationships between the developing person and his or her physical and psychological characteristics, family, community, culture, physical and

designed ecology, and historical niche (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1994, 1998, 2005; Gottlieb, 1997, Lerner, 1990, 1995, 1996, 2002, 2004).

Settings are unique to each individual depending on their circumstances as well as to each community and can enhance or damage the health and development of youth. A social-ecological approach utilizes interventions geared towards modifying the context within which youths' exist rather than solely attempting to change the individuals themselves. Poland, Green and Rootman (2000) stated that this approach signifies a shift in focus from reductionist strategies that emphasize individual action to a more salutogenic philosophy, with programs that acknowledge the impact of wider environmental determinants. Each person, relationship, and social structure is in some way linked to the other thereby creating a patchwork of interaction that is itself embedded in a broader culture and history (Brook-Gunn, 1995; Holder, 1998; Tolan & Guerra, 1994; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1998).

The focus on "supportive environments for health" is not new. It is one of the five key strategies of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986) and gives recognition to the fact that many factors of health and well-being are specific to the complexity of the social-ecological setting. This view shifts the focus from solely the youth participant to the interaction of the youth within multiple levels of his or her environment. Fostering Community Youth Development requires partnerships with youth at multiple levels of the youth's environment.

The early work of Jessor and his colleagues discussed the social-cultural influences on adolescent behaviour (Jessor, 1993; Jessor et.al., 1968, 1977). This line of theory and research helped to trigger a coherent view of the youth's embeddedness within a complex pattern of social institutions (Belsky, 1993; Zigler, 1990) and design of community-based

interventions aimed at a range of issues, including school readiness and prevention of juvenile delinquency (Zigler et al., 1992). Lerner's work on developmental contextualization (Lerner, 1986) has added to the understanding of community context in its articulation of the ecologies that inform development and how youth influence their social contexts.

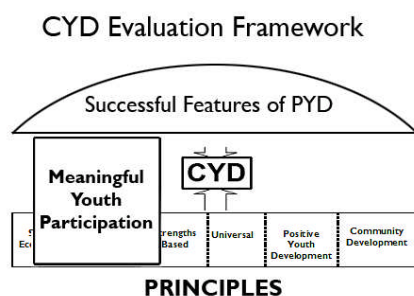
From a social-ecological perspective, Bronfenbrenner (1994, 1998) identified multiple levels that affect youth development: a) the youth engaged in the settings of his or her daily life (micro-systems), b) the web of relationships that compose the community in which the youth resides (meso and exo-systems), and c) the culture and society that provide the frame for development (macro-systems).

The people who surround youth make notably important contributions to their development. However, there are large discrepancies between what are recognized as optimal roles for individuals and institutions in society in promoting youth development and the willingness of people to become involved in the lives of youth. Some of the inattention to youths or lack of participation by adults in youths' lives may be related to Farkas' (1997) description of adult negative perspectives of children and youth. It is unknown whether this is a North American phenomenon or exists worldwide and/or related to changing cultures.

In summary, the use of a social-ecological approach in designing a CYM project is necessary in a community like Surrey which is one of the fastest growing and culturally diverse communities in Canada. By involving a diverse cross-section of the youth population in shaping the project design, implementation and analysis, the data collected are more likely to result in the implementation of a successful CYD initiative because it will speak to the lives of Surrey youth. By involving youth action researchers using a social-ecological approach, we also avoid the pitfall of adult researchers making educated guesses

about youth needs. Within four communities in BC, community coordinators and champions agreed that the two most important factors within a youth's environment that facilitate PYD are supportive, empowering, and enduring relationships and, the goal of making communities a better place for youth to grow up (Miller et al., 2006). In addition it was felt that "the nut to crack" is changing the culture of the community toward supporting youth to thrive.

### *Meaningful Youth Engagement*



To explore meaningful youth engagement in depth, we need to: Firstly, examine the historical role of adolescence and how trends in society have isolated youth from adults creating a fear of youth which is unsubstantiated; secondly, identify the barriers to meaningful youth engagement; thirdly, identify methods to empower youth to have a voice in society; and fourthly, examine the nature of youth and adult roles which foster meaningful youth engagement and strengthen communities.

#### *Historical Role of Youth in Society*

Zeldin et al. (2002) point out that historically, youth were not isolated from adults; they worked within families or as apprentices to others. Formal schooling was a luxury few could afford and the education and socialization of youth was the responsibility of the adults with whom they worked. During the second half of the nineteenth century industrialization replaced the labour economy and also led to urbanization. Children were no longer needed

to work but they were now living in densely populated areas and exposed to immoralities such as drinking and sexually explicit behaviour. This led to a movement to protect youth from potential dangers resulting in child labour protection laws and also public school systems. It also created a new type of intergenerational isolation that had never existed before and this separation has led to children and especially youth being viewed as different and something to fear.

The logic for engaging youth and adults as partners in the democratic processes is well established (Dewey, 1916; Lansdown, 2001; Zeldin, 2005). Lansdown (2001) points out that there is a growing recognition, explicit in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, that adults often cannot be counted on to represent youth needs and concerns. Agencies refer to the developing person's active involvement in shaping the process of development, for example, when youth choose challenging activities and seek supportive relationships they are participants rather than simply recipients in their own development (Convention of the Rights of Children, 1989). Implicit in this knowledge is the importance of listening to our youth and inviting them to be decision-makers in their futures (Zeldin 2005). Youth contribution has become the goal of many agencies, organizations, coalitions, government and civic bodies, and relevant institutions. However, while involvement of youth at all levels has become more evident, the nature and effectiveness of youth participation has come under scrutiny in a search to ascertain, evaluate and make suggestions for improving the quality of meaningful youth engagement.

#### *Barriers to Meaningful Youth Engagement*

Youth apathy and indifference to the political process has implications for the development of public policy today and the quality of our citizens tomorrow (Marques,

1999). Although we may recognize that youth are an important part of the democratic process attempts to involve youth as participants in decision-making around their futures have often been unsuccessful. On closer examination, some youth participating initiatives fail to involve youth meaningfully in the decision-making process.

*Adults don't invite youth to participate.*

Despite the many benefits to involving youth in decision making strategies, youth have often been left out of these decision-making processes in schools, organizations and communities even though they are participants or service recipients (Israel et al., 1993). We need to ask to what extent can settings that are adult-centered successfully address youth participation? The subject of undue adult influence on youth development is one that typically is overlooked in staff youth-development workshops. This may well be because adults, not youths, invariably plan and attend these workshops. One of the reasons that youth are not often involved in community decision making is because adults often question whether or not youth will possess the capacities needed to be involved in important decision-making (Young & Sazama, 1999). Adults have often underestimated the capacities of youth, having concerns about youths' ability to make decisions, to follow through on assignments, or to deal with sensitive or confidential matters (Boggiano & Katz, 1991; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1998).

*Tokenism.*

An example of tokenism is *The Education Quality Improvement Act* passed in Ontario in 1997. The legislature mandated non-voting student representatives on school boards across the province which sounds like a move in the right direction. However, student trustees had no voting status nor were they allowed to participate in closed meetings,

even those that were not of a sensitive nature regarding specific people. When one witnesses such token attempts at providing youth with an opportunity to have a voice, it is understandable that young people may have an apathetic response considering “their political marginalization and a culture that does not tend to value their input” (Marques, 1999).

*Imbalance of power between youth and adults.*

Issues of personal and institutional power are embedded in all youth-adult relationships and often become a stumbling block (Camino, 2005). Zeldin et al. (2005) suggest that analysis is needed that helps clarify the boundaries between legitimate and manipulative exercise of power within youth-adult relationships to ascertain where adults are benefiting youth. Zeldin and Tropitzes (2002) point out that there are limited opportunities for youth to participate and few pathways for them to achieve civic competence. Scales et al. (2001, p. 9) report that when adults assess the importance of possible actions that can be taken on behalf of young people, two of the least frequent responses are to “seek young people’s opinions when making decisions that effect them” and to “give young people lots of opportunities to make their communities better places.” Zeldin and Tropitzes (2002) use an example by Camino (2000) which points out that when youth are invited to participate in community governance and planning, adults tend to set low expectations for the performance of youth and expect them to conform to strictly prescribed parameters that have been set by adults (Camino2000; Schlegel & Barry, 1991).

*Disguised youth participation.*

Pittman (2000) quotes Checkoway in speaking about problems relating to meaningful youth participation, saying the following:

There is a tendency in the youth development field to accept all notions of youth participation and to embrace all forms of practice. Some of what passes today as 'youth participation' actually may be a new form of agency service delivery in disguise. This tendency must be guarded against, in fact must be explicitly referred to in the mission statement of an organization, and it must be operationalized in a way that is observable and measurable. (p. 32)

*Negative stereotypes about youth.*

In one study involving multiple focus groups with parents, the participants consistently discounted positive statistics about youth that were presented to them (Gilliam & Bales, 2004). Zeldin and Troptizes (2002) found that in large cities it is often considered difficult to form emotional and instrumental relationships between adults and youth and easier to become isolated from others, thus easier to form and maintain negative stereotypes against minority groups such as adolescents. These stereotypes are also firmly developed in the minds of adolescents themselves. An understanding about youth, for the most part, lies in the neighbourhood experiences of adults and adolescents and in their sense of connectedness with the places in which they live.

In a study of CYD initiatives in four communities in BC, CYD Coordinators cited the abilities of youth to bring new ideas and fresh ways of thinking to age-old problems that baffle adults and felt the energy of youth is often untapped due to common stereotypes that characterize youth as undisciplined, spoiled or unmotivated (Miller et al., 2006).

*Youth Empowerment*

As important as investments are in CYD, it is even more important to actively engage youth in the development of strategies and priorities for these investments. Unfortunately,

adults often complete the development of programs and activities designed for youth without engaging youth in the development and identification of priorities and implementation strategies (Hart, 1992). An example of children and youth determining priorities and strategies in health programming is the Healthy Schools Initiative developed and implemented in BC. School-aged children and youth were provided funding to determine a health issue within their school and develop an action plan to reduce the problem (Miller, 1995). Funding was minimal and the evaluations of over 600 Healthy Schools initiatives indicated that children and youth felt empowered by this process.

The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion encourages implementation of empowerment strategies to enhance individual and collective health of all citizens. Youth development and empowerment are closely related (Huebner, 1998). Youth are empowered when they feel that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make an informed decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of that action (United Nations: World Sources Online, 2001).

The types of jobs youth are most likely to be involved in are also questionable when it comes to empowerment. There is considerable research that working is only beneficial to youth empowerment when jobs are stimulating, pay an adequate amount and do not take time away from schooling. Greenberger, Steinberg, and Vaux's (1981) study of California high school students found that extensive time in the workplace and exposure to certain job stressors were associated with adverse effects on the well-being of youth. Working more hours has been associated with more negative outcomes, including poorer school performance, less participation in extracurricular activities, greater use of alcohol and other

drugs, more delinquent activity, lower self esteem, more psychological and psychosomatic distress, and greater autonomy from parents (Bachman & Schulenberg, 1993; Mortimer et al., 1992). When youths' jobs are more stimulating, teach more useful skills, and do not consume a large portion of their time, behavioural and psychological benefits are apparent (Mortimer et al., 1992).

In a recent evaluation of CYD initiatives within four communities in British Columbia (Miller et al., 2006, p. 48) CYD Coordinators concurred that "if the ideas aren't coming from the youth, they probably won't work", and that "potential is lost when adults underestimate youth". In addition, meaningful youth engagement was noted as having a positive impact on community perceptions and on the actions of other youth in their community. Youth learned problem-solving and evaluation skills, public speaking and negotiation, addressing issues of differences and managing conflict, and working in collaboration with other youth and adults. Coordinators went on to say that a CYD approach has not only promoted a sense of self and emotional well-being but has also increased the ability of youths' participation as decision-makers, leaders and citizens. Creating youth ownership is essential for success.

*The role of adults in enabling youth empowerment.*

To examine development of youth empowerment, a study of youth and adults in an inner city within British Columbia used an inductive qualitative approach to encourage youth to be involved in a community initiative to promote quality of life (Cargo et al., 2003). Youth empowerment emerged as a transactional process by shifting community practice toward allowing youth to control the process in the context of a welcoming social climate, and with the support of enabling adults. The welcoming social climate involved adults

providing opportunities for youth and believing in, respecting, encouraging, and caring for them. Enabling adult support involved adults facilitating, teaching, mentoring and providing feedback to the youth. The youth process of becoming empowered can be explained by the interrelated concepts of: (a) Engaging youth, (b) actualizing youth potential, and (c) cultivating constructive change (Cargo et al., p. 68).

Huebner (1998, p. 54), in summarizing the literature on empowerment and youth, notes three basic ways that the empowerment of youth can come about: (a) Through the sharing of information (the withholding of information conveys a message of untrustworthiness), (b) through the creation of realistic autonomy (teaching about rules and boundaries), and (c) through examination of the role of staff (emphasizing the importance of process).

There is an emerging research base which supports the view that youth-adult partnerships, collaborative participation toward a common cause, and youth involvement in decision-making and action with adults benefits society and promotes youth and organizational development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Kirchner, O'Donoghue, & McLaughlin, 2002; Scales, 2003; Zeldin, 2004). Over the past fifteen years, there has been an integration of youth and community perspectives into youth programming. Analysts now focus on relationships as a foundation from which youth can be active agents in their own development, the development of others, and the development of the community. Reflecting on this trend, Zeldin et al., (2003) identified three contemporary purposes of youth-adult relationships: Ensuring youth rights of participation in decision-making; promoting positive youth development; and building community and civil society. Strong relationships can promote youth empowerment, i.e., youth become more confident, skilled, and connected, and

they find adult support to achieve personal goals. The successful nature of these youth-adult intergenerational relationships involve adults who genuinely demonstrate respect for youth voices by making the time to solicit their views, listen to their ideas and opinions and respond in non-judgmental ways (Zeldin, 2004).

Hart (2002) has developed a ladder of participation for adult facilitators to establish the conditions that enable groups of children and youth to work at whatever levels they choose. The levels of participation include: (a) Manipulation, (b) decoration, (c) tokenism, (d) assigned but informed, (e) consulted and informed, (f) adult-initiated shared decisions with children and youth, (g) child and youth-initiated and directed, and (h) child and youth initiated shared decisions with adults. A child may elect to work at different levels on different projects or during different phases of the same project. Also, some youth may not be initiators but may be excellent collaborators. It is important to avoid working at the three lowest levels.

Research has found that youth have sound decision-making and comprehension skills by the age of nine, and these skills are equivalent to adult skills by age 14 to 16 (Belter & Grisso, 1984; Lewis, 1981; Weithorn & Campbell, 1982). What youth may lack is the accompanying experiences of making these decisions in adult settings (Young & Sazama, 1999). Therefore, it is beneficial to give youth more opportunities to make decisions with adults so that they can gain these experiences that will continue to develop their decision-making abilities (Hart, 2002). When youth fully engage in their own development, they are provided with opportunities for growth, learning, leadership, and mentoring through the processes of program planning and implementation (Villarruel et al., 2003).

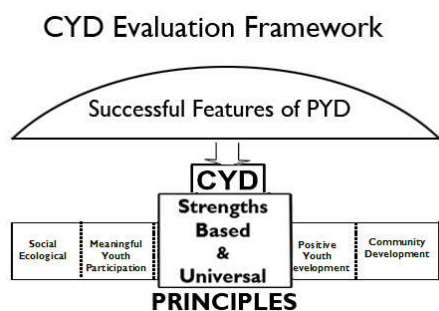
Recognizing a direction for youth empowerment, analysts now focus on adult-youth relationships as a foundation from which youth can be active agents in their own development, the development of others, and the development of the community. Zeldin et al., (2005) reviewed numerous research studies on this topic and have defined three purposes for adult-youth relationships. Firstly, ensuring youth rights of participation in decision-making centers on the assumption that all youth are capable of expressing a view and they also have the right to be taken seriously. At the individual level, the inclusion of youth voices in relationships is found to provide young people with opportunities to experience respect and be acknowledged as important to adults (Kreuger, 2005). At the program or community action level, the active participation of youth in decision-making helps keep the focus on the interests, experiences and concerns of young people (Denner, Meyer, & Bean, 2005). A second purpose of strong youth-adult relationships is to facilitate PYD. To exemplify this, the authors describe an apprenticeship program analyzed by Halpern (2005) and four youth programs examined by Larson et al. (2005). In all these programs, positive relationships with adults were found to provide a rich context for youth's growth and development. Over time these relationships facilitated youth engagement in learning concepts and skills relevant to careers, in addition to improving their self-management abilities and developing capacities to function effectively in the world around them. Larson et al., (2005) state that adults have to transform the nature of their relationships with youth to include transparency and consistency of roles. They also state that many adults are confused as to their proper role and retreat out of the way or "give up their power" in order to empower youth. Zeldin et al. (2005) go on to say that youth may also benefit from the information, encouragement, and contacts they gain from developing relationships with

highly resourced adults in the community (Jarrett, Sullivan, & Watkins, 2005). A third purpose of strong youth-adult relationships can be explicitly oriented toward building community and civil society (Zeldin et al., 2005). When adults and youth work together effectively they are able to provide vital services to other organizations and the community at large. This is seen in the organization profiled by Libby et al. (2005) which offers training and philanthropy services through youth-adult partnerships. The organizations have adopted this approach not only because it enhances quality of service, but also because staff believe that modeling youth-adult partnerships to local community leaders and organizations facilitates community building. Camino (2005) and Ginwright (2005) observed that when adults are engaged as partners in collective action, both adults and youth meet their developmental needs, becoming more confident and competent in working for community improvement.

In summary, adults working with young people need to ensure the opportunities and supports they are providing guarantee meaningful youth participation. Avoiding the pitfalls of tokenism, an imbalance of power and negative stereotyping are essential to effectively engaging youth. Creating relationships is the foundation from which youth can be active agents in their community, confident, skilled and connected. The aim for adults and youth working together toward a common goal is to work at the higher levels of Hart's Ladder of Participation with youth and adults initiating shared decisions. Miller et al. (2006) noted that some adults are not aware that youth are capable partners in leadership, decision-making, and program implementation. Some adults are resistant in viewing youth in new ways such as letting them play new roles, giving them the space to have a voice in decision-making, and

treating them as true partners. An approach such as this challenges adults to take on new roles as partners rather than leaders, and to adapt the process to the needs of the youth.

### *Strengths-Based and Universal Approaches*



### *Strengths-Based Approach*

The healthy development of youth has always been valued within Canadian society. Traditionally, families and schools have been given the role of nurturing and educating youth to become thriving and productive members of our society. Historically, perspectives associated with theory and research in the areas of mental health and developmental psychology in particular, have been framed in a deficit perspective about youth. Hall (1904) described adolescence as a time of inevitable storm and stress, Erikson (1968) believed that youth identity was born of crisis, and Freud (1969) viewed adolescence as a period of normative developmental disturbance. For over a century, the research and literature have supported this deficit approach, mirroring a medical model that relies on the diagnosis and treatment of problems. Today the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders is in its fourth edition (American Psychiatric Association, 1994), and is dedicated to describing the potential disorders and deficits that can occur across human development. Focus has been placed on what makes people ill, rather than what makes people healthy (Larson, 2000).

In contrast to this deficit perspective of youth, a new, positive, and strengths-based vision and vocabulary for discussing youth has been gaining momentum in Canada and is beginning to replace long-held beliefs associated with a deficit model and the predictable engagement by youth in risky or destructive behaviours. In a strengths-based approach, when problems occur, they are viewed as only one instance of a larger array of outcomes that include positive developments (Miller & Leadbeater, 2003). From this perspective, youth are not broken, in need of psychosocial repair, or problems to be managed (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998). Rather, all youth are seen as resources to be developed (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Instead of trying to fix or prevent problems, this new paradigm considers the strengths, competencies, and contributions that youth can make and ways to align these strengths with resources and supports in the environment to maximize healthy development of individuals and society.

The emergence of the strengths-based approach and what has come to be termed the PYD perspective has many roots, ranging from academic research, the voices of youth workers/practitioners and communities, to the discussion of provincial and national policies and the implementation of CYD initiatives designed to promote the healthy development of youth. Academic research in comparative psychology, developmental systems theories, and evolutionary biology has documented the potential for systematic change for plasticity of human development. Specifically, life-span development psychology (Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 2004), bio/social ecological developmental psychology (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Lewin, 1952), and life course sociology (Elder, 1998; Lerner et al., 2002) have demonstrated the possibility of optimizing individual and group change by altering bi-directional relations between individuals and their ecologies to capitalize on this plasticity.

These models of human development avoid the reduction of individual and social behaviour to fixed genetic influences and instead stress the relative plasticity of human development and argue that this potential for systematic change in behaviour exists as a consequence of mutually influential relationships between the developing person and his or her physical and psychological characteristics, family, community, culture, physical and designed ecology, and historical niche (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1994, 2005; Gottlieb, 1997, Lerner, 1990, 1995, 1996). Other roots of this academic view of youth are found in community psychology (Trickett, Barone, & Buchanan, 1996), which emerged in the early 1960's as a critique of the disease or medical model, and which stressed primary prevention (i.e., developing strengths and building competencies rather than secondary and tertiary prevention treating later stages of pathology).

A growing movement has emerged to promote a strengths-based approach to research and social policy, seeking to counter the limitations of traditional deficits-based orientation (Maton et al., 2003). To reiterate, deficit models/traditional approaches were characterized by emphasizing individual vulnerabilities, deficits, pathology, deviance, or risk factors associated with negative outcomes for children, youth, or families (Friesen & Koroloff, 1990; Holmes & Saleebey, 1993; Leadbeater et al., 2003; Scales, 1999). A strengths perspective holds that when a helping agent focuses on pathology and deficits they cripple the individual's ability to transcend life challenges (Brun & Rapp, 2001; Holmes & Saleebey, 1993).

Strengths-based approaches stand in stark contrast to traditional deficit models with the former rooted in meeting the broad developmental needs of young people (Benson et al., 2004; Roeser, 2001; Roth et al., 1998). The two approaches are based on different

assumptions, focus on different outcomes, and place the service providers in a different role in accomplishing those outcomes. Leadbeater et al. (2003) state that “a strengths-based approach seeks to illuminate and understand the individual and environmental characteristics and protective processes that create and support positive developmental outcomes.” Maton et al. (2003) cite four strategic goals that are fundamental to strengths-based research and social policy: (a) Recognize and build upon existing strengths in individuals, families, and communities; (b) build new strengths in individuals, families, and communities; (c) strengthen the larger social environments in which individuals, families and communities are embedded; and, (d) engage individuals, families, and communities in a process of designing, implementing and evaluating interventions: collaborative, participatory, and empowering. The strengths-based perspective is founded on the belief that individuals possess abilities and inner resources that allow them to cope effectively with the challenges of living (Rothman, 1994; Weick & Pope, 1988). Furthermore, these individuals are allowed to retain control of their lives and to activate personal, family and community strengths. Increasing knowledge about the development of strengths or competencies in individuals, families, and communities and of the conditions that are necessary to promote, maintain, or enhance adaptive functioning at each of these levels is a central goal of the strengths-based research (Leadbeater et al., 2003).

It is important to note that a strengths-based philosophy does not imply an absence of problems or denial of needs. Clark (1997) in working with young offenders stated that “strengths-based practice is not a Pollyanna approach of looking for the good or believing that things will turn out for the best. It is a sophisticated approach that many believe can move offenders and families to successful resolution with greater efficiency than working

from their failed side. However, focusing on the offender's strengths is not the same as ignoring or condoning the problems and the pain. Workers who turn to a strengths-based practice will still evaluate the troubles and disorders of an offender. What we try to keep in mind is a balance.”

Leadbeater et al. (2003) states that a strengths-based approach to research and policy development requires a significant change in focus. To build a stronger empirical foundation for strengths-based policy, we need to be aware of : (a) The diversity of individual, family, and community responses to adverse circumstances rather than generalized population responses; (b) the strengths, competencies, and resources needed for preventing or dealing with adversities rather than the deficit, pathologies, and deviance that can result from them; (c) the long-term pathways or life-span trajectories that are affected by variations in strengths available to respond to adversities, rather than short-term responses that are elicited by recurring crises; and, (d) the inter relations among individual, family and community levels of development rather than the characteristics of adapted individuals. This knowledge can be used to create targeted policy responses that can identify, enhance and sustain strengths; follow long term goals; and prioritize integrated strategies that have effects that cut across individual, family, and community levels of functioning and across several specific adversities (Leadbeater et al., 2003)

British Columbia has committed agencies and professionals who provide a myriad of services for children, youth and their families. A strengths-based approach occurs in a wide variety of organizations, some examples include: Municipal/RCMP police, YMCA, Big Brothers and Sisters, School Districts, Regional Health Authorities, Public Health Association of British Columbia, British Columbia Boys and Girls Clubs, Municipal

Recreation and Parks, local Chambers of Commerce and Rotarian clubs, British Columbia Native Friendship Centres, British Columbia Society for Children and Youth, and numerous service agencies. However, as important as these programs are, historically in British Columbia, community service agencies have used a traditional problem-reduction, deficit model approach to youth development, focusing on the risk behaviours and providing prevention programs to reduce these risks. Generally, services address one particular behaviour such as substance misuse (i.e., smoking cessation in schools), juvenile delinquency resulting in crime and/or truancy, homelessness and safety issues such as drunk driving. Emerging research is showing that this service continuum can be augmented, youth outcomes further improved, and investments in these young people enhanced by infusing PYD and CYD approaches into the current education, health and social service environment (Blum, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Zeldin et al., 2005). Effectively preparing young people to meet the challenges of transitioning successfully into adulthood requires providing them with a foundation to make decisions that will promote their own positive development. Youth development needs to involve initiatives and programs which build individual capacities by strengthening protective factors, building competencies, increasing thriving behaviour and reducing risk (Catalano, 1999; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; King et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2002, 2005; Pittman et al., 2000, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Theokas et al., 2005).

It is important to distinguish that a strengths-based approach does not imply an absence of problems or issues. Focusing on youth's strengths is not the same as ignoring or condoning the problems and issues. Examples of community youth mapping initiatives demonstrate the need for the balance by assessing both the strengths or community resources

which facilitate PYD as well as (but to a lesser extent which is more manageable and less overwhelming for youth) identifying issues and needs. The strengths-based perspective is founded on the belief that youth possess abilities and inner resources that allow them to cope effectively with the challenges of living. Furthermore, youth can retain control of their lives.

#### *Universal Approach*

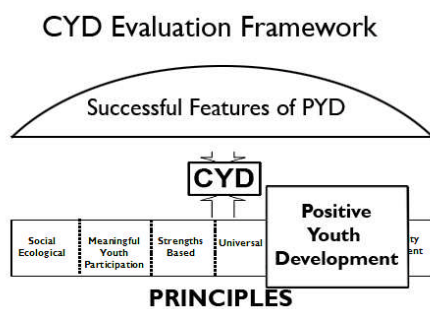
Using a universal approach in recruiting and selecting participants for the CYM study was necessary to avoid the stigma that occurs when specific groups are targeted. Pittman et al. (2002), suggested that all young people need relatively equal access to settings and experiences that help them secure their full developmental potential. Having said this they recognize that equal opportunity has proven near impossible to achieve and individual capacities, interests, and choices will differ. “Some people will always be healthier, some richer, some more productive, some more civically engaged, and some happier. However, the core issue remains one of calling for and taking steps to reduce gross disparities between the benefits and success certain young people accrue from achieving wellness and developmental well-being” (Pittman et al., 2002). The philosophical “fit” of the guiding principle of universality recognizes that all youth have the potential for being “at-risk” and as Pittman (2000) states “problem free is not fully prepared”.

Scales et al. (2002) indicate there needs to be an equitable flow of energy directed at producing developmental assets among all youth. They base this on the research findings that programs narrowly aimed at reducing risks and/or preventing risk behaviours were less effective than more comprehensive approaches rooted in meeting broad developmental needs of all youth (Roth et al., 1998; Roeser, 2001). In fact recent research suggests that even for the goal of disease prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of disease has had more limited

success than universal and primary prevention efforts that aim to more broadly promote a healthy lifestyle (Kaplan, 2000).

In summary, strengths-based and universal approaches require a tolerance and open-mindedness on the part of all involved. Acceptance of others and emphasizing the strengths individuals bring to the table are key. Increasing knowledge about the development of strengths or competencies in youth, families, and communities and of goals that facilitate PYD are a central focus of the strengths-based approach (Miller, 2003). Within the context of this study, changing roles within the family and community coupled with research promoting a strengths-based and universal approach make it not only timely, but essential for youth to be invited to participate in Collaborative Action Research studies as valued and respected members of our communities.

### *Positive Youth Development (PYD)*



For over a decade a new approach for discussing youth has emerged which perceives youth as resources to be developed. Collaborative contributions are occurring among researchers and theorists (Damon, 2004; Lerner, 2004; Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998), practitioners (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2000; Wheeler, 2004), and policy makers (Granger, 2002; Cummings, 2003). Within this new approach, it becomes important to identify strengths present within all youth, such as well-being (Bornstein, Davidson,

Keyse, Moore, & the Center for Child Well-Being, 2003), developmental assets (Benson, 2003), moral development (Damon, 1990), thriving (Dowling et al., 2003; Lerner, 2004; Scales et al., 2000), and civic engagement (Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1999). In addition to individual characteristics, Leadbeater et al. (2003) suggest that there is a need to also understand how PYD has evolved.

While the literature on PYD has grown in the past decade both in journal articles and on the Web, the terms used to define PYD are enough to confuse any reader. Authors of PYD literature emphasize different aspects depending on their perspectives and purposes, for example - internal and external assets, resilience, prevention, youth empowerment, youth promotion, and community youth development. Writers are also extremely varied in defining major tenets of the field, which is inevitable when a field encompasses so much.

Delgado (2002) provides an analysis of over 20 different descriptions of PYD by researchers and youth associations. Seven main themes were identified:

1. an inherent belief in self-worth of youth, regardless of their competencies – cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical;
2. stress on the importance of cultural heritage;
3. the importance of youth exercising control over their lives;
4. a holistic perspective of assets and needs—cognitive, emotional, physical, moral, social, and spiritual;
5. belief in the possession by youth of innate capacities;
6. an understanding that it takes a whole community to carry out youth development and that no one institution has the total responsibility or ability to do so; and

7. long-range commitment – this latter is essential because the goals are long-term. (p. 47)

*Goals which Facilitate PYD*

Researchers and practitioners alike have begun a movement that uses a resiliency perspective to focus on PYD (Pittman, 1992; Pittman & Cahill, 1992; Pittman & Wright, 1991; Pittman & Zeldin, 1994). Moreover, other applied scholars such as Benson, Blyth, & Lerner (Benson, 1990, 1997; Benson et al., 1998; Blyth & Leffert, 1995; Blyth & Roehlkepartain, 1993; Lerner, 1995, 2002) have solidified the positive framework by identifying critical elements that youth need to be successful, contributing members of society.

*The Five C's.*

The concepts that scholars have used to describe the characteristics of a positively developing youth have been described as the Five C's: (a) Cognitive and behavioural competence, (b) Confidence, 3. Positive social connections, (c) Character, and (d) Caring and compassion (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner, et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003) Lerner and colleagues (Lerner, 2002; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003) have theorized that when young people manifest these Five C's across their development, they may be said to be thriving. Scholars have also contended that such exemplary PYD initiatives result in the emergence of a sixth C, contribution to self, family, community, and society. Lerner et al., 2002, 2005) have reported data from a longitudinal, 4-H Study of PYD that confirms the presence of the Five C's among a nationally diverse sample of youth in their early adolescence and the correlation of these C's with variables of PYD, and of the linkages among the C's and contributions by the youth studied in the study. There is growing

empirical support for the use of the Five C's of PYD and for their relevance to operating exemplary PYD initiatives for positive development or thriving (Lerner, 2004).

The Five C's briefly summarize the goals of PYD. They are useful as a quick mental checklist when thinking about what a particular program, organization, or community-wide initiative offers to youth. However, each is broad enough to pose challenges when it comes to designing, planning, implementing, and evaluating initiatives. Programs might try to enhance the competence of young people in a multitude of ways and across a range of contexts or settings, making it difficult to know when progress occurs and what led to it.

Another consideration when discussing goals is the fact that complex characteristics of development make heterogeneity the norm at both the individual and social levels. At any one point in time individuals of the same age will vary greatly in their abilities, values, interests, needs and their social and institutional relationships and connections. Bronfenbrenner (1998) believes that to be successful, PYD community-wide initiatives must develop goals which both accommodate and make use of these heterogeneities.

*Personal and Social Assets.*

The Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth, convened for the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (Eccles & Gootman, 2002) report, has provided an authoritative summation of the critical domains of positive youth development (PYD), adopting the terminology of personal and social assets that include: physical development, intellectual development, psychological and emotional development, and social development. These key domains of youth development and the implied goals/indicators associated with each have several strengths. First, they represent a distillation of available research by distinguished scholars on the qualities of people who succeed by most standards.

Second, they provide a specific set of targets for youth development which aids both in the design and evaluation of programs and initiatives. Third, the list is detailed enough that it distinguishes among and explicates some goals that are at best implicit, notably, physical and mental health; knowledge, skills, and values that open one to multiple cultures; emotional self-regulation; and spirituality.

This long and detailed set of goals may not necessarily help rally large numbers of people behind a community initiative or serve as a quick reminder of what programs are trying to accomplish. Thus choosing which of the two lists of developmental goals to use depends on how it will be used rather than which one is correct. The point in presenting the two frameworks, namely, the Five C's and Personal and Social Assets that Facilitate PYD is that they do not conflict and the second enhances the first.

*Forty Developmental Assets.*

The term development assets is most closely associated with the Search Institute (Benson, 1997). They have provided the most extensive list of personal and social assets, along with a comprehensive review of supporting empirical research (Scales & Leffert, 1999). As pioneers in the PYD movement, the Search Institute found that they could motivate community-wide initiatives around 40 development assets. Half are external assets that exist to varying degrees in the settings that young people inhabit and the people with whom they interact, including family support, safety, adult role models, and creative activities. The other 20 are internal assets that are attributes of young people themselves, such as school engagement, honesty, interpersonal competence, and sense of purpose.

When comparing the Search Institute's list of internal and external assets with the list produced by the Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth (convened by the

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine) substantial overlap is evident, especially when minor differences in wording are considered. The Committee's list has the authority of its numerous scholarly members and the National Academy of Sciences behind it, along with substantial documentation. The Search Institute has also produced a volume substantiating its 40 assets through research (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Therefore, PYD advocates may use either list with confidence when implementing a CYD initiative.

Although, it is the investigator's opinion that a short list of goals, especially the "Five Cs", is less cumbersome to administer and more effective for rallying community support.

*Successful features of PYD.*

The recent evaluation of Community Youth Development initiatives in four very different communities in British Columbia revealed the following eight features deemed necessary for successful development of PYD (Miller et al., 2006, p. 6): (a) Empowering relationships and youth engagement, (b) connectedness, (c) building competencies and skills, (d) emotional and physical safety, (e) collaboration, (f) sustainability, (g) leadership and, (h) diversity and flexibility.

*Evidence that PYD Works*

The BC Ministry for Children and Families' report "Research Review of Best Practices for Provision of Youth Services" (Miller & Hills, 2002) provided an extensive review of literature related to evidence of program model's effectiveness for at-risk and high-risk youth. A number of reports employed high standards of evidence through experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of community-based programs to identify success in reducing specific negative outcomes such as homelessness (Kidd, 2002); substance misuse (Brounstein & Zweig, 1999); youth mentoring (Grossman & Tierney, 1998); school-

based/school linked health centres (Fothergill & Ballard 1998; Hahn et al., 1994; St.Leger, 1999); violence prevention (Elliot, 1999); mental health (Durlak & Wells, 1997, 1998; Greenberg et al., 2001); teen outreach (Allen, et al., 1990); pregnancy prevention (Allen, et al., 1997; Kirby, 1998); or in promoting PYD (Catalano et al., 1999; Hattie et al., 1997; Roth et al., 1998). These experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations demonstrated that community programs can facilitate positive outcomes for youth in motivation, academic performance, self-esteem, problem-solving abilities, positive health decisions, interpersonal skills, and parent-youth relationships, as well as contribute to a decrease in alcohol and tobacco use, and violent behaviour. Although many of these studies were not designed around a PYD framework, many of the evaluations in fact included measures that reflected the personal and social assets and features of settings to support PYD.

Of the myriad of youth development programs occurring all over the North America, only two reviews of programs in the literature are specific to evaluating PYD, and each of these reviews uses different scientific criteria to determine program effectiveness and thus provide further clarification to the realm of PYD.

The first review is ‘The Positive Youth Development Report’ developed by Catalano et al. (1999), funded by Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). In this report 77 program evaluations of PYD programs were reviewed, and of those, 25 were selected for examination based on their use of research designs involving a control or strong comparison group, with clear measures of youth behavioural outcomes. These measures or objectives included: promote bonding; foster resilience; promote social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and moral competence; foster self-determination, spirituality, self-efficacy, a clear and positive identity, belief in the future, and/or pro social norms; and provide

recognition for positive behaviour and/or opportunities for prosocial involvement. The 52 programs excluded from the study either did not meet the scientific criteria or showed no evidence of effectiveness of the program components.

In summary, Catalano et al. (1999) examined 25 well-evaluated programs which clearly demonstrate that a PYD approach can reduce problem behaviours and increase personal assets, particularly in the area of skill building and organizational/environmental change. The limitations to this study suggest implications for future research in that only half of the 25 programs gathered any follow-up data and none included information about the program, implementation process, the youth development objectives being addressed, and the relation between the implementation information and outcomes. Also, PYD was rarely tracked over time and problem behaviours were measured much more frequently than positive behaviours.

The second review of PYD programs is by Roth and Brooks-Gunn (1998, 2000) who reviewed over 60 evaluations of prevention and intervention community-based PYD programs, using a framework to categorize PYD programs and rigorous standards of evaluation. They defined PYD programs as “developmentally-appropriate programs designed to prepare youth for productive adulthood by providing opportunities and supports to help them gain the competencies and knowledge needed to meet the increasing challenges they will face as they mature.”

Of the 60 programs reviewed, only 15 were selected for inclusion in this review based on the usefulness of the PYD framework as follows: The programs had to have a PYD focus; use an experimental or quasi-experimental design; and a focus on youth not currently demonstrating problem behaviours. The programs were grouped into three categories listed

in order of how closely they matched the PYD framework as follows: a) positive behaviour focused; competency/asset enhancing programs; b) problem-behaviour focused; competency/asset enhancing programs; and c) resistance skill-based prevention programs. The authors found that programs incorporating more *elements* of the PYD framework showed more positive outcomes. PYD programs also decreased youth risk-taking behaviours and increased competencies. Moreover, the evaluations supported the importance of a caring youth-adult relationship and life skill development. Lastly, they concluded that longer-term programs that engaged youth throughout their adolescent years were most effective, suggesting the possibility of cumulative effects.

In summary, the reviews by Roth and Brooks-Gunn (1998, 2000) provide conclusive evidence that youth benefit from long-term PYD programs (at least one year in duration) which: develop personal and social assets; decrease risk behaviours and increase competencies; support adult-youth relationships; and develop life skills. However, the limitations of this review are many, leaving us wondering which specific aspects of programs were most effective for any particular outcome or population group. The vagueness surrounding what constitutes a PYD program and how these programs promote PYD in turn limit our ability to improve upon appropriate support and services for large numbers of diverse youth. The two reviews examined here collectively provide insight into the realm of PYD and illuminate areas needed for further research efforts.

High-quality youth programs are those efforts that conduct activities, establish environments, and develop sustained peer-peer and youth-adult relationships that are intentional and deliberately focused on youth's capacity building. As Pittman and Irby (1996) state, "problem-free youth are not fully prepared youth". Through the establishment

of these PYD programs, as well as through greater participation, youth increase the number of opportunities to build their skills and competencies. For example, in her 10-year study of youth and youth programs, McLaughlin (2000) found that youth with higher levels of participation in community youth organizations were approximately 15% more likely to view themselves as worthy persons.

The following characteristics are important components to consider when creating a PYD program. These characteristics have been either identified through research and/or highlighted by scholars (Benson, 1997; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992; Catalano et al., 1999; Dryfoos, 1990, 1998; Durlack, 1998; Galavotti et al., 1997; Halpern et al., 2000; Lerner, 1995; McLaughlin, 2000; Pittman, 1996; Quinn, 1995; Roth et al., 1998). The following is a synthesis from the above noted researchers and from an extensive report conducted for the BC Ministry for Children and Families called “Research Review of Best Practices for Provision of Youth Services” (Miller & Hills, 2002):

1. Engage youth in organized service activities within the community.
2. Provide an accessible safe haven for youth, both physically and emotionally.
3. Provide learning opportunities that are participatory.
4. Provide youth with social support.
5. Create a strong sense of belonging or connectiveness.
6. Focus on recruiting and retaining youth from diverse.
7. Provide multiple opportunities for youth to engage in activities within their community.
8. Are based on theories of youth development.
9. Offer skill-building activities.

10. Have well-trained staff and volunteers.
11. Offer youth the opportunity to hold meaningful leadership roles within the program and organization.
12. Have established strategies to recognize the accomplishments of youth.

In summary, evidence has been presented espousing the merits of using a PYD approach and the benefits of considering *elements* which facilitate PYD when reflecting upon youth within their broader environment. Particularly important is the role of PYD in relationship to the designing, planning, and implementing of Community Youth Development initiatives.

#### *Processes of Youth Development*

Numerous authors describe youth development as part of the ongoing human development process which lasts as long as life itself (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). According to Hamilton and Hamilton (2004) “optimal development in youth enables individuals to lead a healthy, satisfying, and productive life, as youth and later as adults, because they gain competence to earn a living, engage in civic activities, to nurture others, and participate in social relations and cultural activities.”

Youth experience great changes: biological changes associated with puberty, major social changes associated with transitions between grade levels and changing roles and expectations, and major psychological changes linked to increasing social and cognitive maturity. With so many rapid changes comes a heightened potential for both positive and negative outcomes. Although most individuals pass through this developmental period without excessive problems, a substantial number experience difficulty.

Many theorists have proposed systematic ways to think about the developmental challenges, opportunities and risks of adolescence in an effort to understand youth better. Numerous developmental scientists, policy makers, and practitioners working with youth believe that enhancing the lives of adolescents with positive opportunities and experiences could reduce the likelihood and magnitude of the problems they face at this age (Dryfoos et al., 1990; Eccles et al., 1993; Eccles, & Gootman, 2002; Jessor, 1993, 1998; Larson, 1994, 2000; Lerner and Galambos, 1998; Lerner et al., 2000; Pittman et al., 2000; Roth, et al., 1998). The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (Eccles & Gootman, 2002) report identifies the psychologist Erik Erikson as providing the most fully developed theoretical model of the developmental regularities, from the perspective of community programs for youth development. Like other theorists, he proposed that there are developmental tasks that must be addressed at particular ages or stages of life. These tasks change in systematic ways as people mature. Erikson suggests that specific challenges for youth between the ages of 10-18 are: developing a sense of mastery, identity, and intimacy. Critical to youth development is trust with caring adults, a strong sense of self sufficiency, the ability to exercise initiative, a strong sense of industry (confidence in one's ability to master the demands of one's world), a well formed sense of personal identity, and the ability to experience and express true intimacy (Erikson, 1968).

*Changes in relationships.*

According to research (Allen, 1997; Arnett, 2004; Eccles, 1999; Elder, 1998; Lerner, 1998; Lerner & Galambos, 1998) another challenge which impacts youth development includes the following more specific tasks: (a) Changing the nature of the relationship between young people and their parents so youth can take on a more mature role. In relation

to this task there are a number of factors we need to consider which can prevent youth from transitioning to successful mainstream adulthood and these include: the relationship with parents becomes so turbulent that a rift and alienation between youth and their families occurs; youth can also become engaged with a deviant peer group and its behaviours and values; youth may not have made the necessary social connections with adults and social institutions; educational opportunities are limited and youth fail to acquire the necessary intellectual and relationship skills to successfully transition into the labour market; experiences within the community and social institutions is negligible preventing civic engagement for youth; and racism, prejudice and cultural intolerance isolates youth and they withdraw from mainstream society; (b) exploring new personal, social, and sexual roles and identities; (c) transforming peer relationships into deeper friendships and intimate partnerships; and, (d) participating in a series of experiences and choices that facilitate future economic independence and interdependence.

*Biological changes.*

A major challenge facing every youth is the extreme biological changes they undergo which can have an effect on behaviours such as aggression, heightened sexual feelings and mood swings (Albert et al., 1993; Brooks-Gunn et al., 1994; Buchanan et al., 1992). Girls mature 12 to 18 months earlier than boys (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 1999). Cultural identity also affects biological development in adolescents depending on beliefs, norms, expectations of gender roles and acceptable age of becoming sexually active (Caspi & Moffit, 1991). Early maturation is considered more advantageous for males than females, with girls suffering lower self esteem, more difficulty adjusting to school transition, increased rates of depression, eating disorders and other problematic

behaviours (Caspi & Moffit, 1991; Eccles et al., 1996b; Simmons & Blythe, 1987). A National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Blum et al., 2000) found that the rates of sexual intercourse increase from 16 percent among 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to 60 percent among 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Accompanying these age-related increases are increases in pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Interestingly, rates are low among adolescents who want to avoid becoming pregnant to fulfill their educational and occupational aspirations.

Relations between hormones and other biological systems interact in complex ways with both social behaviour and genetic predispositions influencing behaviour; the direct effects of hormones are often overridden by social experiences (Haggerty et al., 1994; Robins & Robertson, 1998). Hormonal changes are most dramatic in early adolescence (Carnegie Corporation New York, 1989; Moffitt, 1993) however there is a dearth of research into the effects of hormonal changes on behaviours making it difficult to conclusively ascertain how these complex systems interrelate. Evidence suggests that the origins of both sex differences and individual differences in mood and behaviour patterns lie in complex interactions between experience, life events, intensified gender role socialization, genetically linked vulnerabilities, and changes in hormonal systems (Buchanan et al., 1992; Kessler et al., 1993; Petersen et al., 1991; Rutter et al., 1997).

#### *Cognitive development.*

New research on brain development suggests that the frontal lobes of the brain are responsible for functions such as self control, judgment, emotional regulation, and organization and planning (Begley, 2000). Changes in cognitive ability occur during youth with increased information-processing skills and learning strategies, knowledge of a variety of different topics and subject areas, ability to apply new found knowledge to new learning

situations, and awareness of strengths and weaknesses as a learner. Theorists state that although these types of cognitive changes ought to allow youth to be more efficient, sophisticated learners, youth need a lot of experience exercising these skills before they can use them efficiently (Keating, 1990; Clark, 1988).

*Peer group.*

The peer group is a powerful place for youth identity formation (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Youniss et al., 1997). The importance of social acceptance can be so strong that youth's conforming to the norms of the peer group and susceptibility to negative peer pressure peaks during early adolescence (Harris, 1995; Steinberg, 1997). Many youth attach great importance to the activities they do with their peer group, with confidence in their physical appearance and social acceptance often a more important predictor of self esteem than confidence in academic success (Lord et al., 1994; Wigfield, 1991). Although pressure from peers to engage in misconduct increases during adolescence (Brown, 1990; Ruben et al., 1998; Steinberg & Morris, 2001), generally, youth agree more with their parents' views than their peer groups' views on major issues such as morality, the importance of education, politics and religion. Peers have more influence on such things as dress and clothing styles, music, and activity choice. Youth usually seek out similar peers, for instance those involved in sports, serious about academics, or the arts (Ruben et al., 1998). This attraction to the peer group is accompanied in Western cultures by a distancing in parent-adolescent relationships. According to Collins (2004) this distancing has great functional value for youth because it fosters individualization from parents, allows them to try more things on their own, and develops their own competence and efficacy.

*School transitions.*

Another aspect affecting youth development is the occurrence of school transitions which youth experience once or twice during their formative adolescent years. Several scholars and policy makers have suggested a link between school transitions and the declines of academic success experienced by many early adolescents. Behaviour, motivation, and mental health are influenced by the change in the school environments which become larger, more bureaucratic, controlling, heterogeneous, with less opportunity for adult contact and less opportunity to hold responsible school roles. There is also a shift to more rigid socially comparative grading and curriculum tracking systems geared towards defining students in either a vocational or college bound educational track (Eccles & Midgely, 1989; Fine 1991). Smaller secondary schools have demonstrated advantages especially for marginal students (Elder & Conger, 2000).

*Sequence of development and social norms.*

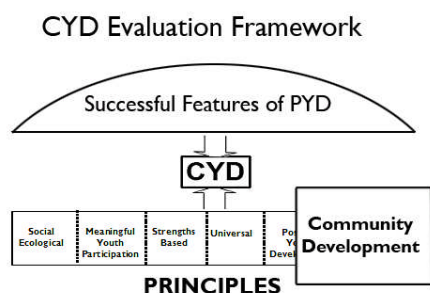
Hamilton and Hamilton (2004) define two other properties of human development which are critical to the design of community programs for youth. Firstly, there is the typical sequence of development which generally occurs over time. This sequence usually stems from three primary sources: (a) The genetically scripted maturational processes linked to such changes as physical and sexual maturation, sensor motor and brain development; (b) the logical sequences inherent in acquiring new skills and knowledge, in moving from more external (adult driven) regulation to increasingly internal regulation of behaviours and emotions, and in moving from primary location within intimate family settings to increasing engagement with the outside world; and (c) the regularities in the sequences of social experiences provided by social and cultural groups for youth as they mature. Secondly, there

is the socially shared norms regarding when particular events are likely to take place in peoples' lives, for instance, expected age of marriage, completion of schooling, birth of children, retirement, age children begin and end formal schooling, the grade structure, major schooling transitions and the age at which youth are allowed to drink, drive, and vote.

Hamilton and Hamilton (2004) state that how these developmental tasks are handled by individuals in the social settings in which they live will influence subsequent development. This suggests two things: (a) Previous learning and development are critical to individuals' current capacities, values, attitudes, etc., and; (b) current experiences set the stage for future capacities, values, and attitudes. Looking at development from this general perspective makes especially salient the need for families, schools and communities to provide developmentally appropriate and enriching experiences throughout adolescence in order to both foster well-being and ensure adequate preparation for the transition to adulthood (Erikson, 1968).

In summary, official adulthood is currently estimated to begin in the late twenties. The many challenges youth face as they transition into adulthood are numerous and if we want our youth to do more than avoid risky behaviours and to become contributing, engaged members of society, then we must be intentional about creating places and opportunities that nurture their development.

*Community Development as it Pertains to Youth*



Community Development (CD) provides a useful framework for thinking about the implementation of Community Youth Development initiatives. First, it recognizes the need to address social, environmental, political, and psychological issues in promoting healthy communities. Community development strategies and decisions can have an impact on the present and future quality of life for youth. Therefore, this comprehensive community-level perspective is needed to create the community contexts that can nurture youth and help them thrive academically, socially, physically, and vocationally (Lerner, 2005; Pittman et al., 2000; Roth et al., 2003; Villarruel et al., 2003). Second, it seeks to build the capacity of a diverse group of local community members and “promote active and representative participation toward enabling all community members to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect their lives” (Community Development Society, 2000). In principle, youth are members of this diverse group of participants, although they have often been underrepresented in community development initiatives (Israel, Coleman, & Ilvento, 1993). When youth are involved, not only does this type of involvement increase youth’s empowerment and decrease their alienation from their community (Calabrese & Schumer, 1986; Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988), but it can also provide important benefits to the community (Beker et al., 1987; Zeldin et al., 2000). Overall, this community development perspective of youth participation recognizes the need for youth to be involved

in the shaping of their own community contexts. CD is really the container that holds, nurtures and moulds PYD.

McKnight (1995, p. 22) provides a definition of community that attempts to establish a common understanding of this complex concept. According to him, community is “the social place, used by family, friends, neighbours, neighbourhood associations, clubs, civic groups, local enterprises, churches, ethnic associations, temples, local unions, local government, and local media”. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) also stated that communities possess significant assets that can be mobilized through the following three categories: (a) Primary building blocks – assets that are located in the community and controlled by its members (includes skills of community members and local businesses, forms of human and social capital); (b) secondary building blocks – assets not currently under community control but which can be brought under its control, and (c) potential building blocks – aimed at building social capital i.e. youth learning healthy social skills and finding positive role models leading to more self-sufficient, well-centered, participating youth of the future.

Attachment to the community has been proclaimed as a key element in the healthy development of youth (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992; Witt & Crompton, 1997). Ellis and Caldwell (2001) noted that many recreation programs are youth-directed with the participants being responsible for major decision-making tasks relative to the programming (Witt & Crompton, 1996). Youth-directed recreation attempts to attach youth to the community by providing them with a voice in society and valuing their opinions and decisions in matters of importance to the youth. For example, Heath (1996) profiled a basketball team comprised of inner-city youth often described as “at-risk”. The team’s coach

gave his players opportunity and responsibility; the youth were actively involved in setting the team's schedule, keeping financial records, making travel plans, creating and enforcing rules, and making many other key decisions. Interviews with team players and coaches revealed that the youth did not have these types of opportunities in other settings, particularly school. As Beilenson (1993) pointed out, schools operate from a framework that youth must accept others evaluating their work, performance, thinking, and ultimately themselves. Heath concluded that this opportunity for youth to have their own voice within the community helped keep them out of trouble and in school.

There are numerous theories gathered from developmental science in the areas of psychology, sociology, public health, anthropology and other fields, that direct attention to individual, community, and cultural processes that are related to youth development. Positive developmental settings recognize that the full framework within which development takes place for different youth involves multiple processes such as: an adolescent's active creativity, thoughtful mentoring and management by others, acquisition of social capital, and socialization into a culture (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2003). Eccles and Gootman (2002) state that:

The major implications of these developmental theories of human development for community programs for youth include the importance of good developmental, cultural, and personal fit; the important role the community organizations can play in helping youth build social capital and life skills necessary to successfully manage their lives in a very complex social system; and the importance of the community programs being interconnected with each other, with families, and with other youth-serving institutions and programs in the community. (p. 112)

The next section will discuss the benefits of implementing a Community Youth Mapping project in building and supporting community engagement and social action.

### The Process and Benefits of Community Youth Mapping (CYM)

Adolescents in communities rich with developmental opportunities are exposed to fewer risk factors and display increased rates of positive development (Perkins & Jones, 2002). Such communities not only support adolescent development but also meet the needs and attract the interest of youth (Perkins & Jones, 2002). It is often the case however, that community resources remain untouched either because of a lack of awareness or because such information sits untouched and unused and data eventually become outdated (Academy for Educational Development/Centre for Youth Development and Policy Research, 2001). Community development initiatives frequently begin with recognizing the capacities of the individuals, associations and institutions within the community and then mobilizing these assets around a particular vision. Once an inventory of community resources is mapped, community partnerships are built and assets to support community development surface (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

Many reports call for community revitalization and engage youth within their local environment. It is often reported that youth feel little connection to their home places but that also the future of a rich local community lies within its youth (Amsden & Ao, 2003). A possible way to address these concerns is through Community Youth Mapping (CYM) which connects youth to their local environment by raising awareness of the services offered in a community (Amsden & Ao, 2003). CYM allows youth and communities “to express their

knowledge and experience in relation to the local environment, and then documents that information in some type of creative format” (Amsden & Ao, 2003).

The CYM process begins with youth canvassing their communities to gather information on local resources. Resources can represent community values or aspects of community space such as the location of parks, youth clubs, individuals themselves (such as caring adults), programs, safe places and social services; as well as deficits within the community including vacant buildings and liquor stores (Perkins & Jones, 2002). With this information in hand, youth, older community members and leaders can implement targeted community interventions to resolve problems or highlight assets (Struthers, Hodge, Geishirt-Cantrell, & Casken, 2003).

CYM can be conducted using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) which can eventually be used to provide free public access to local information and resources via the internet. Data collected by these methods can be entered into a computer for organization and analysis (AED/CYDPR, 2001). In addition to documenting the location of resources, youths’ can take photographs and movies thus bringing the map to life (Perkins & Jones, 2002). Youth then transfer data from the GPS into a computer, creating GIS maps that identify geographical opportunities and gaps for youth such as skill development and recreation places. The photographs and movies are placed on a display that is linked with the maps.

The potential benefits of CYM are many, such as: Community engagement from multiple levels; increased public awareness by both youth and the greater community; the development of a link between technology and community; the adoption of skills by youth such as data collection and communication skills which may lead to increased job readiness;

increased collaboration among young people and the greater community; the encouragement of social action (Academy for Educational Development/Centre for Youth Development and Policy Research, 2001); an increased understanding and commitment to the community by youth, empowerment to solve local problems; and, participation in civic affairs (Israel & Ilvento, 1995).

CYM has the potential to bridge the gap between a community's needs and its actual resources. "Mapping is not just the creation of a paper based map, but a multi-stage process that begins with opening up spaces for community voices, and ends with a graphic representation of resources, demonstrating how those are related or linked to one another" (Environmental Youth Alliance, 2005, p. 14). Once the inventory of community resources is mapped, the maps will be used to build and enhance partnerships within the community. When assets and available resources are identified, a mobilized community can begin to address its agendas and challenges by taking the recognized community resources and building on them by attracting other necessary means, thereby acting as self-directed problem-solvers (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). It is also possible to turn outside the community and build new relationships and access outside resources. Connecting with other resources assists communities to discover their capabilities to act as effective problem-solvers and affords greater community capacity to respond to identified problems.

In summary, Community Youth Mapping has the potential to create links between the needs of youth to the established community of Surrey, B.C. Involving youth as co-researchers in the CAR approach is likely to determine resources in the form of people, places and activities that provide *elements* that facilitate PYD. By using technology and the web to create a visual inventory of community resources, information can be shared equally,

community partnerships can be reinforced and further *elements* that facilitate PYD are likely to become evident.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### Problem Statement

A recent evaluation of four Community Youth Development (CYD) initiatives in BC (Miller et al., 2006), and an extensive review of literature (Miller, 2005) revealed a need to know where and how youth receive or are exposed to opportunities for building *elements* that facilitate Positive Youth Development (PYD) within their communities.

The goal of this research project was to examine the feasibility of engaging young people in Collaborative Action Research (CAR) involving them in developing and implementing a Community Youth Mapping project. The purpose was to learn about where and how young people gain access to local resources, especially in relation to people, places and activities which provide support and opportunities to build *elements* that facilitate PYD.

The research project involved a variety of community partners and youth situated in defined neighbourhoods within the City of Surrey, British Columbia. Surrey was selected because of the interest of the school district in supporting youth leadership and building community resources. The Surrey school district was in the process of establishing five new community schools and was trying to encourage better links between schools and the community. From the first meetings with administration, i.e., the assistant superintendent and the director of research and evaluation of the Surrey School District, they were very keen on the study and could see a true connection to these new community schools.

In order to fully engage youth and community in the research, the project followed the general principles of Collaborative Action Research (CAR) a form of Action Research (Hills & Mullett, 1995, 2000, 2005). Deriving its approach from Co-operative Inquiry (Heron & Reason, 2001), its philosophical basis from community development, and applying

the rigor of Action Research, CAR is a planned, systematic approach to issues relevant to the community that requires community involvement in the research; has a problem-solving focus; is directed at societal change; and makes a lasting contribution to the community. Employing a CAR approach, the research will be grounded in the youths' and communities' need for trust, voice, open communication, self-determination and collaborative decision-making (Assistant Deputy Minister's Committee on Prostitution and the Sexual Exploitation of Youth, 2000; Brown, 2001; Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2002; Driskell, 2002; Clarke, 1997; Strickland & Strickland, 1996).

### Research Questions

The overall research questions guiding the study are:

1. What is the experience of conducting a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project in order to gain an understanding of the opportunities and supports (through people, places and activities) for young people to build *elements* that facilitate positive youth development (PYD)?
2. What types of data are Youth Mappers able to collect using a variety of methods and technology?
3. What are the benefits to the youth participating in this study?

In responding to these questions, this study will:

1. Examine how training of Community Youth Mappers and research team reflection/action cycle meetings provide young people with the research skills and

- knowledge to participate fully in the study as co-researchers. Describe the contributing factors to sustaining youth co-researchers' commitment in this study.
2. Describe how youth are able to collect data from their peers about people, places and activities where they have an opportunity to build *elements* that facilitate positive youth development within their community. Describe the youths' perceptions of utilizing different technology (Global Positioning System, Global Information System, and digital photography, etc).
  3. Determine benefits to the Youth Mappers in terms of their change in comprehension/knowledge/experience/skills, beliefs and attitudes, and understanding of the opportunities and limitations within their community and identify which features of the process were most helpful to participants in supporting their growth.

### Research Design

The essential design of this study is a collaborative action-oriented instrumental case study. Stake (1995) commented on the usefulness of such an approach when a general understanding of research issues is necessary. He recommends that researchers should avoid the pitfalls of selecting cases which focus on generalizability and randomness, but rather, should select instrumental case studies in order to maximize what is learned. The distinctiveness of each case and its context is crucial to understanding the individuality of the case and its significance to the questions.

Given the exploratory nature of this study, namely to examine *elements* that facilitate PYD through people, places and activities within a specific community, the investigator will be using interpretative inquiry (Creswell, 1998). This will also be a CAR effort, or a self-

reflective inquiry in which youth will gain a greater understanding of the various resources within their own community which facilitate PYD as well as identify existing needs to support change toward developing a CYD initiative in Surrey (Hills & Mullett, 1995, 2000, 2005).

Collaborative Action Research (CAR) is situated within a Participatory Paradigm and Action Research tradition and is derived from a Cooperative Inquiry methodology endorsing a subjective-objective ontology that is both transactional and interactive (Heron & Reason, 1997). Hills and Mullett (2005) define CAR as:

A collaborative, participatory, and action oriented research methodology that performs research with rather than on, to or about people. Those involved in the study are both co-researchers, who generate ideas about its focus, design and manage it, and draw conclusions from it; and also co-subjects, participating with awareness in the activity that is being researched. CAR engages people in a transformative process of change by cycling through multiple iterations of action and reflection. (p.280)

In contrast to orthodox science, which presumes the knower and the known are separate and independent, CAR postulates that the knower participates in the known. Evidence is generated from four interdependent ways of knowing (Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 1997; Hills & Mullett, 2000, 2005). CAR acknowledges the following four kinds of knowing and the idea that they overlap and support each other, that they are grounded on each other.

- *Experiential knowing* refers to direct encounters with persons, places or things;
- *Presentational knowing* is grounded in experiential knowing and is the way persons represent experiences through imagery such as dance, art, drawing, writing or stories;

- *Propositional knowing* is factual (empirical) knowledge. This form of knowledge is most valued by orthodox science but is seen as interdependent with the other three ways of knowing in CAR;
- *Practical knowing* is knowing how to do something. It is knowledge in action. This form of knowledge synthesizes conceptualizations and experiences into action (Hills & Mullett, 2000, 2005).

Another important aspect of CAR is the intentional interplay between ‘reflection’ and making sense on the one hand, and experience and ‘action’ on the other. Within this process (iterative cycles of reflection and action), participants have the opportunity to develop an awareness of the explanations that apply to their actions and see the extent to which their experiences are congruent with these ideas or theories (Hills & Mullett, 2005). This developed form of consciousness is called critical subjectivity (Reason, 1994).

CAR also uses a structured framework that consists of a series of logical steps including: identifying the issues and questions to be studied; developing an explicit model or framework for practice; putting the model into practice and recording what happens; and, reflecting on the experience and making sense out of the whole venture (Reason, 1988; Hills, 2001). According to Hills and Mullett (2005, p. 284), “in this way, evidence about what constitutes ‘best practices’ is generated by people examining their experiences in practice and reflecting on those practices”. The Youth Mappers within the study were involved in a series of logical steps in conjunction with numerous iterative cycles of reflection and action. These cycles were facilitated through design team meetings, training, and reflection/action cycle meetings.

*Participatory Paradigm and Action Research Tradition*

The following describes the essence of my inquiry into Community Youth Mapping and identifies my analysis and assessment of research paradigms, traditions and methodologies. The purpose of which is threefold: (a) Identify and provide a rationale for the research paradigm that I chose to work within, (b) outline and evaluate the research traditions under consideration for conducting my research, and (c) identify the research methodology that I believe holds the greatest promise for my research.

The section provides a rationale for the research approach:

1. The first subsection defines a ‘participatory paradigm’.
2. Part two delineates principles of Collaborative Action Research (CAR) a form of Action Research (Hills & Mullett, 1995, 2000, 2005) deriving its approach from Co-operative Inquiry (Heron and Reason, 2001). The section provides in depth description of Co-operative Inquiry (CI) as a methodology and applicability to the research study.
3. Part three discusses validity procedures utilized in CI.
4. Part four provides characteristics of the CI process.
5. The final part presents a concluding summary and rationale.

The investigator reviewed the research traditions and strategies of Ethnography, Grounded Theory, Case Study, and Action Research (e.g., within the Action Research tradition several strategies were reviewed including: Participatory Action Research (PAR), Action Science, Community-based Participatory Research, Appreciative Inquiry, and Cooperative Inquiry), and have evaluated them against selection criteria that was developed. The selection criteria sets out personal expectations for the research tradition and

methodology would achieve (Refer to Appendix K – Selection Criteria and Expectations for Research Methodology, p. 362). In the end, an Action Research tradition using Collaborative Action Research (Hills & Mullett, 1995, 2000, 2005) (derived from a Cooperative Inquiry research methodology) was chosen for conducting the research study.

It is important that the methodology for the study be participatory in nature and avoid the non-inclusive process often used by adults in which a “do for” youth approach is taken. Currently, research about youth tends to adopt a focus *about them* rather than *with them*. Hart (1992, p. 8) stated “there is a strong tendency on the part of adults to underestimate the competence of youth while at the same time using them in some events to influence some cause; the effect is patronizing”.

Because of its participatory and experiential (learning through doing) nature, which would provide a real opportunity for youth and adult community members to share in the exploration of youth participation in the development and implementation of a CYM project, a Collaborative Action Research (CAR), was the methodology chosen.

#### *Paradigmatic Assumptions*

Heron and Reason (1997) view the ‘participatory paradigm’ as giving birth to the Cooperative Inquiry research methodology. The participatory paradigm holds as its major premises that we create our truths through participation with the world, through our experiences and through our relationships with others. Using the framework for exploring competing paradigms in qualitative research described by Guba and Lincoln (1994), Heron and Reason consider three main questions from the perspective of the participatory paradigm: ontology, epistemology and methodology.

### *Ontology.*

The participatory *ontology* is considered “subjective-objective,” where there is “a given cosmos, a primordial reality, in which the mind actively participates ... in a co-creative dance” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p.279). In the Participatory Worldview, the research “subject” and the “object” are assumed to be one. In this paradigm the outside world is assumed real as is the individual experiencing, imaging, conceptualizing and acting in the world. In this worldview it is believed that the individual co-creates the given world by interacting with it by receiving it into consciousness and by acting upon it in various ways. Heron (1996, p.193) says that we not only impose our a priori meanings on our given reality but we reciprocally make up the world by participating in the “given”. Building upon the idea that experiential knowing (as cited below in Heron’s Four Ways of Knowing) is both subjective and objective, and operates as the ground of human knowing, Heron and Reason (1997, p.278) explain, “the very process of perceiving is also a meeting, a transaction, with what there is.... To experience anything is to participate in it, and to participate is to both mold and encounter”.

### *Epistemology.*

The participatory *epistemology* goes beyond direct experience to add presentational knowing, which is our initial expression of experience; prepositional knowing, which is our conceptualization or theory related to the experience; and practical knowing, or the skills that we develop as we experience the world. “A participatory worldview places human persons and communities as part of their world—both human and more-than-human—embodied in their world, co-creating their world” (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p.7). The participatory worldview holds that through experiencing the world, through relationship with the world

and with others, we create our reality. This systems view assumes that human beings and the world are one, that each person is both an individual and part of the whole; reality is considered the relationship between the perceiver and the perceived (Heron, 1996, p.10, 11, 105,193). Heron (1992, p.1) stated that the person is a “seamless whole, an interacting system” both within the person and in relationship with all that is “outside” the person.

The participative worldview sees four psychological modes of being: the “affective” which includes feeling and emotion, the “imaginal” which involves intuition and imagery, the “conceptual” which includes reflection and discrimination, and the “practical” which involves intention and action; within each of these four modes is a basic polarity of individuation and participation (Heron, 1992, p.14-15). The individual person is always in dynamic interaction between what is going on inside the self and what is going on outside the self.

These four modes of being— affective, imaginal, conceptual, and practical lead to four corresponding ways of knowing in the Participatory Worldview: experiential, presentational, prepositional, and practical (Heron, 1992; Reason, 1999). The learner's way of knowing is not limited to an intellectual, conceptual way alone, as has often been the case in Western research but can include knowing from the body, the heart, and the spirit. People can know through “empathy and resonance.... story, drawing,” (Reason, 1999, p.211) and other ways, in addition to traditional knowing by way of theories, information, and skills. Reason claims that knowing will be more “valid—richer, deeper—if these four ways are congruent; if knowing is grounded in experience, expressed through... stories and images, understood through ideas which make sense to the co-inquirers, and expressed in worthwhile action”.

These expanded modes of being and ways of knowing are graphically communicated by John Heron (1992, p.11-12) in what he calls an “up-hierarchy,” which inverts traditional top-down power structures often used to oppress and control other people. Heron deliberately turns the traditional views of knowledge and power upside down.

*Methodology.*

The participatory process and *methodology* draws on the above extended epistemology and practice of critical subjectivity in “a collaborative form of inquiry, in which all involved engage together in democratic dialogue as co-researchers and co-subjects” (Heron 1996, p.283). These dialogues are in the form of a systematic process of reflection/action cycles, with action cycles using the experiential and practical ways of knowing, and reflection cycles using the presentational and propositional ways of knowing (Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 1997).

*Axiology.*

In addition to the ontological, epistemological and methodological questions (what is reality, the nature of knowing and how to know) posed in terms of research, Reason and Heron pose a fourth question - that of axiology, which they claim is necessary to fully define an inquiry paradigm. The axiological question asks “what is intrinsically worthwhile to be studied? What is it about the human condition that is valuable as an end in itself?” (Reason 1998b, p.431)

Reason feels that the participatory paradigm answers the axiological question in terms of the objective of human flourishing “persons as self-directing and sense-making agents located in democratic communities and organizations”. (Reason 1998b, p.419), as conceived as an end in itself. He sees flourishing as practical knowing: knowing how to

choose and act-hierarchically, co-operatively, autonomously “to enhance personal and social fulfillment and that of the eco-networks of which we are part” (Reason 1998b, p.431).

As stated earlier, Heron believes that practical knowing is the “consummation of the knowledge quest.” In his opinion this “...takes the knowledge quest beyond justification, beyond the concern of validity... it affirms what is intrinsically worthwhile, human flourishing, by manifesting it in action.” (Heron 1996, p.20)

In addition, Reason and Heron feel that for human inquiry to be worthwhile it must also be about “democratizing ways of creating practical ‘useful’ knowledge or practical knowing” (Reason 2000, p.4).

The research questions in the study are squarely situated under the participatory paradigm because the focus of the study is to explore the appropriateness of involving youth in learning among their peers about their community. This cannot be done without experiencing community itself; through developing and maintaining relationships with the members of the community to learn what the youth and community has learned.

#### *Research Methodology and Rationale*

As mentioned, within the participatory paradigm, there are a variety of research methodologies that can be used. After careful review and due to its philosophical congruence with Community Youth Mapping (CYM), the investigator chose a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach founded from a Cooperative Inquiry (CI) methodology as the most appropriate research methodology for this study. This research methodology will allow the best opportunity to open a respectful dialog with youth and community, while still allowing the group to determine its own research goals and process.

*Overview.*

Cooperative Inquiry is a methodology first conceived by researcher and consultant John Heron in 1968 as a way to do research *with* people rather than *on* them (Heron, 1996, p.1). It is a process whereby a group of people interested in learning about a topic get together and share decision-making power for the project. They form a question about their topic and then a practical action plan by which each participant responds to or ‘tests’ the question. After the action is completed, the group gathers back together, each individual presenting what he/she learned from the experience of the action. Then the group reflects together and makes collaborative conceptual meaning from their aggregate experience. These meanings are then used as a basis for planning another action and reflection cycle, continuing in this iterative way for as long as the group chooses. In other words,

Cooperative Inquiry involves two or more people researching a topic through their own experience of it, using a series of cycles in which they move between this experience and reflecting together on it ... In these cycles, the ways of knowing expand beyond conceptual meaning to include tacit knowing from felt bodily senses, and from images and patterns such as those found in art and stories. Cooperative Inquiry includes both learning about a topic, “informative” learning, and learning how to improve one's practice in the topic area, “transformative” learning (Heron, 1996, p.3)

For Hills and Mullett (2005), CI is “a collaborative, participatory, and action oriented research methodology that performs research with rather than on, to or about people. This methodology engages people in a transformative process of change by cycling through multiple iterations of action and reflection” (Hills & Mullett, 2005, p.280).

*Foundational assumptions.*

As defined by Reason, “Co-operative inquiry is based first on the assumption that persons are self-determining” (Reason, 1994, p. 22). The main point behind this statement is that in CI, research is being done with people, and not on people. Those involved in the study are “both co-researchers, who generate ideas about its focus, design and manage it, and draw conclusions from it; and also co-subjects, participating with awareness in the activity that is being researched” (Reason, 1994, p. 23).

The second assumption is that CI acknowledges four kinds of knowing and the idea that they overlap and support each other, that they are grounded on each other. This epistemology, then, is that each kind of knowing builds upon supports and interacts and relates to the others. One kind of knowing is not sufficient to understand the human condition. CI looks at each kind of knowing, cycling through and building upon the knowledge gained at each stage. The cycles of action and reflection are designed to use this epistemology, focusing on presentational and propositional knowing in the reflection stages, and concentrating on practical and experiential knowing in the action stages.

The third assumption is that critical subjectivity is required. Within CI there is intentional interplay between reflection and making sense on the one hand, and experience and action on the other. Within this process, participants have the opportunity to develop an awareness of the explanations that apply to their actions and see the extent to which their experiences are congruent with these ideas or theories (Hills & Mullett, 2005). This developed form of consciousness is called critical subjectivity (Reason, 1994).

Collaborative Action Research (CAR) (deriving its approach from a Cooperative Inquiry methodology) is a good fit for the research study. Within this approach, youth and

other members of the inquiry group can study their own community culture and learn about it and ask questions of it while also participating as a member of that culture. The research study focused on the experience of youth and others, the community itself, and what can be discovered that is a common thread for all, or most of the individuals involved in the study. The co-researchers determine what steps need to be taken as they progressed through the research. CAR can provide a unique and powerful way to approach group and individual learning in the development and implementation of a CYM project. The participatory nature of CAR allows youth and adult learners to engage experientially with the topic of youth development that might otherwise remain distant, academic or intellectual.

*John Heron's epistemological framework.*

Heron's (1992, 1996) and Reason's (1994) (Heron & Reason, 1997) framework for extended epistemology provides the theoretical foundation for CI.

In reviewing Heron's extended epistemology, I describe four *ways of knowing*, four *modes of psyche*, participation among the four *modes of psyche*, and define the participatory paradigm that arises from these concepts.

In 1992, Heron published *Feeling and Personhood* where he describes an extended and holistic epistemology of the human psyche that treats experience as a felt process that is the foundation of human knowing. Heron and Reason (1997) observe, “We believe that the mind, by its very nature, is more extensive than any worldview on which it takes its current cognitive stance” (1997, p.274). A worldview can expand into the fuller capacity of the mind through engagement with Heron's *extended epistemology*.

Heron and Reason (1997) describe four interdependent *ways of knowing*—experiential, presentational, prepositional, and practical—that mirror four interdependent

*modes of psyche*: Affective, imaginal, conceptual, and practical. The resulting “up-hierarchy” pyramid situates and interrelates the ways of knowing and modes of psyche. Heron's description distinguishes between up-hierarchy and the more typical and linear down-hierarchy. “In an up-hierarchy it is not a matter of the higher controlling and ruling the lower, as in a down-hierarchy, but of the higher branching and flowering out of the fruit of the lower” (Heron 1992, p.20). I begin with a description of the *ways of knowing* before describing the related *modes of psyche*.

*Four ways of knowing.*

The realm of *experiential knowing* arises from direct, face-to-face contact and is difficult to even express in writing, in the sense that we each have our own dance with experience and perception that is unique, sacred and beyond words. Experiential knowing connotes a direct encounter with the life world. For example, one can describe in words the beauty of a particular sunset, but the words are not the same as the experience of the sunset, no matter how many words one uses in the description. Linda Sartor (1998) advocates expressing the pyramid without a line beneath experiential knowing as the lack of a boundary better conveys how experiential knowing is open to the cosmos. Heron (1998, p.238) explains experiential knowing as something that “relates us not only to particular beings, but at the same time to the field of interbeing, and the immediate here and now presence of Being, of which they are a part”.

*Presentational knowing* springs out of experiential knowing and is the realm of stories, art, poetry, drama and movement. Presentational knowing is often the link between our experience and our “thinking” about that experience. Heron (1998, p.238) adds, “it clothes our experiential knowing of the world in the metaphors of aesthetic creation, in

expressive spatiotemporal forms of imagery”. A painting or poem about the beauty of a particular sunset can symbolically communicate the knowing to another person.

*Propositional knowing* represents the traditional intellectual knowing of the Western world and consists of analysis, theory and informative statements. Propositional knowing is “expressed in intellectual statements, both verbal and numeric, organized in ways that do not infringe the rules of logic” (Yorks & Kasl, 2002a, p.182; Heron, 1992). Here I might describe my knowing from a scientific perspective the concept of what constitutes a sunset, in terms of the earth, sun and other factors.

*Practical knowing*, at the apex of the pyramid, represents skills and aptitudes that no longer require conscious thought, as in riding a bicycle after having mastered the technique. Heron and Reason (1997, p.281) explain that practical knowing “presupposes a conceptual grasp of principles ... presentational elegance, and experiential grounding in the situation within which the action occurs. It fulfills the three prior forms of knowing”. Practical knowing, not propositional knowing, is at the apex of the pyramid of knowing because “we believe that what we learn about our world will be richer and deeper if this descriptive knowledge is *incidental* to a primary intention to develop practical skills to change the world” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p.281). The pyramid construction suggests an “up-hierarchy,” where each layer of knowing grounds the layer(s) above it; each layer of knowing is nourished and supported by the layers below it. Heron and Reason (1997, p.280) call the developmental challenge implicit in the model “critical subjectivity.” “It involves an awareness of the four ways of knowing, of how they are interacting, and of ways of changing the relations between them so that they articulate a reality that is unclouded by a restrictive

and ill-disciplined subjectivity”. Knowing is considered more congruent when each layer, with its own patterns of validity, is fully engaged.

*Four modes of psyche.*

Each *way of knowing* is related to a pair of corresponding *modes of psyche*. Heron's basic construct for the human psyche has four primary modes of operation: affective, imaginal, conceptual and practical. Table 3.1 - Modes of Psyche with Participatory and Individuating Functions, shows how each mode of psyche includes a polarity between an individuating function and a participatory function.

Table 3.1 Modes of Psyche with Participatory and Individuating Functions

Adapted from Heron (1992, p.18)

Participatory	Mode of Psyche	Individuating
Intention	(Practical)	Action
Reflection	(Conceptual)	Discrimination
Intuition	(Imaginal)	Imagery
Feeling	(Affective)	Emotion

The four ways of *knowing* described above arise out of the four *modes of psyche*. Each way of *knowing* is effectively “parented” by two *modes of psyche*. Each way of knowing is parented primarily by the corresponding level of the *modes of psyche* pyramid, with assistance from the next level up on the *modes of psyche* pyramid. For example, presentational knowing is parented primarily by the imaginal *mode of psyche* with help from the conceptual mode as well.

Each mode of psyche has a participatory and individuating function associated with it. The former depicts a participatory sense of oneness with the larger field of being; the

latter connotes movement towards individual distinctiveness (Heron, 1992, p.15). For example, within the affective *mode of psyche*, the participatory function of “feeling” refers to the “capacity to participate in wider unities of being ... in the domain of empathy, indwelling and resonance” (Heron, 1992, p.16). Conversely, the individuating function of “emotion” represents “the intense, localized affect associated with the fulfillment or frustration of individual needs.... emotion is the domain of joy, love, fear, and anger” (Heron, 1992, p.16). The elaboration of participation and individuation in relationship to the affective *mode of psyche* is helpful for engaging a perspective that is deeply steeped in individualism and uncomfortable with the full range of human emotions.

Overemphasis in any one layer of knowing can result in “all the distortions of those defensive processes by which people collude to limit their understanding” (Heron, 1998, p.240).

#### *Outcomes of Co-operative Inquiry.*

Since there are four ways of knowing in CI, it follows that one might expect four different outcomes to the CI process. The four interrelated outcomes relate directly to the four *ways of knowing*. There are practical skills about the cumulative actions and learning that have taken place. Next, there are propositional outcomes, consisting of reports, principles or concepts on what has been learned, with descriptions that refer as much as possible to the other three ways of knowing, and articulation of the inquiry method. Heron (1996, p.104) views practical outcomes as “having primacy” above propositional outcomes as he sees practical outcomes as “the consummation of the inquiry process”. The last two outcomes are presentational, “through dance, drawing, drama and other expressive modes” and experiential, through “transformations of personal being.”

Co-operative inquiries can be categorized as informational, transformational, and or a combination of both. Outcomes of informational inquiries generally describe and explain the domain of the inquiry proportionally and/or presentationally, while transformational inquiries focus on the transformation of practical skills as the outcome (Goetzman, 2002).

Heron suggests that informational inquiries can be related to participation in nature, art, intra-psychic life, interpersonal relations, forms of culture, and other realities and altered states of consciousness. In the case of transformational inquiries he suggests that such inquiries can include topics such as the environment, social structures, education, professionalism, personhood and lifestyles. However he is quick to discern that these categories are by no means exhaustive, as CI can be applied to any type of human inquiry (Goetzman, 2002).

*Initiating an inquiry.*

An inquiry usually requires a person to facilitate the bringing together of an inquiry group. This facilitator is known as an initiator (there can be more than one initiator). Group initiators can be familiar with CI or could be first time initiators using knowledge gathered through reading about the inquiry process. Heron and Reason term these first-timer inquiries as 'bootstrap' inquiries (Heron & Reason 2001, p.183).

An inquiry can be externally or internally initiated. This means that the group initiator can be an outsider to the topic, and unknown to the group or s/he can be an insider personally engaged in the culture or practice that might be the focus of the inquiry. In the case of an external initiator the participation in the research topic is partial, and the initiator is considered to be “of a lesser rank” than the rest of the group. In internal inquiries actions can be performed when everyone is together as a group including the initiator (who slowly

phases out of his/her role and allows others in the group to facilitate the process) as well as outside group meetings. Where as in externally initiated groups actions by group members are performed outside of the group meetings (as the initiator does not participate in the action). In its full form, all participants are both co-subject and co-researchers (Goetzman, 2002).

*Apollonian or Dionysian.*

The inquiry process is dependant on the dynamics of the inquiry group, and the way they feel comfortable in presenting and participating in the process. In some cases, groups may feel they require a structured method of reflecting and exploring data which is termed by Heron as an Apollonian method. While in other cases groups may feel that a more open, spontaneous and expressive mode is preferable. Heron terms this mode Dionysian. Groups may also choose an integration of both modes. Flexibility in facilitating this process is key in order to suit group needs and allowing for the optimal output from this experience (Goetzman, 2002).

*Structured framework for Co-operative Inquiry.*

Co-operative Inquiry uses a structured framework that consists of a series of logical steps including: identifying the issues and questions to be researched; developing an explicit model or framework for practice; putting the model into practice and recording what happens; and, reflecting on the experience and making sense out of the whole venture (Reason, 1988; Hills, 2001). Hills and Mullett (2005, p. 284) stated, “In this way, evidence about what constitutes ‘best practices’ is generated by people examining their experiences in practice and reflecting on those practices”. The research group within the Surrey’s

Community Youth Mapping study cycled through a series of logical steps in conjunction with the following four phases of reflection and action.

*Four phases of reflection and action.*

CI can be seen as cycling through four phases of reflection and action. Although it should be noted that the actual process is not as straightforward as the model suggests. There are usually mini-cycles within major cycles; some cycles will emphasize one phase more than others; and some practitioners have advocated a more emergent process of inquiry which is less structured into phases (Reason 1998, p.265).

*Stage I (First Reflection Phase)*

The group agrees on the focus of their inquiry (i.e. the topic and type of inquiry), they devise a plan and agree on a set of procedures for gathering and recording data from this experience.

*Stage II (First Action Phase)*

Co-researchers now are also co-subjects. They engage in actions on some aspect of the topic that they collectively agree upon, observe and record process and outcomes of their own and other's experience. In particular, they are careful to notice the subtleties of experience applying a range of integrated inquiry skills and holding lightly to the conceptual frame from which they started so that they are able to see how practice does and does not conform to their original ideas.

*Stage III (Full Immersion in the Action Phase)*

Co-subjects become fully immersed in the experience. According to Heron, this process could lead to multiple outcomes which include: seeing things in a new way, getting so intensely involved that co-researchers may lose awareness that they are part of an inquiry

group, there may be a practical crisis in the action being carried out, co-researchers may become enthralled or they may transcend the inquiry format all together.

*Stage IV (The Second Reflection Phase)*

After an agreed upon period in Stage II and III, the co-researchers re-assemble to share the experiential data from these phases and to consider their original ideas in the light of it. As a result, they may develop or reframe these ideas or reject them and pose a new question(s), they may choose a new cycle of action, they may choose to focus on the same or on different aspects of the overall inquiry - they may also change the process or the action in the light of this experience (Heron, 1996).

It is also important to note that CI is an emergent process. According to Heron and Reason (1995, p.130), “co-researchers will only develop the competencies required through extended practice this understanding of the process will deepen, the group will mature as the issues arise and demand creative responses.” Reason states that ideally, there should be full reciprocity, “so that each persons agency is fundamentally honoured in both the exchange of ideas and action” (Reason 1998, p.264). However Reason finds it naive to assume that this ideal egalitarian environment will prevail. He claims that inquiry groups are like any human group which have to “struggle with the problems of inclusion, influence and intimacy, people will take different roles, and there will be differences in both quality and quantity of member contributions” (Reason 1998, p.264). Goetzman cautions that it is important to note that “there is no set method, that CI is more about congruence with the epistemological, ontological and authentically co-operative principles than specific steps” (Goetzman, 2002, p.4). According to Reason and Heron, in an ideal situation the inquiry is finished when the initial questions are fully answered in practice, and when there is a new congruence between

the four kinds of knowing. However, they state from experience that “it is rare for a group to complete an inquiry so fully” (Reason & Heron 1995, p.126).

### *The Question of Validity*

“Validity in Co-operative Inquiry is grounded within the fulfillment of the method and principles” (Goetzman, 2002, p.5). It rests in the unique process of knowledge-sharing and generation or what Reason & Rowan term a “collaborative encounter with experience” (Reason 1998a, p.267). As opposed to positivist science where validity is about truth in some sense (correspondence between theory and empirical evidence), in CI, validity is a rather different and multidimensional notion relating to quality (Reason, 2000).

In questioning the skills that a lay person may possess to conduct research as opposed to a trained researcher, Reason is quite positive about the lay persons’ ability to conduct research. In his opinion, “people can and do fool themselves however they can also develop their attention so that they can look at their beliefs and theories critically and in this way improve the quality of their claim to knowing” (Reason & Heron 2001, p.2).

Heron and Reason identify numerous 'skills' for generating a “high quality” inquiry. Central to these ‘skills’ is the concept of critical subjectivity (Reason 1998a, p.267). They define critical subjectivity as not having to discard one’s living knowledge in search of objectivity, but building upon it to further develop it through self-reflexivity (Reason & Heron 2001, p.2). In fact, Reason & Heron (1995, p. 124) stated, “Reality is both one and many. Human persons are centers of consciousness, each unfolding a unique perspective within it. As we choose and co-create our world, our knowledge can develop this quality of critical subjectivity”.

According to Reason and Heron, competence in inquiry skills is essential in order to optimize the output of the inquiry process and ensure validity of the data gathered and analyzed/ reflected upon (Heron & Reason, 2001).

Heron identifies two specific categories, radical perception and radical practice, in reference to the use of inquiry skills. The purpose of radical perception is for the co-researcher/co-subject to be descriptive and explanatory, where as radical practice relates to engaging in action that strives for change within its domain (Heron, 1996).

Heron and Reason (2001, p. 184) through their own experience with different types of CI have developed a set of validity procedures/skills. These include:

*Being present and open* - Developing this skill involves “empathy, resonance and attunement”, it includes being open to the meaning given to the cosmos by “imaging it in sensory and nonsensory ways”. It also includes participating in the way of being of other people.

*Bracketing and Reframing*- This skill involves keeping separate ones own classifications and constructs or ways of perceiving, so that the co-researcher/co-subject can be more open to “inherent primary, imaginal meaning”. It requires the co-researcher/co-subject to be open to trying out alternative constructs to enhance creative capacity; and to be “open to reframing the defining assumptions of any context”.

*Radical practice and congruence* - Attaining this skill requires being aware, during action, of the actions' bodily form, its strategic form and guiding norms, its objectives, its context and beliefs, and its actual outcomes. It requires being aware of any lack of congruence between these different aspects of the action and changing them to make them more congruent.

*Non-attachment and meta-intentionality* - According to Heron and Reason, it is possible that researchers may develop an emotional bond with the action which may affect the way they perceive the knowledge generated. This skill requires being aware of this attachment if it were to occur, and being able to move away from this. Accomplishing this requires a degree of emotional control and not “investing one's identity” (in the action) while staying committed to the agreed upon action. In addition, it involves keeping in mind possible alternative behaviours, and considering their possible relevance and applicability. This skill requires developing the ability to identify and manage emotions, it includes keeping action free from distortion caused by “unprocessed” distress (distress not reflected upon) and previous conditioning.

*Research cycling* - This activity is an integral part of the research process and involves going back and forth between reflection and action, looking at the various facets of experience and practice, developing ideas, attempting different ways of behaving. According to Heron and Reason the cycling process will lead to a refining of, “experiential and reflective forms of knowing” and hence better quality of knowledge can be generated.

*Divergence and convergence* - Based on group consensus, action may take place collectively, individually or in a combination of the two. Collective action known as convergence gives the group the possibility of exploring a particular topic of inquiry in depth from multiple perspectives but may provide a narrow focus, while individual actions (known as divergence) allow multiple related inquiries which give breadth to the inquiry but may not provide the depth. Groups may choose inquiries where there is a combination of convergence and divergence as well creating more of a balance if this meets their requirements.

*Authentic collaboration* - According to Heron & Reason (2001, p. 184), “The inquiry will not be truly co-operative if one or two people dominate the group, or if some voices are left out altogether.” Therefore, it is important for group members to be aware of individual behaviour to create an atmosphere that allows for all members to express themselves in the method they feel comfortable in and to interact in a supportive manner.

*Challenging consensus collusion* - The term consensus collusion refers to co-researchers uniting together as a group in defence of their anxieties, so that areas of their experience that challenge their world view are ignored or not properly explored (Reason 1998a, p. 268). Heron and Reason suggest authorizing any inquirer at any time to adopt the role of devil’s advocate in order to question the group as to whether one of several forms of collusion is in progress.

*Managing distress* - This requires the group to be open to adopting some regular method for “surfacing and processing repressed distress”. According to Heron and Reason “the very process of researching the human condition may stir up anxiety and trigger it into compulsive invasion of the inquiring mind, so that both the process and the outcomes of the inquiry are warped by it” (Heron & Reason 2001, p. 184).

*Reflection and action* - According to Heron and Reason each inquiry group must find its own balance between action and reflection, so that there is neither too much reflection nor too little experience, however there is no set formula for achieving this, as balance will in essence depend on the topic being explored.

*Chaos and order* - Heron and Reason suggest that it is possible for inquiry groups to sometimes find themselves confused and lost regarding the research topic during the course of the inquiry. Hence a group should be mentally prepared for such an eventuality. In their

experience, in many cases inquirers do not like being in this position and will instinctually try to resolve the chaos. Prematurely trying to ‘tidy things up’ out of anxiety leads, according to Heron and Reason, to what they term ‘pseudo-knowledge’. Hence they suggest that a mental set is necessary to create an attitude which “tolerates and undergoes, without premature closure, inquiry phases which are messy” (Heron & Reason 2001, p. 184).

In conclusion however, Reason states that validity procedures do not ensure the validity of the knowledge created through the Co-operative Inquiry process “in any absolute sense of term” but that the procedures help to communicate in a lucid manner the perspective from [sic] which the knowing has been generated from [sic], and to identify possible distortions that may have occurred through the inquiry process. (Reason 1998a, p. 268)

#### *Characteristics of the Co-operative Inquiry Process*

CI has numerous characteristics that make it an attractive strategy in working with youth and community in implementing a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project. Within my study it was important to use an approach that meets, engages, and expands the ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology of youth and community involved in Community Youth Development (CYD) and CYM. The following eight points summarize the characteristics of CI.

1. The CI process is self-directed and participation is voluntary. To use a process that is both voluntary and self-directed, one must have participants who are ready and willing to explore the topic. “All the active subjects are fully involved as co-researchers in *all* research decisions—about both content and method” (Heron & Reason, 2001, p. 179). The importance of this precondition should not be underestimated. The voluntary and self-directed nature of the inquiry is essential for creating a more open beginning, where

autonomous individuals can join each other to participate in learning and research. The voluntary aspect of CI encourages individuals to take responsibility for their learning and minimizes resistance. The voluntary nature of CI signals a degree of individual empowerment is required and already in place as the inquiry begins.

2. Validity procedures provide an invaluable part of the CI process that makes CI distinct from other methodologies. Heron says that the purpose of validity procedures is “to free the various forms of knowing ... from the distortion of uncritical subjectivity” (1996, p. 59). Heron's validity procedures provide a detailed sense of “how” change can happen, as the procedures encourage whole-person learning and knowing.

3. CI is based on an axiology of human flourishing. The idea that a CI inquiry holds the explicit value of improving all people's lives is a thoughtful addition to the process. The intention to hold a value of human flourishing explicitly helps to create a more trusting environment for the work of the group. Reason sees flourishing as knowing how to choose and act cooperatively and autonomously “to enhance personal and social fulfillment and that of the eco-networks of which we are part” (Reason, 1998b, p. 431).

4. CI uses an experience-based epistemology and requires participants to study their own lives and practices as the centerpiece of the inquiry process. This emphasis on one's own life experience, along with the experience of the CI group itself, is designed to keep the focus on direct experience, rather than separating oneself from the subject of inquiry. Attention to direct experience means participants are asked to engage a broader epistemological range of knowing. This broader range of knowing is crucial for moving participants away from the heavy reliance upon the rational, analytic traditions and towards a

place where critical subjectivity and perspective transformation can occur. CI helps the participants to see themselves as part of the situation of the inquiry.

5. Action/reflection cycles are used throughout the CI process and provide an important and on-going attention to changing both thinking and behaviour in participants. CI provides a place to practice new behaviours within the context of the inquiry, while tracking the reflective dialogue, reactions and thinking about those new behaviours. “There is intentional interplay between reflection and making sense on the one hand, and experience and action on the other” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 179). The interplay helps foster a better balance between the different ways of knowing and gives participants lived experience of what is meant by greater congruency of knowing.

6. CI is a process that happens over time. Time allows for meaning-making, incubation of experience and ongoing reflection. Having the work take place over a longer period of time has the advantage of promoting cumulative learning amongst the youth and community.

7. CI is designed with a unique extended epistemology based on the four types of knowing identified by Heron and Reason. As discussed earlier, the extended epistemological framework provides a concrete way for other ways of knowing to be legitimized, validated and integrated into the propositional knowing.

8. CI has flexible and complementary inquiry cultures that are adaptable to different inquiry groups or even within the same inquiry group over time. The first is called Apollonian, and represents an inquiry culture that is “more rational, linear, systematic, controlling and explicit” (Heron, 1996, p. 45). A group operating with a more Apollonian culture would tend to follow the specific instructions offered in the CI process to the letter.

By contrast, the Dionysian inquiry culture, represents an inquiry culture that is “more imaginal, expressive, spiralling, diffuse, impromptu and tacit.” A group operating with a more Dionysian culture could operate more erratically, creatively, spontaneously and with a less linear path of actions and reflections. Either group culture can sustain a successful CI experience.

### *Summary and Rationale for Methodology*

The research questions within the study are squarely situated under a *Participatory Paradigm* because of the focus to explore the appropriateness of involving youth in learning among their peers about their community. This cannot be done without experiencing community itself; through developing and maintaining relationships with the members of the community and to discover what the youth have learned.

As mentioned, within the participatory paradigm and *Action Research* tradition, there are a variety of research methodologies that can be used. The investigator reviewed several methodologies, including Participatory Action Research (PAR), Action Science, Community-based Participatory Research, Appreciative Inquiry, and Cooperative Inquiry. After careful consideration of these various methodologies and due to its philosophical congruence with Community Youth Mapping (CYM), the investigator chose *Collaborative Action Research* derived from a *Cooperative Inquiry* methodology because of its participatory and experiential (learning through doing) nature, which provides a real opportunity for youth and adult community members to share in the exploration of youth participation in the development and implementation of a CYM project.

Lastly, I believe that Collaborative Action Research provides a unique and powerful way to approach group and individual learning in the development and implementation of a CYM project. The participatory and collaborative nature allows youth and adult learners to engage experientially with the topic of youth development that might otherwise remain distant, academic or intellectual.

## Research Methods of Inquiry and Analysis

### *Location of the Study*

The study examined the feasibility of learning from youth that attend schools in the Surrey School District and reside in neighbourhoods within the City of Surrey. These neighbourhoods were chosen because of the presence of supportive administration within the schools and School District Executive, who were willing to support the study. Five secondary schools were involved in the study, including: Fraser Heights, North Surrey, Tamanawis, King's, and Panorama Ridge.

### *Recruitment and Training of Youth Mappers*

A number of factors were important for the engagement and retention of youth in this research study. Recruitment of a diverse and interested group of young people willing to participate as co-researchers was critical to this study. Training Youth Mappers in the areas of research design; recruiting interview respondents; collecting, transcribing, and analyses was the next major step to consider. Lastly, attention was given to adequately training youth

in the use of technology within the scope of the study (i.e. GPS, GIS, digital camera, audio recorder, and specialized software).

Finding youth involved or interested in community development initiatives is always a challenge. Fortunately, the study was able to secure strong partnerships with the Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative, the Surrey School District, the Surrey Foundation, and the Community Youth Development Coalition of BC. The Adult Coordinator of the Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative was instrumental in securing several youth leaders from the Surrey Foundation Youth in Philanthropy program where she also held the volunteer position of Adult Advisor. These youth were well positioned to use their community leadership role more strategically to build social capital, to promote civic engagement as well as practice social responsibility. The Coordinator of Surrey's Community Youth Development Initiative provided her house for research design team and Youth Mappers' reflection/action cycle meetings, training sessions, data analyses and concluding sessions. These meetings and sessions established an environment that mirrored *elements* that facilitate PYD including: physical and emotional safety, a sense of belonging, supportive relationships, opportunities to build skills, and to be meaningfully engaged within the study.

#### *Recruiting Youth Mappers*

The investigator and Surrey Community Youth Development Coordinator along with the Surrey Youth in Philanthropy group worked with school district/administrators and youth-serving organizations to identify potential youth who represented a wide range of diversity. (i.e., age; gender; ethnicity; location of school; and, social, physical and cognitive abilities).

In addition, the following criteria were also used for selecting youth to be trained:

1. Enrolled at one of five large public schools
2. Age 16-18
3. Reside at home with one or more adult chaperones or parents
4. Adult or guardian consent to participate in the study over 3-4 months
5. Commitment to the following amount of paid time in the form of a \$900

honorarium:

- Four 6 hour training seminars for learning concepts of community development, positive youth development, research expertise, and using technology;
- Ten hours to support the development of the data collection tools (key informant interview and focus group session script and questions) and to support the development of the tool describing *elements* that best facilitate positive youth development within their community;
- Twenty hours of data collection (key informant and focus group sessions);
- Twenty hours in transcribing interviews and data analysis;
- Ten hours in research study meetings involving iterative cycles of reflection and action;
- Ten hours of volunteer time for study fund raising events.

Total of 94 hours

Three Youth Team Captains designed the questions and protocol for interviewing potential Youth Mappers and conducted twenty two interviews, resulting in securing a total

of eleven Youth Mappers. Each Youth Mapper was assigned to one of the three teams based on a combination of their demographics of living in different geographic neighbourhoods and personality characteristics.

### *Training of Youth Mappers*

The design team for the development of the training modules consisted of the three Youth Team Captains who were essentially the core of the design team. They were charged with the important task of filtering the training protocols, editing and changing processes so that the adult investigators kept true to our youth-driven principles. The rest of the design team included the Coordinator of the Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative, staff from Surrey School District, the Executive Director of the Community Youth Development Coalition of BC, and the investigator. The design team created the purpose and objectives of each of the training modules along with an expedient timeline to meet the needs of the youth and the confines of the school year timetable. These training modules were facilitated by the Youth Team Captains and experts from the University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University and Laval University, presenting in the areas of: youth development, PYD, community development, CYD, meaningful youth participation, strengths-based approach, data collection, interview techniques, group facilitation, use of GPS and GIS, digital photography, audio and video taping, and specialized software for visually presented mapped data on the web. The Youth Team Captains, made decisions on relevant information to assemble into training kits provided to all the Youth Mappers at their first session.

The Youth Team Captains were also each assigned a hand-held GPS, laptop computer, audiotape recorder and digital camera to share with their group throughout the study. The Youth Team Captains collectively planned the shape of each training day, the

presentation and administration tasks each would perform, and were asked to make sure that all Youth Mappers followed research guidelines to ensure reliability and positive experience for each of their group members.

The training was designed to promote several areas of development, skill, knowledge, practice, preparation and eventually expertise, namely:

1. Skills or preparation that youth deem necessary or important.
2. Development of a strong sense of engagement for the youth and team building.
3. Knowledge of fundamentals of community development and *elements* which facilitate PYD.
4. Recognition of available resources within their lives which possess key *elements* which facilitate PYD.
5. Skills for providing input and gaining consensus on a research approach toward question formulation, probing, and listening.
6. Youth Team Captains and others developing skills for facilitation of individual and group dialogue.
7. Knowledge and skills regarding a CAR and a co-operative inquiry approach.
8. Knowledge and skills regarding the utilization of GPSs, digital and video cameras, computers and GIS (plus other specialized software) for presenting information.

The purpose of the training was to prepare Youth Mappers with the research expertise to gather data from their peers about the people, places and activities within their community of Surrey that facilitate PYD, using self-selected data collection methods. Examples of the following data collection options were provided for youth to choose from during training

(interviews, focus groups, surveys, participant observation, journaling, global positioning and geographical information systems, computer skills, Photovoice, etc). In addition, the youth also needed an understanding of concepts surrounding the research such as youth development, key *elements* that facilitate PYD, and community development in relation to youth. Training was designed to engage youth to be co-researchers and consisted of four-six hour paid sessions.

The first training session (Refer to Appendix D – Outline and Objectives for CYM training, p. 337) began with icebreaker activities. This was followed by a presentation of current literature on asset development models that facilitate PYD, specifically, the Five C’s (Lerner, 2004); the Personal and Social Assets (Eccles & Gootman, 2002); the 40 Developmental Assets (Search Institute, 1998); and the CYD Evaluation Framework (Miller et al., 2006). Digital photography, discussion of project logos, using GPS and data collection methods was interspersed throughout the day. In addition, the Youth Mappers all received training kits which included key resources. Given the Collaborative Action Research approach of this study, a follow-up reflection/action cycle meeting was facilitated to evaluate “what worked well – WWW” and “I wish –IW” in order to improve practice and determine next steps. Lastly, in preparation for the next training session, Youth Mappers were asked to further review the models that were presented and start selecting key *elements* that they believed assisted PYD in their community.

The first part of the second training session (Refer to Appendix D - Outline and Objectives for CYM Training, p. 337) began with each youth team captain leading their group in a discussion about the various models on PYD, i.e., the Five C’s; the Personal and Social Assets; the 40 Developmental Assets; and the key *elements* from the CYD Evaluation

Framework. They were given the task to select six or seven key *elements* that facilitate PYD that they could use in the designing an assessment tool. The second part of the session involved hands-on training in GPS navigation with an exercise involving object finding and location marking within the local neighbourhood. A reflection/action cycle meeting again assisted with improving and planning the third training session. For homework, youth were given cameras to practice photography with regard to proper focus and strong compositions for various shots such as portrait, landscape, etc. The Youth Mappers used their team laptop computer to perform uploading of photos from the camera and formatting photos for email and website purposes. They were also asked to identify people, places and activities in their own lives which supported their development as well as to start finalizing the data collection tools and develop the interview script and questions for respondents (Refer to Appendix F - Key informant interview Script and Questions, p. 346).

During the third session the youth began by discussing the questions they felt most pertinent in small groups. They then moved to whole group discussion and came up with the main questions for the interviews. Next, they were trained in interviewing and data collection techniques to ensure consistency and participant confidentiality and comfort. The youth were given advice on dealing with `problem interviews` (i.e., negativity, redirecting distraught participants to appropriate help, being patient and helping to phrase prompts effectively). A reflection/action cycle meeting led to a request for an additional training session to further prepare them in conducting focus group and key informant interviews. The Youth Mappers were also asked to complete one or two mock key informant interviews on friends or family members for homework.

In the fourth training session, Youth Mappers practiced conducting/facilitating a focus group session. They learned that the basic needs of anyone involved in a group session include power, fun, connectedness, leadership by thinking outside the box and, making sense. In this session Youth Mappers were also able to finalize the Focus Group Interview Kit (Refer to Appendix G – Focus Group Interview Kit, p. 348). They also decided to create a DVD of themselves discussing the *elements* that facilitate PYD as a tool to assist focus group participants in understanding the key *elements* that facilitate PYD (Refer to Appendix A – Elements that Assist PYD, p. 322).

Through reflection/action cycle meetings, individual phone conversations and email, the Youth Mappers were supported during the data collection phase and provided with opportunities to debrief their experiences, learn from each other, discuss their concerns with supportive adult co-researchers as well as each other and work to find solutions.

It should be noted that the Youth Mappers played a major role as decision-makers in this study and the adult researchers assisted with coordination of meetings, food, providing resource materials and a safe and secure environment.

## Research Methods and Analysis

### *Investigator - Data Collection*

#### *Field Notes*

The investigator audio-taped or recorded and transcribed field notes beginning with the November 2006 design team meeting through to the completion of the final Youth Mappers' reflection/action cycle meeting in June 2007. General information related to decision processes, implementation, challenges, and implications were recorded. As the Youth Team Captains and Youth Mappers came up with the direction they wanted to pursue, feasibility was examined and the youth were provided the support and guidance necessary by the adult researchers. Field notes were transcribed, content analyzed and provided insight into Questions #1, and #3.

#### *Research Design Team Meetings*

Nine meetings were conducted and consisted of the three Youth Team Captains (Youth in Philanthropy – Surrey Foundation; two adult representatives from the Surrey School District, (one being the Director of Research and Evaluation, and one the Principal of Tamanawis Secondary School); Coordinator of the Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative; Executive Director of the Community Youth Development Coalition of British Columbia; and, the research investigator. These reflection/action cycle meetings were conducted at various venues (i.e. restaurants, schools, and Coordinator's home) and were audio-taped and transcribed. The data were content analyzed to examine themes related to Research Questions #1, 2 and 3, and included challenges and successes in securing community and school partnerships, implementing research methods, recruitment of Youth

Mappers and respondents, data interpretation, and changes in perceptions of the Youth Mappers and respondents themselves.

#### *Training Videotape*

The entire Surrey CYM training was videotaped to capture for review purposes, concepts presented by experts, youth responses, interaction and discussion, homework assignments to reinforce training, all of which enabled assessment of Research Question #1 and #3. The videotape was transcribed and content analyzed to determine emergent themes and associations.

#### *Written Training Evaluations*

Mappers completed short written evaluations after each of the four CYM training sessions to assess Research Questions #1 and #3. These written evaluations are included in Appendix H – CYM Training Evaluation, p. 265. The evaluation used Likert-scale questions related to confidence (1 being not at all confident, 5 being very confident) about the overall understanding of *elements* that facilitate positive youth development and in skills and knowledge of the Surrey CYM activities and the overall training. Open-ended questions were also included to obtain their feedback regarding the quality of the training and to determine whether re-training was needed in specific areas. All responses were summarized and content analyzed.

#### *Post-Training Reflection/Action Cycle Meetings*

These mini iterative cycles of reflection and action occurred after each of the four training session or as Youth Mappers referred to them, “reflection/action cycle meetings”. The Team Captains facilitated each meeting asking Youth Mappers “what worked well- WWW” and an “I wish- IW” for what they would like to see improved for next training

session or other aspects of the research study. This process challenged the Youth Mappers to reflect on the research study in terms of successes, challenges and issues in implementing the research methods, perspectives of youths within each team and within the group concerning comfort level, comprehension, satisfaction with how the study is progressing and general feedback. The discussions were thorough with the understanding that consensus from the Youth Mappers directed the next steps or actions. In addition, the informal atmosphere created was meant to encourage a feeling of trust that all perceptions would be listened to and future actions adapted accordingly. The meetings were video-taped, transcribed and content analyzed to examine themes related to Research Questions #1, and #3.

#### *Data Interpreting Session*

A full day follow-up session was facilitated by Youth Team Captains and investigators that supported Youth Mappers in analyzing and interpreting data, and in sharing differences, similarities and patterns. This session also involved extensive plotting of locations on a large scale map of Surrey of people, places and activities that build *elements* that facilitate PYD. The entire session was video-taped and transcribed and content analyzed to examine themes related to #1 and #2.

#### *Participant Data (Youth Mappers and Respondents)*

Data were collected from Youth Mappers during meetings, training and concluding Youth Mappers interviews. Youth Respondent data (key informant interviews and focus group sessions) were also tracked and collected. The data were counted, content analyzed, and summarized according to age, gender, ethnicity, and school neighbourhood to learn about Research Questions #1, #2, and #3.

### *Concluding Youth Mappers' Interviews*

A full-day session with the Youth Team Captains and Youth Mappers was conducted at the end of the data collection phase. The session consisted of a celebration recognizing special qualities of each of the Youth Mappers, further discussion of team findings and plotting locations of resources (people, places and activities) on a large map of Surrey, and individual Youth Mapper interviews. These concluding Youth Mapper interviews obtained their perceptions of the goals of the study, whether or not those goals were achieved, and what they learned about people, places and activities in their community as a result of the study. In addition, Youth Mappers were asked whether they felt adequately prepared for the study, successes, challenges, fun, what they would remember, what they would change, what would have prepared them better and if given the opportunity, would they stay with the study.

The Youth Mappers were also asked to examine whether their view of themselves changed because of the process they had been through with the study, as well as the interviewees' view of themselves. This was particularly important with respect to their new knowledge about *elements* which facilitate positive youth development in terms of seeing or feeling aspects of these *elements* in their daily lives and how they view the world. Regarding their future, the Youth Mappers were asked how they might use these new skills, new relationships, new people, places and activities and how they might use their different self-identity to treat others differently and perform different roles within their family, school or community.

The concluding interviews were all conducted by the investigator with the first one being recorded by the Surrey Community Youth Development Coordinator. After the Youth

Mapper was finished his/her interview the investigator had that individual stay in the room for the next Mapper interview as recorder so they experienced the final data collection activity. Refer to Appendix I - Concluding Interview Guide for Youth Mappers, p. 361. The concluding Youth Mappers interviews were audio taped and transcribed and content analyzed to examine themes related to Research Questions #1, and #3.

### *Youth Mappers - Data Collection*

Youth Mappers were provided with numerous options and chose the following data collection methods and skills they deemed most appropriate for the study: key informant interviews; focus group sessions; Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) technology, digital photography, journaling, data analysis and transcribing.

The GIS component of this study was designed to map the locations of people, places and activities where *elements* that facilitate positive youth development can be found, as reported by the youth. The Youth Mappers showed considerable interest and enthusiasm in using GPS and GIS. They envisioned the data being presented on a youth friendly website to be used by youth and others in the Surrey community and elsewhere. Data collection would include finding and mapping local opportunities and resources, developing visual maps for specific neighbourhoods identified and using photographs to bring the maps to life.

### *Key Informant Interviews*

Interviews were conducted by the Youth Mappers between the months of May and June, 2006. On average, each Youth Mapper conducted 12 interviews lasting 30 to 45 minutes each (Refer to Appendix F – Key Informant Interview Script and Questions, p. 346). Interviews were designed to be conducted by Youth Mappers in-person and in a safe location

within the participating schools. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the Youth Mapper. Youth Team Captains provided support and assistance when needed and took on the role of conduit between Youth Mappers and the investigator for any concerns or protocol questions Mappers incurred. The data from the 118 interviews were content analyzed to examine and identify potential themes. Data were also sorted according to age, gender, ethnicity, community needs, along with *elements* that facilitate PYD through people, places and activities.

### *Focus Group Sessions*

Three large focus group sessions averaging 18 participants each were conducted/facilitated by Youth Mappers within participating schools. A focus group interview kit was developed (Refer to Appendix G - Focus Group Interview Kit, p. 348). The kit provides guidelines, processes and tools necessary to conduct a focus group session. Youth Mappers were thoroughly trained in the use of the kit and to facilitate group sessions. The data collected was used to augment Youth Mappers' efforts in discovering the current locations, resources and opportunities through people, places and activities within the key informant interviews. Each session was approximately 45 minutes in duration and provided data for the following four broad questions:

1. Priorize the following *elements* in order of importance. What other *elements* help build strength and resilience? (Explain how these *elements* help build resilience (ones ability to bounce back.)
2. What activities help you build these *elements*?
3. Where can you go to build these *elements* that assist positive youth development? (Your favourite people, places and activities).

4. What could we do to make this a better community?

Data from the 56 participants were sorted according to age, gender, ethnicity, community needs, along with people, places and activities identified that facilitate PYD. All sessions were video/audio taped and content analyzed to identify themes. Each Youth Mapper filled out a facilitator's observation form (Refer to Appendix G - Focus Group Interview Kit, p. 348) highlighting the main messages from the group discussion along with their general comments, implications, and personal insight. The observation forms were content analyzed.

*Data Analyses*

Reflection/action cycle meetings: Along with these meetings occurring after each of the four training sessions and the ten design team meetings, a one-day reflection/action cycle meeting was facilitated by the three Youth Team Captains post data-collection of key informant and focus group sessions to support Youth Mappers in analyzing and interpreting data, and to share differences, similarities and patterns. Youth Mappers recorded the findings and plotted the location of resources (people, places and activities) on a large scale map of Surrey.

To complete the process, a two day field trip was organized over a weekend during which the three teams of Youth Mappers obtained locations called way points with a hand held GPS along with multiple site pictures, "stitched" (utilizing a specialized digital camera software) to support the development of a GIS website linked to Google Earth and virtual tour to display findings/community resources that support youth development within the community of Surrey.

Database: In preparation for analysis, data were entered into NVivo, a qualitative software program that assisted in determining what topics and themes emerged. The software allows for multiple layers of analysis from transcriptions of the key informant interviews, focus group sessions, concluding Mapper interviews, as well as reflection/action cycle meetings. The documents were imported into sources for coding called nodes and tree nodes (a hierarchical structure) as well as casebooks for examining attributes within the information. Information was then collated around people, places, and activities such as work, volunteer In-School and Out-of-School. Source information was coded and analyzed to examine similarities and differences between the Youth Mappers and the people they chose to interview. Within casebooks, attributes were given to age ranges, culture, gender, names of schools, especially in relation to the Youth Mappers themselves. The software allowed the investigator to perform queries as ideas and themes surfaced. For instance, how many youth involved in activities in school were also involved in activities out of school? And vice-versa, how many youth not involved in school activities were also not involved in any out of school activities. A memo system allowed us to keep track of significant points as the data were being generated without affecting the data itself. This way we were able to refer to it later and incorporate into further data collection and later analysis if necessary. The software generates reports from sources, casebooks, queries and attributes. However, the format, although easily imported into word, needed tweaking to make the information easier to decipher. It also exports to Excel and generates charts and models which were not very useful for this dissertation but will be used in visual presentations. Other key questions were able to be examined in relation to what youth felt the community of Surrey had going

for it and what was missing. The reports allow one to organize by topics and generate the quotes coded within sources under the tree nodes.

### *Sample Size*

The investigator hoped for a sample size of approximately 200 youth, however, this could not be pre-determined because of using youth co-researchers in a CAR approach. Also, pre-analysis indicated the data started to become saturated after approximately 75 key informant interview respondents.

The nature of the study also required three Youth Team Captains who were willing and able to fulfill a role in terms of leadership capability, as well as an understanding and commitment to the study goals. In addition, the potential methodology was difficult to predict as participants needed to decide on the methodology deemed most appropriate. Ten Youth Mappers remained involved through the duration of the research study and collected 118 key informant interviews along with 56 respondents involved within the 3 focus groups sessions conducted. A total sample size of 174 respondents was achieved.

### *Timeframe*

The Surrey CYM project was initiated with design team work in November of 2006. Ethics Review Office approval was obtained in January 2007 and training took place in March and April 2007. Youth Mappers data collection occurred in the months of May and June 2007. Final data collection occurred in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June, with content analysis of the qualitative data beginning immediately after. Analysis and interpretation was completed at the end of August, 2007.

The following Chapter describes the findings from this Collaborative Action Research study involving young people as co-researchers in identifying resources that build *elements* that facilitate positive youth development in their community.

## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Eleven youth participated in the Surrey's Community Youth Mapping training with one Youth Mapper dropping out of the study for personal reasons. In total, ten Youth Mappers collected data from 174 of their peers. One hundred and eighteen youth respondents participated in key informant interviews, and another fifty-six youth respondents took part in three focus group sessions. The Youth Mappers and other youth respondents were diverse in age, ethnicity/culture, school location, and gender.

The study provided the following data related to: (a) The experience of conducting a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project, (b) the types of data Youth Mappers were able to collect using a variety of methods and technologies, and (c) the benefit to Youth Mappers and youth respondents participating in the study.

Question #1 – What is the experience of conducting a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) Project?

The main areas of study related to question #1 include: (a) Study sample, (b) sustaining youth commitment, (c) the effectiveness of training Youth Mapper's as co-researchers, and (d) the effectiveness of communication strategies.

### *Study Sample*

With guidance and recommendations from School District #36 in Surrey, the study was designed to recruit a diverse group of Youth Mappers. The recruiting strategy used an

intact group of youth as its organizing nucleus. This youth group (n=7) had been established for four months and were considered the Youth in Philanthropy committee as part of the Surrey Community Foundation. Each member of this intact group was given a choice to participate in the Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project. They all felt that they had the time and interest to participate. In addition to the research element, there was also the need to write grants and fund-raise to support the project. The three project Youth Team Captains were selected from this intact group because they had demonstrated leadership ability and held credibility with their peers.

The CYM project was seen by the youth committee members as an important way to establish needs of youth within the city, to build a stronger youth team and to recruit more youth by involving them in a real and authentic project. In supporting their own youth initiative in the CYM project, the Surrey Community Foundation could potentially become an active player in an important mission of the social sector. Rather than concentrating exclusively on the problems of young people, the Foundation could focus on promising ways to give young people a meaningful role in society. The idea was to capitalize on youth's fresh approach, talents, and energy. The youth membership believed that the Foundation would like to support the youth groups' growth and development, toward building a more community-wide, inclusive, diverse group of young people

The youth and investigator developed an interview protocol by brainstorming the characteristics needed to be "good" action researchers/Youth Mappers as well as developing questions that helped them judge the level of commitment towards the project. The potential Youth Mappers needed to be able to find the time to be trained, conduct the mapping research, and adopt the "objective" stance of participant researcher. They also needed to

have an interest in technology as they would be using digital photography, GPS/GIS technology, specialized software as well as developing protocols for website development. At the time of the interviews, the Youth Team Captains decided not to disclose the \$900.00 honorarium that would be provided to each Youth Mapper for their participation in the study. Their rationale was to secure Youth Mappers who showed genuine interest in the position, and the study, and were not motivated by monetary incentive.

The advertising for the Youth Mapper research positions was by word-of-mouth with supportive advice and counsel from school district personnel. For example, there was an up and coming strategic plan for the school district to roll out a community school initiative and it was suggested that youth from these targeted schools would benefit from their involvement in CYM. On the suggestion of the Assistant Superintendent of the Surrey School District, these schools were approached and canvassed to see if there was interest in involving students in this project.

The interview process was conducted by the three Youth Team Captains. Four Youth Mappers were selected and added to the intact group through this interview process. The eleven Youth Mappers attended six large secondary schools within the community of Surrey and one private school located in Langley. The opportunity for the Youth Mappers to conduct their search within their own school community and their own community organizations created a strategic advantage to learn from a representative sample of their peers. The goal was to learn about the various people, places and activities where youth find supportive *elements* that facilitate PYD from within the participating schools and surrounding neighbourhoods within Surrey.

Prior to recruiting youth members, The Surrey School District was approached to request permission to conduct the research. Because the study involved youth both as researchers and subjects, there were clear ethical guidelines that needed to be established along with an extensive research application process. Although the school district is familiar with an action research approach, this was different in that the investigator was from outside the school district and the students, as Youth Mappers, were considered co-researchers. The youth were also being paid an honorarium for their involvement.

The study received the approval and the school district personnel took a special interest in supporting the efforts of the Youth Mappers. One of the school principals held a meeting with the Youth Mappers and asked the question: “Now that you are finished your training, how can the school help you conduct your research?” The principal had some sound suggestions for school groups that could be used for the focus group sessions and gave the youth permission to conduct their one-on-one individual interviews during the school day. This kind of openness and encouragement was essential in the development of these young researchers. They felt that their first experiences with the research process were successful.

Sampling of Youth Mappers and respondents originated from six large secondary schools (Johnston Heights Secondary, North Surrey, Tamanawis, Panorama Ridge, Lord Tweedsmuir, and Kings) within the boundaries of Surrey School District. Students within these schools were involved in key informant interviews. In addition, three focus group sessions took place at Tamanawis, where over half the Youth Mappers attended. Early on in the process the Youth Mappers suggested expanding the study to include the entire City of Surrey since they often gain resources from people, places and activities outside their school

neighbourhood. Some of the Youth Mappers expanded their key informant interviews to include youth who were co-workers, team-mates and involved in other community associations like the Canadian/Jamaican Association, Temple on Scottsdale and Sun God, Green Bay Bible camp, YMCA, North Surrey Recreation Centre, Newton Athletic Park, and numerous sport facilities.

#### *Recruitment of Youth Mappers*

Table 4.1 includes the demographic description of the Youth Mappers involved in Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project. The ten youth that participated were from a range of demographic and cultural groups. Four of the Youth Mappers were males (ages ranging from 15-17) and seven were females (ages ranging from 15-18). There were no Youth Mappers who lived outside the City of Surrey. The diverse multicultural nature of the community was well represented and included Korean, Jamaican, Indo-Canadians from India and from Kenya as well as Caucasian and Aboriginal students.

Youth Mappers from six secondary schools (Johnston Heights, North Surrey, Tamanawis, The King's School, Fraser Heights and Panorama Ridge) were involved in the data collection phase of the study. The Youth Mapper from Lord Tweedsmuir left the study after the training sessions and did not conduct the key informant interviews and the focus group sessions.

Youth Mappers were divided into three teams. Youth Team Captains were appointed based on a combination of their leadership, personality characteristics and credibility with their peers. The team members were assigned to each Team Captain based on the combination of learning styles, strengths and diverse geographic representation.

Table 4.1

## Demographics of Youth Mappers

Demographic Characteristics	Number (%)
<i>Age</i>	
15 years	2 (20%)
16 years	2 (20%)
17 years	5 (50%)
18 years	1 (10%)
<i>Grade</i>	
Grade 10	3 (30%)
Grade 11	5 (50%)
Grade 12	2 (20%)
<i>Gender</i>	
Female	6 (60%)
Male	4 (40%)
<i>Ethnic</i>	
Aboriginal	1 (10%)
Korean	1 (10%)
Jamaican	2 (20%)
Indo-Canadian	3 (30%)
Caucasian	3 (30%)
<i>School</i>	
Johnston Heights	1 (10%)
North Surrey	1 (10%)
Panorama Ridge	1 (10%)
Fraser Heights	1 (10%)
Tamanawis	5 (50%)
The King's School	1 (10%)

The three Youth Team Captains (with support from the investigator) facilitated the design team and reflection/action cycle meetings and were instrumental in filtering the training protocols, editing and changing processes so that the research stayed true to a CAR approach and strong youth-driven principles. The investigator fine tuned the training design and key processes with Youth Team Captains and then pre-taught the process to them prior to the Youth Mappers' training sessions, which the Youth Team Captains then facilitated,

teaching what they had learned. For the most part, the Youth Team Captains facilitated and conducted the actual training sessions with the support from the seven other Youth Mappers.

In addition to ensuring a youth led process, this team structure worked to help the study stay on task, organize the communication and field work, and use the supplies and equipment equitably. For example, each Youth Team Captain was assigned a hand-held GPS, a laptop computer, audiotape recorder, and a digital camera. They were also provided with the research protocol packages and asked to make sure that all Youth Mappers followed research guidelines re: permission/consent forms, interview process, etc.

Within the CYM training, ten Youth Mappers participated in the three training sessions. A fourth additional training session was added as support was deemed necessary around facilitation logistics, practice and preparation to ensure successful implementation of their first focus group session.

#### *Recruitment of Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Respondents*

The Youth Mappers experienced some successes and challenges in finding places for recruitment. This study was designed to be implemented during the school year because of the natural exposure of young people to their peers at school and in activities that would lend themselves to recruitment. Youth found innovative ways to recruit their peers to participate in the interviews and focus group sessions. They recruited one-on-one with friends and peers informally, mainly within their prospective schools.

Youth Mappers reported during reflection/action cycle meetings that they attempted recruitment of key informant interviews in settings other than school with some success, though the yield rate was not as high as the informal recruitment conducted at their schools. Youth Mappers reported that work settings were useful places to recruit, and would yield

peers (both coworkers and customers) who were less similar than those peers they could recruit at their school or in their neighbourhood. Mappers also identified that recruitment among youth groups in faith organizations produced a higher response rate than most non-school places. Other possible sites youth suggested for recruitment were school orientations (with School support,) and youth clubs outside of school (e.g., teen clubs, private athletic groups, community service projects, and cultural youth clubs).

Many of the Youth Mappers also discussed time as an important issue for them and their peers in recruitment. While they and their peers often had busy schedules (approximately half were involved in extracurricular activities), they managed to conduct interviews with a diversity of youth.

To identify Youth Mappers, it was collectively decided that a specific logo was needed. The Youth Mappers designed a logo to show Surrey as an area with green space (trees, bushes), homes, and larger buildings (Refer to Appendix J - Surrey Community Youth Mapping Logo, pg. 361). The Youth Mappers had voted against including the Simon Fraser University award winning building, a mosque and a church which are well represented in Surrey, preferring something simpler. The colours selected were navy and white which were seen as “classy” and appealed to both genders. The font and words were chosen to allow maximum readability from a distance so others could quickly ascertain that this was a community initiative, as opposed to canvassing for funds. The Youth Mappers discussed various options to identify themselves as Surrey Community Youth Mappers and chose navy and white golf-shirts with the logo screen-printed on the front left chest and right sleeve. They also customized water bottles sporting the SCYM logo and used these as incentive gifts for the respondents.

To familiarize the Youth Mappers with processes for recruiting youth respondents and to pilot the key informant interview script and questions (Refer to Appendix F – Key Informant Interview Script and Questions, p. 346), the Team Captains contacted malls in the Surrey area for authorization to carry out interviews with youth frequenting these locations. All ten Youth Mappers participated in a one-day excursion working in pairs.

In the follow-up reflection/action cycle meeting, Youth Mappers discussed how their experience recruiting respondents was more enjoyable than they had predicted. One Youth Mapper likened it to an ‘Apprentice episode with Donald Trump’ where you have to make connections with people. More than half the Youth Mappers felt that working in pairs with other team-mates provided them with more confidence in conducting the interviews. Each of the Mappers practiced talking with youth strangers and piloting the interview script and questions. They found the exercise invaluable and provided excellent suggestions on improving the process/protocol along with getting needed practice in explaining the six key *elements* (Refer to Appendix A - Elements that assist PYD, p. 322). Youth Mappers also learned to use prompting techniques in order to elicit more in-depth responses on where these *elements* are located through people, places, and activities in the community of Surrey.

The professional look and approachable manner of the Youth Mappers appeared to generate a positive response. The researchers cued the Youth Mappers and the Mappers also made suggestions to each other to adjust non-verbal communication techniques such as looking people briefly in the eye as they walked by, maintaining an approachable demeanour and staying relaxed but still professional.

Twenty-four partial respondent interviews were carried out during the piloting and each of the ten Youth Mappers had a chance to practice approaching and speaking with

strangers. The data were not used in the study; rather, the experience was meant as a practice session with recommendations for changes to the interview protocol coming through the follow-up reflection/action cycle meeting.

There were a number of other factors related to recruitment of respondents that were observed and discussed in subsequent reflection/action cycle meetings, emails and telephone conversations. These included finding places to interview youth as quickly as possible (e.g., at lunch times at school). This worked very well with students 16 years or older who could sign permission forms and complete the interview in one go. The Youth Mappers generally had difficulties at first, finding areas within the school that were quiet enough and far enough away from distractions so that the interview could be completed without interruptions. They mentioned that disturbances affected the concentration of some of their respondents. By the time equipment such as the tape recorder was set-up the Mappers usually managed about one interview per lunch. Those with one or more spare blocks were able to complete their interviews in a timely manner. The younger Youth Mappers who did not have spare blocks were pushed for time to complete their interviews.

Another factor that affected recruitment of interviewees was the fact that three of the Youth Mappers fell behind in the school work because of the weekends they had been involved in training and fund raising events for the study, and also participating in team sports. To support them in their school, the investigator used funds to get three Youth Mappers, one in Grade 10 and two in Grade 11, special tutoring at home to help them with the rigours of preparing for Provincial exams. In British Columbia, students are required to write exams in Math, English and Science in Grade 10, and Social Studies and a second language in Grade 11. Some Grade 10 and 11 students also take Grade 12 provincials

examinations to help get enough credits to qualify for university entrance. Whether or not this was the case for these three Youth Mappers is not known, as specifics were not asked. Rather the investigator was keen to retain the Youth Mappers in the study and this seemed a reasonable solution which satisfied the Youth Mappers and their parents.

In order for the Youth Mappers to complete their key informant interviews and transcriptions within the short timeline, they were given free reign on recruitment of respondents. Initially, it was hoped that more team excursions to malls to generate interviews with youth strangers would occur, but finding times for the Youth Mappers to be available together as a group became problematic. It therefore became more realistic for the Youth Mappers to generate interviews in school and leisure settings where they could easily access youth for interviews and be in a safe environment. This did suggest limitations in that the Youth Mappers were most likely drawn to friends and more outgoing youth, curious about the activity. The Youth Mappers were encouraged by the investigator to seek out others they would normally not interact with in order to get a broader sample of responses. However, this was not enforced.

Upon examining the information gathered from each of the Youth Mappers there were definite patterns in selecting respondents. For example, four Youth Mappers seemed to make a greater effort or had easier access to interviewees with different demographics to themselves. A significant factor in recruitment used by all Youth Mappers was selecting respondents who had similar interests and personalities. The more academic Youth Mappers tended to include interview respondents who were already in university or college, even though three of these Youth Mappers were only in Grade 10 and 11. Four Youth Mappers involved in sports were also involved in student council and leadership activities within their

schools and their respondents were primarily similar in their involvement in sport and leadership activities. One quieter Youth Mapper selected interview respondents who were much less active in and out of school and less connected to others socially. Although additional reflection/action cycle meetings may have better supported a more diverse selection of youth respondents, the data collected by the Youth Mappers were sufficient.

Information such as response rate (how many people did they have to ask to get their interviews?) was not known, but the fact interviews were completed in a timely manner and Youth Mappers did not mention this being a problem in the concluding Youth Mappers interviews, suggests the process was not arduous. We do know that the response rate varied somewhat according to the skill and comfort level of individual Youth Mappers. This was evident in the quality and quantity of information included in transcriptions. The four males tended to be cryptic in their writing styles, using a template of their own with bullets as an organizational tool. All male Youth Mappers tended to have either shorter answers or devised a reporting system that did not cover all questions asked but approached the interview from a unique angle. In contrast, five of the six females documented conversations in more detail, writing more lengthy descriptions, rather than summarizing.

Regarding focus group sessions, Youth Mappers found innovative ways to recruit respondents. Participants were drawn by an announcement over the school PA inviting those with a spare to participate in a discussion on youth in the community. Student respondents were told that their participation in the focus group session would count toward volunteer hours for their graduation requirement. In addition, Youth Mappers highlighted the importance of the respondents' contribution in providing data to support the development and implementation of a broader Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative. Youth

Mappers were also able to secure a number of participants by cruising the school hallways and announcing a fun session which is not boring, includes a cool DVD and refreshments.

The access to key informant interview and focus group respondents was made easier by the support of the school administrations and the 'captive' youth audiences within the school settings. While some of the Youth Mappers were quite reluctant to perform interviews with each other during the CYM training, all Mappers reported in the concluding Youth Mappers' interviews that they learned new and valuable skills in approaching people. Recruitment required them to have a sound comprehension of the interview script/questions, the *elements* that facilitate PYD, and the purpose of data collection.

#### *Consent Forms*

School district policy and ethics approval for this study allowed students sixteen years and older to sign their own consent forms. This expedited the interview process since forms did not have to go home to be signed by parents. Conversely, students under sixteen years of age had to have signed parental consent and needed to return the forms prior to their interview with the Youth Mapper. High school students are familiar with consent form protocol used for field trips, photographs/interviews, participation in events, etc., making completion of the forms a non-issue. Youth Mappers commented that starting the interview process with consent forms provided credibility and professionalism to the study and made the interview appear more official.

#### *Two Methods of Data Collection - Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Sessions*

Tracking the interview respondents through the demographic data collected on consent forms yielded the following information about the research participants. The data were collected in two different research categories, namely, key informant interview

respondents conducted individually with one or two Youth Mappers, and the three focus group sessions conducted in a school setting. The demographic information collected includes age, grade, gender, ethnicity identified through names, and school as depicted in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

## Demographics of Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Sessions Respondents

Key Informant Interviews = 118		Focus Group Sessions = 56			
Age					
3	14 yrs	2.7%	Focus Group Session I		
3	15 yrs	2.7%	3	15 yrs	12.4%
59	16 yrs	48.2%	8	16 yrs	31.6%
28	17 yrs	21.5%	10	17 yrs	37.4%
14	18 yrs	13.9%	5	18 yrs	18.6%
4	19 yrs	3.9%	26	Total	100%
2	20 yrs	1.9%	Focus Group Session II		
1	21 yrs	0.9%	1	15 yrs	5.1%
4	22+ yrs	3.9%	6	16 yrs	32.5%
118	Total	100.0%	8	17 yrs	40.3%
			2	18 yrs	12.1%
			17	Total	100%
			Focus Group Session III		
			4	16 yrs	31.5%
			5	17 yrs	37.0%
			4	18 yrs	31.5%
			13	Total	100%
Grade					
3	Gr 9	2.8%	Focus Group Session I		
16	Gr 10	16.0%	1	Gr 9	0.4%
64	Gr 11	51.2%	6	Gr 10s	21.6%
24	Gr 12	21.5%	14	Gr 11	50.4%
7	University/College	5.7%	5	Gr 12	17.6%
4	22+ Not in school	2.8%	26	Total	100%
118	Total	100%	Focus Group Session II		
			1	Gr 9	5.5%

	4 Gr 10s	23.5%	
	7 Gr 11	41.5%	
	5 Gr 12	29.5%	
	17 Total	100%	
	Focus Group Session III		
	2 Gr 10s	15.6%	
	7 Gr 11	53.0%	
	4 Gr 12	31.4%	
	13 Total	100%	
<b>Gender</b>			
Female = 75/118	64%	Focus Group Session I	
Male = 43/118	36%	Female = 12/26 45%	
		Male = 14/26 55%	
		Focus Group Session II	
		Female = 10/17 58%	
		Male = 7/17 42%	
		Focus Group Session III	
		Female = 9/13 70%	
		Male = 4/13 30%	
<b>Culture</b>			
Aboriginal		Focus Group Session I	
Jamaican		Aboriginal	
Indo-Canadian		Indo-Canadian	
Caucasian		Caucasian	
Korean		Asian	
Total		Focus Group Session II	
		Aboriginal	
		Indo-Canadian	
		Caucasian	
		Asian	
		Focus Group Session III	
		Aboriginal	
		Indo-Canadian	
		Caucasian	
		Asian	
<b>School</b>			
BCIT	2	1.9%	Focus Group Session I
Clayton Heights	5	4.9%	Tamanawis Leadership Class
Enver Creek	1	0.9%	
Fraser Heights	6	6.6%	Focus Group Session II
Kwantlen College	1	0.9%	Tamanawis
North Delta	3	2.9%	
North Surrey	9	8.8%	Focus Group Session III
Not in School	4	3.9%	Tamanawis
Panorama Ridge	9	8.8%	

Princess Margaret	1	0.9%
Seaquam Secondary	1	0.9%
SFU	4	3.9%
Sullivan Heights	1	0.9%
Tamanawis	59	42.3%
The King's School	4	3.9%
Trinity University	1	0.9%
UBC	4	3.9%
Johnston Heights	2	1.9%
Sentinel Secondary	1	0.9%
Total =	118	100%
<u>14 Secondary Schools -</u>		
<u>3 attended school outside Surrey</u>		
<u>but lived in Surrey</u>		
King's School is in Langley		
Sequeam Secondary is in Delta		
Sentinel Secondary is in West		
Vancouver		
<u>5 Colleges/Universities - 3 Outside</u>		
<u>Surrey</u>		
Trinity University is in Langley		
BCIT is in Burnaby		
Kwantlen & SFU are in Surrey		
UBC is in Vancouver		

### *Ages of Respondents*

The ages of the key informant interview respondents ranged from 14 to 22+, whereas the focus group sessions respondents were all within a high school and ages ranged from 15-18 years. The school setting made it easy for Youth Mappers to access other youth and it was more expedient to interview students 16 years or older as they could sign their own consent forms. This may explain why almost half of the key informant interview respondents were 16 years old. This differed somewhat from the focus group sessions where approximately 30% of respondents were 16 years old for all three sessions. The three focus group sessions were held in a grade 11/12 Leadership class and two open-invite sessions for

students who were free because they had a spare block. The ages in these latter two sessions ranged between 15-18 years old.

There were substantially more 17 years olds in the focus group sessions, 37%, 41% and 37% respectively, compared to the key informant interview respondents, 27%. The numbers for 18 year olds fluctuated with 19%, 12% and 32% in the focus group sessions compared to the key informant interview respondents of 14%. If 16 and 17 year olds were combined the numbers were almost identical for all categories with key informant interview respondents at 69.7% and focus group session participants at 69%, 72.8% and 68.5%. These numbers were synonymous with the ages of the Youth Mappers themselves, 70% of whom were 16 and 17 years.

The majority of youth were in Grade 11 for both categories with 55% of key informant interview respondents, and 51%, 42%, and 53% in the three respective focus group sessions. Similarly, 50% of the Youth Mappers were in Grade 11. Thirty percent of Youth Mappers were in Grade 10 yet the numbers were lower for Grade 10s in the two categories, with 21%, 23% and 16% in the focus group sessions and only 16% of key informant interview respondents. For Grade 12s, 21% of key informant interview respondents and 18%, 30% and 31% were Grade 12 participants in the three focus group sessions. Twenty percent of Youth Mappers were in Grade 12. Likely the higher numbers of Grade 12s in the last two focus group sessions were because the sessions were held in a spare block with students invited over the PA system to join in on a volunteer basis if free for that block. Grade 12's had more flexible timetables than younger students and also may have found the subject more appealing.

### *Gender of Respondents*

The ratio of females to males was higher in two of the focus group sessions (58% and 70%,) the key informant interviews 64% and the Youth Mappers 60%. The Leadership class focus group session had slightly more males (55%.) The numbers tended to be fairly close and may have been related to the fact that there were more female Youth Mappers and there was a tendency by both genders to interview same sex respondents.

### *Ethnicity/Culture of Respondents*

Originally, the investigator had intended to include a question relating to ethnicity/culture of PPA for respondents in both the key informant interview and focus group sessions. However, Youth Mappers voiced their discomfort with asking personal questions related to specifics such as addresses and ethnicity. It was therefore excluded from the study until the investigator recognized that young people selected respondents similar to themselves. Ethnicity/culture also became a factor because the majority of youth respondents commented on a need for safe places to “hang-out” together in diverse groups. Therefore, it was after the data collection that the investigator sought to piece this information together.

A few techniques were used to help identify the ethnicity/culture of the key informant interview and focus group session respondents. The first was analysis of last and first name origin using three websites, <http://www.searchforancestors.com/surnames/origin>, <http://www.last-names.net/>, and <http://surnames.behindthename.com>. Names were given clear descriptions of origin and it was thought that if ethnic/cultural names e.g., Chinese, were given, it is possible that ancestry relates back to that culture at some point, enough to name the children and thus preserve the cultural identity. This process did not take into account mother’s maiden names which limited the accuracy of the information. It was

particularly difficult to discern Jamaican descent because of it being common to assume European names over the course of history. Indo-Canadian, Chinese and Caucasian names were easily identified on the web. During focus group sessions the video tapes were closely analyzed for distinctive features of participants as well as their names. This was also aided by accents and styles of speech common to different cultures. The key informant interviews and focus group sessions were diverse in participation, represented by Aboriginal, Asian, Indo-Canadian, and Caucasian youth. Jamaican heritage was harder to recognize and the investigator decided not to ask the two Jamaican Youth Mappers directly for this information but it is likely they interviewed relatives or friends because of their affiliation with the Jamaican Youth Club.

#### *Geographic Locations of Schools Respondents Attend*

The geographic locations represented all neighbourhoods of Surrey with the exception of the White Rock area in South Surrey. A total of 118 interview respondents and 56 focus group session participants as well as 10 Youth Mappers took part in the study. Six percent of the interview respondents were graduated and either working and/or attending college or university outside the Surrey boundaries. Four of the high schools were located in the Newton region of Surrey and of these Tamanawis had 115 (59 key informant interview and 56 focus group respondents) of the 174 participants which represented approximately 65% of the entire sample. The reason for this was the immediate and strong support from the administrators in the school who were very accommodating and flexible. Also, five Youth Mappers attended Tamanawis within Grade 10, 11 and 12 and collectively produced the 59 key informant interviews from Tamanawis students. Panorama Ridge had nine students,

Sullivan Heights had one, Princess Margaret had one, and Kwantlen College had one.

Altogether, 70% of the respondents were from the Newton area in Surrey.

A few of the Youth Mappers commented that numerous youth access resources outside Surrey and it would be useful to include these in the study. However, the logistics of a strict timeline to work within the school year, especially in relation to not bothering students during exams, made this impossible for the current research study. Of the other participants 17 were from three high schools in Guilford, six in Fraser Heights, nine in North Surrey and two in Johnston. One student was from Enver Creek in the Fleetwood area of Surrey. Four university students attended SFU in Whalley. Five students attended Clayton Heights in Cloverdale and the remaining eight students were spread through three schools just outside the Surrey borders, four in the King's School in Langley, and four students in Delta schools (one in Seaquam and three in North Delta). Figure 4.1 provides a map of Surrey outlining the number of key informant interviews respondents at each school

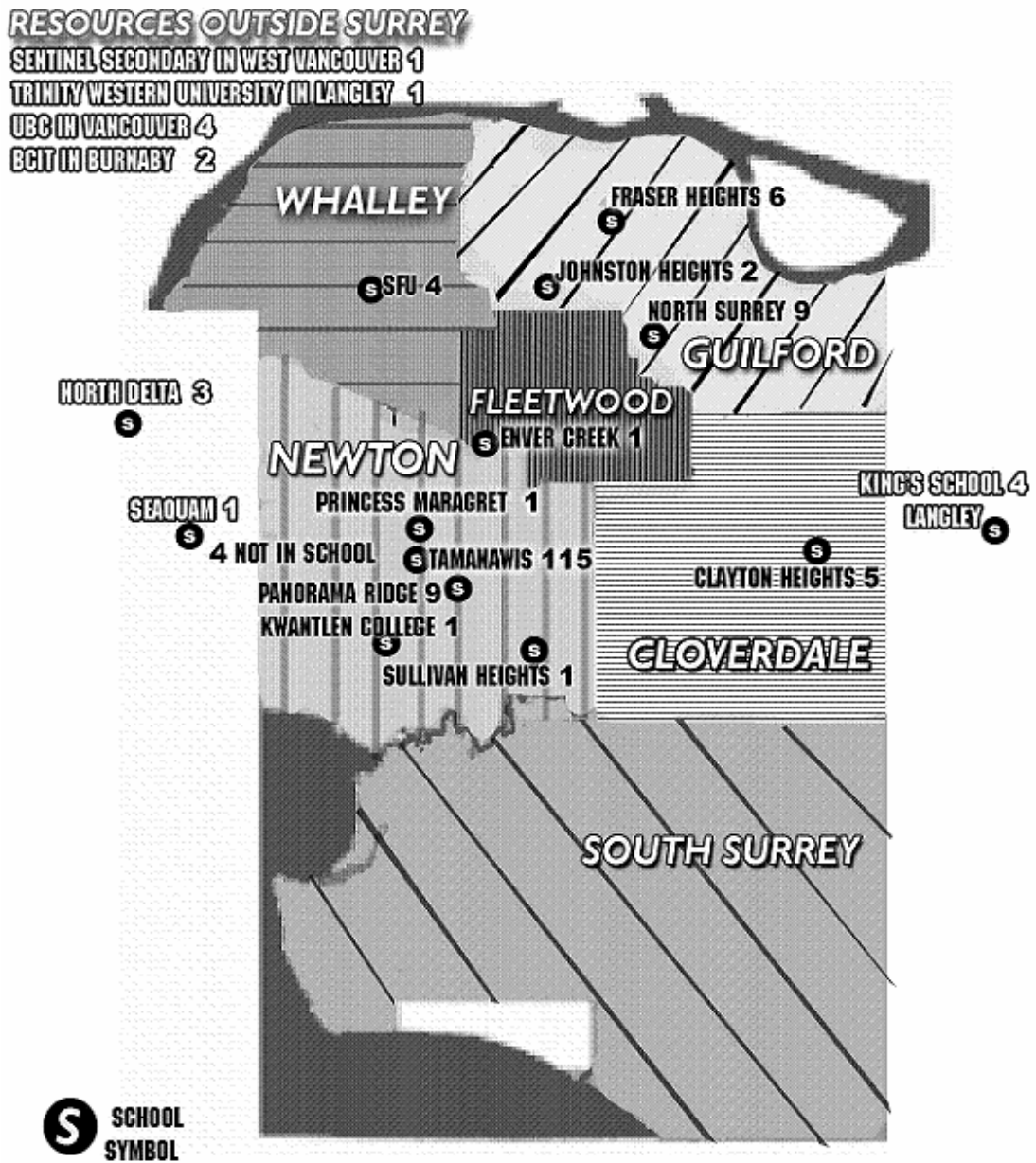


Figure 4.1 Youth Respondents in Participating Schools within Surrey

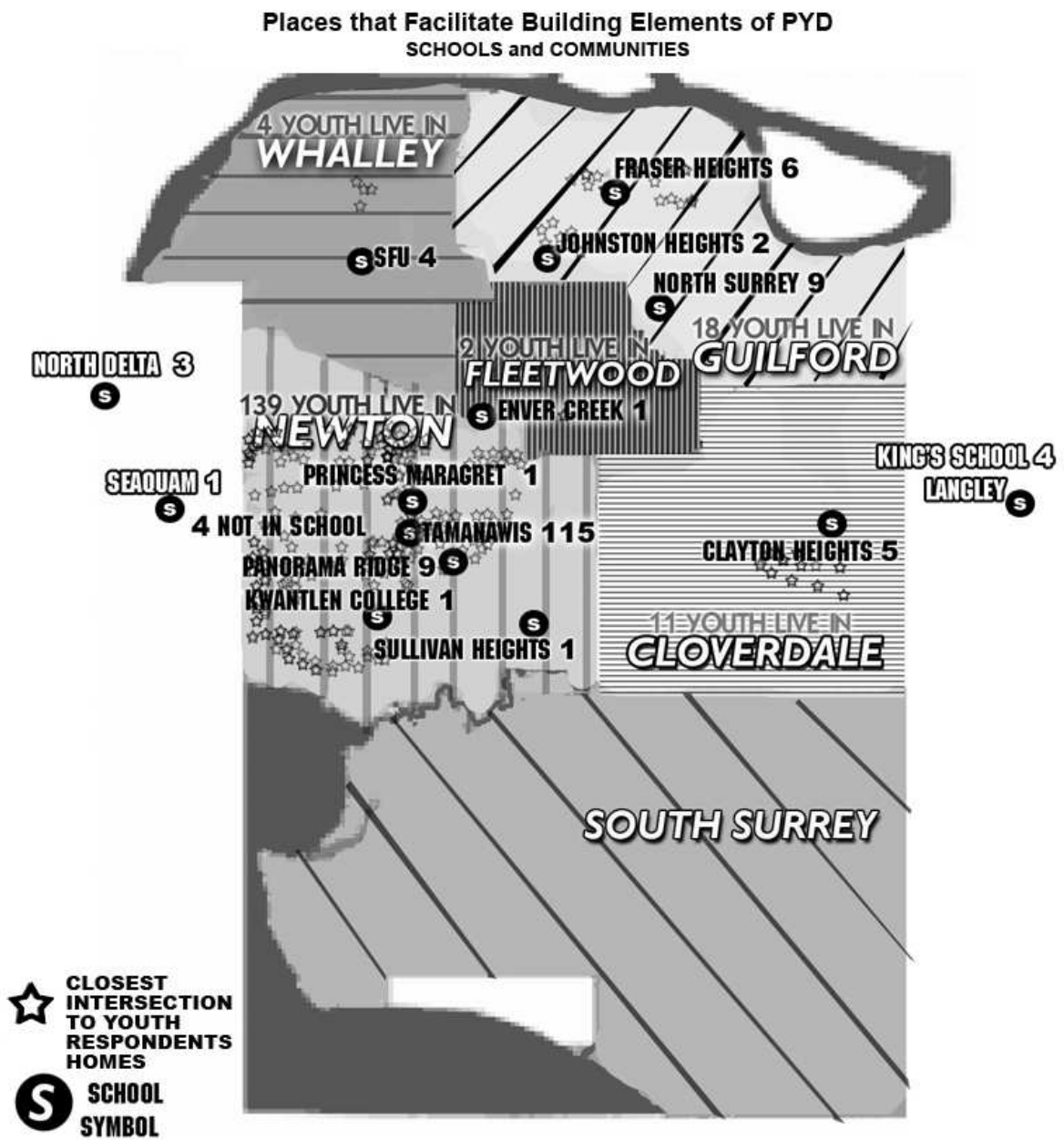


Figure 4.2 Closest Intersection to Youth Respondents' Homes in Relation to Schools

*Sameness and Difference*

Table 4.3 depicts the sameness and difference of the Youth Mappers demographic information compared to the demographic information generated from their key informant interview respondents. The demographics include age, gender, ethnicity/culture and school they were attending.

Table 4.3

Sameness and Difference of Demographics of Individual Youth Mappers Compared to their Interview Respondents

	Youth Mapper 1		
	Same	Different	
15 yrs. Gr. 10 # Interviews 9	6 = 67%	1 1-2 yr older = 11% 2-3-4 yr older = 22%	Total = 33%
Female	9 = 100%	0 = 0%	
Indo-Canadian	5 = 56%	1 Asian = 11% 3 Caucasian = 33%	Total = 44%
Tamanawis	7 = 77%	2 at UBC = 22%	
<hr/>			
	Youth Mapper 2		
	Same	Different	
16 yrs Gr. 10 # Interviews 10	9 = 90%	1 1-2 yr younger = 10%	
Male	9 = 90%	1 = 10%	
Jamaican	0%	5 = Chinese Korean or Malaysian = 50 % 2 = Caucasian = 20% 2 = Indo-Canadian = 20% 1 = Spanish Mexican = 10%	Total=100%
North Surrey	9 = 90%	1 Enver Creek = 10%	

Youth Mapper 3		
	Same	Different
16 yrs Gr. 10 # Interviews 9	5 = 56%	1 1-2 yrs younger = 11% 2 1-2 yrs older = 22% 1 3-4 yrs older = 11%    Total = 44%
Male	5 = 56%	4 = 44%
Jamaican		7 = Caucasian = 77% 2 = Unknown = 23%
The King's School	4 = 45%	3 at Clayton Heights = 33% 1 at Trinity University = 11% 1 at Sullivan Heights = 11%    Total = 55%
Youth Mapper 4		
	Same	Different
17 yrs Gr. 11 # Interviews 9	9 = 100%	0 = 0%
Female	4 = 45%	5 = 55%
Korean	6 = 66%	3 = 33%
Fraser Heights	6 = 66%	1 Sentinel Secondary = 11% 2 Johnston Heights = 22%    Total = 33%
Youth Mapper 5		
	Same	Different
17 yrs Gr. 11 # Interviews 10	6 = 60%	4 = 1 yr older 40%
Female	9 = 90%	1 = 10%
Caucasian	5 = 50%	5 = Indo Canadian = 50%
Tamanawis	9 = 90%	1 Seaquam Secondary = 10%
Youth Mapper 6		
	Same	Different
17 yrs Gr. 11 # Interviews 19	12 = 64%	2 1-2 yrs younger = 10% 1 1-2 yrs older = 5% 4 22+ yrs = 21%    Total = 36%
Male	10 = 54%	9 = 46%
Caucasian	17 = 89.4%	1 Chinese = 5.3% 1 Indo-Canadian = 5.3%    Total = 10.6%
Tamanawis	13 = 74%	

Youth Mapper 7			
	Same	Different	
17 yrs Gr. 11	12 = 75%	3 1-2 yrs younger = 18%	Total = 25%
# Interviews 16		1 1-2 yrs older = 7%	
Male	10 = 69%	6 = 31%	
Caucasian	14 = 87%	2 Indo-Canadian = 13%	
Tamanawis	15 = 94%		
Youth Mapper 8			
	Same	Different	
17 yrs Gr. 11	8 = 80%	1 1-2 yrs older = 10%	Total = 20%
# Interviews 10		1 3-4 yrs older = 10%	
Female	10 = 100%	0 = 0%	
Indo Canadian	10 = 100%	0 = 0%	
Panorama Ridge	8 = 80%	2 UBC = 20%	
Youth Mapper 9			
	Same	Different	
17 yrs Gr. 12	12 = 70%	2 1-2 yrs younger = 10%	Total = 30%
# Interviews 17		3 1-2 yrs older = 20%	
Female	12 = 70%	5 = 30%	
Aboriginal	Could not tell		
Tamanawis	13 = 80%	1 North Delta 5%	Total = 20%
		1 Kwantlen College 5%	
		2 BCIT 10%	
Youth Mapper 10			
	Same	Different	
18 yrs Gr. 12	3 = 37.5%	2 1-2 yrs younger = 25%	Total = 62%
#Interviews 8		1 3-4 yrs younger = 12.5%	
		2 1-2 yrs older = 25%	
Female	6 = 75%	2 = 25%	
Indo Canadian	3 = 38%	4 Caucasian = 50%	Total = 62%
		1 Spanish/Mexican 12%	
Tamanawis	4 = 50%	1 North Delta = 12.5%	Total = 50%
		1 Panorama Ridge = 12.5%	
		1 Clayton Heights = 12.5%	
		1 Princess Margaret = 12.5%	

*Sameness of Youth Mappers to Respondents*

Table 4.4 summarizes the percentage of similarities of Youth Mappers to respondents with respect to a variety of factors.

Table 4.4

Sameness of Youth Mappers to Respondents

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>% of Sameness</i>
Gender	100 90 56 45 90 69 64 100 70 75 = 76% average
Gender/Age	67 90 56 45 60 54 69 80 70 38 = 63% average
Age/Grade	60 90 56 100 60 75 54 80 70, 38 = 68% average
School	77 90 45 66 90 94 75 80 80 50 = 75% average
Ethnicity	55 66 50 94 87 100 38 = 70% average

*Same gender.*

A significant finding in data collection was the prevalence of Youth Mapper's selection of same gender respondents. Seventy-six percent of key informant interview respondents were the same gender as the Youth Mappers. Four out of ten Youth Mappers interviewed almost exclusively same gender youth (90-100%). Two Youth Mappers were fairly evenly distributed in numbers of females and males they interviewed. The one Youth Mapper who had less same gender interviews was a female math award recipient at a National and International level. Her respondents were slightly higher for males and over half of the participants she interviewed spoke of their affiliation to math study groups and clubs. One other Youth Mapper had 56% same gender, he attended private school and was one of the few Youth Mappers who interviewed a number of students from different schools. His affiliation with a cultural centre may also have exposed him to a variety of youth other than same gender from his own school, like so many other Youth Mappers.

*Same age and gender.*

Sixty-three percent of Youth Mappers interviewed respondents of the same age and gender as themselves. When examined individually it was much higher for two of the Youth Mappers (80%-90%) for same age and gender of respondents. For four of the Youth Mappers the majority of their interview respondents were the same age and gender (60%-70%) which may lead one to surmise youth find it slightly easier to participate in discourse with those of the same age and gender as themselves. Of the remaining four Youth Mappers who had more diverse age and gender interviews, their respondents' comments suggested these Youth Mappers were more connected to groups other than school, such as work, church, mosques, neighbours, and a cultural club.

*Same age and grade.*

In 68% of cases Youth Mappers selected key informant interview respondents in the same grade and age as themselves. Eighty-seven percent of key informant interview respondents fell in the age range of +1 or -1 year indicating that Youth Mappers were also comfortable interviewing youth in slightly lower and higher grades than themselves.

*Same school.*

The second most significant finding for similarity between the Youth Mappers and the key informant interview respondents involved the schools they were attending. Five of the ten Youth Mappers found the majority of their key informant interview respondents from within their own school (80-90%). Considering that the Youth Mappers were asked to conduct between ten and twelve interviews, securing eight or nine at the same school was likely due to the convenience and accessibility to youth respondents. Two Youth Mappers recruited half of their respondents from other schools and one sought out a third of their

respondents elsewhere. Two of these Youth Mappers were Youth Team Captains who were likely adhering to the suggestions by the investigator to select a diverse array of respondents.

*Same ethnicity/culture.*

Same ethnicity was difficult to track for three of the Youth Mappers who included two Jamaican males, both in Grade 10, and one Aboriginal female in Grade 12. Estimations were made based on the first and last names of the key informant interview respondents and Jamaican and Aboriginal ethnicity was difficult to ascertain by names alone. Thus Jamaican and Aboriginal ethnicity/culture was omitted from the results. However, these three Youth Mappers interviewed a diverse group of respondents and where ethnicity/culture could be predicted by names, these data were included. Of the remaining seven Youth Mappers, it was estimated that 70% of the key informant interview respondents held the same ethnicity as the Youth Mapper interviewing them. Three of these seven Youth Mappers interviewed almost exclusively same ethnicity participants; two were Caucasian males whose interviewees included 94% and 87% Caucasians, and one was an Indo-Canadian female who interviewed 100% females from her own culture. This created a high average overall of same ethnicity which does not truly represent the whole picture. In fact, six of the Youth Mappers interviewed a diverse group of youth in terms of ethnicity/cultural backgrounds, mostly from Indo-Canadian, Caucasian, Asian, and Spanish/Mexican heritage.

Surrey is well known to have social issues related to racial tensions. It is one of the fastest growing and culturally diverse regions in British Columbia. Certainly it is a topic which was informally discussed by some of the Youth Mappers but was a sensitive issue to address openly. Within the findings of all three focus group sessions statements were made regarding “youth needing to develop more tolerance toward other cultures and values.” In

addition, young people expressed the desire for more opportunities for larger and more diverse groups to be able to “hang out” together in safe settings.

Table 4.5 provides the ratios and percentages of demographics for all three groups involved in the study, namely, the Youth Mappers, the key informant interview respondents and the focus group respondents. The information tabulated below indicates that for all groups 70-80% of respondents were aged 16 or 17 years of age. More than 90% of respondents were in grades 10, 11 or 12. Gender within the Youth Mappers and key informant interview respondents was 60-64% female, whereas the ratio of females in the focus group sessions varied between 45-70%. Ethnicity within all three groups was similar although this was decided through analysis of names and physical features in video-tapes. By far the majority of respondents were from Tamanawis school in the community of Newton, ranging from 42.3%, 50% and 100%, respectively for the Youth Mappers, the key informant interview respondents and the focus group respondents.

Youth Mappers successfully recruited 174 respondents to participate in the data collection over a period of two months. While the logistics of carrying out the CYM project evolved over time, there were other important aspects involved in implementing the study. Understanding the effectiveness of the CYM training and of the variety of communication strategies contributed to assessing the feasibility of conducting a Collaborative Action Research study with youth.

Table 4.5

Ratio and Percent of Demographics for the Youth Mappers, Key Informant Interview  
Respondents and Focus Group Respondents

Characteristic of Youth Mappers	Key Informant Interviews = 118	Focus Group Sessions = 56
	<u>Age</u>	
15 yrs = 1 10%	3 14 yrs 2.7%	Focus Group Session I
16 yrs = 4 40%	3 15 yrs 2.7%	3 15 yrs 12.4%
17 yrs = 4 40%	55 16 yrs 48.2%	8 16 yrs 31.6%
18 yrs = 1 10%	32 17 yrs 21.5%	10 17 yrs 37.4%
Total = 10 100%	14 18 yrs 13.9%	5 18 yrs 18.6%
	4 19 yrs 3.9%	26 Total 100%
	2 20 yrs 1.9%	
	1 21 yrs 0.9%	Focus Group Session II
	4 22+ yrs 3.9%	1 15 yrs 5.1%
	Total = 118 100.0%	6 16 yrs 32.5%
		8 17 yrs 40.3%
		2 18 yrs 12.1%
		17 Total 100%
		Focus Group Session III
		4 16 yrs 31.5%
		5 17 yrs 37.0%
		4 18 yrs 31.5%
		13 Total 100%
	<u>Grade</u>	
1 Gr 9 10%	3 Gr 9 2.8%	Focus Group Session I
2 Gr 10 20%	18 Gr 10 13.6%	1 Gr 9 0.4%
5 Gr 11 50%	68 Gr 11 54.9%	6 Gr 10s 21.6%
2 Gr 12 20%	24 Gr 12 21.5%	14 Gr 11 50.4%
10 Total 100%	7 University/College 5.7%	5 Gr 12 17.6%
	4 22+ Not in school 2.8%	26 Total 100%
	118 Total 100%	
		Focus Group Session II
		1 Gr 9 5.5%
		5 Gr 10s 29.5%
		6 Gr 11 35.5%
		5 Gr 12 29.5%
		17 Total 100%
		Focus Group Session III
		2 Gr 10s 15.6%
		7 Gr 11 53.0%
		4 Gr 12 31.4%
		13 Total 100%

Characteristic of Youth Mappers	Key Informant Interviews = 118	Focus Group Sessions = 56
<b>Gender</b>		
Female = 6 60%	Female = 75/118 64%	Focus Group Session I Female = 12/26 45%
Male = 4 40%	Male = 43/118 36%	Male = 14/26 55%
<b>Culture</b>		
Jamaican 2 20%	Aboriginal	<i>Focus Group Session I, II &amp; III</i>
Indo-Canadian 3 30%	Jamaican	Aboriginal
Caucasian 4 30%	Indo-Canadian	Indo-Canadian
Korean 1 10%	Caucasian	Caucasian
Total 10 100%	Korean	Asian
<b>Schools</b>		
Fraser Heights 1 10%	BCIT 2 1.9%	Focus Group Session I
North Surrey 1 10%	Clayton Heights 5 4.9%	Tamanawis Leadership Class
Panorama Ridge 1 10%	Enver Creek 1 0.9%	
Tamanawis 5 50%	Fraser Heights 6 6.6%	Focus Group Session II
The King's School 1 10%	Johnston Heights 2 1.9%	Tamanawis
Total 10 100%	Kwantlen College 1 0.9%	
	North Delta 3 2.9%	Focus Group Session III
	North Surrey 9 8.8%	Tamanawis
	Not in School 4 3.9%	
	Panorama Ridge 9 8.8%	
	Princess Margaret 1 0.9%	
	Seaquam Secondary 1 0.9%	
	Sentinel Secondary 1 0.9%	
	SFU 4 3.9%	
	Sullivan Heights 1 0.9%	
	Tamanawis 59 42.3%	
	The King's School 4 3.9%	
	Trinity University 1 0.9%	
	UBC 4 3.9%	
	Total = 118 100%	

### *Sustaining Youth Commitment*

Three distinct themes emerged from analysis of the data that contributed to sustaining youth co-researchers' (Youth Team Captains and Youth Mappers) commitment to this research project. These included: (a) Creating a youth-centred atmosphere, including six sub-themes or categories coded as providing adequate time, youth-led action, adults need strong facilitation experience before working with youth, the importance of team-building, sense of meaningful contribution, and rewards and recognition); (b) ensuring challenging activities; and, (c) modeling *elements* that facilitate PYD.

#### *Theme #1 - Creating a Youth-Centred Atmosphere*

##### *Category # 1- providing adequate time.*

Time was a crucial component for creating a positive atmosphere for youth. Adequate time for travel, training, discussion, reflection, clarification, preparation, field work, as well as time to build supportive relationships between youth and adult co-researchers, based on mutual respect and trust was the most intangible yet valuable of resources. One Youth Mapper commented: "There was no way I wanted to stand in front of a class until we'd practised exactly what we were going to do...scary. Once we'd gone through the ideas and role-played being in the classroom and thought how the kids would react then I felt ready".

The following is an example of the investigator and Surrey CYD coordinator (adult co-researchers) taking time to clarify how Youth Mappers were processing information.

*Investigator:* "I sense a bit of tension between Youth Team Captain #1 and #3, I'm going to phone and see what's happening there."

*Surrey CYD Coordinator:* "I felt it too, there's definitely an issue. Did you notice how Youth Team Captain #1 has stepped right back and isn't offering his/her opinion now?"

*Investigator:* “Yeah...I’ll phone Youth Team Captain #1 first. Would you have time to phone Youth Team Captain #3 and then we could talk together to come up with a plan to help them work through this?”

*Surrey CYD Coordinator:* “Yes, we need to do this tonight and if we phone them right now, it’s not too late yet. I think if we say we didn’t record Youth Team Captain #1’s idea and s/he should email this to the group so we can all reflect on it till tomorrow. Then I’ll talk to Youth Team Captain #3 about encouraging others to say their ideas even if they are quiet, try to draw it out by being open.”

*Investigator:* “Ok, I’ll talk to you in about half an hour.”

This example is one of many where adequate time was needed to deal with issues in a timely fashion before youth felt alienated and discouraged from the process.

*Category #2 - youth-led action.*

Youth-led action was another aspect of creating a youth-centered atmosphere, i.e., ensuring that the individual and collective youth voice was heard accurately and youth determined the direction of the project. One Youth Team Captain commented:

At first we thought the adults would be telling us what to do and didn’t feel comfortable saying our opinions. Pretty soon we were able to tell them what the youth would like better and how the sessions should be run, and they listened and things were done the way we wanted, or they would ask us questions to help us figure out an even better way.

To support the youth-centered atmosphere, the three Youth Team Captains were taught prior to training, to facilitate the training process as much as possible. This train-the-trainer approach provided opportunities for the Youth Team Captains to take an active role in

leadership and mentoring of the Youth Mappers. The guest adult presenters would work under the direction of the Youth Team Captains to adapt materials and become familiar with the training agenda.

The changes that the youth co-researchers made to the overall design of the study and to the training helped keep everyone engaged throughout the process. For example, One Youth Team Captain videotaped the other two Youth Team Captains' practicing their interview skills on a volunteer Youth Mapper. The rest of the Youth Mappers then arrived to watch this practice interview session and witnessed some authentic nervousness and mistakes. The openness and vulnerability of this first attempt created an environment where everyone was willing to commit to practice and pilot their data collection interviews.

The Youth Team Captains were instrumental in providing a youth-centered atmosphere around training. The following phone conversation between Youth Team Captain #2 and the investigator indicates the supportive role Youth Team Captains played.

*Youth Team Captain #2:* "One of my Youth Mapper's has not done any interviews yet and I'm so frustrated I don't know what to do to help her/him because s/he's at another school."

*Investigator:* "Did s/he say why s/he's having trouble?"

*Youth Team Captain #2:* "Yeah, people don't seem interested, maybe if I took over some water bottles, (Refer to Appendix J – Surrey Community Youth Mapping Logo, p. 361) my dad could drive me. S/he would have something to give out. I can talk to the principal and see whether there's a way we can make an announcement or poster or something."

*Investigator:* "Yeah that would help her/him have some support because s/he's all alone in that school."

*Category #3 - adults need strong facilitation experience before working with youth.*

The investigator and Surrey CYD coordinator viewed their roles as coaches/anchors and were able to create a healthy competitive spirit among the Youth Mappers. The youth

co-researchers appreciated this strong and stable support as well as the team-building. The following quotes indicate the fun, competitive atmosphere that developed to see who could conduct the most interviews.

*Youth Mapper #8:* “We want to be the best team and get the most data!”

*Youth Mapper #10:* “I don’t want to let my team down.”

*Youth Mapper #7:* “I got seventeen interviews how many did you get?”

*Youth Mapper #3:* “I did nine.”

*Youth Mapper #7:* “Ha! I beat you, it took forever to transcribe those notes, ugh!! How many did (anonymous) get?”

*Youth Mapper #3:* “S/he got a lot, eighteen, I think.”

*Youth Mapper #7:* We might have done the most, I bet we did ...ALRIGHT (high fives)!”

The adult co-researchers need to have a similar philosophical approach in working with youth. The investigator and Surrey CYD coordinator have a long history of working together in the area of health promotion, i.e., Provincial Healthy Schools Initiative and Community Youth Development Initiatives. As a result, they knew each other’s facilitation styles were complimentary and effective.

The attitudes of the adult co-researchers were very upbeat, always complimentary and encouraging, eliciting strong youth engagement. Conversations were focused on abilities and providing an empowering environment with a look to future possibilities.

*Category #4 - the importance of team-building.*

Youth co-researchers had numerous opportunities for team building, i.e., design team meetings, reflection/action cycle meetings, training sessions, fund-raising events, and team celebrations. By the end of the training, Youth Mappers reported a sense of belonging and

connectedness to the research team. In a written training evaluation Youth Mapper #5 commented, “I’ve loved working with everybody, both the other youth and the adults”. They also developed their decision-making and consensus building skills. It was evident from videotapes of the training sessions that more reserved and introverted Youth Mappers became more comfortable in speaking out within group discussions. Team-building also enabled the Youth Mappers to effectively participate in group events. At the Cloverdale rodeo the Youth Mappers put on a pancake breakfast to fund raise for the research project, and comments showed how positive they felt.

*Youth Mapper #7:* “I can’t believe I actually got up at 5:30am today, I don’t even feel tired.”

*Youth Mapper #8:* “We were like a well-oiled machine out there; they’ve even asked us to come back.”

*Youth Mapper #10:* “I know, the Lions Club members commented on how well we worked as a team, they said we can come and do other things if we want.”

*Category #5 - sense of meaningful contribution.*

The research project began with the idea of involving a group of youth and adult partners in the overall design. The initial design meetings used a simple two page explanation of the project and its relationship to the Surrey Community. Once community adult partners such as school district staff and school administration had confirmed the community boundary areas and agreed to conduct the research project within schools, they were, for the most part, content to trust the judgment of the youth regarding the design of the research project, and wanted to honor and respect youth voice. Field notes revealed that the assistant superintendent of the Surrey school district stated:

I'm excited by how well this fits in with our community schools project that has just started. And to see these young people step up to the plate and lead a community project is great. We have got to recognize the positive things youth are doing and support them in doing it. Just tell me what you need and we can make it happen. Do you have contacts at schools already, I know of some that would definitely be interested.

This unconditional support from the assistant superintendant gave Youth Mappers the credibility and motivation they needed. The following quote was made by Youth Mapper #4:

I can't believe how excited they (the assistant superintendent and school board staff) were about us doing the project. They think us asking other youth about what they do, where they go ...is going to make a difference in the community. That's so cool, that they think we'll get something that everyone wants to know and we'll be able to help youth in the community.

It should be noted that the timing was good for this type of research project because of the introduction of community schools within the Surrey School District.

*Category #6 - rewards and recognition.*

The Youth Mappers were paid an honorarium for their involvement in the project which compensated the amount they would have made in a part-time job. The investigator and Surrey CYD coordinator organized influential meetings and attendance at conferences for Youth Mappers to present the project, seek funding, and speak to community decision-makers. The Youth Mappers were told by the adult co-researchers that being involved in community development is impressive on their resumes. At every opportunity rewards and

recognition were built into the training. Numerous incentives were used, i.e., pens, clothing, team equipment, food, meetings held at restaurants and staying at hotels while attending conferences. Rewards and recognition provided the positive reinforcement that helped develop a bond within the research team (both adults and youth). For example, the Surrey CYD coordinator stated that “you might very well find yourselves presenting your finding in other parts of the province and Canada.” The youth found this an exciting possibility. Also, the positive feedback from parents, peers, community organizations, along with the notoriety that built around the importance of the project was instrumental in building Youth Mappers’ self-esteem, confidence and commitment. Youth Mapper #5 stated:

I think every student should be involved in some sort of thing. Something outside of school that helps their community. Cause not only does it make you feel good about yourself, but it helps you a lot down the road, and it makes people give you a lot of respect.

#### *Theme #2 - Exposure to Challenging and Engaging Activities*

The investigator and Surrey CYD coordinator were purposefully intentional about the importance of engaging the Youth Mappers for action, fostering effective youth-adult partnerships, providing opportunities for leadership, and engaging youth as evaluators in participatory research. In addition they provided the opportunity for the Youth Mappers to build research and technology skills, exposing them to challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences throughout the project. Guest speakers presented university level materials which were adapted for youth to ensure concepts were covered without overloading. The Youth Team Captains were instrumental in designing the research training to maximize youth co-researchers uptake of knowledge by interspersing active learning with

hands-on use of the technology and practicing research skills with the academic rigours of theory. This created a recipe whereby the Youth Mappers received the ingredients to build skills and help them apply these skills to affect their own positive development and social change. Comments from Youth Mappers during concluding interviews reflect their perceptions.

*Youth Mapper #5:* “I’m going to be able to take every single thing I’ve learned and use it.”

*Youth Mapper #10:* “I was a confident leader before the project but my communication and interpersonal skills have improved so much from having to work together and reach consensus.”

*Youth Mapper #7:* “I learned a lot about myself and know how to work better as a team instead of dictating things to be done my way.”

*Youth Mapper #8:* “My confidence has improved so much.”

*Youth Mapper #6:* “I found out I love to lead things, I never knew that until the Focus Group sessions.”

*Youth Mapper #2:* “I really love the technology; I think I want to keep on doing that with my life, as a career maybe.”

The continuation of the knowledge transfer portion of this project gives the Youth Mappers opportunities to be involved in the follow-through to communicate their findings. There is already interest within Surrey to continue to build the maps showing available resources that provide *elements* of positive youth development as well as continue to collect data through the state of the art website that is currently under construction.

*Theme # 3 - Modeling Elements that Facilitate PYD*

Six *elements* that facilitate PYD were developed by the Youth Mappers based on the literature they reviewed. First they examined the Five C's which consisted of: cognitive and behavioural competence, confidence, positive social connections, character, and caring and compassion (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner, et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Next they considered Personal and Social Assets that Facilitate PYD including physical health and emotional development, and social development. Thirdly, they reviewed an extensive list of personal and social assets called the Forty Developmental Assets developed by the Search Institute (Benson, 1997). Finally, the Youth Mappers reviewed the Community Youth Development (CYD) Evaluation Framework (Miller et al., 2006), defining principles and *elements* of PYD. From this literature the Youth Mappers came to consensus on the following six key *elements* that would facilitate PYD within their community. They developed indicators for each key element to assist youth respondents in identifying people, places and activities where these *elements* exist (Refer to Appendix A: Elements that Assist Positive Youth Development, p. 322). These six key *elements* included:

1. Meaningful Youth Participation
2. Sense of Belonging
3. Emotional and Physical Safety
4. Supportive Relationships
5. Competencies and Skills
6. Leadership

In addition to being an essential data collection tool used in key informant interviews and focus group sessions, this tool was the lens through which the co-researchers viewed the whole research process, particularly as adults working with youth. A number of Youth Mappers commented on the lasting effect this tool has had on them.

*Youth Mapper #8*: “We look at everything we do through the *elements* now and can figure out what’s missing”.

*Youth Mapper #12*: “I look at other youth differently, when I see someone into drugs or something I try to figure out which *elements* they need in their life that they don’t have, whereas I used to dismiss them.”

To gauge how well the research project supported the element of Meaningful Youth Participation for our youth co-researchers, Hart’s Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992, p. 43) assisted in monitoring levels of participation throughout the project (i.e. keeping within levels 6, 7 and 8). These top three levels were: (a) “8-Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults” - from the on-set of the project the plan was to have the Youth Mappers inform the process and share the decision-making between the youth and adult co-researchers. This project empowered these young people while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults; (b) “7-Youth-initiated and directed” - during the key informant interviews and focus group sessions the Youth Mappers initiated and directed the process and the adult co-researchers were involved in a supportive role; and, (c) “6-Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth” - the vision of the project based on previous research was initiated by the adult investigator and Surrey CYD coordinator but the decision-making was shared with the young people.

As Youth Mappers became more familiar with applying the key *elements* their awareness related to the community changed, and they became defensive about criticism toward youth and the community.

*Youth Mapper #7*: “Surrey has such a bad reputation but we know there are many good things going on here.”

*Youth Mapper #10*: “We’re always told it’s not possible and I’m tired of it always being about teenagers causing problems, like they crash cars and create trouble but those are the only teenagers people hear about.”

*Youth Mapper #5*: “I now automatically go through in my head the *elements* when I get involved in something whether it is student leadership or community initiatives with adults.”

#### *Effectiveness of Training Youth Mappers’ as Co-Researchers*

The purpose of the training (Refer to Appendix D – Outline and Objectives for CYM Training, p. 337) was to engage Youth Mappers from the onset of the project as co-researchers to: (a) Develop an understanding in the use of a CAR approach (i.e., research team reflection/action cycle meetings), (b) understand the concept of positive youth development, (c) select and develop research methods, (d) identify key *elements* that facilitate PYD, (e) build common language and consensus around terminology, (f) develop competencies in data collection and use of technologies, (g) build strategies around recruitment of respondents, and (h) build a sense of team amongst Youth Mappers. All co-researchers wanted to ensure that each aspect of the training mirrored the *elements* that facilitate PYD.

### *Establishing a PYD Training Environment*

#### *Setting.*

The setting was in a large home on the edge of Surrey which was set-up to accommodate 10-15 people in a well-lit, well-ventilated, comfortably furnished basement. Transportation to and from training sessions took between 15-25 minutes one way and in cases where it was an issue, the adult researchers were able to drive the youth. Weekends proved best for the youth, and the paid incentives were commensurate with other part-time work, so they were not 'out of pocket' by being involved in the research study. The environment was organized so everyone could see each other and emotional and physical safety was considered at all times. Responses were always encouraged and team-building activities were planned for each session, with a celebration and award ceremony at the final session. These small gestures were affirming for the individuals within the group. The amount of interest demonstrated by the youth and laughter during each session indicated their level of comfort. Youth Mappers had access to juice, water, and snacks at anytime during the sessions and breakfast and lunch meals were well-organized. Also, the activities were interspersed with "prize" items to create fun incentives, i.e., novelty mugs and pens. A number of Youth Mappers expressed a need for a change of venue during the day and three of the four day training sessions involved outdoor activities related to practicing digital photography and GPS reading. Unfortunately, the fourth session had to be indoors because of poor weather and, despite a couple of "games" the youth felt a bit "cooped-up" and tired by the end of the session.

*Timing of the training sessions.*

The timing of the training sessions and indeed, the whole study, was built around key factors affecting school timetables. This proved very successful with the youth able to meet most expectations. Three of the four training sessions were planned and held on consecutive weekends in early March to April, at a time when grade 10-12 youth are not “snowed down” with “Provincial Exams” and other school commitments. The last training session was a collective decision resulting from a reflection/action cycle meeting where the Youth Mappers asked for additional training time in preparation for facilitating focus group sessions. The weekly timing of the first three training sessions enabled prompt follow-through of next steps (shaped from reflection/action cycle meetings), where reinforcement and retention of information were optimal. Weekends proved to be the best time for the youth to be available for 6-8 hours at a time, and as stated previously, the monetary compensation freed the Youth Mappers from having to get another part-time job. The whole study adhered to firm time-lines which were built around the school year. The recruitment of Youth Mappers happened in mid-February, after initial semester start-up was over. Training sessions were conducted prior to end of term tests and the whole study wrapped-up prior to end of year provincial exams. The concluding Youth Mappers’ interviews and project celebration event was carried out right after school was out for the year.

*Incentives for motivation to stay with the study.*

For most of the Youth Mappers, this was their only job with a commitment of approximately 8 hours a week over three months. The monetary incentives matched or bettered the amount youth would receive at any other typical part-time job and this likely affected the excellent retention rate of Youth Mappers (90.9%). Only one of eleven Youth Mapper’s dropped out of the study. This Youth Mapper fully appreciated the training but felt

it better to withdraw from the study because of affiliation and responsibilities within another organization's project.

Other incentives were decided by Youth Team Captains and sometimes occurred spontaneously as the sessions were in progress. The Youth Team Captains were aware of the importance of making the learning fun and creatively adapted topics into contests i.e., discovering *elements* that facilitate PYD became "Digging for Gold" (Refer to Appendix H – Digging for Gold Activity Sheet, p. 358), where each new idea earned individuals chocolate coins. Lists of PPA (people, places and activities) earned other snacks such as popsicles, twizzlers, and other candy. Interestingly, the youth asked for healthier food after the first session, and morning muffins, cinnamon buns and pop were replaced with veggie trays, fruit, and water. The typical burgers and pizza were a big hit for lunch.

*Accommodating a variety of learning styles.*

The Youth Mappers required a variety of learning styles, therefore content was presented orally, visually and wherever possible, hands-on kinetically. Logical, sequential, as well as creative types of learning styles were accommodated through the variety of activities, for example, interspersing high level conceptual information with logo design planning and digital picture-taking techniques. The variety of personality types included high achievers, organizers, helpers, peacemakers and people with musical, creative, logical and scientific interests. Through video analysis it appeared as if three of the Youth Mappers had difficulty concentrating for longer periods of time. Hands-on practice using digital and video cameras, GPS and laptop computers displaying Google Earth provided alternate activities integral to the study. The Youth Team Captains learnt to break the monotony of the sessions by "switching it up" by interjecting short games that provided opportunities for

Youth Mappers to get up and move and have fun. The Youth Mappers appreciated the preparation that went into the training sessions and, although a few of the them were unsure of what the study was about after session two, most were clear by the time they performed the pilot key informant interviews. This suggests that the sequential order and rate of information was appropriate, which was confirmed with written training evaluations (Refer to Appendix E – CYM Written Training Evaluation, p. 342) and concluding interview (Refer to Appendix I – Concluding Youth Mappers Interview Questions, p. 359).

*Providing training resources.*

All materials were available during training as needed, with each Youth Mapper receiving a training kit on their first day. Additional information was added each training session, allowing the Youth Team Captains to discuss the content with adult presenters prior to the Session. This approach prevented youth from becoming overwhelmed with the dense university content and provided them with the opportunity to be involved in decisions around adapting the information for better comprehension. For example, the Youth Team Captains and investigator re-wrote the pertinent information and limited handouts to 5-10 pages a session. The screening of information was important because of the wide range of topics covered and level of research skills required for data collection. Even with the adaptations to the materials, the Youth Team Captains felt frustrated at times because they grasped the information easily, yet some of their team members had difficulty understanding the concepts. Whether this was due to the project structure where more time was spent with Youth Team Captains preparing them to teach others, or the fact that as leaders they tended to grasp things more easily, is unclear. The Youth Team Captains received double the learning opportunity because they were trained by adults and then taught the concepts to their

team members, which helped reinforce the information. Most of the youth excelled within the four session time-frame (6-7 hours per session either on a Saturday, Sunday or both, with up to an hour after the session for a reflection/action cycle meeting, and to hangout, unwind, and get to know each other better). During the concluding Youth Mappers interviews, several Mappers suggested that they would have liked more time for additional training and practice.

Paying youth was helpful in retention, as gleaned from statements made during the training. The written evaluations also indicated the Mappers appreciated the team kits (GPS, digital cameras, recorders, interview materials and recruitment resources) along with providing each Youth Mapper with two shirts clearly identifying them with the project. Youth Team Captains became an integral part of the study, with strong leadership skills and personal empowerment developing over time, as found within investigator's field notes, training evaluations, and Youth Mappers concluding interviews. This is discussed further in the summary.

### *Training Sessions*

The concepts of community and *elements* that facilitate positive youth development (PYD) were introduced early on, so that Youth Mappers could start learning about the location and source of their peers' resources through people, places, and activities. The youth also explored their own and others' definitions of those concepts and "mapped" their resources on a large map of the City. The intention of the final product was to use digital photography of places, GPS technology to find locations, and Google Earth to map places and activities. These concepts were introduced by an expert in photography and another in Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Findings from the evaluation of training session one (Refer to Appendix E – CYM Written Training Evaluation, p. 342) revealed that two out of the ten Youth Mappers suggested the need to ask more questions to ascertain comprehension levels of subject areas. Another Youth Mapper said they needed more time to familiarize themselves with interview techniques. One Youth Mapper wanted a longer lunch and another wanted less down time. When Youth Mappers were asked what they enjoyed the most, four cited the GPS and other technology, six enjoyed working with others and in teams, while others preferred hands-on field work practicing their interview techniques and using equipment. When asked about their confidence level in explaining *elements* that facilitate PYD (one being minimal and five maximum) the average confidence level was 3.6. The aim was to have a 4.5 level of confidence so the investigator and Youth Team Captains planned a review at the following session. Findings from training evaluations after session two met this expectation with an average of 4.6 level of confidence. Youth Mapper confidence level in being able to describe their role in the study averaged 4.5 in Session 2. Four Youth Mappers felt partially confident in their ability to find resources that build *elements* that facilitate PYD in their school community related to people, places and activities. The average rating of the training and instruction team was 4.5 and comments were very positive.

The Youth Mappers' initial descriptions of community were documented through the training videotape and flipcharts and compared with later descriptions (same sources plus written evaluations) to determine whether a broader, more inclusive definition of community emerged. The "mapping" activity in sessions one and two also provided an opportunity for the participants to expand upon their descriptions of community.

In addition to questions of confidence around explaining *elements* that facilitate PYD and their role as a Youth Mapper, written training evaluations for training sessions three and four asked additional questions pertaining to their research competencies, i.e. data collection methods, professional conduct, and use of technology. A number of the Youth Mappers commented on their increased comfort and confidence levels in recruiting interview respondents. Youth Mappers became more at ease explaining the purpose of the study, the short time-commitment required, ensured anonymity, and the contribution youth respondents were providing. It is difficult to determine whether youth became more comfortable introducing themselves to strangers than they had been at the beginning of their data collection. As noted earlier, the Youth Mappers tended to select key informant interview respondents similar in age, grade and gender to themselves which suggests some lack of comfort approaching strangers. A more diverse range of respondents was elicited from Youth Mappers who had previous leadership experiences prior to coming into the CYM project.

In concluding Youth Mappers' interviews (Refer to Appendix I – Concluding Youth Mappers' Interview Questions, p. 359), Youth Mappers were asked to describe in their own words what they thought the CYM project was about. More than three-quarters (77%) stated they were helping youth within their community, 47% mentioned the positive youth development focus of the project, and 42% commented on the importance of finding safe places for youth to go.

### *Selecting Data Collection Methods*

A variety of data collection methods along with the types of technology available were presented to the Youth Mappers. Results from data collected through videotaping and investigator's field notes of training session two revealed that Youth Mappers were able to describe the purpose of each research method as indicated through dialogue about pros and cons of each method. Their feedback on each method during Session Two included:

#### *Journaling:*

- *Pros* - "you can write privately and express own opinions"
- *Cons* - "takes a lot of time to write and we do so much writing in school, need more interaction to talk about what things meant to us individually so we can share."

#### *Focus Group Sessions:*

- *Pros* - "get people excited and talking about stuff in their community", "different way of talking about what they do which teenagers talk about anyway", "some people can talk while others listen, gives them a choice of how to participate", "get to learn about what's going on in the community more"
- *Cons* - "intimidating to be in front of a lot of people", "hard to get everyone organized and on track", "there are a lot of answers to keep track of," "students won't want to talk about confidential things", "difficult to get interest in meeting"

#### *Key Informant Interviews:*

- *Pros* - “get to use technology like a reporter”, “interacting about something that affects us all”, “fun”, “can chat one-on-one, way more personal”, “can make good questions”, “can ask other questions if you want to get more information”,
- *Cons* - “takes a lot of time” “hard to set-up so you can get all the info they say”, “kids might not want to say much”, “invades their privacy”

*Surveys:*

- *Pros* - “fast way of getting responses”, “easy to hand-out”, “anonymous so you can write without anyone knowing it’s you”
- *Cons* - “get too many surveys in school”, “get enough reading in school and surveys are hard to figure out” “vague and impersonal”, “can’t know if they’ll give details, they might skip writing much”, “privacy issue”

*GPS/GIS:*

- *Pros* - “cool new technology” “for some people it’s easy if they like tech stuff” “it is like orienteering, you have to search out something, like a game”, “lots of fun”, “we can use it to post our findings on Google Earth maps”, “it’ll appeal to lots of youth”
- *Cons* - “overcoming techno-phobia as some people are intimidated by equipment,” “complex, have to memorize a number of steps to get it,” “need to make sure it’s charged and ready to go” “have to be patient and wait till satellites line up to read it”

*Digital Cameras:*

- *Pros* - “great to get goofy fun shots”, “a picture tells a thousand words,” “really need photos on the web to show places so it is really good to have cameras,” “the new cameras are so easy to use”, “pictures will look really good on our website”
- *Cons* - “none really, everybody knows how to point and shoot” “have to make sure you have charged batteries,” “some people are camera shy”

Youth Mappers were able to come to a consensus by the end of the second training session that the preferred methods to use for data collection were key informant interviews and focus groups along with using GPS/GIS technology and digital pictures. The discussion that occurred around the choice of the methods also revealed that the Youth Mappers understood the need for methods that would complement each other. They chose key informant interviews as the primary step for learning about the location and source of resources, and decided on conducting focus group sessions to confirm and support findings of interviews. Use of GPS/GIS was unanimously endorsed among the Youth Mappers perhaps due to the excellent training they had received where each group had to locate a hidden object and then plot their lunch location into the GPS. The hands-on exercise was motivational and the youth could see the value of this for use with a website.

By the end of the fourth training session, Youth Mappers’ written training evaluations indicated that confidence in their abilities averaged between 4.5 and 4.8 for all the items (one being minimal and five maximum). Only one Youth Mapper rated them self 3.0 for explaining assets. Constructive criticism for enhancing the training sessions included giving more respect when people were speaking, providing more energizers and field work/practice. Three Youth Mappers mentioned that a better process was needed for decision-making

around choice of clothing and logo (used to identify Mappers and project) to reduce the heated discussions that occurred. Three Youth Mappers said nothing was needed to improve the sessions. Favourite aspects included role playing, cooperation, hands-on, fieldwork, outside activities, using GPS/GIS technology, working with the adult researchers, and developing friendships and connections.

#### *Building a Cohesive Research Team*

Attendance at the training sessions was excellent with all of the Youth Mappers present for all four sessions except for one Mapper who missed session three due to an unavoidable trip away from the city for sports. Most of the Youth Mappers enjoyed learning from each other and volunteered their ideas routinely. A number of Youth Mappers commented on enjoying the dynamics of the group. When asked what did you like most? Two said “working with others,” one mentioned “the wonderful atmosphere and the adult researcher’s encouragement,” one said “working outside as a team,” and another said “how everyone was involved and expressed themselves freely,” one commented “the group aspect of sharing ideas and information was wonderful.” By the third evaluation the comments on what they liked most revolved more around doing field work and going outside. Relationships within the research team was most strained among two of the Youth Team Captains, one of whom wanted autocratic rule and was finding teaming difficult.

In reviewing the videotape of the training, there were a few times when the youth had been sitting for a while and appeared to need a more lively activity. In the training evaluations, even though most noted the physical nature of a number of the activities, a few commented on the need for more physical activities. Although the youth asked for more activities at each session, the amount of content to get through in the training sessions limited

the amount of time available for breaks. A few of the Youth Mappers' restlessness and speaking over other people became a bit problematic at times and was tolerated by the adult researchers but commented on as an issue in written evaluations from other Youth Mappers.

In terms of team building many Youth Mappers wrote positive comments in the evaluations such as "energizers, going outside to work as a team with the GPS and digital cameras," "working together with the other youth," "having fun", "becoming friends with all the new people, and interacting as a team," "cooperation," "great involvement from everyone!" "Good connection with everyone, strong team building," and "networking".

The Youth Team Captains were given the opportunity to select their team of Youth Mappers. Two of the Youth Team Captains voiced frustration with some of their team members having difficulty understanding and discussing concepts and data collection methods. One Youth Team Captain expressed a desire in the evaluation to have had a different group. Her group was quieter and were reluctant to voice opinions during their team discussion and decision-making sessions.

In reviewing the video-tapes the females seemed to grasp concepts and maintain an alert and respectful tone throughout presentations whereas three of the four males lost concentration and chatted and joked among themselves on occasion, especially in training sessions three and four where they were more comfortable with each other and had developed stronger friendships. This behaviour became most pronounced after two hours into the third session which was heavy in content on data-collection methods and analysis. The entire morning had been dedicated to absorbing information and this proved too static for these males. Once the presentation became more interactive, challenging and inclusive, the males soon became re-engaged. Three of the males and one of the females were in need

of more physical activity, which they consistently reported in their evaluations. Two of the males moved about a lot more than the rest of the group and can be seen on tape quietly moving to adjust cameras, take photos, go for a snack and generally being more mobile. Both of these males were somewhat hyperactive and had more difficulty concentrating. However, it should be noted that these same males offered a high level of energy that supported creating a fun atmosphere for all the Youth Mappers. Creating a conducive learning environment required flexibility on the part of adult researchers to work with the Youth Mappers' personalities rather than using a regimented approach. It was important to the process that the Youth Mappers feel free to let the sessions evolve and the adult researchers did not want to be prescriptive about anything, especially not behaviour. Interestingly, evaluations from a few of the Youth Mappers spoke to the need for more respectful behaviour when individuals were speaking and this was relayed to the group at the following sessions.

One challenge to group dynamics was the environment in which the meetings were housed. While the basement was large and allowed the three different groups to be spread out and work separately without disturbing others, fourteen or fifteen bodies became cramped after a while. The winter season often meant heavy rain preventing outside activities. Other factors creating a conducive, positive learning environment were the inclusiveness of the Youth Mappers in the process, and strong youth engagement practice.

Evident in the video was friction among the Youth Mappers when discussing preferences of clothes and logos for branding within the project. Fashion and identity are such strong aspects of youth culture that coming to consensus became almost impossible. After reading evaluations where four of the Youth Mappers commented on the fact that this

process needed to be done differently, the Youth Team Captains made an executive decision on both the clothing and the logo. This worked to refocus the group on the important aspects of the study and although one or two Youth Mappers made clear comments that they preferred different choices, in the eyes of the adult researchers and Youth Team Captains this became a non-issue very quickly.

As mentioned, there was conflict with one Youth Mapper's commitment to the CYM research study because of involvement with another organization. This was resolved by the youth stepping down from the Youth Mapper position. The Surrey CYM project held to the belief that this was a youth-led project and youth needed to have a strong democratic voice. Eighty-seven percent of the comments within the concluding Youth Mappers' interviews spoke to the tremendous connectedness between the Youth Mappers. The group was unanimous in how well they worked as a team and the strong relationships within the group.

#### *Effectiveness of Communication Strategies*

Working out organizational details and allowing further debriefing from training sessions, practice sessions, data collection, field trips, using the GPS, visually documenting the places, fund raising events, and presentations, required many communication strategies to ensure key messages were delivered and understood. The adult researchers encouraged Youth Mappers to communicate their thoughts and concerns via email, conference calls, phone, training evaluations, and research team reflection/action cycle meetings and project follow-up sessions.

### *Open Communication*

#### *Emails.*

From the start of the study, Youth Mappers were asked to use email to identify issues and problems needing a quick response and the investigator promised to reply within the day. This method of communication was an essential component to the study and active group discussions occurred around logistics and protocols for recruitment of youth respondents, interview script and questions, and use of consent forms. An email contact list was developed and distributed.

Another valuable use of email was to enable Mappers to problem-solve as they emailed back and forth to the investigator who then made suggestions and coached the various youth to come up with strategies to reach a resolution to the issue at hand and move forward with the project.

An average of 27 emails/week in less busy times to over 50/week during the data collection phase were logged between the Youth Mappers and investigator. The emails worked well for coordinating logistics such as design team meetings, training sessions, special events, focus group sessions, and presentations. This was beneficial to ensure both Youth Mappers and adult researchers felt connected and reassured Youth Mappers when they had reservations or questions. To illustrate, one Youth Mapper wrote to the adult researchers “I’m not sure where the Lions Club booth is located at the Cloverdale rodeo and should we wear our T-shirts?” The researcher’s response was “Don’t worry about getting there, I’ll pick you up at 6 am, sorry so early but we have to be setting-up by 7am for the pancake breakfast and I’m picking up other Youth Mappers. Yeah the T-shirts make us look organized and these guys don’t often see young people advertising youth working in the community. I think it’s a great idea to wear them. How do you think the others feel? Do

they want to wear them?” This conversation carried on for a few more emails and demonstrates the importance of this form of accessible communication in supporting the Youth Mappers.

Emails were also used prior and during conference calls to send attachments such as agendas, forms, documents, and any other pertinent information for review.

*Conference calls.*

Conference calls worked well for open discussions, design team and reflection/action cycle meetings. The Youth Mappers were able to share their experiences and speak to challenges regarding recruiting respondents, prompting methods and other aspects of the data- collection phase. The conference calls worked better for Youth Mappers who were more auditory learners, therefore providing another form of communication to have their points expressed.

*Phone.*

Youth Mappers stated the importance of being easily accessible to all the researchers. A more complete contact list was developed and distributed with pertinent information related to address, home and personal cell number along with email address. The phone was used when internet lines were not working. Cell phones were used to contact members for coordinating meet-up points during field work, special events and focus group sessions. Occasionally, long conversations occurred between adult researchers and Youth Mappers to deal with personal issues and Team conflict.

*Training evaluations.*

Written evaluations and follow-up reflection/action discussions occurred after each training session and resulted in providing information regarding progress of desired training outcomes. The findings demonstrated changes in knowledge of fundamental concepts of PYD, and development of skills in data collection methods and use of technologies. These evaluations provided invaluable feedback to support decisions around next steps within the study.

*Research team reflection/action cycle meetings and follow-up sessions.*

The main purpose of these meetings was to enable the voices of the co-researchers to be heard through the use of reflection/action iterations which are discussed in detail in Chapter five (Our Collaborative Action Research Approach – p.210).

A full day of follow-up sessions occurred post data-collection that supported Youth Mappers in analyzing and interpreting data, and sharing differences, similarities and patterns. Also, a concluding one-day session was facilitated after the completion of the study. The Youth Mappers were asked eleven questions pertaining to their perceptions of the goals of the study and whether these goals were accomplished, what they learned about families, schools and communities, how prepared they felt for conducting the interviews and any improvements they could suggest for the future, changes they felt in themselves and others as a result of the CYM project, the *elements* that facilitate PYD in their own lives, and whether what they have learned through participating in this study will change how they act in the future (Refer to Appendix I – Concluding Youth Mappers' Interview Questions, p. 359). This session also provided an opportunity to discuss and develop a knowledge transfer strategy for the project and potential next steps for expanding Surrey's CYM project.

*Coordinating locations of meetings.*

The logistics related to participation issues and data collection issues were assessed by analyzing field notes, research team meeting notes and concluding Youth Mappers interviews. Meetings occurred at various places, e.g., Coordinator's house, restaurants and coffee shops, school district office and meeting rooms at Tamanawis School. Meetings also occurred after each of the four training sessions and two full-day sessions were facilitated at the end of the data collection process.

*Organizing transportation.*

Throughout the meetings and during concluding interviews the Youth Mappers identified some difficulties related to transportation, especially given the large geographic area of Surrey, the location of the meeting place in White Rock, which was in the very southern area of Surrey and the poor bus services. Transportation was definitely the biggest overall challenge for the Youth Mappers, especially because new legislation in British Columbia only allows novice drivers to carry one passenger. None of the Youth Mappers had a full driver's licence at the time of the CYM project, making this an issue that could only be rectified by the investigator and other adult researchers spending an inordinate amount of time driving the youth to and from meetings and events.

*Summary of Findings for Question #1*

Sampling and recruitment of Youth Mappers and their peer respondents occurred within fourteen participating secondary schools and five colleges/universities. Eleven secondary schools were from within Surrey, one in Whalley, three in Guildford, six in Newton, one in Fleetwood and one in Cloverdale. One secondary school and one university were in Langley. Two secondary schools were in Delta, one college was in Burnaby, and

one university and one high school were in Vancouver. Youth Mappers tended to successfully collect data from respondents who were like them, especially in terms of age, gender, and also in terms of ethnicity/culture and geography/location.

The timeline for the study was affected by the necessary time needed to secure solid partnerships and resources from the community of Surrey, and work within the school calendar year as well as young people's school commitments.

This project is unique in that youth were supported and trained to become authentic co-researchers. To satisfy the need of sustaining youth's commitment and involvement in a CAR project, youth need to participate more deeply than simply 'being heard'. As this study demonstrated they need opportunities to influence issues that matter to them and have considerable commitment and support from legitimate collaborators, to engage in activity solving problems through iterative cycles of reflection/action, to express themselves through different forms of technology, and the opportunity to develop closer connections with adult co-researchers and with their fellow youth co-researchers.

During the CYM training, most youth reported that the four sessions were adequate, and commented numerous times regarding their appreciation to the host and special environment set-up for their training. All appreciated the payment (honorarium) and felt it was more than adequate or even too much. It was not surprising that a few of the Mappers commented on the need for additional time to practice data collection skills, given they were novices to this type of experience. Youth gained knowledge about their community from the perspective of their peers around the people, places and activities that build *elements* that facilitate PYD. Scheduling for the training sessions were sometimes challenging with

numerous follow-up emails and phone calls made by Youth Team Captains to their team members.

The reflection/action cycles meetings were an important aspect in ensuring meaningful youth engagement, as well as building consensus regarding next steps.

While the first purpose of the research study was to learn about engaging young people as co-researchers in a CAR approach, the second question was to examine the type of data Youth Mappers collected using self-selected methods and technology.

#### Question #2 - What Types of Data are Youth Mappers Able to Collect Using a Variety of Methods and Technology?

The Mappers used two research methods to collect data in the CYM project. Those were the key informant interviews (Refer to Appendix F – Key Informant Interview Script and Questions, p. 346) and focus group sessions (Refer to Appendix G – Focus Group Interview Kit, p.348). Audio-tapes were used to record the key informant interviews and the focus group sessions were videoed. The Youth Mappers who facilitated those sessions also filled out an observation form which was discussed in the reflection/action cycle meeting immediately following each focus group session. On average, six of the ten Youth Mappers were involved in facilitating the focus group sessions and this included all three of the Youth Team Captains.

#### *Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Session Data*

The key informant interview and focus group session data collected by Youth Mappers from their peers was examined and content analyzed using NVivo, field notes,

audio and video-tape, reflection/action cycle meetings, transcriptions of interviews, and a full-day post-data collection session with Youth Mappers.

One hundred and eighteen key informant interviews were conducted by Youth Mappers between May and June, 2007, with 80% of them occurring before June. Reflection/action cycle meetings were a key part of the process and assisted in identifying and dealing with issues that occurred during the collection phase. For example, a number of the Youth Mappers were feeling overwhelmed with their school and other curricular activity schedules that placed time constraints on their ability to collect data. In addition, some Youth Mappers were having difficulty recruiting youth for the interviews, applying the interview script, taping of the interviews and, some felt they needed more training for the interviews than was readily available given their schedules or resources for the study.

After further practice and guidance from Youth Team Captains and the investigator, all were able to adequately perform and transcribe the interviews to gain detailed data to answer the questions provided. Transcriptions of these interviews yielded very rich and important information about how youth build *elements* that facilitate PYD. Youth Mappers were able to use extensive prompts (i.e., the 10-minute DVD of the Youth Mappers discussing the six *elements* as an introduction to the focus group sessions, and also a Digging for Gold activity ( Refer to Appendix H – Digging for Gold Activity Sheet, p. 359) and probes, and were persistent in gathering information about the “what and how” about resources through people, places and activities where youth gain important *elements* that facilitate PYD in their community.

*People, Places and Activities (PPA) that Build 'Elements' that Facilitate PYD*

The combined data of the two collection methods (174 respondents) were content analyzed to determine themes. The primary concern for the Youth Mappers was to make all youth respondents feel at ease and not pressured to answer questions if they did not want to. However, the Youth Mappers had chosen to ask youth respondents to identify any resources (PPA) in their lives, hoping the simple wording and open-ended nature of the question would allow youth respondents to feel comfortable enough to come up with some answers. Youth respondents (174) were encouraged to mention any resources (PPA) that came to mind and were not limited in number of responses. Youth Mappers moved onto the next question when youth respondents appeared to be finished (i.e., pausing or waiting expectantly for the next question). If respondents mentioned two or more resources for each of the PPA the Youth Mappers continued onto the next question. If, however, only one or no resources were mentioned, Youth Mappers made a judgement whether or not to prompt for more information. In some cases, the respondents did not appear to want to answer the question, either because they were rushed and wanted to speed through the interview, or were unable to come up with more resources, which was making them somewhat anxious. Some respondents were very forthcoming with one or two of the resources, especially activities and places, but not with the other one(s). Each Youth Mapper decided when to move onto the next question and therefore the number of resources reported per respondent varied. In addition, some Youth Mappers were able to gather “fuller” data than others.

The open-ended nature of gathering information from the 174 respondents about PPA resources resulted in a minimum and maximum number for each of the people, places and activities. For *people* the maximum number of responses from an individual respondent was five and the minimum was 0. For *places* the maximum number of responses from an

individual respondent was six and the minimum was 0. For *activities* the maximum number of responses from an individual respondent was four and the minimum was 0. Two themes were identified multiple times by 12 key informant interview respondents; one pertaining to people which was “friends”, and the other to places, which was “restaurants”. Three key informant interview respondents referred to friends twice (i.e., going with friends to the mall, riding in a friend’s car). Nine key informant interview respondents mentioned individual restaurants two or three times (i.e., going to Tim Horton’s, Earls and the Dairy Queen). The objective of the CYM study was to gather as many resources as the youth respondents mentioned and therefore these multiple identifications were included in the data. The respondents who did not provide information relating to PPA came from various sources. One Youth Mapper had sent the key informant interview questions via email and had not followed up when five of her ten respondents did not provide all of the information. In the focus group sessions the data collected from the 56 respondents resulted in 42 responses for people, 47 responses for places, 45 for in-school activities and 52 responses for out-of-school activities. Three Youth Mappers had a total of six key informant interview respondents who did not identify any PPA. Five Youth Mappers had a total of seven respondents who only identified one PPA. Eight Youth Mappers had a total of eight respondents who only identified two PPA. Given these various convolutions in the data gathering and the principles of using a strengths-based approach to the study, it was decided to focus on the information the Youth Mappers had gathered rather than dwell on the data regarding how many youth respondents did not comment. The main purpose of the CYM study was to eventually share the resources with other community members. Given this, analysis of individual interviewing techniques seemed counter-productive to our efforts. However, we

did examine the disparity in the amount of data collected in light of improving training sessions (discussed in Chapter five).

Analysis of the data was carried out by determining the total numbers of resources reported for each of the themes within people, places and activities. These themes were then examined in terms of the percentage of the total number of respondents (out of 174) who reported them. For friends and restaurants which were reported multiple times by 12 key informant respondents we examined the differences in percentages based on the number of respondents. The difference in results for “friends” was minimal (74.7% based on the reports by 130 respondents compared to 76.4% for the additional three “friends” reported - 133). An average of the two gave us 75.5% as the total number of respondents who reported friends as a key resource in their lives. The 20 restaurants reported by nine key informant respondents provided different percentage figures (47.1% based on 82 reports compared to 40.8% from 71 respondents) with an average of the two at 43.9%. It was decided that for our purposes, an estimate of 44% of youth respondents who reported restaurants as places they felt were resources in lives, was sufficiently accurate.

Within the focus group sessions, the number of respondents commenting on people, places, in-school activities and out-of-school activities was 42, 47, 45 and 52, respectively. Reported resources related to *people* came from 113 key informant interview respondents and 42 focus group respondents, totalling 155. Reported resources related to *places* came from 112 key informant interview respondents and 47 focus group respondents, totalling 159. Reported resources related to *in-school activities* came from 112 key informant interview respondents and 45 focus group respondents, totalling 157. Reported resources related to *out-of-school activities* (including volunteering and work), came from 116 key informant

interview respondents and 52 focus group respondents, totalling 168. This data is presented in Table 4.6, p.193, which illustrates the number of times the 174 key informant and focus group respondents mentioned specific resources they access in the community in terms of people, places and activities.

With respect to *people* resources (Refer to Figure 4.3, p. 179) indicates that, of the people in their lives, by far, the most important resource for young people are their friends (75%). Friends were mentioned by almost a third more of the youth respondents than family (48%), their next best support. Teachers (32%), team-mates (24%) and coaches (23%) were also influential in a substantial number of youth respondents' lives. For other youth respondents, people they interact with at work such as co-workers and bosses (20%), at school such as peers (15%), and youth leaders and adults at church and religious or culturally affiliated organizations (11% and 9% respectively), provided much needed developmental support.

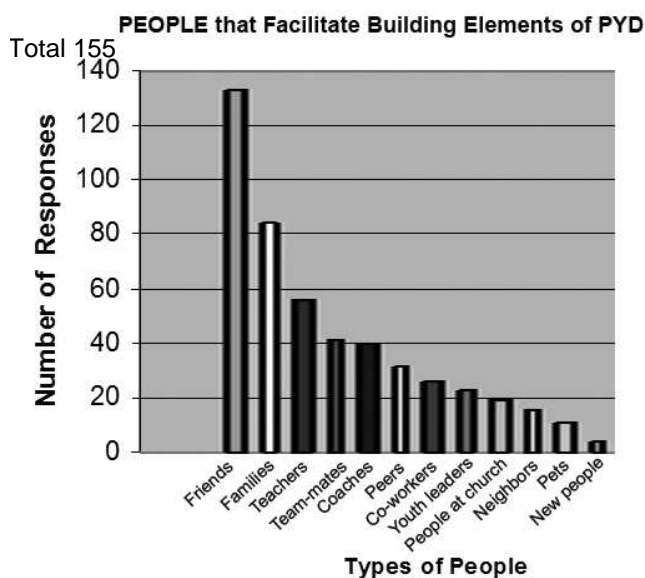


Figure 4.3 People Who Help Youth Respondents' Build Elements that Facilitate PYD

As indicated in Table 4.6, p.181, there are six *places* young people prefer to go for PYD, the mall (57%), friends' places (53%), their own home (51%), to movie theatres (54%), to sport or recreation facilities (48%) and to restaurants (44%). Well over half of the youth respondents mentioned the mall in relation to shopping, eating there, and having a safe, fun place to hang out with friends. Over one third of those interviewed felt school (36%) provided PYD and was a place young people go to develop a variety of aspects depending on their interests (i.e., academic, involvement in sports or the arts, student council, or clubs).

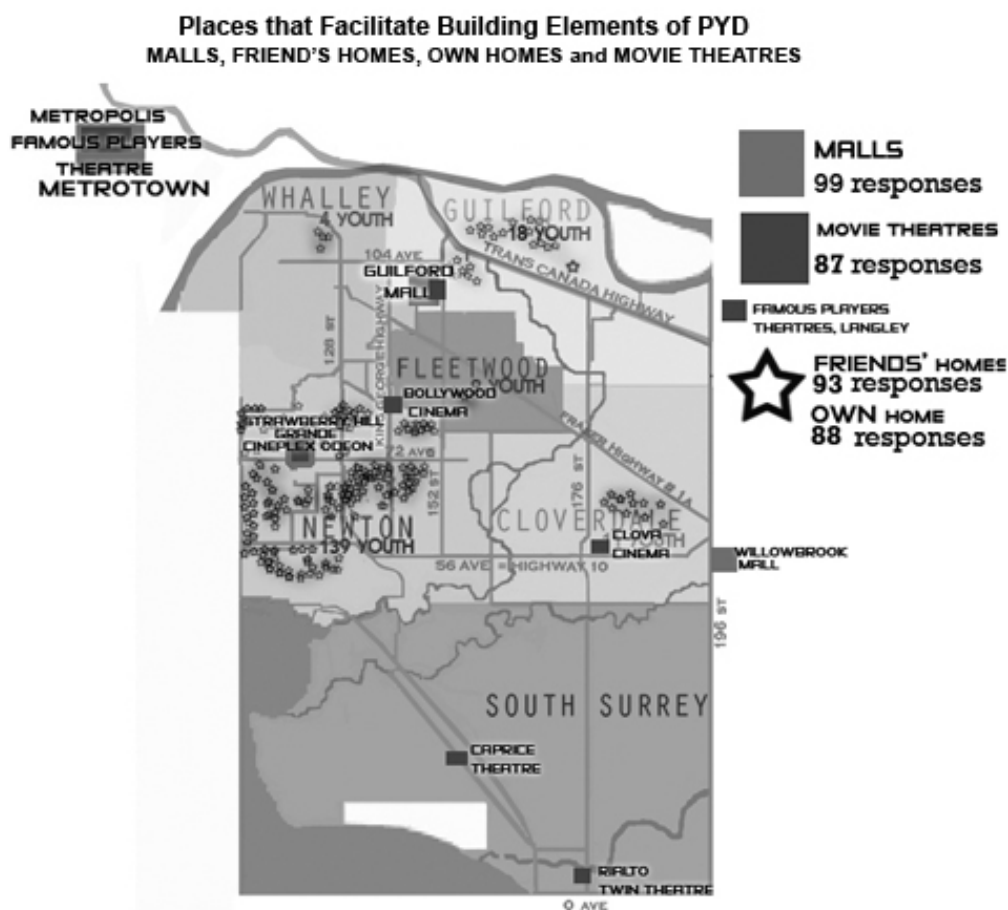


Figure 4.4 Closest Intersection to Youth Respondents' Homes in Relation to Malls, Friend's Homes and Own Homes, and Movie Theatres

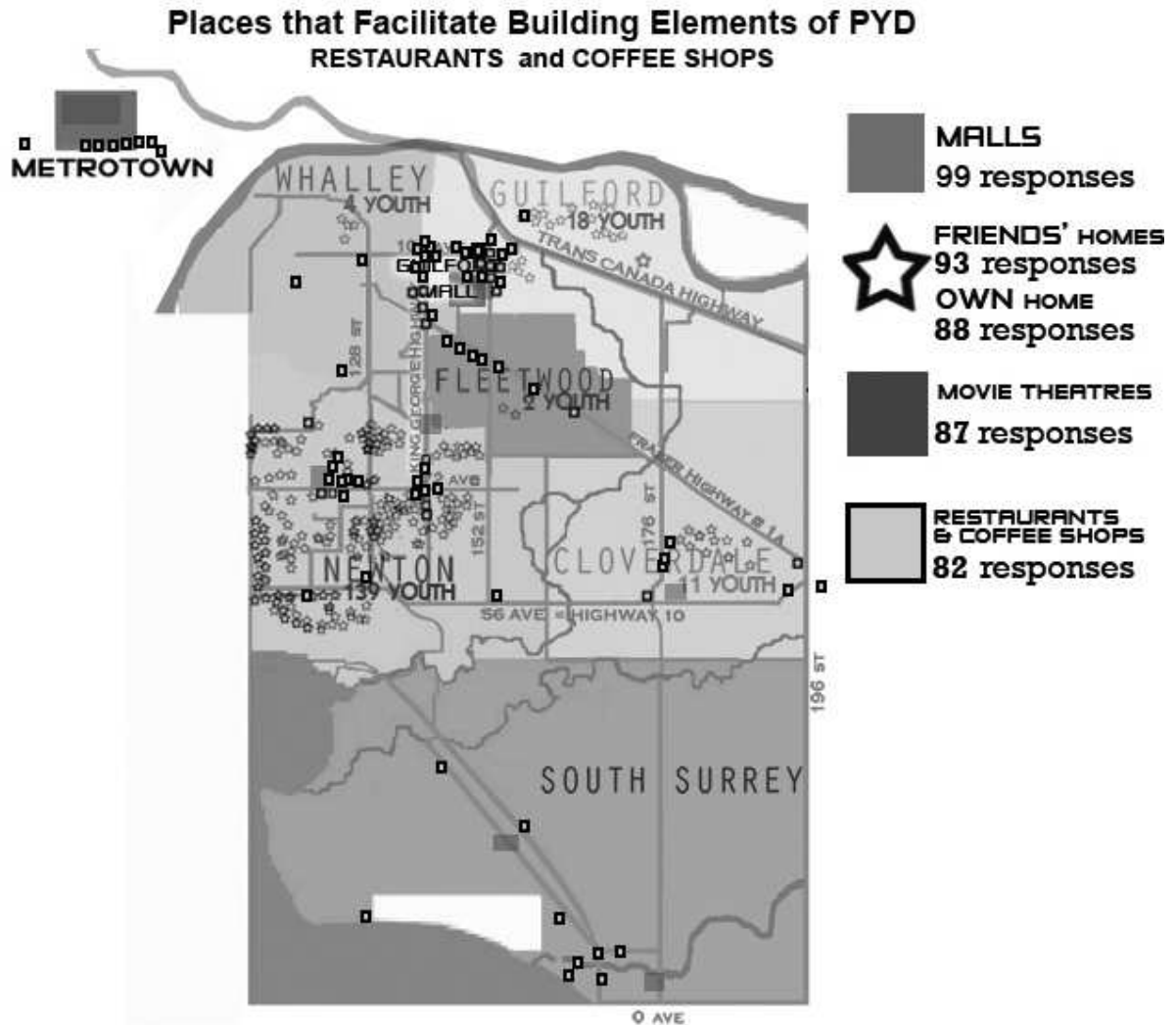


Figure 4.5 Closest Intersection to Youth Respondents' Homes in Relation to Restaurants and Coffee Shops (usually fast food – Tim Hortons, MacDonalds, KFC, DQ, Starbucks, A&W, any pizza places and Earls)

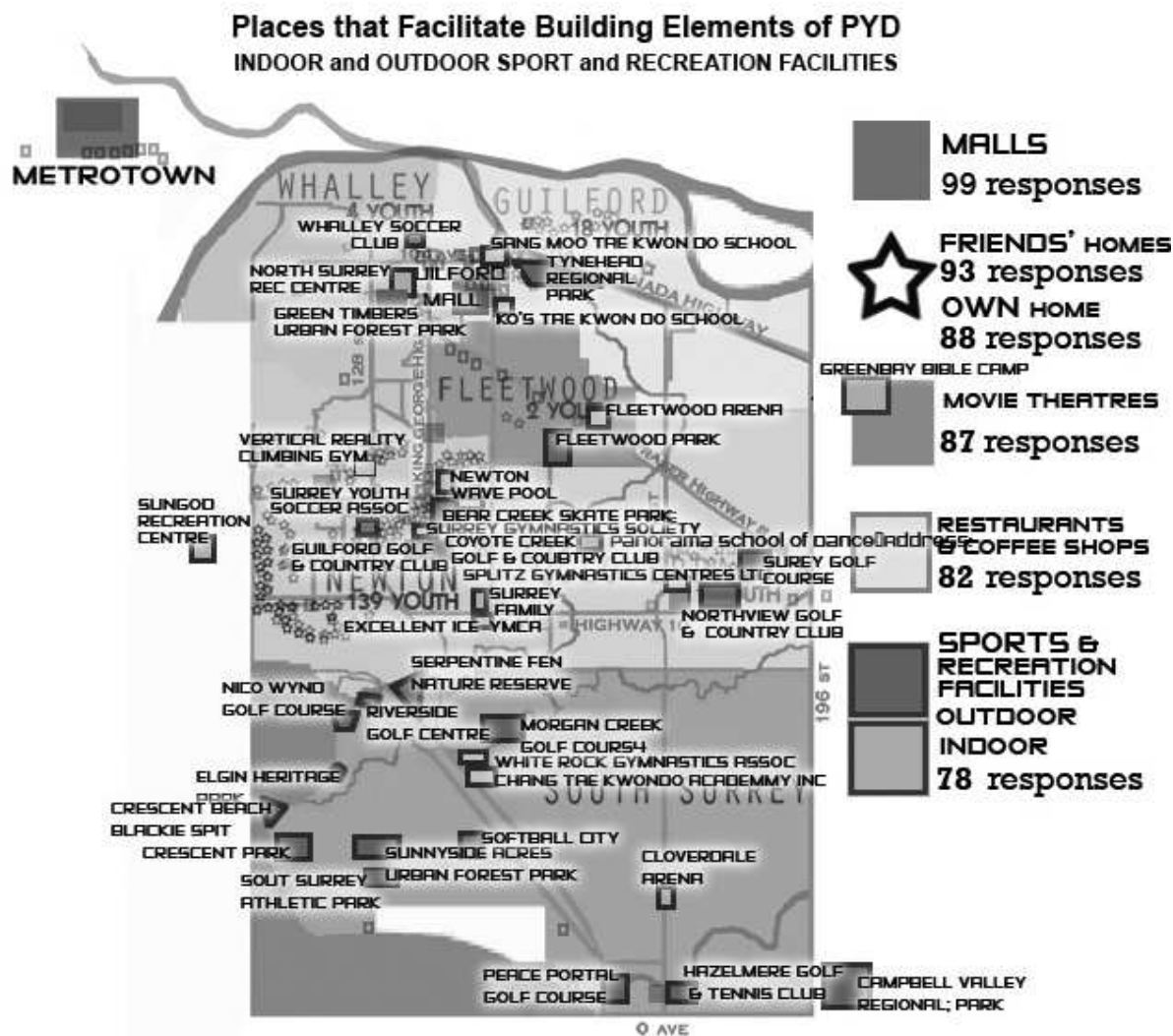


Figure 4.6 Closest Intersection to Youth Respondents' Homes in Relation to In-Door and Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

Schools were the next choice for youth respondents (40%), a number of respondents enjoy the informal outdoor setting of parks and beaches (21%) and others were connected to their neighbourhoods (10%). The library (9%) was an important place for a few academic youth.

Table 4.6  
Resources Reported by Respondents

People Out of 174 respondents 155 responded		Places Out of 174 respondents 159 responded		In-School Activities Out of 174 respondents 157 responded		Out-of-School Activities Out of 174 respondents 168 responded	
Friends	133	Mall	99	Sports	69	Sports Teams	59
Family	84	Friends houses/cars	93	Clubs i.e., Global Awareness,	40	Church Youth Groups	36
Teachers	56	Home	88	Performing Arts	34	Bands, Drama, Dance Studios	32
Team-mates	41	Movies	87	Student Council	28	Supporting others	17
Coaches	40	Restaurants	82	Academic Groups	4	Ethnic Groups/Clubs	10
Co-Workers/ Bosses	35	Sport Rec Facility	78	No Activity	48	No Activity	57
Peers	26	School	63	Other Out-of-School Activities			
Youth Leaders	19	Park/Beach	36	Volunteer		Work	
People at Church	15	Neighborhood	17	Community Related	52	Part-time	66
Neighbours	11	Library	16	Sports related & Coaching	37	Summer only	25
Pets	4	Church	13	Work with Young Children	30	Full-time	7
New People	2	Groups	11	Tutoring/ School related	18		
		Dances	2	Animals SPCA	9		
		Parties	2	Seniors	2		
				Do not volunteer	46	Do not work	61
A total of 454 <i>people</i> were reported from 155 respondents		A total of 670 <i>places</i> were reported from 159 respondents		A total of 175 <i>in-school activities</i> were reported from 157 respondents		A total of 400 <i>out-of-school activities</i> were reported from 168 respondents	

The theme of *activities* was divided into those performed in-school and those participated in outside of school.

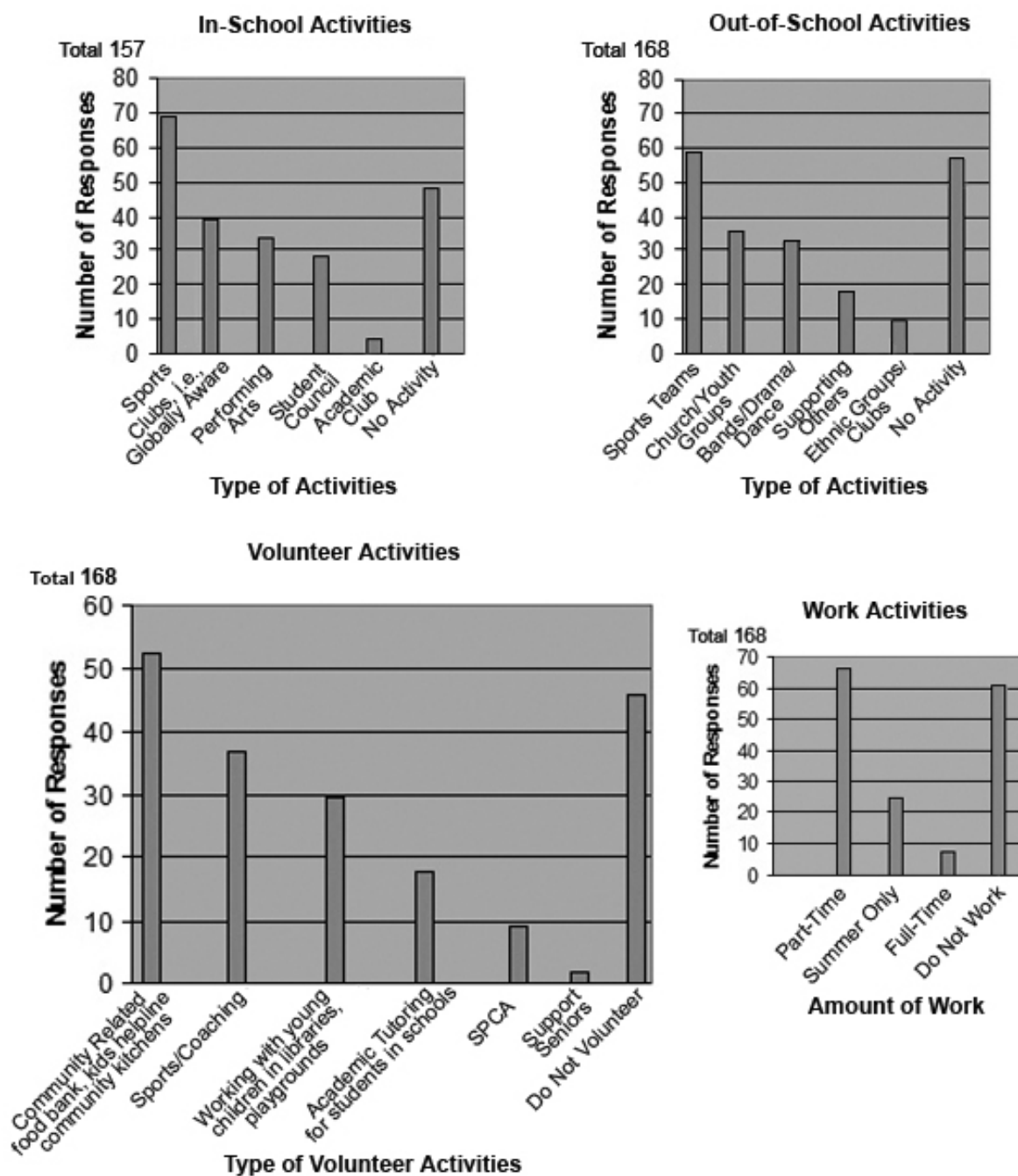


Figure 4.7 Activities that Help Youth Respondents' Build Elements that Facilitate PYD

*Description of In-School and Out-of-School Activities*

Respondents were asked what activities they were involved in school and out-of-school. Of the 174 respondents involved in the project, 157 commented on in-school activities and 168 respondents provided data on out-of-school activities (Refer to Figure 4.7 p.184). These activities were organized and fell into similar categories relating to sports and performance related arts. The clubs and groups in-school were event focused i.e., global awareness or student council, whereas clubs and groups in the community tended to centred around church youth groups, or Jamaican and Baahtra ethnic groups. Both in and out-of-school activities included an academic component related to math study groups. Respondents generally commented on one or two outside school activities.

Of the 168 respondents involved in out-of school activities, 34% of young people were not involved in any activities outside-school. Of the 66% of respondents who were involved in activities outside School 35% of those were involved in organized sports such as hockey, tennis, baseball, soccer and basketball. Twenty-one percent were regularly involved in church youth groups which involved a number of activities, especially singing, bible study, supervising or teaching younger children. Eighteen percent were also involved in performance activities such as dance, bands, or drama events.

Thirty percent of respondents who were not involved in any outside school activities worked full time or part time (19). Thirty percent who were employed part or full time were involved in sports, 18% were involved in church groups and 16% were involved in performance-related activities.

Table 4.7

Description of Out-of-School Activities (a number of respondents mentioned more than one activity)

Sports	59	Participation in community sports teams such as hockey, baseball, soccer, tennis, ultimate frisbee, and basketball
No Activity	57	Stated No when asked about involvement in activities outside school
Church	36	Participation in church youth groups, reading the bible, games, teaching Sunday School
Performance	32	Participation in community activities related to music, i.e. guitar lessons, part of a jazz band, belong to dance studios, community drama events
Ethnic groups/Clubs	10	Jamaican and Mosque youth clubs as well as all Asian dinner get-togethers
Volunteer	122	Community related, sports related including coaching, working with younger children, tutoring or school related, SPCA, working with seniors
Work	107	Part-time (66), summer only (25), full-time (7)

*Comparison of Youth Involvement in Both In-School and Out-of-School Activities*

Comparing respondents' involvement in activities In-School and Outside-School was necessary to see if interests of youth were reflected in both areas (Table 4.8, p.185). Eighty-four percent of respondents reported being involved in sports in school were also involved in sports outside school. Over half of those involved in clubs or student council in school were also involved in sports outside school. Forty-three percent of respondents not involved in school activities were involved out-of-school as follows: 13% in sports, 7% were involved in performing arts and 8% were involved in church groups, 7% volunteered and 8% worked. Sixteen percent of youth respondents involved in student council and clubs in-school were also busy volunteering in a diverse array of activities.

Table 4.8

## Comparison of Youth Involvement Both In-School and Out-of-School Activities

Out-of-School Activities (out of 174 respondents 168 responded)	In-School Activities (out of 174 respondents 157 responded)			
	Clubs/ Student/ Council	Performing Arts	Sports	No Activity
Sports	37	7	58	22
Performance	4	13	4	12
Church	11	9	6	14
Volunteer	26	11	19	11
Work	9	12	22	13
No Activity	12	6	8	6

Many respondents were active in sports both in-school and outside-school, as well as involved in areas of leadership and organization within the school (clubs and student council). A number of respondents talked about one or two activities being their passion in life, especially related to sports, dance and volunteering. The concept of staying healthy and fit and being pushed to strive to be better at the sport they were involved in was a recurring theme. These respondents focused more on concepts such as building team spirit than talking specifically about teammates being important.

As illustrated in Table 4.6, p.183, within school, 40% of youth respondents were involved in sports. Almost one quarter (24%) of those interviewed reported not being involved in any school activities and another 9% did not comment, making the potential number of youth respondents not involved in school activities as high as one third of the respondents polled. Other in-school activities youth are involved with include special clubs (23%), performing arts (20%) especially dance and student council (16%).

Almost all of the respondents (96%) reported on resources found during *out of-school activities*. One third were involved in community sports (34%). Other outside activities included participation in Fine Arts related pastimes such as dance and guitar lessons (18%) and membership in church youth groups (21%). Supporting others was seen by 10% of youth as a meaningful activity. Another 6% felt very connected to cultural organizations they were affiliated with. A third of respondents (33%) reported not being involved in out-of-school activities within these themes (sports, Fine Arts, church youth groups, supporting others and ethnic clubs). This percentage did not include those volunteering or working. When combined with those who did not comment on out-of-school activities, the number of youth respondents who were not involved in the out-of-school activities reported, rises slightly, to 36%.

#### *Elements Provided by People*

Respondents rated the six key *elements* (Refer to Appendix A – Elements that Assist PYD, p. 322) in terms of which were most to least important (one being the most and six being the least) with respect to opportunities and supports provided by *people* in their community (Refer to Table 4.9, p.189). Youth respondents found youth leaders and adults at church, as well as teachers, most able to support them to participate in a way which was meaningful to them. Coaches and team-mates are also ranked second most important for providing and encouraging meaningful youth participation. Coaches and team-mates ranked most important for helping youth develop competencies and skills, followed by teachers as the second most important *element* they provide for youth. Developing competencies and skills was considered by respondents to be least important by youth leaders and adults at church. Finding supportive relationships was most important with friends, second most

important with youth leaders and adults at church, and third most important for family, coaches and team-mates. Youth respondents rated supportive relationships least important of the *elements* provided by teachers. Experiencing a ‘sense of belonging’ was ranked the second most important *element* for family members, with ‘emotional and physical safety’ ranking most important; this ranking was reversed with friends, ‘supportive relationships’ ranked first and ‘emotional and physical safety’, second. ‘Sense of belonging’ was not rated as the most important *element* for any of the people resources. ‘Leadership’ was not considered an important *element* provided by any of the people resources except for teachers, where it was ranked third most important. With friends and family it was the least important *element*, and with coaches and team-mates ‘leadership’ was the second least important *element*, with ‘emotional and physical safety’ being least important.

Table 4.9

## Respondents’ Rankings of Elements Provided by People

	People				
	<i>Friends</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Coaches Team-mates</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>At Church</i>
Meaningful Youth Participation	#5	#4	#2	#1	#1
Supportive Relationships	#1 <sup>4</sup>	#3	#3	#6	#2
Sense of Belonging	#3	#2	#4	#5	#3
Competencies and Skills	#4	#5	#1	#2	#6
Emotional & Physical Safety	#2	#1	#6	#4	#4
Leadership	#6	#6	#5	#3	#5

Friends and family provide stability for young people by being supportive, providing an environment where youth feel safe emotionally and physically, and also accepting youth so they feel a sense of belonging. Four youth respondents (2.2%) commented on receiving all *elements* from family and three youth respondents (1.7%) commented on receiving all six *elements* from teachers.

#### *Elements Provided by Places*

Respondents ranked the six key *elements* (Refer to Appendix A – Elements that Assist PYD, p. 322) in terms of which were most to least important (one being the most and six being the least) with respect to opportunities and supports provided by *places* in their community (Refer to Table 4.10, p. 191). Church and home were most associated with ‘emotional and physical safety’. ‘Sense of belonging’ was strong in all places except school, and sport/recreation facilities. ‘Supportive relationships’ were found everywhere but slightly less at church (although this conflicts with the data on *people* at church where ‘supportive relationships’ was rated as second most important). Interestingly ‘emotional and physical safety’ was found to be least evident of the six *elements* at school and sport/recreational facilities. Again ‘leadership’ was rated as low in all places, being fourth in schools and sport and recreation facilities.

The place most frequented by respondents was malls, where they felt a ‘sense of belonging’ and experienced ‘supportive relationships’ while there with friends and family. Malls were also a place the youth felt safe, more so than at school, especially for boys. Reasons cited for going to malls were “because it’s fun”, “shopping”, “eating out there” and “hanging out with friends”. Youth also mentioned knowing people who work at the malls. There were no negative comments toward malls, which was surprising to the investigator

who, as an adult, could see the dangers of consumerism and media manipulation. However, this was not mentioned by any of the respondents who enjoy malls. Perhaps the other 43% of young people who did not include malls in their list of places might have a less positive view of mall mentality and the pressures put on youth to become consumers.

Table 4.10  
Respondents' Rankings of *Elements* Provided by Places

	Places							
	<i>Malls</i>	<i>Home/ Friend's Houses</i>	<i>Movie Theatres</i>	<i>Restaur- rants</i>	<i>Sport/Rec Facilities</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Park Beach</i>	<i>Church Youth Groups</i>
Meaningful Youth Participation	#4	#5	#4	#4	#1	#2	#4	#3
Supportive Relationships	#2	#3	#2	#2	#2	#3	#1	#4
Sense of Belonging	#1	#2	#1	#1	#5	#5	#2	#2
Competencies and Skills	#5	#4	#5	#5	#3	#1	#3	#6
Emotional & Physical Safety	#3	#1	#3	#3	#6	#6	#5	#1
Leadership	#6	#6	#6	#6	#4	#4	#6	#5

The second and third most popular places for youth to hang out were friend's houses, and home, respectively, which indicated that youth were probably congregating in fairly small groups in the comfort of places where they felt welcome and knew each other well.

‘Emotional and physical safety’ and ‘sense of belonging’ were the two top *elements* found in friend’s houses and young people’s own homes, closely followed by ‘supportive relationships’. The youth talked about “hanging out”, “relaxing”, “eating”, and “having fun things to do” at a friend’s or their own home. They could be themselves and were fully supported by those around them.

Movie theatres and restaurants were the next most common places to find youth and comments about these places were identical to comments about malls and the *elements* were rated the same for all three. ‘Sense of belonging’, ‘supportive relationships’ and ‘emotional and physical safety’ were the top *elements* mentioned for all of them.

An interesting finding was that over 50% of youth respondents frequented sport and recreation facilities to engage in some form of physical activity and this will be further discussed in the area of activities. The most important element found at sport and recreation facilities was ‘meaningful youth participation’, which was the second most important *element* reported for schools, and third most important element at churches and places with youth groups. The second most important *element* found at sport and recreation facilities was ‘supportive relationships’, followed by ‘competencies and skills’, and fourthly, by ‘leadership’. Of the 15% of youth respondents who enjoyed the connectedness they felt within neighbourhoods and the time they spent in natural settings, at parks and beaches, supportive relationships was most important, followed by sense of belonging. ‘Competencies and skills’ was third most important, perhaps suggesting they might have been using these settings to practice and play outdoor activities.

### *Elements Provided by Activities*

Respondents ranked the six key *elements* (Refer to Appendix A – Elements that Assist PYD, p. 322) in terms of which were most to least important (one being the most and six being the least) in the type of opportunities and supports provided by *activities* in-school and out-of-school, in their community (Refer to Table 4.11, p.195). ‘Emotional and physical safety’ does not even rate in the area of sports which is understandable given the competitive nature of high school age sports. This element was also low for student council, performing arts, and work, which perhaps suggests that activities which involve competition, popularity, outspokenness or trying out for positions might affect youths’ perceptions of safety. ‘Emotional and physical safety’ was ranked most important for clubs and groups, and volunteering ranked it as third most important, perhaps suggesting these two activities required less competition than the other activities. ‘Competencies and skills’ were high for all activities except for volunteering, which is understandable considering the volunteer activities reported which tended to involve simple tasks such as peeling potatoes for the community Christmas dinner, filing in offices, cleaning animal cages out at the SPCA, handing out water cups at the Sun Run, etc. Those volunteer activities requiring more skills such as coaching were in areas of experience in which the youth had already developed skills and competencies. ‘Meaningful Youth Participation’ rated highly in sports, performing arts and volunteering and youth respondents wrote passionate comments about their experiences in these areas, i.e., one youth volunteer wrote “I go to the recreation centre on Fridays and be with the younger kids who need company. I help them get a sense of belonging and I know I’m improving other’s lives so it is meaningful (youth participation) for me”. ‘Leadership’ was high for student council and volunteering but less important than ‘supportive relationships’, which was also high in all activities other than clubs and groups. The

leadership component of student council and volunteering suggests that these youth are able to make decisions about activities that will be well received or are timely, either as a current societal issue i.e., running a battle of the bands and global awareness info night to raise funds for global awareness, or as a way of providing support to peers and others, i.e., serving snacks and chatting to seniors so they see younger people like their great grandkids. It is interesting that once again 'sense of belonging' does not rank as most important in any of the activities.

As stated earlier (Table 4.8, p.187), almost half of the youth respondents (47%) were involved in either organized sport (i.e., football, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, baseball, swimming, basketball, hockey, lacrosse, skiing, etc.), or less formalized activities (i.e., recreational fitness, skating, badminton, basketball and swimming, etc.). 'Competencies and skills' and 'meaningful youth participation' were the two top *elements* youth attributed to sports. Youth on sports teams were often very passionate about their involvement and the supportive relationships they felt they had as part of the team affiliation. Less organized sports such as working out at a gym made the youth feel good about themselves in terms of health and looking better.

The third most popular activity was Performing Arts (23%) with youth involved both in-school and outside-school. The school setting was active with Musical Theatre, Drama productions, as well as Dance and Band Performances. Out-of-school Performing Arts activities included dance both at studios and recreation centres, musical involvement from playing in a garage band, piano recitals, jazz bands, guitar lessons, etc., and lastly, drama/acting in community productions. With the diminishing funds in schools as well as academic

Table 4.11

## Respondents' Rankings of Elements Provided by Activities

	Activities In and Out of School					
	<i>Sports</i>	<i>Clubs Groups</i>	<i>Performing Arts</i>	<i>Student Council</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Volun- teering</i>
Meaningful Youth Participation	#2	#5	#1	#4	#4	#1
Supportive Relationships	#3	#4	#3	#1	#3	#4
Sense of Belonging	#4	#3	#4	#5	#2	#6
Competencies and Skills	#1	#2	#2	#3	#1	#5
Emotional & Physical Safety	#6	#1	#5	#6	#5	#3
Leadership	#5	#6	#6	#2	#6	#2

subjects filling student timetables at school, performance related activities was another area youth seek involvement. Interestingly, although 'meaningful youth engagement' and 'competencies and skills' rank first and second respectively for the Performing Arts, third and fourth are 'supportive relationships' and 'sense of belonging'. Other than work, which ranked 'sense of belonging' as the second most important *element*, the performing arts was the next highest activity for this *element* which ranked by the youth respondents as the most important of all of the six *elements* (Table 4.12, p.198).

The second most reported activity related to youth groups within churches, mosques and cultural organizations (9%) which provided a fun place for youth to be that was safe and provided activities they enjoyed as well as other youth to hangout with. A diverse age range was also found in these places with older youth mentoring younger children. Respondents found a 'sense of belonging', 'emotional and physical safety', and 'supportive relationships' and felt very closely connected within these organizations.

Youth found being on student council in-school allowed opportunities for ‘supportive relationships’ and ‘leadership’. Organizing events in the school as a group gave these youth a strong sense of connection to the school. Nine percent of the youth respondents were active within their schools. These activities included: organizing dances, being on a grad committee, involvement in global awareness activities, running a Kids Help Line, and participating in fund raising and community events. ‘Emotional and physical safety’ was not mentioned often and throughout the study this was the *element* least associated with in-school activities, although a few students claimed to find all *elements* being on student council.

Activity in the area of volunteering was sometimes related to part of school graduating requirement. Most were very specific about their volunteer activity and many spoke passionately about their work. However, about 21% were vague, i.e. “I volunteer two or three times a month”, but they neglected to clarify what or where. Sometimes they would say they have volunteered in the past but not presently, perhaps feeling pressure to provide an answer to this question. Once the graduating requirement of thirty hours was met, a number of respondents reported that they chose not to continue volunteering, suggesting they had no further interest in voluntary participation at that time.

Eighteen young people (12%) were not involved in activities in or outside school, nor did they work or volunteer. These youth tended to find supports within families and friends. With respect to work, 44% worked part-time throughout the year, 17% work in the summer only and 41% did not work. Whether youth worked part-time throughout the year, in the summer only, or volunteered, had no bearing on whether or not they were involved in activities in or outside school. Eight respondents (5%) mentioned wanting to do activities if

they had the chance. These youth also worked part-time which led the investigator to speculate whether financial needs, transportation issues and/or also lack of time were factors to consider.

#### *Elements Most and Least Important*

Respondents were asked to give their personal rating of the importance of the six key *elements* (one being most and 6 being least). Table 4.12, p. 198 depicts the average ratings in the first column and the ranking in the second column. The lower the average the more important the element was in the minds of the youth surveyed. 'Sense of belonging' was the most important element (2.0), followed quite closely by 'emotional and physical safety' (2.3). There was a substantial difference in importance with, 'supportive relationships' (3.1), followed by identical ratings for 'meaningful youth participation' and 'competencies and skills' (3.5 for both). 'Leadership' was far less important (5.2), which was interesting because one of the focus group sessions was held within a leadership class. The responses in this class tended to be stronger towards 'meaningful youth participation' than other groups, however 'leadership' still ranked in the lower half. Overall, the affective *elements* relating to how youth feel with others and within their environments, is very important to them.

Table 4.12

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 Respondents' Personal Rankings of Elements from Most to Least Important
 

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	Focus Group Sessions	
	Average	Ranking
	1 = Most Important	
	6 = Least Important	
Meaningful Youth Participation	3.5	#4
Supportive Relationships	3.1	#3
Sense of Belonging	2.0	#1
Competencies and Skills	3.5	#5
Emotional & Physical Safety	2.3	#2
Leadership	5.2	#6

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*Respondents Comment on What is Missing in Their Community*

Seventy-five percent of the respondents offered opinions about what was missing in their community (Refer to Table 4.13, p.199). A number of themes emerged: (a) Supporting youth in finding resources in the community, (b) enabling better connections for youth with people in the community including their neighbours, (c) getting youth more involved in community activities and (d) providing safe affordable places for youth to hang out with proper adult guidance and supervision. Five respondents felt Surrey had everything youth needed and four youth felt Surrey lacked everything and no-one cared. In analyzing the comments, there was a sense by about 25% of those who responded that youth could find resources but did not look hard enough, or were too lazy to bother. Generally, however, the comments reflected the opinions of youth that there are not enough activities available and

affordable for all youth to participate in. Some respondents mentioned that the perception of youth by adults and other youth needs to be more positive, and this could only happen if people became friendlier and more respectful toward youth. Twenty percent of the respondents wanted more support and guidance from parents and schools in terms of addressing bad behaviours, racism and drug and violence issues. Thirty-eight percent asked for places and activities that are safe and affordable, with activities youth would enjoy, supervised by adults. Most compelling in the data was the request by 37% of the respondents to support youth in having opportunities to be more involved with adults and their communities.

Table 4.13

## Respondents Comment on What is Missing in Their Community

Missing	# of Responses	Quotes
Need safe places, clubs, community centres, without spending lots – lower prices	49	“Bigger centres” “Community Centers or clubs for all ages.” “Areas for youth to chill.” “Cool places to hang out.” “Not enough youth groups/places that are safe and enjoyable.” “More hangout places, safe places that have a controlled or mature environment” “Sports.”
Need more opportunities for youth to get involved in community – a better connection – social interaction – real support for youth involvement – adults and youth interacting – programs like soup kitchen - Better connection with neighbours	47	People expressing their goals and aspirations for life in an open manor. “Ways of communicating it to youths” “Real word of mouth, because people who usually get all of these elements are shy to explain why they go there because of social status or something” “Maybe some more action to get kids involved in the community more? This would make them more aware of how they could build on themselves and their communities when they’re older.”

Table 4.13 Cont'd

## Respondents' Comment on What is Missing in Their Community

Missing	# of Responses	Quotes
Places to go where youth feel 'emotional and physical safety' and sense of belonging	33	"The community has become less safe, so there needs to be something done about that. You even begin to notice that there's less trick-or-treating every Halloween."
Bad behaviour not corrected– More parental guidance –less racism - stop littering – address drug issues & violence	26	"There needs to be less racism because it splits people up. Something like anti-racial seminars/workshops to promote diversity at schools would work well." "There's too much violence, drugs, and alcohol. They need to promote the message to not do drugs, alcohol, etc more in school. Also have better relationships with family and participate in community affairs."
Need more activities	22	"Push youth toward positive activities."
Don't know where to find resources, need more information	15	"Not a lot of resources out there to get youth involved. Also, many people don't hear about them, and don't know where to find them."
Better transportation	11	"More transportation in the night, cause its hard to get home when the last bus is done."
Friendlier people and respect - a better attitude overall so youth can be supported.	9	"Less biased views. Adult's perception of teenagers should be different. More promotion to get youth involved in programs." "Respect from adults, if they have no respect for youth how do they expect us to respect them."
Nothing is missing	5	"Can't think of anything missing." "Everything is in the community. People just don't make the effort." "Nothing really. We already have a lot."
Everything is missing	4	"Not enough information, because no one cares and no one knows." "No one cares."

Of the respondents that spoke to what is missing in Surrey 93% mentioned either more places and activities for youth where they feel safe and a sense of belonging, and better adult, community, youth connections and more opportunities for interactions between these groups.

### *Summary of Findings for Question #2*

Youth Mappers had an opportunity to reflect on the two different methods of data collection. As Youth Mappers considered the one-on-one interviews with respondents they had recruited, they acknowledged that their probing and guiding assisted youth respondents in identifying *elements* in their lives. The repetitive nature of these interviews reinforced the information to the Youth Mappers. By the end of their key informant interviews, the Youth Mappers had become very familiar with the *elements* and easily able to recognize them in the lives of others as well as themselves. This provided the Youth Mappers with a unique experience that was very different from their normal everyday experiences. In contrast the focus group sessions required a very different approach. The Youth Mappers worked as a team to present the information and then broke into smaller groups generating a sense of fun as youth discussed PPA and the *elements*. Youth Mappers were able to identify changes in perceptions of key informant interview respondents as a result of the one-on-one, in-depth interview process. Discussions generated from the *elements* caused respondents to consider new ways of thinking about resources in their lives that build important *elements* that facilitate PYD.

### Question #3 – Benefits to Youth Participating in the Study

The third research question was to examine the benefits gained by Youth Mappers and respondents from their involvement in the CYM project. A Collaborative Action Research study should both engage and empower the co-researchers in learning and taking action to enhance their environment and their acquisition of new skills should be transferable to future endeavours. This study described how the youth benefited from the process in terms of their change in comprehension, knowledge, experience, skills, beliefs and attitudes, and understanding of the opportunities and limitations within their community.

#### *Acquisition of Skills*

Skill levels among Youth Mappers were observed and examined at numerous points during the study through written training evaluations, videotape review of training, reflection/action cycle meeting transcriptions, field notes, key informant interview data collected by Youth Mappers, focus group session evaluations, and concluding Youth Mappers' interviews.

Youth Mappers reported gaining a variety of skills from the training. In technology this included: (a) Learning to compose a photograph for portrait or landscape, downloading, cropping and adjusting photos and preparing them for email and the web using Adobe Photoshop or Paint; (b) using a GPS to locate objects and plot locations; (c) using a laptop to work with Google Earth Plus to mark locations of resources, (d) working with Sketch-Up in order to build 3D models of places for use on Google Earth Plus; and (e) operating video and audio equipment for maximum effectively.

Youth Mappers also developed skills in data collection and transcribed their key informant interviews. This was an area where different skill levels were demonstrated in the accuracy and detail of information collected and transcribed.

Youth Mappers learned to use appropriate communication skills in order to build a rapport with respondents, and not be concerned about themselves but concentrate on the person they were recruiting and interviewing. For shy Youth Mappers this was a big step and the fact that all youth completed their key informant interviews and facilitated focus group sessions was significant. Some youth ventured further with this aspect than others.

Findings from the concluding Youth Mapper interviews demonstrated additional benefits that included: (a) Interpersonal skills gained from working with others and recruiting respondents, (b) communication skills conveying the intent of the study and clarifying questions, (c) facilitating and probing skills to acquire more information from the key Informant and Focus Group respondents, (d) acquiring knowledge in the field of positive youth development, and (e) skills using a variety of research data collection methods.

#### *Gaining a Broader Perspective*

Youth Mappers learned where and how their peers accessed resources (people, places and activities) that build key *elements* to facilitate PYD within their school and community. They also learned about the broader community context in which they live and what was missing to support PYD.

Within the data, Youth Mappers noted that young people have varying amounts of opportunities and supports in their lives. Six of the 10 Youth Mappers already had most or all of the *elements* in their lives at the start of the study and so saw little change in this

aspect. However, they reported that they were able to change the perceptions of a number of youth they interviewed who did not have such strong support. Two Youth Mappers had about half the people, places, and activities in their lives they needed at the start of the study and this had improved for both by the end of the study. This suggests they sought out additional sources and resources because of their experience in the CYM project.

All of the Youth Mappers in the concluding interview described having gained a new perspective on their own role in their community, school and family, and identified themselves as being able to provide different resources to their community than before the CYM project. These new roles included being able to recognize when *elements* are present or not, being more interested in understanding which *elements* are missing for youth who are acting discouraged or are involved in risk-behaviours, and being more confident in getting involved in more community initiatives in the future.

In the concluding Youth Mapper interviews, Mappers were asked to describe in their own words, what they learned about families as a result of this Community Youth Mapping effort. Interestingly, the Youth Mappers included friends in the discussion of families although they were not directed to and five commented on the importance of friends. Two commented only on friends even though they were asked about family. Seven Youth Mappers felt that respondents commented on 'physical and emotional safety' and 'supportive relationships' as the *elements* most commonly found in families/friends. Six also thought 'sense of belonging' was an important attribute of families/friends. Three felt families were number one, the ones you can count on and a huge part of youths' lives. Two others talked about the importance of encouragement and support provided by friends and families.

Youth Mappers were asked to describe in their own words, what they learned about Schools as a result of this Community Youth Mapping effort. Two Youth Mappers felt that all the *elements* are found at school. Five commented that competencies and skills, meaningful youth participation, and leadership were the main *elements* of PYD found in schools. Three Youth Mappers mentioned school as a big influence in their lives, they found supportive relationship there, but also commented that the surrounding area outside of the schools is not safe. Only one Youth Mapper mentioned feeling a sense of belonging in school. One Mapper commented on extra-curricular activities after school hours in the gym was important. Again, ‘emotional and physical safety’ was quite obvious in its absence from discussion.

Youth Mappers were asked to describe in their own words, what they learned about Communities as a result of this Community Youth Mapping effort. Sixty-six percent of Youth Mappers identified malls, movie theatres and sport related activities in recreation centres and sport facilities as the most common places for youth to hang out. Sixty-one percent mentioned popular restaurants and coffee shops such as Tim Horton’s, Earls, Starbucks and MacDonald as well as local places to eat. Sixty-eight percent mentioned hanging out at friend’s houses or in cars as preferred things to do. Twenty-two percent mentioned the lack of safety and youth do not feel connected in any way to their community. Home, parents, schools, teachers and friends were consistently mentioned as a source of *elements* that assist in PYD.

Youth Mappers were asked what would have better prepared them and what could be done to improve the training and data collection methods. They were also asked if they had an opportunity would they want to stay involved with this project. Sixty-six percent stated

that nothing more needed to be added to improve training. Twenty-two percent mentioned the need for more practice to improve interview skills. Twelve percent were unsure what to suggest to improve training and one Youth Mapper thought the training sessions needed to be conducted at a faster pace.

They were asked whether the process of learning about school and community through conducting interviews changed their view of themselves. Three Youth Mappers felt they remained unchanged, however, one of those felt they made a difference by demonstrating that Surrey isn't as bad as its reputation. Six Youth Mappers found their perceptions had shifted for various reasons. These included: gaining new respect for everyone's opinion; developing more interpersonal communication skills; and gaining a broader understanding of themselves through the interview process. Three reported that they gained confidence and had fun. One Youth Mapper felt really smart like a TV reporter, while another was shy at first but then opened up and decided to have fun with it, especially leading Focus Groups.

Youth Mappers were asked how respondents felt when being interviewed in terms of changing their views and learning from the experience. All of them felt there were changes in many of the respondents. Two had to coach respondents to come up with answers but the other eight suggested that the respondents gained from the process. The element sheet (Refer to Appendix A - Elements that Assist PYD, p. 322) required respondents to examine resources of people, places and activities in their own lives in order to provide answers. Comments included, respondents gained a better understanding of what is important in their lives to better themselves, youth gave lots of information and felt like part of the community

helping out by doing the interviews, youth learned they have to get involved more and some saw Surrey as a great place with a bad reputation.

The Youth Mappers were asked to consider their new knowledge of *elements* that assist PYD, and whether they see or feel aspects of these *elements* in their daily lives or how they see the world. Eight commented that they had become more aware of the key *elements* that facilitate PYD, and examined when and where they were present in their lives, and the lives of friends and other youth they come in contact with. Two Youth Mappers were affirmed that they were fortunate to have all of the *elements* in their lives. All Youth Mappers stated that they now relate what they have learned about key *elements* that facilitate PYD in the way they conduct their daily lives.

Youth Mappers were asked if they thought they are different or will do anything differently as a result of their experiences with the project. Four out of ten Mappers felt their ability to communicate better had greatly improved, i.e., developing new people skills and interpersonal communication skills. Learning to work in a team and share responsibility was a big factor. One Youth Mapper spoke to the difficulties overcoming sharing leadership and the changes she made to interact better and not try to control the outcomes. Another Youth Mapper said she would walk away with everything she has learned, especially the *elements*. Technology and research skills were a big change for some and an area they see themselves using more in the future. One particularly quiet Youth Mapper was much more aware of accessing resources in the community and plans to become more involved and connected within his community. One of the Youth Team Captains said “Yeah, I do treat others differently. When my peers point out druggies, I wonder what *elements* are missing? I

automatically click right there...what is missing in their lives that could change them. What factors made them that way?"

### *Summary of Findings for Question #3*

There were a number of benefits derived for the Youth Mappers. They gained social and/or people skills (e.g., networking, building rapport, working within a team, listening, recruiting,) technical skills (e.g., question formulation, note taking and transcribing, observation, recording, GPS, Google Earth, and digital cameras) and administrative skills (facilitating, presenting, scheduling, and organizing). They also gained useful information about their neighbourhoods and community, and about differences and similarities in finding available resources through people, places and activities. Finally, most of them gained a new perspective of their own identity within the community and their possible roles in their community, schools, and families.

### Summary of Findings

In reviewing whether a CAR approach enhances the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping project, Youth Mappers recruitment, conducive training environment and location, transportation for youth participants, and incentives for continued participation were related to successful implementation of the study. The rich diversity of the Youth Mappers (ethnicity/culture and demographics) was related to the successful implementation of this study. The CYM training provided adequate skills, knowledge and competence to get started. The addition of the fourth day of training proved useful in building confidence and providing the needed practice in key informant interview

and focus group methods and use of the technology. The reflection/action cycle meetings were effective in producing additional skills, confidence and decisions regarding needed changes and next steps.

Youth Mappers were able to collect a variety of data relating to how youth spend their time when not in class. This included in-school activities such as sports, student council, clubs, etc., and activities outside of school in sports, performance related activities, youth groups, volunteering activities and where and how much youth work. Youth Mappers were also able to document the people, places and activities youth get the most support from in terms of finding *elements* that facilitate PYD. Respondents reported favourite places and activities and discussed the *elements* found there. They then spoke to perceptions by young people about Surrey in terms of how aware youth are of being able to find *elements* in their lives and what is missing.

The third research question, to describe the benefits to youth from the experience, indicated that youth gained skills in working with people, skills that could be useful in jobs or school, and a greater understanding about their community and the people around them. The interpersonal skills developed by the Youth Team Captains were definitely more advanced than those mentioned by the other Youth Mappers because of their leadership, coordinating and facilitative role within the study and the extra time being mentored and coached by adult co-researchers.

These findings will be further discussed, along with the limitations and recommendations for future implementation of similar projects and further studies in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

## Discussion

*Our Collaborative Action Research Approach*

As mentioned, the study followed a Collaborative Action Research (CAR), a form of Action Research (Hills & Mullett, 1995, 2000, 2005). In addition, the approach was derived from Co-operative Inquiry (Heron and Reason, 2001), the philosophical basis from community development, with the rigorous application of Action Research. The investigator attended to the basic assumptions that underlie this methodology, particularly the notion of self-determination by engaging all participants/co-researchers (Youth Mappers, adult researchers) in all decisions regarding the research process. The investigator and co-researchers were aware of the extended epistemology of Co-operative Inquiry and incorporated the four types of knowing – propositional, presentational, experiential and practical (as explained in Chapter 3, p. 115) within the inquiry process.

Formally, Co-operative Inquiry consists of a series of logical steps including: identifying the issues and questions to be studied; developing an explicit model or framework for practice; putting the model into practice and recording what happens; and, reflecting on the experience and making sense out of the whole venture (Reason, 1988; Hills, 2001). The research team within the study cycled through these steps in a series of iterations of reflection and action consisting of four stages as described by Heron and Reason (Chapter 3, p. 100; Heron, 1996; Reason, 1988, 1994; Hills, 2001).

The research study started off moving through these four stages, which make one complete cycle that goes from reflection to action and back to reflection again, and there were numerous choices to be made within each of the stages. Refer to Figure 5.1 – Collaborative Action Research Cycles; p. 209.

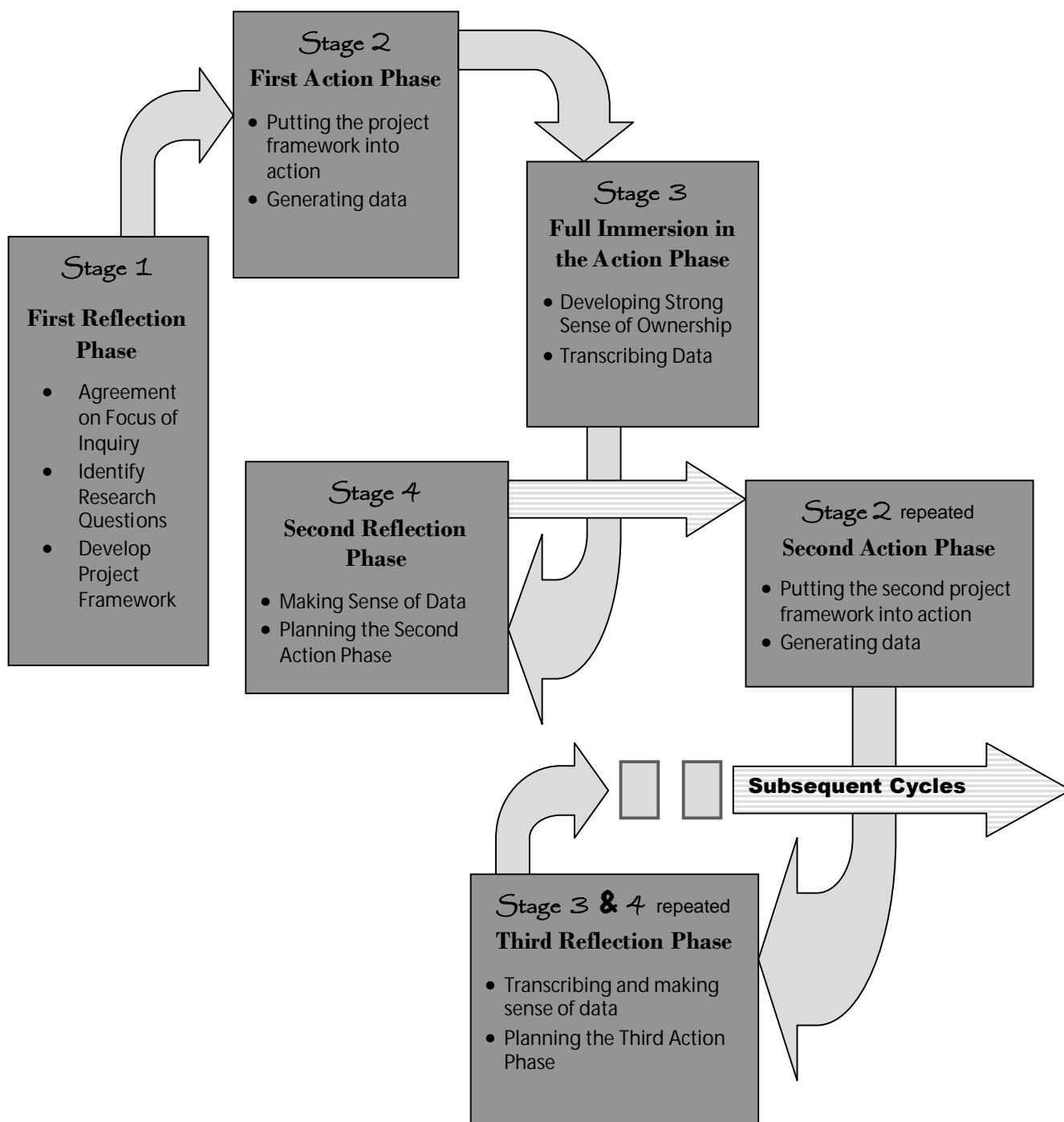


Figure 5.1 Collaborative Action Research Cycles  
Adapted from Hills 2005 (Presentation of Collaborative Action Research)

In addition to the theoretical constructs, findings from an evaluation of four Community Youth Development Initiatives in BC (Miller et al., 2006) provided insight into working with youth as co-researchers in our inquiry. The variety of techniques, responses and personal characteristics exhibited by youth were almost as diverse as the youth themselves. Particularly evident was the varying involvement level, also commented upon by Reason (2003), especially at the inquiry cycle where some “may enjoy group interaction, enter fully into discussions about inquiry but be unwilling to commit themselves in practice.” Reason (2003) further notes that “others may rush off into new activity without giving sufficient attention to the reflective side of the inquiry” p. 222. Therefore, the investigator stressed the importance of the reflection/action cycles to the success of the study and ensured adequate time was allowed for this process along with a supported environment to establish open and safe interaction.

Another aspect embedded within the inquiry was the forms of knowing and the outcomes associated with them. Heron and Reason (2001) highlight the fact that “practical knowing consummates the other three forms of knowing and brings them to their fullness” (p.188). Practical knowing is partly about developing competencies or skills and was central to this study. The Youth Mappers identified technological aspects as relevant, useful and exciting and directed the nature of the study. Digital cameras, enhancing photos, operating a laptop computer for web purposes (different from focusing on Word documents used in school), GPS and web development were all incorporated into the training based on the Youth Mappers’ confirmation that these were important. This aspect of the study cannot be under-stated because it related to the tactile and visual nature of youths’ uptake of knowledge and provided the catalyst to the uptake of the theoretical aspects of the study.

*Stage 1 First Reflection Phase**1-1 Focus of inquiry.*

In the summer of 2006 the investigator was approached by the Coordinator of the Surrey Community Youth Development initiative and the ED of the Community Youth Development Coalition of British Columbia to support the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping Project within the City of Surrey.

The initiating researchers recruited representation from the Surrey School District (Director of Research and Evaluation, VP Superintendent, a School Principal); the Surrey Foundation - Youth In Philanthropy (adult advisor and 4 youth). The group (research design team) convened to discuss the broad topic of involving youth in a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project. As with most co-operative inquiries, the idea for our study originated in experiential knowing when we discovered during an extensive evaluation of four CYD initiatives in British Columbia (Miller, et al., 2006) that the communities effort to implement a CYM project involved youth primarily as data collectors and not as co-researchers.

In the first meetings, the initiating researchers facilitated the following: (a) Opportunities for the design team to talk about their interest in the topic area, (b) discussion about what a CAR approach within a CYM project might involve in terms of participative method, roles and time-structure, (c) discussion of any selection criteria they considered relevant for the inquiry regarding membership (participating schools, Youth Mappers, etc.) and geographic areas of Surrey, and, (d) discussion of group working principles in conducting the research. To assist with the agreement of the research study's focus, it was

useful to discuss the possible outcomes it will have for youth and the community. In these discussions it was helpful to frame the possible outcomes as being either informative and/or transformative in nature (Refer to Chapter 3, Outcomes of CI, p. 82). Our research study was a combination of both having a practical focus (transformative) in types of skills and practices co-researchers acquire along with situational changes they have brought about within their community particularly within the schools; and a descriptive focus (informative) where the outcomes gave explanatory information about combining a CAR approach in implementing a CYM project.

Active discussion also occurred regarding the research study's working principles and challenges regarding the importance of participant decision-making and authentic collaboration between the partners so the inquiry becomes truly co-operative; and creating a project climate where 'emotional safety' exists where stress and tension aroused by the inquiry can be openly accepted and processed. The following broad working principles/approaches were agreed on and incorporated by the group (a similar process was facilitated with Community Youth Mappers during training): (a) Meaningful youth participation, (b) strengths-based, (c) settings/social-ecological, (d) youth development, and (e) community development. These principles along with the CAR approach (iterative cycles of reflection and action) were instrumental in grounding our group in making critical decisions on the direction of the study

A challenge that existed through this first phase included the importance of the research design team and Youth Mappers understanding idiosyncrasies of the CAR methodology approach to support the implementation of the CYM project. The Surrey School District research department and Coordinator of the Surrey Community Youth

Development initiative had past experience with action research but mostly within the realm of Participatory Action Research which does not have the inherent complexity or epistemology of a CAR approach. This issue was more apparent among the Youth Mappers and more time was provided at the initial training session to teach the inquiry phases and the defining features of CI. As time progressed, the youth became more comfortable with the interplay between reflection (making sense of their experiences) and action. The youth referred to these interplays as reflection/action meetings.

*1-2 First action plan and data generation methods.*

A total of six research design teams meetings occurred prior to the training of Youth Mappers. Within each of these meetings mini reflection and action cycles occurred where action items were divided between the group for preparation for the next meeting through a divergent (each going off and doing different actions, finding out different things) and/or convergent (where two or three members worked on the same action item) process. These meetings were essential in engaging in critical dialogue for determining group consensus on the structure of the study; the plan for action (2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the inquiry), recruitment of Youth Mappers; research questions; and, how long the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage will last and timing for Youth Mappers. Dialogue also considered options regarding data collection and recording methods and the group decided that the project would use GPS and GIS technology, digital photography, audio and video taping, and specialized software for visually presented mapped data on the web. This type of record-keeping fits within a CI approach (Heron, 1998) where the use of 'presentational knowing' (expressed in graphic and art forms) was incorporated in the study in the form of a visual web-based map (GPS/GIS), photography, music, and graphic designs. Heron, 1998 also suggests that this type of knowing also supports

propositional forms or conceptual knowing (usually verbal forms used to categorize, analyze and theorize).

One of the important decisions made was the need for extensive training of Youth Mappers (Refer to Training of Youth Mappers, p. 98). The research design team developed the purpose and objectives of each of the training modules along with an expedient timeline to meet the needs of the Youth Mappers and the confines of the school year timetable. It was decided that each training module (Refer to Appendix D - Outline and Objectives of CYM Training, p. 337) would be facilitated by the Youth Team Captains and technical training provided by experts presenting in the areas of: (a) Community youth development, (b) strengths-based approach, (c) data collection, (d) interview techniques, (e) group facilitation, and (f) use of technology including GPS, GIS, digital photography, audio and video taping, and specialized software for visually presented mapped data on the web.

### *Stage 2 First Action Phase*

Stage Two (First Action Phase) involved co-researchers (Youth Mappers and adult researchers) who are also now co-subjects in the piloting and implementing of the data collection phase of the study. Youth Mappers were able to apply their new inquiry skills and experience how the research approach/practice conformed or did not conform to their original idea of the study. This phase enabled co-researchers to record processes and outcomes experienced by themselves along with those experienced by the Key Informant and Focus Group respondents.

Over the three month period of this action phase, Youth Mappers had numerous opportunities to practice and master their newly developed data collection skills. In order for Mappers to feel supported during this phase, the adult researchers and Youth Team Captains

encouraged Youth Mappers to communicate their thoughts and concerns via email, conference calls, phone, training evaluations, and research team meetings. This provided a supportive learning environment and allowed opportunities for resolving conflict and trouble shooting, sharing experiences (similarities and patterns), and developing and acting on further strategies to improve the data-collection process. As this action phase progressed the support needed by the Youth Mappers also increased. It was helpful to divide the Youth Mappers into three teams; each being assigned a Youth Team Captain. It was a lengthy process for the adult researchers in providing mentoring and coaching to the Team Captains but this process paid off with over fifty percent of the communication from Youth Mappers being directed to their Captains. This also clearly demonstrated how decision-making was transferred to the youth in the study.

The challenge within this phase was striking the right balance between action and reflection which is critical to the validity of the research (Heron, 1998). (Refer to The Question of Validity, p. 87). This activity is an integral part of the research process and involves going back and forth between action and reflection, looking at the various facets of experience and practice of the co-researchers and the developing ideas. According to Heron and Reason the cycling process will lead to a refining of, “experiential and reflective forms of knowing” and hence, better quality of knowledge can be generated (Heron & Reason 2001, p.184).

### *Stage 3 (Full Immersion in the Action Phase)*

By the second week of the data collection phase Youth Mappers were fully engaged in their practice and experiences within the study. It was also a time where Youth Mappers started receiving recognition from their school and community for their work. This in-turn

created a strong sense of ownership and self pride among them. Youth Mappers' experiences in this stage made way for transformative changes regarding data collection protocol and practice. For example, changes were made in conducting the focus group sessions, with the Youth Mappers deciding to develop a creative and entertaining DVD explaining '*Elements that Facilitate PYD*'. This was shown at the beginning of each session and was effective in introducing the study along with providing an excellent icebreaker for the youth participants. Another example came from Mappers reflecting on their experiences and implementing creative changes to the key informant interview protocol to ensure ease of data collection. It was also during this stage that Youth Mappers reported personal transformative changes, for example commenting on how comfortable they now were approaching strangers for interviews.

#### *Stage 4 Second Reflection Phase*

##### *4-1 Making sense.*

This day-and-a-half session began with a concluding award ceremony to acknowledge the successful completion of the data collection and the personal contribution of each Youth Mapper. It was a special celebration to recognize how well the co-researchers had worked as a team and how individual qualities and characteristics had benefitted the whole process. Each Youth Mapper received a certificate acknowledging their expertise as a Community Youth Mapper and the specialized skills they had acquired. In addition, the adult facilitator led the group in an activity to highlight the individual strengths, special personal qualities and unique gifts each Youth Mapper brought to the project. These reflections reinforced the importance of each Youth Mappers' role in the project as well as

described the special bond and respect that had developed over the past three months. It was also a morale boosting culmination activity to start off a “wrap-up” data-collection day.

In preparation for the full-day post-data collection session, each Youth Mapper was assigned the task of transcribing their data and reflecting on the findings. Within this session Youth Mappers had opportunity within their individual teams and as a larger group to discuss findings (practice and inquiry topic). The Coordinator’s house provided plenty of space with large sheets of paper to chart *elements* that facilitate PYD through people, places and activities. This process also provided an excellent visual to then plot locations of these resources through people, places and activities that build *elements* on a large map of Surrey that was prepared by the Youth Team Captains. The process provided a combination of presentational knowing (through charting and mapping) and propositional knowing (verbal conversations used to categorize and analyze data), being able to highlight significant patterns or similarity and difference in the data. Phone books aided in plotting locations of places identified by respondents and patterns emerged around malls, recreation centres, schools, as well as local restaurants and coffee shops. The co-researchers were surprised at the amount of time, energy and patience required in this phase, possibly because the youth were tired from just finishing the school year and major provincial exams. The timing had to be precise to occur after the final provincial examinations which two youth were writing the previous day, and before youth left on summer holidays. Despite their exhaustion, the Youth Mappers were keen to attend, and aware they might not see each other much over the holidays, were planning the next steps of action to start up again in the fall.

The investigator recognized this reflection cycle must be structured to hear from Youth Mappers individually. Adhering to advice from Reason (2003) who stated that the

“inquiry investigator has a crucial role to play here in initiating people into the iteration of action and reflection, and helping people understand the power of the research cycle” (p. 222). In addition, the investigator’s findings from the evaluation of four Community Youth Development Initiatives in BC (Miller, et al., 2006) suggested that adults cannot make assumptions about youth but must provide an environment where youth feel able to articulate their thoughts and be prompted to speak to their experiences. Devising individual concluding interviews with a script of a dozen questions pertaining specifically to their experiences provided a wealth of insights (Refer to I: Concluding Youth Mappers Interview Questions, p. 359). The Youth Mappers were prompted and encouraged to speak about the benefits they had gained, changes in themselves and others as well as potential improvement to the whole inquiry process. It was essential that the setting be emotionally safe for the Youth Mappers. To help the youth be less self-conscious an audio-tape was used instead of video-tape to record the data. In addition, a system was devised by the investigator to have two youth and one adult present for all but the first interview, where two adults and one Youth Team Captain participated in the concluding interview. The first Youth Mapper (also a Youth Team Captain), was interviewed by the investigator, while the Coordinator of the Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative took notes. After the interview, the Youth Team Captain then replaced the Coordinator as the note-taker for the next interview. This replacement of note-taker with interviewee took place at each interview. This allowed each Youth Mapper except the last one, who was also a Youth Team Captain, to experience the two roles, and provided them with insights into another Youth Mapper’s perceptions. One of the most significant findings from the Youth Mappers was that they had learnt over the course of this inquiry to respect others’ differences and this process aided them in

recognizing that experiential knowing is a very individual phenomenon. In keeping with Reason (2003), this purposeful reflection cycle allowed each group member to “deepen their engagement with the inquiry, open themselves to more subtle understandings, engage with previously unsuspected aspects of the inquiry task, and so on” (p.220).

#### *4-2 Planning the second action phase.*

The second (half day) session provided more opportunities for Youth Mappers to discuss findings and give feedback. During this session they further discussed their experiences and benefits derived from the study and provided their own recommendations on the process and model for use in future projects. They also provided the following next steps toward planning a strategy around knowledge transfer which included:

1. Presenting to an international Health Promotion Conference on June 7th, 2007.
2. Presenting the Annual General Meeting of the BC Coalition for Community Youth Development on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007.
3. Presenting their findings to the Surrey School Board.
4. Contacting the Surrey School District to find out whether there is interest for further CYM projects within other schools.
5. Developing a website to share their findings.
6. Developing a workbook on the process.

In conclusion, involving youth as co-researchers in determining people, places and activities which support the facilitation of PYD proved enlightening. Perhaps the most significant finding relates to the importance of a few validity indicators of Cooperative Inquiry. The reflection/action cycles were a major component of the process and by the end of stage two, the Youth Mappers were at a deeper level of consciousness, becoming keenly

aware of making observations as actions were ongoing, in preparation for the ensuing reflection meetings.

Another indicator was setting the environment to reflect the six key *elements* (Refer to Appendix A: Elements that Assist Positive Youth Development, p. 322) so that: youth felt supported by all relationships within the team; felt a sense of belonging and ownership; were learning ‘competencies and skills’; were meaningfully engaged at every step; their ‘emotional and physical safety’ and wellbeing was considered continually; and they each became leaders in the CYM project. The Youth Mappers became so familiar with the six key *elements* by the end of the study that any disparity between their working environment and the *elements* would have been glaringly obvious.

Another significant aspect of the study was related to the *ways of knowing* as outlined by Heron and Reason (2001). While in the beginning of the research inquiry the Youth Mappers were open to following the activities set out for them, in the final transformative phase the Youth Mappers had clearly taken ownership of the project and were empowered with the new leadership, decision-making and research skills they had acquired.

#### *Building Knowledge.*

As previously discussed the design team agreed that increasing knowledge around theoretical and technological aspects was necessary, and that university experts present the pertinent information the youth needed to know. Using dialogue and mapping techniques the group explored the people, places and activities in terms of personal assumptions and values. Also, no assumptions were made regarding existing youth knowledge. Rather a systematic approach was used, combining presentation of information to include lecture and interactive

learning techniques as well as formative evaluations to determine the uptake of knowledge and where further reinforcement was needed.

### *Adult Roles*

Upon reflection, a pertinent finding from the study was the successful collaboration between the adult investigator and adult Coordinator of the Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative. They were able to speak to prospective organizational partners, adult community members, as well as monetary and behavioural aspects and basically bounce ideas off each other. This provided a more supportive and progressive environment for the adults than if the investigator had been working alone. The investigator may have found himself second guessing decisions whereas another adult perspective helped resolve issues and expedite the process so that the Youth Mappers always felt progress was being made. This was an important consideration since young people need to see progress in order to maintain motivation. Maintaining similar philosophical approaches was also essential with the two adults on the same wave length throughout the study. They observed each other's actions and provided feedback to support authentic collaboration with the youth. This was confirmed in the Youth Mappers' concluding interviews and anonymous evaluations after every training and action phase. The youth commented on how well organized the training was and how they were making an important contribution to their community through this study. They presented the Coordinator with the first Community Youth Hotspot Award signifying the key *elements* which facilitate positive youth development occurred with the adult researchers and within the Coordinator's house.

An additional component adults working with youth co-researchers should consider before undertaking a CYM project using a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach is

the level of participation that they are able to support within available time constraints, finances and contextual influences. Although CAR usually requires a longer timeframe to build relationships and gather the pertinent data, involving youth as co-researchers within the school setting compressed the parameters of the study down to five months. A disadvantage was the fact that the Youth Mappers were finally grasping the scope and potential of the CYM project as the inquiry ended. The Youth Mappers were eager to continue their work and discussed further endeavours of engaging different schools and community organizations.

In addition to the adult researchers, Mullett, Jung and Hills (2004) describe how agencies (including schools) work within community based collaboration. They state that “the community exerts both a facilitating and constraining influence over how the school operates. Facilitators are features of the sector that constitute components such as social conditions and needs, general community support and social awareness of the issue. Constraining issues on the other hand are factors such as available resources, political climate and political priorities, and economic restraints,” (p.162). Fortunately for the purposes of this study, the receptiveness of school administrators, especially in the school of Tamanawis, opened the doors for us. The school administration was quick to grasp the notion that this was a win-win situation. In terms of constraints, our study did not require financial support but furthered the school mandates to promote community partnerships. Both politically and financially we were able to support each other and, as with all good partnerships, progress was achieved by the agencies (the schools), the participants (the Youth Mappers) and the investigator (theoretically based valid research). In a political environment where measuring outcomes is encouraged, this proved a successful community partnership

and one that could never have taken place without the integral participation by the gatekeepers of the school, the school district administration.

*Balance of Adult and Youth Roles - Authentic Collaboration and Meaningful Youth Participation*

Schultz (2004, p. 456) refers to the educational psychology theory of Vygotsky when stating that “cognitive skills are the products of activities practiced in the social institutions of the culture in which individuals grow up”. Vygotsky (1978) describes how crucial adult roles are in guiding young people when stating “It is the distance between actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p.86). For youth, working with people who can help their learning through questioning, discussion, and/or skill and competencies acquisition is an important aspect of the cognitive development process, and thus positive youth development.

Gunn (2008, p.254) states that “young people...need support from well-informed adults to understand the nature of their power and how best to apply it in different organizational structures.” In a recent study in England examining the power of young people to help shape decision in the local policy process, alongside managers, local politicians and frontline workers, Gunn found that youth and service workers tended to see their involvement as supporting the other two groups’ agendas rather than getting their voices heard. Gunn calls for those involved in the process of working collaboratively with youth to reflect on where their power lies and to support change toward helping youth achieve “real” participation in collaborative efforts.

CAR requires a commitment to authentic collaboration and meaningful youth participation. This was monitored throughout the study using Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992). The Team Youth Captains received double the training with a one-to-one adult to youth ratio and operated at the top levels of the scale where youth were leading the direction of the inquiry under the guidance of the adults. Approximately half of the training for the other Youth Mappers was presented by the Team Youth Captains and the rest by adult experts. Their level of involvement fluctuated from decision-makers under the guidance of adults to recipients of knowledge from adults. The Team Youth Captains definitely were more committed and engaged than the other Youth Mappers. However, it is interesting that the majority of the Youth Mappers have branched off into additional areas of community involvement as a result of the study. This leads the investigator to believe that again, assumptions by adults are at play here and level of consciousness may be greater than first assumed both by adults and the youth themselves when assessing youth on Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992). Many of the youth did not feel they had changed as much as they had helped others change. This was particularly true of the Team Youth Captains who were perhaps already at a high consciousness level coming into the project since they volunteered for the leadership roles.

#### *A Natural Follow-up is Peer Education*

In October of 2007 the Youth Team Captains met with representatives from three elementary school people (two principals and a school counsellor) and are presently training students in these schools to support the implementation of new CYM projects in Surrey. Reason (2003), points out that when numerous experts in research knowledge collaborate with children and youth toward their cognitive development within the constructs of the four

ways of knowing, the children and youth are bound to be impacted in terms of their future endeavours. As such, the Youth Mappers themselves have pointed out the importance of peer education and are using critical thinking, dialogue, and participation skills that broaden perspectives within a collaborative inquiry approach, to work within diverse situations with other youth who may have differing views.

We expect positive bi-directional interactions (Lerner, 2005) to occur in conducive settings with regard to peer education, especially given the optimum skills the Youth Mappers have acquired. The Youth Mappers themselves were involved in bi-directional interactions with respondents whereby thoughts transformed because of their inquiries and listening skills. The CYM project has provided Youth Mappers with a foundation that will assist them in their ongoing interactions with others so that they understand the training needs and importance of and time requirements of building knowledge and skills in their younger peers.

#### *From Power to Empowerment*

Interestingly, although the study resulted in rich data, the focus of the process was somewhat different for the Youth Mappers than the adult investigator. Shared decision-making emerged as a cornerstone of this form of study but, whereas the youth were intent on reaching the destination, the investigator was more in-tune with the journey. Together we decided what our destination would be; yet the journey allowed us to refine the details of our end-point along the way and examine our own bi-directional growth as a result of working together. The sophisticated communication skills required to transcend to a reciprocal unit requires “the use of the full range of sensibilities to inquire together into any aspect of the human condition with which the transparent body-mind can engage” (Heron, 1996, p.1). The

empowerment of individuals within the group is necessary if the group is to surmount the challenges of institutional, personal, and experiential differences and constraints.

#### *Youths' Need to Practice until Perfect*

In addition to the issue of empowering individuals youth constantly gave feedback regarding their need to practice for any presentational situation. Whether it was for focus groups, the International Health Conference or the BC CYD Coalition AGM, the youth demanded they be well- prepared for these events. Devoting time to practice was not an issue for the youth (although it was for the adults) but being asked to engage in face-to face communication when they were not as prepared as they would like was a source of personal tension. As such, it should be noted that incorporating enough time for youth to practice presentation skills is essential.

The following section will discuss the results related to each of the Research Questions. This discussion will help to better understand the meaning of the data and how they can be used by the youth, the school and school district, the community and, for further inquiry. Results will be discussed in the order in which they were presented in the previous chapter.

#### Discussion Related to Question #1

What is the experience of conducting a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project in order to gain an understanding of the opportunities and supports (through people, places and activities) for young people to build *elements* that facilitate positive youth development (PYD)?

### *Implementation of the Study*

#### *Sample and Recruitment of Youth Mappers*

Implementation of this study was dependent on the adequate recruitment of youth to participate as Youth Mappers and a strong partnership with the Surrey School District and participating schools. In addition, the adult co-researchers and presenters needed to be people who understood what it is like to work with youth in terms of their energy, enthusiasm as well as their need for positive support and encouragement. Providing an environment which mirrored the key *elements* that facilitate PYD was essential to the recruitment and retention of youth.

This research project avoided some of the pitfalls so prevalent in community-based research. Flicker (2008) conducted a case study of a positive youth project using community-based participatory research and found frustrations with the amount of time taken to include all stakeholders in reaching consensus. Flicker's project (2008) involved HIV positive youth, academic researchers and service providers who each held differing expectations for the research. Our study similarly had numerous stakeholders i.e., Surrey school district (school board members, administration, research and evaluation department, teachers and students), Surrey Foundation, CYD Coalition of British Columbia, academic researchers, and City of Surrey. Fortunately, the stakeholders within this research project were on board philosophically and were content with the youth-led adult collaborative decision-making. In addition, the timeline had to be compatible with the school calendar, i.e., completed by the end of June, and ensuring the process was at an appropriate pace to keep youth engaged.

Possibly the most important aspect of the study was the initial search for youth who demonstrated interest in being involved in Surrey's Community Youth Development initiative. Having connections to community partners was an essential aspect and the commitment by the adult Coordinator of Surrey's Community Youth Development initiative toward this end made this a positive experience with strong youth participation. The adult Coordinator took the necessary time over the course of a few months, to cultivate the right approach toward the study.

#### *Recruitment of Youth Mappers*

Once the three Youth Team Captains were identified and agreed to their role and working together, the study was able to gain momentum. The three leaders decided on the term "Youth Team Captain" to suggest connectedness and a fun, sporty, somewhat competitive atmosphere, like a youth may experience at summer camp. Recruitment of Youth Mappers was led by the Youth Team Captains who worked with the adult co-researchers to establish protocol. Eight Youth Mappers in total were hired after in-depth interviews by the three Youth Team Captains.

Only one of these Youth Mappers ended up leaving the study after the training and this was related to a conflict of interest as a parent was an executive member of an affiliated organization. Unfortunately, this organization was not like-minded in its approach to working with young people and did not adhere to the principle of strong meaningful youth participation, so this Youth Mapper decided to withdraw from the study so that her alliances would not be questioned by the other organization. It was a learning experience for the researchers who had assumed organizations that involved youth would have the same

philosophy toward meaningful youth engagement. This proved not to be the case and taught the adult researchers to create partnerships with “like-minded” organizations in the future.

The diverse group of Youth Mappers was balanced in terms of ethnicity, attendance at different schools, gender, and age range as well as grade level within high school. No one team of Youth Mappers dominated others, and although personality traits did cause friction especially with decision making between two of the Youth Team Captains, the youth were supported by the adult researchers to work through these issues. The fact that the young people were able to keep moving forward with the study and have support to work through differences, enabled the Youth Mappers to feel listened to and valued. The retention of the Youth Mappers was excellent and most remained involved with the adult researchers even after the CYM study was finished, designing new projects and helping within the community and school district in other ways.

#### *Learning the Skills of Recruitment*

Youth Mappers recruited respondents who were somewhat like themselves, especially for gender, age/grade, and ethnicity. The limited time, as well as lack of more stringent protocol around selecting a diverse study sample resulted in the Youth Mappers being free to choose their respondents. They chose young people they had an established comfort level with and could easily access at schools or at familiar places or shared activities (i.e., sports, academics, church, etc.). The Youth Mappers who had experienced leadership roles before coming into the study managed to recruit a more diverse group of respondents they were unfamiliar with, suggesting they had more confidence in approaching other youth. For the other Youth Mappers the learning curve was very steep and required them to develop necessary leadership and communication skills as well as confidence. By the end of the

study all Youth Mappers had gained these qualities and were less hesitant to approach strangers.

#### *Effectiveness of the Training and Team Reflection/Action Cycle Meetings*

The training was designed to prepare the Youth Mappers to be co-researchers in the development and implementation of a CYM project. It was essential to coach them to a level where they could act independently, without direct adult supervision, to effectively collect data from their peers. The delivery structure of the training content was designed to ensure strong 'Meaningful Youth Participation'. Keeping to the principles of a CAR approach, the Youth Team Captains played a crucial role in decisions pertaining to training design and the organization and facilitation of each training session. To gain Youth Mappers' interest and provide them with the skills to create valid research, experts in the content areas were brought in as presenters. It is important to recognize the ability of this age group of young people to uptake knowledge. However, although the Youth Mappers could absorb a considerable amount of information, the theoretical language had to be simplified by the experienced presenters. Youth Mappers were able to provide feedback on their comprehension and the effectiveness level of the training through written evaluations and reflection/action cycle meetings.

The Youth Mappers developed stronger communication skills as a result of the reflection/action cycle meetings, and reported finding them to be one of the most important aspects of the study. The openness to discussion and the fact that their opinions were acted upon, provided strong engagement and empowerment. This was crucial in establishing mutual respect and trust between the adult and youth co-researchers.

Another factor related to implementation was the timeline for the study which was dictated by the school calendar and youths' school, work, family and extra-curricular commitments. It cannot be stated strongly enough the importance of accommodating youths' schedules. Opportune meeting times were during professional development days for teachers when Youth Mappers were not required to be in school, nor were they away on vacation or working.

Other important factors involving young people as co-researchers include: (a) ensuring that momentum is maintained throughout the study so youth do not lose interest, (b) limiting the duration of the study to 3-4months, and (c) adult co-researchers having a firm understanding of youth development and past experiences working collaboratively with youth.

#### *Comprehension of the Content Areas*

The Youth Mappers had a good understanding of the various research methods presented to them during the training and recognized the benefits and challenges of each data collection method. The decisions they made to conduct the key informant interviews and focus group sessions were based on whether they would enjoy the method, whether it would collect useful data, and what was manageable. In addition, the choices they made regarding the *elements* that facilitate PYD indicated that they had a good sense of how much information their peers could comprehend in a short interview. To assist in making this work, the Youth Mappers condensed and reorganized the information which they felt would challenge youth to consider their own *elements* without overwhelming them with theory. As such, the Youth Mappers demonstrated a perceptive understanding of the content area.

*Determining Existing Opportunities for Peers to Build Elements that Facilitate PYD*

The Youth Mappers discovered their peers' ranked 'sense of belonging', 'supportive relationships' and 'emotional and physical safety' as the three most important *elements*, respectively. They found all three *elements* among family, friends, and youth and adult leaders at church. Informal places such as malls, friend's and their own homes, movie theatres, and restaurants provide opportunities to build all three of these *elements*. The natural environment such as parks or beaches were places that provided youth with opportunities to build two of the three *elements*; 'supportive relationships' and 'sense of belonging'. Activities in and out-of-school, volunteering and work tended to rank sense of belonging fourth most important or lower. Two exceptions were work which ranked sense of belonging second most important and clubs and groups which ranked it third. 'Emotional and physical safety' was the most important element ranked for clubs and groups which may explain why youth asked for more places to congregate within the community which were run like church youth groups, cultural groups/clubs, and informal groups who have common interests. The only other activity which ranked 'emotional and physical safety' the third most important *element* was volunteering. All other activities ranked this element least or almost least important. 'Supportive relationships' were found in all activities. Given that 'sense of belonging' was ranked as the most important element it is significant that the only resources for which this element was ranked most important were related to places and consisted of malls, movie theatres, and restaurants.

### *Summary of Discussion for Question #1*

This study successfully engaged youth as co-researchers to collect data from 174 youth respondents. While there was considerable variation between Youth Mappers in the quantity and quality of data collected, it was apparent that youth can be trained to conduct research on *elements* that facilitate PYD, and other topics related to youth and their community. Numerous challenges were encountered in implementing the study. Youth Mappers tended to gravitate toward youth their own age, gender and interests which reduced the amount of diverse data which could potentially have been collected. Another challenge was related to four of the Youth Mappers deviating from the key informant interview script and questions (Refer to Appendix F – Key Informant Interview Script and Questions, p. 346), resulting in a lack of congruence within their data compared to the other Youth Mappers, and thus presenting problems in interpretation and analysis. Although the investigator presumed the script was enough guidance, Youth Mappers would have benefitted from also receiving a template for collecting interview data.

### *Discussion Related to Question #2*

Describe the types of data Youth Mappers were able to collect using a variety of methods and technology. This discussion will offer some interpretation about the types of resources (people, places and activities) that build *elements* that facilitate PYD, the success and challenges of using the two different data collection methods and the incorporation of technology into the CYM project.

### *Types of Resources Reported*

Youth have fewer resources available to them in society (i.e. knowledge, power, prestige, social connections) by which to alter the economic, educational, social/human or other structures that affect how resources have been distributed (Hart, 1997; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003). This social inequality experienced by youth has been comparable to that experienced by low-income families, minorities, single-parent households, the poorly-educated and lower socioeconomic classes (Patton et al., 2006). However, despite this disparity, 174 youth respondents reported more than 600 resources within the CYM project, with the majority of them centred around friends, family, malls and school. Half the youth reported being involved in many in-school and outside-school activities and were able to access people, places and activities which supported many of the *elements* that facilitate PYD. However, approximately one third of the youth respondents were only minimally involved or not involved in any activities, nor work, nor volunteering (other than for school graduation requirement) which supports this notion of social inequality. Many of these young people who were not as connected to people, places and activities (PPA) in their community spoke to the importance of being around friends and family in relaxed settings.

Informal resources (i.e., hanging out with friends at a restaurant, the mall, a friend's house, at the gym) were preferred by the majority of respondents who stated that they developed a 'sense of belonging', 'emotional and physical safety' and 'supportive relationships' in these environments. This finding may be different, however, than many adults in Surrey expected for youth in their community, given the perceived attention to youth programming within youth-serving organizations, community centers and other places. Youth who reported having more PPA had also accessed more formal resources (i.e., organized sports, dance studios, etc.). This was likely due to families valuing the

competitive nature of more formal organized resources and therefore being willing to provide support (i.e., through mentorship and encouragement, financial help and provision of transportation); although the data did not specifically determine this premise. It was also possible that more formal resources did not provide enough of the *elements* that facilitate PYD (especially the three *elements* youth respondents sought the most, i.e., ‘sense of belonging’, ‘emotional and physical safety’ and ‘supportive relationships’).

Another possible explanation for youth respondents reporting more informal rather than formal resources are the personal social networks that are so important to youth (Eccles and Gootman, 2002; Miller et al., 2006; Patton et al., 2006). Within the study, over 90 % of the youth reported gaining *elements* that facilitate PYD from either family/extended family or friends. For example, family has been considered one of the most influential contexts for child and youth development (Eccles and Gootman, 2002; Elder, 1998; Garbarino, 1995; Lerner et al., 2005; Cummings, 2003; Catalana, 2004). As many of these authors suggested, it was not the family structure but perhaps the family process that seemed to make a difference in the amount of influence families had. In the study this was particularly evident with differences between cultures. Caucasian youth respondents were least vocal about the importance of family support in their lives compared to Indo-Canadian and Jamaican youth respondents who rated family as most important in providing *elements* that facilitate PYD.

Given the nature of the key informant interviews and the limited time youth respondents had to respond to the questions, youth may have underreported other resources as being opportunities to build *elements* that facilitate PYD. Also, without a greater understanding of the *elements* on the part of the respondents, the youth may not have known, or been able to name, when or with whom they were building *elements* that facilitate PYD.

The respondents also may not have understood that they were exposed to experiences that build *elements* that facilitate PYD through other more formal activities.

Another explanation for a lesser percentage of formal resources being reported included the inaccessibility of these programs by many youth. Youth Mappers noted those issues such as the need for more places and activities for youth where they feel safe and a sense of belonging (e.g., “Not enough youth groups/places that are safe and enjoyable.”), lack of transportation (e.g., “More transportation in the night, cause its hard to get home when the last bus is done.”), lack of resources and/or not knowing where to access them (e.g., “Not a lot of resources out there to get youth involved. Also, many people don’t hear about them, and don’t know where to find them.”).

#### *Location of Resources Reported*

One of the objectives of the study was to uncover information about the location of resources to identify whether they were available locally for youth to build *elements* that facilitate PYD. It was assumed that distribution of resources across the city might vary due to social and economic factors, such as social organization and social or family connectedness (Canadian Population Health Initiative, 2004, 2005, 2006; Boyce, 2004; Starfield, 2002; Abernathy, 2002; McKnight, 1995). Without an equitable distribution of resources, youth do not have an equal opportunity to access PPA and PYD (Lerner et al., 2005; Zeldin et al., 2005).

Of the over 600 reported resources, the preponderance (45 %) were reported in the North Surrey/ Guilford area. This did not indicate that the majority of resources in Surrey were confined to that part of the city, but primarily that the respondents found this area to be a cool and fun place to hang-out due to large malls providing movie theatres, youth friendly

stores and restaurants, and numerous informal places to gather. Given that the majority of respondents (75 %) lived in the central area of Surrey, this created a considerable transportation issue for most youth trying to access the northern part of the City.

While the exact relationship between respondent home location and resource availability was unknown, it was likely related to differences in family and school settings, proximity and availability of friends, and some bias inherent in the youth who reported in this sample. It is likely that additional data from youth and about the community would have created a greater understanding about how various cultural and social factors affected the availability of resources reported by youth. Given the huge variation in reporting of resources, some youth likely had an abundance of opportunities for building *elements* that facilitate PYD in their lives while others had far fewer than would be optimal. Among those young people who reported having the fewest resources, those reported resources were mostly friends and family.

#### *Other Factors Related to Report of Resources*

##### *Socio-demographic factors.*

There were differences in reporting of resources between the genders, with girls accessing formal organizational resources (youth serving organizations, faith and volunteer opportunities) more than boys. Whether these differences were related to true gender differences or to the biases in the sample are unknown (i.e. more females were involved as Youth Mappers and recruited their female friends that may have been more involved in activities). It is unknown whether female youth were involved in more activities where building of *elements* that facilitate PYD occurred, or whether they perhaps recognized them as building activities, or whether male youth were less involved in activities in general. Had

the sample been larger there may have been more confidence in these estimates. However, the data did indicate that for certain formal organizational resources, girls might have been more willing or able to participate than boys.

The sample in this study was not large enough to examine the resource data by geography, age, or race; though that would have been useful information to gain for understanding why some youth used some resources more than others.

*Specific data from Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Sessions.*

In general, the data yielded information about the types of *elements* that facilitate PYD available from various resources (people, places and activities), what the actual building of element that facilitate PYD experiences looked like, relationships between these *elements*, their ranking in the youths' lives, and the frequency and intensity of the building of these *elements* that facilitate PYD.

Almost all the places youth chose to go in their spare time provided the *elements* of 'Emotional and Physical Safety', a 'Sense of Belonging' and 'Supportive Relationships'. In contrast, people in youths' lives tended to provide 'Leadership', 'Competencies and Skills' and 'Meaningful Youth Participation'. Activities on the other hand were more concentrated around 'Competencies and Skills' especially in improving their performance in the area of their interest whether it was reading or hockey.

The richness of the focus group sessions confirmed data from the interviews and also added some depth to understanding how building *elements* that facilitate PYD are important in the lives of youth.

*Summary of Discussion for Question #2*

The data captured general categories of the kinds or types of people, places, and activities where youth had opportunities to build *elements* that facilitate PYD.

The key informant interviews were a bit more difficult to administer in this study. Several Youth Mappers were able to conduct interviews with optimal skill for gaining the depth of information that was valuable for understanding details about building *elements* that facilitate PYD. Also, some Youth Mappers used a buddy system partnering with a fellow Mapper to conduct the interviews. The teaming worked well to support the difficult task of explaining the objectives of the research study and defining the key *elements* that facilitate PYD to the respondent. Mappers who did team work also found it useful to have support with the audio taping and prompting of questions.

The investigator was impressed with quantity of data and comprehensiveness of the transcriptions completed by the Youth Mappers. It was also obvious from transcription/videotape of the Youth Mapper's group discussion of results that they were more than capable in providing critical synthesis of the data and meaningful in-depth discussion of the results and next steps for the study.

Although the Youth Mappers found the focus group sessions difficult to organize around student's schedules and within participating schools, the sessions became a preferred method for the Mappers. The sessions were a rich source of data and provided Youth Mappers an opportunity to learn valuable presentation and facilitation skills. Youth Mappers found the reflection/action cycle meetings extremely useful after each focus group session allowing opportunities to discuss the richness of the data and how to improve upon the process and facilitation of the next session.

*Discussion Related to Question #3*

Describes the benefits to the Youth Mappers participating in the CYM project?

The Youth Mappers gained research skills, learned about the importance of building *elements* that facilitate PYD, discovered resources their peers access in their community through people, places and activities, and changed their own and others' perceptions of their community.

*Skill Acquisition*

The Youth Mappers gained many skills within the training to be co-researchers and conducting key informant interviews and focus group sessions. These skills were transferable to school, work, and other leadership events or projects. Youth Mappers appreciated the monetary honorarium and being valued and respected for their knowledge and research skills.

Youth Mappers found they experienced increased confidence and developed better communication and inter-personal skills from participating in the study. They also increased their technical skills with the use of a GPS and digital and video camera to document locations and provide visual references to share information. The Youth Mappers had to demonstrate skill in downloading photos and preparing them for email, power-point presentations, and the web-base electronic map. The Youth Mappers identified the use of technology within the study as relevant, useful and exciting. Four Youth Mappers identified their new knowledge in technology as the most significant change that would benefit them in the future. Given the technological world we live in, using technology helped make the project more relevant for the youth, especially in displaying the data (via maps, photos, and movies) on the project website.

Other useful skills that may have further facilitated the study would have included: probing to elicit additional information in interviews, listening, note-taking, and more practise describing *elements* that facilitate PYD to ensure understanding by the respondents.

#### *Gaining a Broader Understanding of Community*

Flicker (2008) examines the benefits of action research at the community level stating that measuring individual benefits requires different indicators than at the community level. Flicker cites the research of Hawke (1994) and Boutelier et al., (2001), who state that often benefits at the individual level are precursors to larger-scale changes. These authors suggest using alternative indicators of success such as looking where connections have been created where none had existed before. Flicker (2008, p. 82) goes on to say that in the case of her project the “meso-level changes...show(ed) the synergistic efforts of capacities of individuals and organizations working strategically in a collective manner.” Although difficult to measure, as with Flicker’s study, our research project likely had greater gains at the community level than first realized. For example, the CYM Training opened the eyes of the youth to new and different ways of looking at their community. Through the process of being co-researchers, the Youth Mappers were exposed to people who were different and lived in different places. This early process of instilling in them a broader sense of community was likely related to their desire to know more about their broad community (as stated in reflection/action cycle meetings), and to their ability to describe relationships between community factors and youth’s lives.

Regardless of the accuracy of their reflections on community and its resources, most of the Youth Mappers took a new interest in learning about and volunteering/working in the community. Through this Collaborative Action Research (CAR) inquiry they gained some

decision-making power, learned that they could identify important issues in their community, encouraged each other to become active in their community, and used their skills as resources for change. While each of these tenets of a CAR project (Hills and Mullett, 2000, 2005; Heron and Reason 2001) was important in implementing the CYM project, it is also hopeful that more community support will emerge to expand upon the study and its findings and also support the development and implementation of a broader Community Youth Development initiative within the city of Surrey.

The benefits of being socially connected within the research project were evident. Watson-Thompson et al., (2008) take this notion further, stating “social ties among people are a protective factor inversely associated with rates of crime at the community level” (p. 273). These authors created a framework for supporting and evaluating community mobilization to promote healthy youth development as an approach to preventing youth violence. In Surrey, youth respondents spoke repeatedly to transportation and safety issues, where sky-trains and buses are risky because of the danger of being attacked. Watson-Thompson et al. support a similar iterative process that engages youth and adults in assessment, planning and targeted action to change communities and promote healthy youth development. Unfortunately their initiative ended before improvements in population-level indicators were evident, a common problem in lengthy research, suggesting a need to build sustainability into projects.

When resources are inadequate for families, either in economic, educational, social or cultural terms, the youth may choose to find them on their own. Youth often turn to naturally-occurring resources, such as siblings, extended family or school settings for those resources, and when these are lacking, they either turn to existing structures (e.g., formal

organizations like church, recreation centres, youth serving organizations) or create their own (e.g., peer groups). The continuing paradox is that some of these youth will generate social structures or networks that may or may not provide the resources that family's desire for their youth.

Youth also have little negotiation power to affect social formation and interaction (e.g., do not have transportation until older, have little authority to create new social networks with organizations, meet with resistance related to organizational boundaries and adult interests, have a need for authority figures to participate, face liability issues). Perhaps the social structures where youth find the most support are the most abstract, most informal, least acceptable to adults, most ambiguous where they can gain resources in ways that adults do not understand.

A community that was more open to creation of new structures or change rather than maintaining status quo (conventionalizing structures, or current view of reality) may have provided youth with opportunities that were more suited to their needs (Villarruel et al., 2004; Steinberg & Lerner, 2004). Youth in this study described their community as segmented and segregated, facing challenges to its cohesion due to rapid growth and change, as having inequities among different racial and geographic segments, and facing issues of safety. If young people are to engage with existing social structures and resources, the community that creates them ought to reflect the resources that youth need: interactiveness of diverse people and ideas, a collective consciousness of understanding, common values, co-construction of realities, synthesis of meanings (Zeldin et al., 2005).

The role of youth in creating this positive place for living has been underestimated and under-used, which is not hard to understand given adults negative perception of youth in

general. The expectations of some youth differ from their reality, and therefore they create their own natural structures that fit their subcultures. Their ability to create their own natural structures without the condoning of adults should be recognized as strength rather than viewed as disrespectful and nonconformist. Perhaps the disconnect between adult knowing what needs to happen for youth and the ability to do it lies not only in the lack of will, ability, skills and time to create it but also in the apparent absence of youth participating in what ought to be their quest to identify social structures and strategies for making communities better places to live.

#### *Enhanced Social Responsibility*

After participating in this study, Youth Mappers became more conscious of their responsibility and roles as change agents in their community. Increased awareness in the inequalities in available resources (PPA), as well as knowledge of what was needed, affected Youth Mappers' sense of social responsibility toward improving the community where their peers live. Most of the Youth Mappers identified themselves as continuing their involvement in CYM projects and community youth development initiatives and these changed self-images were predicted by Zeldin (2002) who encouraged collaborative learning opportunities for young people with persons older than themselves in order to promote responsibility and to bring about a deeper understanding of their own conditions.

The continuation of the knowledge transfer portion of this project gives the Youth Mappers opportunities to be involved in the follow-through to communicate their findings. There is already interest within Surrey to continue to build the maps showing available resources that provide *elements* of positive youth development as well as continue to collect data through the interactive website that is currently under construction.

Confirming the direction toward interactive web-based data collection, Hansen and Prospero (2005, p.617) concur that interactive internet GIS has proven to be an effective means to increase community participation in the evaluation process. It is being used by governments, officials and those involved in environmental planning as a potential tool for “citizen participation”, providing a means to increase “participation rates and quality of participation, increasing social inclusion and promoting greater democracy.” The authors warn that this method may prove too technologically advanced for ordinary citizens; however, given the ease with which the young people in our research project learned the technology and their keenness to share their findings and gather new data using this method, it seems a natural direction to pursue.

#### Limitations

The study had several limitations that must be addressed. It is common with community mapping projects that significant underreporting of resources occurs. Respondents may not have understood the concepts and/or may not have recognized the importance of opportunities in their lives for PYD. This limitation may be related to the research methods and instruments or the general lack of recognition of potential resources in a person’s life.

One Youth Mapper asked “Who are the people in your life that have an influence on you?” and then over prompted or led the interview respondents by giving the following examples: Coaches, Teachers and Parents.” As a result, approximately 70% of this Mapper’s respondents included at one or two of the three examples provided. This limitation obviously affected the reliability of the data.

Over half of the Youth Mappers tended to select respondents similar to themselves or people they already know. For example, this was reflected in choices of respondents with similar athletic involvement, cultural background, and affiliation with special interest groups such as church, school council, and math club. This practice has skewed the data and is an obvious methodological flaw that needs to be addressed in future Mapping projects.

A limitation in the study related to discovering the ethnicity and culture of the youth respondents. Although Youth Mappers were clearly recruited for their diversity and readily identified their cultural heritage, asking youth respondents to provide this information became problematic. Youth Mappers stated this was too personal and the question was removed from the data collection. However, during data analysis ethnic/cultural factors became evident in video-tapes, comments and were eluded to by many youth as something Surrey needs to address, i.e., provide more safe places for diverse groups of youth to hang out together.

An important question worth including in Youth Mappers' concluding interviews would have been parent(s) or guardians' responses to their youth's involvement in the project. This information did surface in a few discussions but was not specifically asked. This is especially significant in retrospect when considering what we know from studies in health promotion which espouse the importance of linking schools, home and communities for the benefit of youth. It would have been interesting to know if families viewed the activities as worthwhile or intrusive, whether dialogue ensued at home because of the project and the Youth Mappers engagement. Parent/youth communication varies and it may be useful to have discussed with Youth Mappers how involved parents were in their decisions to take part in the study and to keep updated on the youths' activities throughout the inquiry.

It should be noted that transportation of a number of the Youth Mappers became the responsibility of the investigator and other adult researchers because parents/guardians found it too difficult to commit to this responsibility. An inordinate amount of time and resources were spent ensuring the coordination and safe transportation of Youth Mappers (to and from meetings, training sessions, community events, field trips, etc.).

### Recommendations and Next Steps

#### *Recommendations for this Study*

Given the similarities between the Youth Mappers and their interview respondents it will be important to ensure Mappers understand the necessity for stratified sampling. Also stipulating that Youth Mappers interview at least two-thirds of respondents they do not know would add validity to generalizations regarding youth within their community.

The balance between working within school and student time constraints, resource constraints and allowing enough time for training is always a challenge. While it was important to keep the amount of time for training manageable, more practice time was needed to ensure that all Youth Mappers felt confident in conducting their key informant interviews and focus group sessions. Even though an additional fourth training day was conducted, it was still questionable whether this was adequate practice for some Youth Mappers to be effective in collecting data for all questions. Especially open ended questions such as what is missing in your community and elaborating on the top two *elements* which facilitate PYD. With regard to the training a specific recommendation was the addition of opportunities to learn more interview prompting skills in order to access additional detail and greater depth during key informant interviews. Youth Mappers would still be able to use their own personal style of interviewing but would have greater confidence in their approach

and comfort in seeking more opportunities to interview a more diverse demographic sampling of respondents.

Although this project had numerous ways to communicate to the Youth Team Captain and adult co-researchers during the data collection phase, this process is critical and needs to be monitored closely. For example, Youth Mappers' need opportunities to problem-solve and discuss their progress. Also, Mappers need additional support in recruitment of respondents. A possible solution is developing awareness and promoting the study to a variety of groups within the community where youth congregate, i.e., youth clubs and organizations. This could be further supported by establishing other strong partnerships with like-minded youth serving organizations within Surrey. Recruitment might be further supported through the provision of incentives to Youth Mappers for thoroughness and quality of data collection and transcription as well as ensuring a variety of incentives (along with water bottles) for respondents.

Further scrutiny of the interview script toward enhancing responses is warranted, especially relating to ranking the *elements* associated with each PPA. By gathering the two most important *elements* for each PPA, data pertaining to other active *elements* was excluded. Phrasing the question to elicit a more open-ended response, i.e., which of the *elements* are evident most or all the time you are involved with/in PPA.

Cultural heritage/ethnicity was a question Youth Mappers did not want to pose to respondents for fear of being too personal, however, it became evident during data analysis that the reasons for prioritizing elements differed among varying cultures and this would have been insightful information had the question been asked. Further discussion around

acceptable ways to gather this data would have helped discover diverse cultural social values and thus inform those working with culturally diverse youth to assist respectful interaction.

### *Recommendations for Developing Resources for Youth*

Cultural differences emerged from the data which assist in directing future efforts in the area of resources. Indo-Canadian and Jamaican Youth Mappers had more youth respondents speak to the importance of close family ties and the influence of parents, siblings and cousins as being number one in their lives. The Aboriginal and Asian Youth Mappers had more youth respondents speak to neighbourhoods as being supportive for youth which is important information in terms of resource development. In contrast, the Caucasian Youth Mappers and youth respondents seemed to value friends above family (although family are a strong influence) and value youth independence such as Meaningful Youth Participation and Leadership. Ethnicity is a sensitive issue that Youth Mappers found too intrusive to address; however, it is also fundamental to the ways in which youth interact. Young people in this study clearly wanted opportunities to gather safely together in larger diverse groups within an informal and safe setting. Thus, and acceptable ways of gathering ethnic/cultural information, particularly with respect to social values is going to be especially important in future studies.

Within the data a few themes emerged that should be considered guidelines for thinking about creating or identifying resources for youth. The data from youth respondents strongly indicated that Surrey does not have enough safe places which are youth-oriented. Youth recognized that church and cultural clubs are important settings, however, they also commented that these settings need to have less religious affiliation and include a wider demographic of youth. In addition, they want to ensure key *elements* which facilitate PYD

are present, along with a relaxed atmosphere where they can get away from stresses of their daily lives and just “hangout” with friends. Generally, half the youth felt Surrey is a “great place with a bad reputation” where resources are available to them. Youth Mappers recommended creating a web-based resource where locations are mapped using interactive visuals and providing information on how to access people, places and activities, in a safe manner.

Youth generally identified that the supportive relationships they have with friends, family, people at church and school, coaches and team-mates were important in their ability to build *elements* that facilitate PYD. A significant number of youth found volunteering to support the development of others to be a meaningful experience in their lives. This premise should be explored further to make such activity appealing to youth. For a significant number of youth, family was their only resource and while possibly “problem free” it is doubtful they will become “fully prepared” (Pittman, 1998) without developing bonds within more formal institutions.

Social institutions that support youth must also attempt to either individually or collectively support families in their myriad of roles. Ensuring that malls, movie theatres, parks, beaches and recreation centres are safe and provide support for building *elements* that facilitate the development of PYD in Surrey’s youth is another aspect for consideration in the area of resource development. As well, social structures that would promote collaborative relationships with adults who understand meaningful youth engagement might create additional opportunities for youth to grow and prosper.

#### *Recommendations for Next Steps in Data Collection*

1. Work with other schools throughout Surrey to make this a city initiative

2. Have the Youth Mappers train other youth in different areas within Surrey which show an interest in this project
3. Connect with other BC youth organizations which have similar key *elements* as their philosophy so youth can gain a stronger voice in BC
4. Continue training the youth who are technology minded and want to work with Google Earth linking and creating 3-D places in Sketch-Up to produce strong visual maps for presentation purposes
5. Continue building Surrey's Community Youth Mapping website to make it appealing and interactive, yet safe, for youth
6. Work with elementary age children to encourage acceptance of diversity and gaining *elements* that facilitate PYD through people, places and activities at a young age
7. Create new training resources around this younger age group (e.g., train the trainer resources to support existing Youth Mappers in training other potential Mappers)
8. Support further research for youth who reported minimal involvement in activities and look for resources and funding to provide equal opportunity for this segment of the population who represented half of the youth interviewed

#### *Next Steps in the Inquiry*

Interestingly, the next steps seem to be coming to the study rather than the research team initiating new research partners on our own. An elementary school principal heard of the project through one of the Youth Mappers and a new youth mapping project is now currently being organized within three elementary schools in Surrey.

New funding and finding possible ways to sustain projects through potential community partners is important. The project website could be developed more as a promotional tool for local businesses that may be able to put funding toward the initiative. As interest grows, the challenge will be to manage resources, create a structure of dissemination of knowledge and training teams.

Developing an interactive and dynamic youth-friendly website will be time consuming and costly. Website development has become more complex over the past few years in an effort to encompass a variety of interactive media. Therefore professional training for youth is needed and specific software which supports a variety of web needs. Finding resources and time for Youth Mappers to work along with experts to support further development is essential.

Certainly, the Youth Mappers involvement in new projects indicates certain personality and special qualities and interests are at play. Some youth wanted to expand the project to other schools because of their interest in coaching and working with children and youth. Others wanted to present the study and findings to larger audiences using their newly acquired technology skills. A number have taken on new leadership roles in the area of Community Youth Development, i.e. becoming executive board members of the Community Youth Development Coalition of BC. All the Team Youth Captains are planning on becoming or already have become involved in further, larger projects as facilitators and are likely to take on paid roles as researchers, both voluntarily and more in-depth if funding comes about.

## Conclusions

Using a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach, ten Youth Mappers were involved as co-researchers in the development and implementation of a Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project in the city of Surrey, British Columbia. Efforts were focused on training youth to be co-researchers.

In reflecting on the important components of a CAR effort, youth were seen as a valuable resource in this effort, and were involved as decision-makers in: (a) Research design, (b) data collection methods, (c) developing recruitment strategies, (d) choosing the technology to use, and (e) creating the knowledge transfer strategy used to present information to the community and policy-makers.

Through the experience of being co-researchers in the CYM study, the Youth Mappers have become committed to social action and plan to give their continued support and involvement to the existing Surrey CYD initiative. Also, all of the Youth Mappers have broadened their association in civic affairs by becoming affiliated with the Community Youth Development Coalition of British Columbia, four of whom have become executive board members, with one elected as co-chair.

Data-collection revealed that youth respondents reported primarily informal resources through PPA that build *elements* that facilitate PYD, with fewer resources reported having come from formal organizations (other than schools). The places and activities the majority of youth respondents sought out involved activities related to leisure and sports and were situated in the northern part of Surrey within the Guilford area. The Guilford Mall was identified by almost 60% of youth respondents as their favourite place to congregate with friends. Youth also frequented two recreation centres also located in north Surrey, the Surrey

sport and leisure complex in Guilford and the North Surrey Recreation Centre in Whalley. Accessibility to these resources was problematic for majority of youth respondents, most of whom lived in central Surrey. Youth respondents identified a number of issues, the most pressing of which was related to: (a) Safety around transportation, (b) places for youth to participate in leisure and informal activities in larger groups, and (c) more opportunities to collaborate with adults in decision related to themselves and their community. Schools provided a diverse array of opportunities for youth to become involved in activities with people who share personal interests, identifying schools as key to the positive development for many youth within the community. A significant number of youth thrive on being active both in and out-of-school, especially in the areas of leadership, sports, dance and volunteering. Few other organizations were identified by youth as providing opportunities to build *elements* that facilitate PYD even though numerous community and government services are in the business of creating resources for the betterment of children, youth and families. It is probable that the youth could benefit from additional community support to take advantage of other existing opportunities, both formal and informal, and that families could profit from the support derived by the creation of resources geared to providing *elements* that facilitate PYD within their youth. Most importantly, young people in the community of Surrey need to be part of the decision-process around the development of opportunities, so that there might be congruence between what they need and want, and what is actually created.

Supporting Youth Mappers throughout the study so that they feel prepared enough to lead the research process is crucial to successful collaboration. Youth can successfully design and manage complex projects together if they feel a sense of ownership in them. If

youth are not involved in at least partially designing the goals of the project themselves, they are unlikely to demonstrate their potential and competence they possess. “Involvement fosters motivation, which fosters competence, which in turn fosters motivation for further projects” (Hart, 1992, p.5).

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Elements that Assist Positive Youth Development (Created by Surrey Youth Mappers)

#### **Meaningful Youth Participation (PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES)**

- People, places, and activities that value and respect youth
- Opportunities to be engaged as leaders and decision makers
- Empowering practices where youth are fully engaged
- Opportunities to make a real difference in one's community
- Opportunities to provide meaningful services to one's community and have a useful role
- Opportunities to move into positions of responsibility

#### **Supportive Relationships (PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES)**

- Caring neighborhood
- Caring school climate
- Supportive and caring relationships with peers, parents, and other adults
- Opportunities for support and guidance from peers, family, school, neighborhood, community, etc.

#### **Sense of Belonging (PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES)**

- Attachment to places such as school and non-school youth programs
- Opportunities for a sense of belonging
- Being connected and valued
- Sense of purpose
- Support for cultural differences

#### **Competencies and Skills (PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES)**

- Opportunities to learn life skills and "soft skills" (e.g., communication skills, conflict resolution skills, planning and decision making skills, goal setting skills, critical thinking, coping skills)
- Opportunities for academic competencies
- Opportunities for vocational competencies (i.e. work habits and training, and career choices)
- Opportunities for creative activities
- Opportunities to learn cultural and multi-cultural competencies

#### **Emotional and Physical Safety (PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES)**

- Opportunities for safe and health promoting environments
- Opportunities that increase safe peer interactions
- Opportunities that decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions

#### **Leadership (PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES)**

- Opportunities to build leadership qualities and skills
- Opportunities for individual growth and development as leaders
- Opportunities for youth and adults to build mutual partnerships (e.g., having a clear and defined process for the roles youth play in decision making)
- Opportunities for youth to evaluate program content

## Appendix B

## Community Youth Mapping Recruitment Material - Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project

## Recruitment Poster

**We Need Mappers  
Aged 16-18**

**Community Youth Mapping** is a research project in your school and community to find resources through people, places and activities that provide opportunities and supports for you to grow and gain positive life experiences.

You will receive **four** training sessions to develop necessary skills in Global Position System technology, digital photography, and data collection. You will also be provided with T-shirts (identifying you as part of the Mapping Team) for participating, along with food during the training and planning meetings. With other Mappers, you'll have the experience of building a virtual website consisting of a map identifying opportunities and supports that you and your peers identified in the city of Surrey.

**Four – 6 hour training session** on Community Youth Mapping Training will be offered on **April 21, 28, and May 5, and 15, 2007** in your community. It is important that you're able to attend all sessions. Transportation will be provided to the sessions if necessary.

If you live in the city and attend a high school and have the time and interest to participate in this important project please contact: **Donna VanSant (project coordinator, Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative) 538-7621 and or Gord Miller (Principal Investigator) 250-472-4102**

## Research Project Description and Questions and Answers

### Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project

The goal of this research project is to examine the feasibility of engaging young people in a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) approach involving them in developing and implementing a Community Youth Mapping project within the city of Surrey. The purpose is to learn about where and how young people gain access to local resources, especially in relation to places and activities which provide support and opportunities to build positive youth development (PYD). The information would also help the community and local organizations in planning for additional opportunities and resources, and support the initial development and implementation of a broad Community Youth Development initiative within Surrey.

The Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative, the Surrey School District, the Surrey Foundation, the Community Youth Development Coalition of BC, the Canadian Council on Learning, and, the Centre for Community Health Promotion Research (University of Victoria) are co-sponsoring this project and are working with schools and youth-serving organizations in Surrey to carry-out this research.

The recruited Youth Mappers will participate in Community Youth Mapping Training. The purpose of the training is to prepare Mappers with the research expertise to gather data from their peers using self-selected data collection methods. Training is designed to engage the Mappers to be co-researchers and will consist of four-six hour sessions designed to promote several areas of knowledge and skills regarding: (a) Data collection methods; (b) analyzing, transcribing, and interpreting data; and, (c) utilizing technology (e.g.,

Global Positioning Systems, digital and video cameras, etc.). The Community Youth Mapping Training is currently scheduled for April and May, 2007.

The Youth Mappers, the Training Team, and the Centre for Community Health Promotion Research, University of Victoria will create a report that describes the experiences and knowledge gained from the project. Youth Mappers will then have an opportunity to present this report to various groups and organizations within the City of Surrey.

## **Questions and Answers**

### What is Community Youth Mapping?

Community Youth Mapping is a research project for youth in the city of Surrey to identify existing resources that support positive youth development. Research has identified the important “elements” that young people need in their lives to thrive. We do not know, however, what these look like in our community, who provides them, or whether young people know they exist.

### What's Involved in the Research Project?

A Community Youth Mapper is a youth aged 16-18 who will map resources in the city of Surrey. Youth who are interested in being Mappers and who obtain their parent/guardian's consent can attend the Community Youth Mapping Training. Training will be designed to engage youth to be co-researchers and will consist of 4-6 hour sessions. Regular Team meetings will be scheduled after the Training as a way to continue supporting the Youth Mappers and to assist them in collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data along with discussing issues, challenges, and solutions.

Data collection will occur within the confines of a school, so will not require any special transportation and will be in the presence of other adults and youth. The data collection phase will last about 6 weeks.

What are the Benefits to Young People Participating?

Community Youth Mappers will gain new information and skills from the training sessions. These will include: (a) Better understanding of their neighbourhood and broader community; (b) identifying important elements that assist positive youth development; (c) developing new relationships with other Youth Mappers; (d) developing communication skills which may lead to increased job readiness; and, (e) gaining specific research skills.

For Further Questions?

If you have any questions at anytime during the research project you can telephone Gord Miller, Uvic Investigator, at 250-472-4102 or Dr. Donna VanSant (Project Coordinator) 604-538-7621.

## Appendix C

### Consent Form for Community Youth Mappers - Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project

#### Community Youth Mapping (CYM)

CYM begins with youth canvassing their communities to gather information on local resources. Resources can represent community values or aspects of community space such as the location of parks, youth clubs, individuals themselves (such as caring adults), programs, safe places; as well as deficits within the community including unsafe places and lack of youth orientated programs and services. With this information in hand, young people, adult community members and leaders can implement targeted community interventions within Surrey to resolve problems or highlight "element" that assist positive youth development.

This project is sponsored by the Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative, Surrey School District, Surrey Foundation, Community Youth Development Coalition of BC, Canadian Council on Learning, and, the Centre for Community Health Promotion Research (University of Victoria) and is working with schools and youth-serving organizations in Surrey to carry-out this project.

#### Involvement in the Research Project

A Community Youth Mapper is a youth aged 16-18 who will map resources in the city of Surrey. The research project will last about three months and will consist of approximately 24 hours of training, 20 hours data collection, and 15 hours data analysis for each Youth Mapper. Youth who are interested in being Mappers and who obtain their parent/guardian's consent can attend the Youth Mapping Training. The training will begin in April, 2007 with data collection and analyses of data to follow. Regular Team meetings will be scheduled after the Training as a way to continue supporting the Youth Mappers and to assist them in collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data along with discussing issues, challenges, and solutions. Data collection will occur within the confines of a school, so will not require any special transportation and will be in the presence of other adults and youth. The data collection phase will last about 6 weeks.

### Benefit to Youth Mappers

Community Youth Mappers will gain new information and skills from the training sessions. These will include: (a) Better understanding of their neighbourhood and broader community; (b) identifying important elements that assist positive youth development; (c) developing new relationships with other Youth Mappers; (d) developing communication skills which may lead to increased job readiness; and, (e) gaining specific research skills.

### Associated Risks with this Research Project

There are no known risks associated with this research project. Regular reflection/action cycle meetings will occur with the investigator and adult co-researchers and will provide an informal support network to discuss any problems or concerns.

### Confidentiality

The information provided by the Community Youth Mappers will never be identified in a way that would break confidentiality. A code name or numeric identifier will be used instead of a name for discussing or reporting the results of this study. All of the information provided by the Mapper will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office separate from all signed consent forms and receipts of payments. Data may be collected by audiotape for research purposes only. By signing this form, both the Mapper and parent/guardian are giving permission for tape recording of interviews and discussions. The tapes and their transcripts will be stored in locked files and erased or destroyed at the end of the study.

### Questions about the Project

If you have any questions at anytime during the research project you can telephone Gord Miller, the principal investigator, at (250) 472-4102 or Dr. Donna VanSant (project coordinator) 604-538-7621. In addition, if you have any concerns about the youth's rights as a research subject, you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics, Technology Enterprise Facility (TEF), Room 218, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700 STN CSC, Victoria, BC, V8W 2Y2 or contact the Human Research Ethics Assistant at (250) 472-4545 or email [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca).

**Community Youth Mapper Consent (to be read and signed by young person)**

I have read this consent form and understand what it means for me to take part in this project.

_____	_____
Youth Participant's name (please print)	Participant's Birth Date
_____	_____
Signature of Youth Participant	Date of Signature

**Parent(s) Legal Guardian(s) Consent (to be read and signed by parent/legal guardian)**

I have read this consent form and understand what it means for my son/daughter to take part in this project. I agree for my son/daughter to be in this project for up to 3 months.

_____	
Parent/Guardian Name (please print)	
_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date of Signature
_____	_____
<b>Gord Miller</b> <b>Principal Investigator</b> <b>University of Victoria</b> <b>(250)472-4102</b>	Date of Signature

**Consent Form for Youth Participant/Respondent**  
**CONSENT FORM (Under 16)**  
**For Youth Participants and their Parents/Guardians**  
**Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project**

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled "Collaborative Action Research: A Catalyst for Enhancing the Practice of Community Youth Mapping" that is being conducted by Gord Miller, Centre for Community Health Promotion Research at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by phone (250) 472-4102 or email [gdmiller@uvic.ca](mailto:gdmiller@uvic.ca). This project is sponsored and supported by the Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative, Surrey School District, Surrey Foundation, Community Youth Development Coalition of BC, and the Canadian Council on Learning.

The purpose of the research project is to learn about where and how young people gain access to local resources, especially in relation to places and activities which provide support and opportunities to build positive youth development (PYD). The information would also help the community and local organizations in planning for additional opportunities and resources, and support the initial development and implementation of a broad Community Youth Development initiative within Surrey.

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your knowledge and experiences. Your contribution will help us create a "map" that can be used by youth, the local neighbourhood and the broader community in deciding how to create the right kinds of resources for young people and support the development of a broader community youth development initiative in Surrey.

Interviews - If you agree to participate, we would like to ask you some questions. This will only take a few minutes. The interviewers have made an agreement that they will not identify you to anyone else or link you to what you have said. With your permission the interview will be tape recorded and then typed into words on paper. Anything that identifies you on the paper will be changed so no one will recognize who you are.

Your participation in this research will be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. If you do decide to stop the interview, you may decide to have the audiotape erased or allow us to use the information you have provided.

**Youth Consent (to be read and signed by young person)**

I have read this consent form and understand what it means for me to take part in this project. I know that I may choose to stop participation at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Participant's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Birth Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Youth Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

**Parent(s) Legal Guardian(s) Consent (to be read and signed by parent/legal guardian)**

I have read this consent form and understand what it means for my son/daughter to take part in this project. I know that I may choose to stop my son/daughter from participating at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Gord Miller**  
**Principal Investigator**  
**University of Victoria**  
**(250)472-4102**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

**Consent Form for Youth Participant/Respondent**  
**CONSENT FORM**  
For Youth Participants (16 years & older)  
**Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project**

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled "Collaborative Action Research: A Catalyst for Enhancing the Practice of Community Youth Mapping" that is being conducted by Gord Miller, Centre for Community Health Promotion Research at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by phone (250) 472-4102 or email [gdmiller@uvic.ca](mailto:gdmiller@uvic.ca). This project is sponsored and supported by the Surrey Community Youth Development Initiative, Surrey School District, Surrey Foundation, Community Youth Development Coalition of BC, and the Canadian Council on Learning.

The purpose of the research project is to learn about where and how young people gain access to local resources, especially in relation to places and activities which provide support and opportunities to build positive youth development (PYD). The information would also help the community and local organizations in planning for additional opportunities and resources, and support the initial development and implementation of a broad Community Youth Development initiative within Surrey.

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your knowledge and experiences. Your contribution will help us create a "map" that can be used by youth, the local neighbourhood and the broader community in deciding how to create the right kinds of resources for young people and support the development of a broader community youth development initiative in Surrey.

Interviews - If you agree to participate, we would like to ask you some questions. This will only take a few minutes. The interviewers have made an agreement that they will not identify you to anyone else or link you to what you have said. With your permission the interview will be tape recorded and then typed into words on paper. Anything that identifies you on the paper will be changed so no one will recognize who you are.

Your participation in this research will be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. If you do decide to stop the interview, you may decide to have the audiotape erased or allow us to use the information you have provided.

**Youth Consent (to be read and signed by young person)**

I have read this consent form and understand what it means for me to take part in this project. I know that I may choose to stop participation at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Participant's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Birth Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Youth Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

**PHOTO CONSENT FORM (under 16 years of age)**

**Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project**

In consideration of my appearance in pictures from the above Project, and without any further consideration from the principal investigator (PI), I hereby grant to the PI of the above Project, for an unlimited amount of time, the unlimited right and license to use my pictures, and the right to use in whole or in part with other material within the above Project.

**Community Youth Mapper's Photo Consent (to be read and signed by youth)**

I have read the above photo consent form and understand what it means and give permission for my photos to be used

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Participant's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Birth Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Youth Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

**Parent(s) Legal Guardian(s) Consent (to be read and signed by parent/legal guardian)**

I have read the above photo consent form and understand what it means for my son/daughter. I know that I will receive a copy of this signed consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Gord Miller**  
**Principal Investigator**  
**Centre for Community Health Promotion Research**  
**University of Victoria (250)472-4102**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

**PHOTO CONSENT FORM (16 years of age and over)****Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project**

In consideration of my appearance in pictures from the above Project, and without any further consideration from the principal investigator (PI), I hereby grant to the PI of the above Project, for an unlimited amount of time, the unlimited right and license to use my pictures, and the right to use in whole or in part with other material within the above Project.

**Community Youth Mapper's Photo Consent (to be read and signed by youth)**

I have read the above photo consent form and understand what it means and give permission for my photos to be used.

---

Youth Participant's name (please print)

---

Participant's Birth Date

---

Signature of Youth Participant

---

Date of Signature

---

**Gord Miller**  
**Principal Investigator**  
**Centre for Community Health Promotion Research**  
**University of Victoria (250)472-4102**

---

Date of Signature

## Appendix D

### Outline and Objectives for CYM Training - Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project

2007

#### **Desired Outcomes**

- Fun – Celebration
- Youth Adult Partnership
- Youth as Co-Researchers
- Build Team
- Relationship Building
- Mapping Connections
- Life Long Learning's
- Collect and Analyze Data
- Map "Assets" Available in Your Community
- Create a "map" of activities, places, people and opportunities
- Present Findings
- Mobilize Community
- Promote Several Areas of Skill and Knowledge:
  1. Skills or preparation that youth deem necessary or important
  2. Knowledge of fundamentals youth development and developmental assets
  3. Skills for question formulation, probing, listening, and clarifying (listen for the patterns and what you don't hear)
  4. Skills for facilitation of individual and group dialogue
  5. Skills regarding a Collaborative Action Research approach
  6. Skills regarding data collection methods chosen (Mappers will be provided with numerous data collection options (menu) to choose from (e.g., Photovoice, interviews, focus groups, participant observation, journaling, global positioning device, etc).
  7. Skills regarding use of GPS and GIS

**Welcome to Community Youth Mapping Training**  
**Day One**  
**March 10, 2007**

**Objectives for Day 1**

*At the end of the day you'll be able to:*

1. Describe your community, including places where you get support and resources (people, places, and activities).
2. Describe and assess elements/assets/attributes in your life.
3. Build common consensus around terminology.
4. Describe your role as a Youth Mapper.
5. Design Logo.
6. Understand GPS & GIS (web-mapping).
7. Understand using the camera.
8. Understand Action Research and forms of data collection.

**Shape of the Day**

1. Ice Breaker (over and under)
2. Context
  - Community Youth Mapping
  - The Research Project
  - Action Research – Collaborative Action Research Approach
3. Logo
  - Examples from Parklands Secondary Graphic Program
4. Group Norms
  - How do we want to communicate and work together?
5. CYD
  - Community Youth Development...the broader context
  - Strengths-based Approach
  - Setting Approach
  - Youth Development Approach
  - Elements that Facilitate Youth Development
  - Community Development
6. Global Positioning System and Geographical Information System (web-mapping)
7. Digging for Gold
  - What are positive elements that support your development?
8. Using a Digital Camera
  - The How Too...
9. Action Research and Forms of Data Collection
10. Evaluation Survey
11. Reflection/Action Cycle Meeting
  - What Worked Well – WWW & I Wish – IW
  - Homework
  - Next Training Session

**Welcome to Community Youth Mapping Training**  
**Day Two**  
**March 20, 2007**

**Objectives for Day 2**

*At the end of the day you'll be able to:*

1. Describe your role as a Surrey Youth Mapper
2. Describe Elements and PPA in your life and community (March 10<sup>th</sup> assignment)
3. Build common language and consensus around terminology
4. Describe method(s) used to map local Elements and PPA
5. Interview fellow Mappers utilizing interview protocol to collect data
6. Become more proficient with journaling and the use of the camera and GPS
7. Finalize logo
8. Identify next steps in training

**Shape of the Day**

1. Assignment from day before (Digging for Gold)
  - Activity with gold coins and number of assets that we've found
2. Cameras (Yay! We got them!!)
  - How to use them
  - Different settings
  - Taking pictures
  - Take pictures throughout the day (we're going to use them later)
3. GPS
  - Nat will go over different functions
  - Activities to gain experience with GPS

LUNCH!!!!!!!!!!!! (Don't think you've gotten out of work yet---12:00-1:30pm)

- Find restaurant on GPS (Crescent area)
4. Collecting Data
    - Show video of mock interview with Anna
    - Give out newly revised "pink" sheet
    - Determine **MAIN** points of an interview
    - Establishing questions
  5. Logos
    - Choose our final image
  6. Journaling
    - Going over what we accomplished today
    - Thoughts on the logo
  7. Evaluation Survey
  8. Reflection/Action Cycle Meeting (IW & WWW)
    - Work Assignment
    - Finishing Slide Show

**Surrey Community Youth Mapping Training  
Day Three  
March 31, 2007**

**Shape of the Day**

1. Assignments (refining interview script and questions)
2. Collecting Data Review –Ethics and Protocol
3. Cameras and Photovoice
  - Photo Consent Forms
  - Different settings
  - Taking pictures
4. Lunch
5. Here we go! Practicing our data collection skills
6. GPS
  - -Review of fundamentals
  - -Team field trip
  - -Activities to gain experience with Google Earth
7. Logo and Clothes
8. Evaluation Survey
9. Reflection/Action Cycle Meeting (IW & WWW)
  - Next Steps (Field Work and Piloting)

**Surrey Community Youth Mapping Training**  
**Day Four**  
**April 14, 2007**

**Shape of the Day**

1. Collecting Data Review –Practice Key Informant Interview and Facilitation of Focus Group Sessions
2. Lunch
3. GPS and GIS
  - -Review of fundamentals
  - -Team field trip
  - -Activities to gain experience with Google Earth
4. Distribution of Shirts and Water Bottles
5. Finalizing Data Collection Strategy and Timeline
6. Produce Introduction DVD – Elements the Facilitate PYD
7. Training Evaluation Survey
8. Reflection/Action Cycle Meeting (IW & WWW)
  - Next Steps (Field Work and Piloting)

## Appendix E

## CYM Written Training Evaluation - Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Training

**Day One Evaluation, March 10, 2007**

What did you like most about this session?

What did you like least about this session?

What could be done to improve upon this session?

As a result of the training, how confident are you in your ability to:

*Not at all Confident - Very Confident*

a. Find resources that build "Elements" for PYD in your school and community?

**People** 1 2 3 4 5

**Activities** 1 2 3 4 5

**Places** 1 2 3 4 5

b. Describe your role as a Youth Mapper? 1 2 3 4 5

c. Explain "Elements" for PYD to another person? 1 2 3 4 5

What is your overall rating of this session?

*Poor - Excellent*

1 2 3 4 5

What is the overall rating of the instruction?

1 2 3 4 5

## Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Training

### Day Two Evaluation, March 20, 2007

What did you like most about this session?

What did you like least about this session?

What could be done to improve upon this session?

As a result of the training, how confident are you in your ability to:

*Not at all Confident - Very Confident*

a. Find resources that build "Elements" for PYD in your school and community?

**People** **1 2 3 4 5**

**Activities** **1 2 3 4 5**

**Places** **1 2 3 4 5**

b. Describe your role as a Youth Mapper? **1 2 3 4 5**

c. Explain "Elements" for PYD to another person? **1 2 3 4 5**

What is your overall rating of this session?

*Poor - Excellent*

**1 2 3 4 5**

What is the overall rating of the instruction?

**1 2 3 4 5**

## Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Training

### Day 3 Evaluation, March 31, 2007

What did you like most about this session?

What did you like least about this session?

What could be done to improve upon this session?

As a result of the training, how confident are you in your ability to:

*Not at all Confident - Very Confident*

a. Find resources that build "Elements" for PYD in your school and community?

**People** **1 2 3 4 5**

**Activities** **1 2 3 4 5**

**Places** **1 2 3 4 5**

b. Describe your role as a Youth Mapper? **1 2 3 4 5**

c. Explain "Elements" for PYD to another person? **1 2 3 4 5**

d. Use data collection methods to learn about "elements that facilitate youth development" in your community? **1 2 3 4 5**

e. Conduct yourself professionally as a researcher? **1 2 3 4 5**

f. Keep data confidential? **1 2 3 4 5**

g. Use of camera and GPS? **1 2 3 4 5**

*Poor - Excellent*

What is your overall rating of this session? **1 2 3 4 5**

What is the overall rating of the instruction? **1 2 3 4 5**

## Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Training

### Day 4 Evaluation, April 14, 2007

What did you like most about this session?

What did you like least about this session?

What could be done to improve upon this session?

As a result of the training, how confident are you in your ability to:

*Not at all Confident - Very Confident*

a. Find resources that build "Elements" for PYD in your school and community?

<b>People</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
<b>Places</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>

b. Describe your role as a Youth Mapper? **1 2 3 4 5**

c. Explain "Elements" for PYD to another person? **1 2 3 4 5**

d. Use data collection methods to learn about "elements that facilitate youth development" in your community? **1 2 3 4 5**

e. Conduct yourself professionally as a researcher? **1 2 3 4 5**

f. Keep data confidential? **1 2 3 4 5**

g. Use of camera and GPS? **1 2 3 4 5**

*Poor - Excellent*

What is your overall rating of this session? **1 2 3 4 5**

What is the overall rating of the instruction? **1 2 3 4 5**

## Appendix F

### Key Informant Interview Script and Questions - Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project

#### **Interview Script for Community Youth Mapping Project**

I have a number of questions I'd like to ask you. The interview will take just a few minutes. If any time you feel uncomfortable with a question, you don't have to answer it. I'd like to record our conversation so I don't lose any information that you provide.

#### **The Research Project – Surrey Community Youth Mapping?**

We're conducting a Community Youth Mapping Research Project in this neighborhood of Surrey to identify existing resources in the form of people, places and activities that support positive youth development. The information you'll provide will support the initial development and planning of a Community Youth Development Initiative in Surrey.

PLEASE READ OVER THE CONSENT FORM AND SIGN (must be 16 or over to sign on their own, if not, they'll need to get their parent's signature before commencing interview)

#### **Are you ready?**

To begin, would you please take a few minutes and look over this paper titled **“Elements that Assist Youth Development.”** It's a list of factors that help young people develop positive forces in their lives. These are the kinds of things we want to ask you about in the interview (AND WHERE AND HOW YOU FIND THESE “ELEMENTS THAT ASSIST YOUTH DEVELOPMENT” IN PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ACTIVITIES WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY). We also have a MAP OF THE COMMUNITY we want you to think about when you are answering questions. **You can look at the “Elements that Assist Youth Development” at any time during the interview.**

(wait for a minute or so while the person looks over the elements list)  
(GO OVER THE MAIN POINTS OF THE SHEET, EXPLAIN ANY HAZY AREAS, ASK IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS)

#### **WARM UP QUESTIONS (Have the respondent identify where on the map)**

Where do you go to school? Do you participate in school activities (e.g., sports, clubs, or other school activities)? (If yes) What are those?  
Do you participate in youth groups outside of school? (If yes) What are they? What kinds of activities do you do there? Where are they? (HAVE THEM IDENTIFY ON THE MAP)

Do you work? (If yes) Where? (HAVE THEM IDENTIFY ON THE MAP) How many hours/week?

Do you do volunteer work? What is it you do? How often?

What other kinds of places do you go? What do you do there? Where are they? (HAVE THEM IDENTIFY ON THE MAP)

***LOOK AGAIN AT THE LIST OF “ELEMENTS THAT ASSIST POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT”***

Thinking back on YOUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY, where can you find resources in the form of “people, places, and activities” to help build some of these ELEMENTS OR OTHERS THAT COME TO MIND (have them refer again to the list)? Any other people, places and activities where you can find these ELEMENTS?

Tell me a little about why you said \_\_\_\_\_. What elements do you have a chance to build? (prompts)? Where is this resource? (Use map if needed)

- Who helps you build these? How do they do that? What does it look like?
- Why is this such an important place for you?
- How often do you feel these ELEMENTS are being built there? (every day, once a week, once a month or less?)

(Pick another resource (people, places, and activities) participants mentioned).

Let’s talk a little about \_\_\_\_\_. Which of the ELEMENTS do you have a chance to build at/or with \_\_\_\_\_? (Prompts)

- How are these elements built there? Is there someone important to you there?
- How do they do that? What does it look like when you gain those ELEMENTS there?
- How often do you feel these ELEMENTS are being built there? (Every day, once a week, once a month or less?)
- Where is this resource (people, places, activities) in the community (use map if needed)?

Do you think that most people your age in this community know how to get these positive forces or ELEMENTS in their lives?

What is missing in this community to be able to support people your age in these ways?

Is there anything else you can tell me about this community?

Do you have any questions for me?

Tell me a major street intersection near your home? Who lives there with you?

## Appendix G

### Focus Group Interview Kit - Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project

## The Components

The Focus Group Kit contains:

1. The Listening Campaign
2. What's a Focus Group? (The interview technique)
3. The Facilitator, The Recorder, The Photographer, The Technical Crew
4. The Focus Group Question List & Process
5. Observation Form for Facilitators / Recorders

### Section 1: The Listening Campaign

Where do teens find opportunities for positive development? Can teens identify the people, places and activities (PPA) that support their growth? Can teens describe resources that are missing for them and make suggestions for building stronger communities?

The Focus Group Interview is an exciting opportunity for the Physical Education Leadership class members to voice their perceptions about people, places and activities that support their growth. We will use this data to augment youth mappers' efforts in discovering the current locations, resources and opportunities for promoting youth development and asset-building within their neighbourhoods. At this time, we do not know where or how most youth receive or are exposed to opportunities for building assets within their families, neighbourhoods or communities.

This kit provides the guidelines, processes and tools necessary to conduct the Focus Group Interview process. Results of the Focus group Interviews will be compiled to identify people, places and activities that support positive growth.

### Section 2: What is a Focus Group?

This interview is a form of research that is used to obtain qualitative information from several respondents at once. The group atmosphere provides greater stimulation for openness, thereby readily conveying target audience perceptions and beliefs.

The Focus Group technique is used frequently in business to assist organizations to reconnect with their customers. The groups provide direct face-to-face contact and practical insights on how best to serve a changing clientele.

A group of 5 to 8 respondents are led through a discussion period, responding to a few key questions.

Using topics selected specifically for the group, a Facilitator keeps the session on track while allowing respondents to talk freely and spontaneously. We have utilized several different ways to collect ideas from group members. This should keep the group conversations stimulated. Insights and patterns will emerge and the facilitator can ask for clarification or probe further to gain useful insights. Key points are included in the summary at the end of the session.

The Focus Group respondents should be typical of the intended target audience, and representative of the various sub-groups within this audience. Their information will be used by researchers in subsequent stages of reporting data, i.e. in this case, listening to youth perceptions about people, places and activities that build positive development experiences.

Information about the location and source of these resources will help youth access positive people, places and activities. This information will also help the community and local organizations in planning for additional opportunities and resources and help us better understand how different neighbourhoods within Surrey provide resources for youth.

### **Section 3: Facilitator & Recorder Guidelines**

#### **The Facilitator**

Here are some of the guidelines to follow when you facilitate your focus group:

#### **Before the meeting**

Ensure that you have two recorders (if possible) to assist you. (This will ease your workload and save time). Also, if possible use a tape recorder.

- Familiarize yourself with the Focus Group process and the questionnaire
- Find out as much as possible about the group before the Focus Group Interview
- Check participants' names on the list and add new members – please have participants complete any missing information
  - For Students – name, age & gender
  - For Parents – name of child and grade
  - For Teachers – gender, number of years teaching, number of years at Discovery

- We do not use names on final reports but we like to thank participants and make sure they receive some feedback. We do require age and gender for reporting demographics information.

### **At the beginning of the meeting**

- Arrive early, set up your space
- Introduce yourself and your Focus Group interview team (maybe wear school shirts or something to identify your team) or a professional name tag
- Outline the purposes and format of the session
- Ask participants to introduce themselves or do an exercise to warm them up or make people comfortable.
- Determine quickly the kind of approach that the group will be most comfortable with
- Communicate a genuine interest in the topics and task
- Be relaxed and friendly without being too casual
- Set a non-threatening climate from the start
- Relay to the group that you are not necessarily an expert in the subject matter being discussed
- Stress that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions being posed to the group

Note: Results from the focus group interviews will be shared. As trained facilitators we will make every effort to ensure a safe environment where conversation is candid. Simple rules such as hard on the issue and soft on the people, respecting the individual voices and different points of view work well in this process. Gossip after the meeting, “who said what”...should be discouraged by all stakeholders and participants. This process is not about making anyone right or wrong.

Notes for Youth Mappers:

These were some mappers’ thoughts on the purpose of the focus group meetings:

1. to generate excitement about the community youth mapping research project
2. to identify more people, places and activities that build strong youth
3. to discover hidden opportunities and find some surprises (dig for gold)
4. to have fun gathering information and listening to different perspectives
5. to build trusting relationships

The Focus group process is not about: (1) creating conflict (2) pursuing our own opinions; or (3) simply complaining.

### **During the meeting**

- Adopt a neutral role
  - Refrain from interrupting
  - Avoid critical judgment
- Build rapport and trust
- Follow the question wording as closely as possible
- Probe to receive responses sufficiently informative for analytical purposes

- Ask for clarification, further explanations
- Respond to questions in a factual nature only
  - Give no opinions or value judgments
- Do not correct incorrect statements made by a group member but make note of the misinformation
- Do not react to, and therefore influence respondents' opinions
- Paraphrase where necessary to draw out opinions and ideas
- Seek insights; elicit group comments
- Allow equal air time to all members
- Facilitate communication between participants (an integrative requirement)
- Lead the discussion
  - Keep it moving
  - Redirect the group if it goes off track
  - If 2 people are talking at once, as facilitator point out that we have 2 important opinions on the table and we would like to hear them both. Could we please go one at a time!
- List any comments from the participants evaluating the Focus Group interview process

#### **After the meeting**

- Rewrite the question responses in point form on clean copy
- Include key points that the group discussed
- Together with the Recorder, fill out the Facilitator / Recorder Observations form to help capture the flavour of the general message relayed by the Focus Group
- Complete good copies as soon after the meeting as possible, when your memory is fresh
- Return word-processing list to your team captain at the end of the day or as soon as possible

#### **The Recorder**

Here are some guidelines to follow when you record your Focus Group's responses:

- Familiarize yourself with the Focus Group process and the questionnaire
- Adopt a neutral role as the Recorder
- Accurately record key points of discussions – we are trying to capture data on people, places and activities for youth
- Do not trust your memory anymore than you have to; write cues in margin to jog your memory when completing the hard copy
- Use point form
- Print or write legibly
- Bring extra paper with you; use the backs of forms if necessary
- Put together a rewritten word-processing draft – do this as soon after the session as possible, while your memory is fresh

- Return the forms to your team captain by the end of session
- If you use a recorder, please check to see if it is recording and watch the timing for the tape

### **The Photographer**

Let the group know that you are taking pictures of the process and, in the case of the Physical Education Leadership class, tell them you will come back to them if there is a picture that will be used for knowledge transfer. If you have a picture that you wish to use please have the youth complete the photo permission form.

### **The Technical Crew**

Set up the GPS / Google Earth / in-focus projector with screen. During the “Places” question have a technical person send addresses or key intersections to the recorder. Before the interview have some of the places that you think will be mentioned ready so you can speed up the process.

### **The Process**

1. Set a time and place in the school for a group meeting
2. Review the purpose of the interview. “The purpose of this interview is...”
3. Select the interview questions from the Focus Group Question List. Post the question for visual reference.
4. Convene your Focus Group meeting by outlining the purpose and format of the session.
5. Using the kit’s interview instruments, the Facilitator conducts the interview. One Recorder is adequate but two Recorders ensure thorough data gathering. Nominate a photographer and a technical assistant.
6. Enter data in the computer during the “Places” question and at the end of your session.
7. Complete the Facilitator Observations form (can use computer.)
8. Return the clean copy and the Facilitator Observations form to your team captain.

A research sub-committee will compile responses for distribution. A power-point presentation will be developed to use for reporting purposes.

### **Time Frame**

- 45 minutes class / meeting time to conduct the interview
- ½ hour for reflection/action cycle meeting
- ½ hour to synthesize the responses on the Response Form (Synthesized Final Draft)
- ½ hour to complete the Facilitator / Recorder Observation Form

## Section 4: The Focus Group Question List

There are 4 broad questions addressed in the Focus Group Interview for the class. Each broad question is listed in the left-hand column. In the right hand column is a brief explanation of what responses may emerge. **The purpose of this session is to identify activities and places to help youth thrive in our community.**

We have 45 minutes for the group to respond to the questions. This will include time to introduce the group to one another, review purposes and process, and share final words of appreciation at the end.

### Focus Group Interview Questions

**REFER TO “ELEMENTS” HANDOUT INTRODUCED IN VIDEO**

5. **Prioritize the following elements in order of importance. What other elements help build strength and resilience? (Explain how these elements help build resilience (ones ability to bounce back))**
6. **What activities help you build these elements?**
7. **Where can you go to build these elements that assist positive youth development? (YOUR FAVOURITE PLACES/ACTIVITIES)**
8. **What could we do to make this a better community?**

### Question # 1 – Prioritize Elements

**Time: 10 minutes**

**Prioritize the following elements in order of importance. What other elements help build strength and resilience?** (Explain how these elements help build resilience (ones ability to bounce back))

**Process:**

Ask the participants to prioritize by numbering one through 6 regarding what they think are the most important to least important elements.

Ask who would like to share their top two and why they chose them.

Facilitators to pick up Elements handout after session.

**Prompts**

Read through the six elements and think about which ones are the most important to you personally.

There are no right or wrong answers we are just looking for your opinions.

**Materials Needed:**

- Elements Handout for each participant.

## Question # 2 – Activities

**Time: 10 minutes**

**What activities help you build these elements?**

Activities that

- Are safe?
- Are fun?
- Are engaging?
- Create opportunities for leadership?
- Create opportunities to learn new skills?
- Give teens a sense of belonging?

**Process:**

You will be using the carousel sheet so watch the participants and allow them time to write a few ideas down for the first round. In the second round, give them time to read and add things. Finish with the third round. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> round facilitate whole group (call out) and chart activities (limit ideas to a few minutes).  
**(Facilitators collect blue carousel sheets)**

Carousel list – round table

- Write your activities on the list and pass it to the right. Be as specific as you can be.
- Receive your neighbour's list – add other activities and pass it to your right
- Continue as time allows
- Add only new activities to your neighbour's list.

**Prompts**

**Activities:**

Public speaking  
Team building  
Sports  
Festivals  
Internet  
Performing arts  
After school clubs  
Dances  
Yoga  
Kick boxing  
Religious classes  
Volunteering  
Youth groups  
Work  
Fund raisers  
School events  
Clubs  
Band concerts  
Shopping  
Fitness (working out)  
Baking  
Baby Sitting  
Student Counsel  
Reading Books  
Goal setting  
Event planning

**Key Elements:**

- Meaningful Youth Participation
- Supportive Relationships
- Sense of Belonging
- Competencies and Skills
- Emotional and Physical Safety
- Leadership

### **Question # 3 - Places**

**Time: 20 minutes**

*Where can you go to build these elements that assist positive youth development? (Your Favourite Places and Activities)*

We want to know where you build important “**ELEMENTS**” in your life. **Refer to the list of “ELEMENTS.”** Think about where you have a chance to find some of these. Tell us where that happens (for example, at school, a mall, recreation centre, etc.). This will help us find and map these places in your life.

**Where can you go (places) to build elements that assist positive youth development?**

**Process:**

The question is divided into 2 major sections:

1. Each team has a coloured sticky and they’re challenged to write one favourite place per sticky and post them on the wall. This is a contest and the winning team will have the most stickies on the wall.
2. Collect stickies from the wall and bring back to their group table and identify name and location of place (e.g., Esquires Coffee Shop, Crescent Rd.).
3. Have the group choose 5 or six of their top places and pin them on their map (with flag pins and writing name on thin strip)
4. Each group to present **Why** these places would be given an award. Record info on flip chart reasons/criteria.

#### **Key Elements:**

- Meaningful Youth Participation
- Supportive Relationships
- Sense of Belonging
- Competencies and Skills
- Emotional and Physical Safety
- Leadership

#### **Prompts**

##### **Places:**

Schools/ classroom  
 Recreation centre  
 Library  
 Workplace  
 Pool  
 Mall  
 Home  
 Neighbourhood  
 Movie theatre  
 Festivals  
 Concerts  
 Sports  
 Coffee shop  
 Church  
 Gym  
 Parks  
 YMCA  
 Museum  
 Arts centre  
 Aquarium  
 Zoo  
 Playground  
 Leadership Conference  
 Friends House  
 Hockey Shop  
 Beach  
 Tim Hortons  
 Star Dust

#### **Materials Needed**

- 3 coloured stickies
- Teen Hotspot Labels
- Maps and pin flags

### **Question # 4 – Input for Change**

**Time: 10 minutes.**

**What could we do to make this a better community?**

Some possible questions:

- Do you have some ideas? A recorder, using chart paper and a felt pen, helps to brainstorm ideas for making this community even better
- Are there opportunities outside the school that we could capitalize upon?
- If you could make one change, what would it be?
- What should the top 2 priorities be for the youth mappers?

**Process:**

Brainstorm in the small groups. (Each group has a recorder)

What could we do to make this a better community?

- The group picks 2 ideas to present as possible starting points for action
- These ideas are highlighted with an asterisk (\*)
- The recorder puts an asterisk (\*) beside the ideas that the group feels are the most important

Leave distributing water bottles and food until the end.

“Thanking them wholeheartedly” and hoping they experienced funnuation!

**Prompts**

**Change:**

Safer to walk on the  
Streets  
Safe places for  
youth to hang out  
Adopt a street  
Plant trees  
Paint fish  
Say thank you  
Say hi to someone  
new every day  
Be generous  
Open doors

**Key Elements:**

- Meaningful Youth Participation
- Supportive Relationships
- Sense of Belonging
- Competencies and Skills
- Emotional and Physical Safety
- Leadership



## Appendix H

Digging for Gold – Activity Sheet - Surrey’s Community Youth Mapping Project  
March 20/ 2007

We want to know where you build important “ELEMENTS” in your life. Review the list of “ELEMENTS that facilitate PYD”. Think about where you have a chance to build some of these? Who helps you build these things? Think about the kinds of people (for example, parents, coach, youth leader, friend, teacher, etc) and/or activity where you have a chance to build these “ELEMENTS” in Surrey. Tell us where that happens (for example school, mall, recreation centre, etc.). This will help us find these positive helpers in your life. \* **The following results are from a facilitated exercise with Youth Mappers during their training session.**

PEOPLE, PLACES, ACTIVITIES...Where you get assets	WHERE do you get these assets (Name organization or/and location)	WHO and/or WHAT activities helps you get those assets
<b>ELEMENTS THAT FACILITATE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>Meaningful Youth Participation; Supportive Relationships; Sense of Belonging; Competencies and Skills; Emotional and Physical Safety; Leadership</b>		
PEOPLE	PLACES	ACTIVITIES
Teachers Coaches Parents Bus/taxi Drivers Principal Lifeguard Minister Facilitators Family Bosses Friends Sport Teams Church Groups Tutors Neighbor Radio People H.C. Workers Youth Leaders Teammates	Schools/classroom Recreation Centers Library Workplaces Pool Mall/shopping centre Home Neighborhood Movie Theatre Festivals Concerts Sporting Events Coffee Shops Church YM-YWCA/gym Museum Arts Centers Aquarium Zoo Playground	Sports Festivals Internet Performing Arts After School Programs Clubs Dances Yoga Kick Boxing Religious Classes Youth Groups Work Fund Raising Events Band Concerts Shopping Sports and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volleyball</li> <li>• Basketball</li> <li>• Soccer</li> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Fitness</li> </ul>

## Appendix I

## Concluding Youth Mappers Interview Questions

June 29, 2007

We would like to ask you a few questions about your experience with Surrey's Community Youth Mapping Project both in terms of the training and the overall experience of learning in your community. All your responses will be confidential, and will never be used with your name.

1. In your own words, what do you think this Community Youth Mapping effort was about?  
Prompt: goals
  
2. Do you think we were able to accomplish those goals?  
If yes, what helped us to make that happen?  
If no, what would have helped us to make that happen?
  
3. What did you learn about families as a result of this Community Youth Mapping effort?
  
4. What did you learn about Schools as a result of this Community Youth Mapping effort?
  
5. What did you learn about Community as a result of this Community Youth Mapping effort?

## PROMPTS:

People, Places, or Activities where you can go to build elements that assist in positive youth development? What were those?

6. Did you feel prepared to learn about these things, or ask the kinds of questions you did?

## PROMPTS:

Conduct key informant interviews (one-on-one) and focus group sessions.

What worked?

What didn't?

What was the most challenging?

What was the most fun?

What will you remember?

If you could change one thing what would that be?

What would have better prepared you (side note: trying to tease out information on the training or other)?

Are there things that we could do to improve the training and methods that you haven't already shared?

If you had an opportunity would you want to stay involved with this project?

7. How did you feel about yourself when you were learning in your school and community through conducting interviews? Did you change your view of yourself?
8. How did others (interviewees or others) feel when you were conducting interviews? Did their views change, did they learn from the experience? If so how? (Give an example)
9. Regarding your new knowledge of elements that assist in positive youth development, do you see or feel aspects of these elements in your daily life or how you see the world?
10. Do you think you will do anything differently as a result of your experiences with the project?

PROMPTS:

(Use new skills, new relationships, new people, places and activities to go, different self-identity, perform different roles within your family, school or community, treat others differently).

Appendix J

Surrey Community Youth Mapper/Mapping Logos

Branding Used on T-Shirts, Bottles, Letterhead/Business Cards and Website Banner



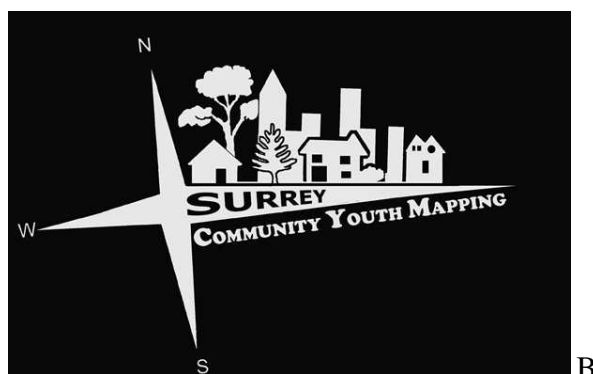
Business Card



Letterhead



Website banner with SFU building, flash animation and slideshow of youth



Binder labels



T-shirts

## Appendix K

### Selection Criteria and Expectations for Research Methodology

To assist in the analysis and assessment of the different research traditions and methodologies, I developed a framework that set out the criteria and expectations I had of my research methodology and what I would expect it to honour and achieve. I also identified some of the challenges that I anticipated would arise during the inquiry process so that I could mindfully select a methodology that could rise to these challenges. This framework leads me to develop a series of questions by which I evaluated the eight prospective methodologies.

#### *Criteria and Expectations*

As previously noted, the topic of community youth development (CYD) is of personal and professional interest to me. In the course of preparing to undertake my research, I have connected with my own past experiences working in the area of youth health promotion and the importance of settings in the healthy development of youth. In reviewing the relevance and application of different research traditions and methodologies, I have integrated personal and professional criteria and expectations. In the following I have identified my expectations and criteria for research traditions and methodologies under the general headings of:

- Participatory in nature
- Getting to voice
- Embracing diversity
- Tackling the subject/object dichotomy
- Honouring relationships
- Understanding contexts
- Research as praxis

Each of these criteria and expectations have helped me to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different traditions and methodologies and they will also be applied when I develop my research proposal.

#### *Participatory in Nature*

It is important that the methodology for this proposed study be participatory in nature. I want to avoid the non-inclusive process often used by adults in which they do for youth approach is taken. Currently, research about youth tends to adopt a focus about them rather than with them. The intent of research is to better understand the processes and actions to successfully involving youth as evaluators and researchers. Therefore, a strong participatory approach is an important criteria for the research tradition and methodology.

#### *Getting to Voice*

Although the research on youth's voice is limited in a number of ways, it does illustrate the challenge faced by any researcher seeking to explore voice, and particularly inner or authentic voice – how does one truly “know” if any expression of voice is authentic? Despite the challenge, there appears to be some agreement within the literature on three points. The first is that we must focus on the lived experiences of youth. The second point of congruence is that voice emerges out of trusting relationships within which youth feel able to explore, uncover and express their own voices. The third point is that there is great diversity and we must create space for and allow this diversity to be expressed not only in those we learn from but also in ourselves as researchers.

In order to understand more about youths experience within their community, I must engage in a research process that allows for youth and other community members to have voice within the research context. I will need to build trusting relationships within which they feel able to explore, uncover and express their own voices. Issues of personal and institutional power are embedded in all youth-adult relationships and often become a stumbling block.

#### *Embracing Diversity*

My desire is to uncover through discourse, some of the range of possibilities and the contextual and relational variables that relate to CYD. I am seeking a participatory science – a non-elitist approach in which community participation is both valued and promoted. Generalizations are not the aim, rather a real and honest expression of youth and community experience is the aim. The research methodologies must help draw out the actual and lived

experience of youth and community, including thoughts, feelings, stories, history, and perspectives.

#### *Tackling the Subject/Object Dichotomy*

The subject/object duality or dichotomy is discussed in research with vulnerable youth population (Zeldin et al., 2003) and is alluded to in my candidacy paper on Community Youth Development (CYD). The key consideration for me in the selection of research traditions and methodologies is that this duality is suspended or negated. The research should be *for* the subject, not *about* the subject as an object. It is important that my research approach does not transform people into objects and instead allows for subjectivity.

Standard methodologies of research set up a hierarchy with the researcher being privileged. This sets up conditions whereby youth and community participants may be less inclined to “tell their truth”. I hope to develop an approach that allows me to make contact with the authentic voice of youth, therefore, elimination of the distancing experience of the subject/object dichotomy is a key requirement.

#### *Honouring Relationships*

The research tradition and methodologies must serve to recognize, honor and support relationships. This includes the relationships that are described as being part of a youth’s experience as well as relationships that may develop between the researcher and participants and amongst the participants. The relational quality also necessitates that there be opportunities for dialogue and interaction between the researcher and participants so that trust can evolve in the support of accessing more authentic representations of youth voice.

#### *Understanding Contexts*

The research tradition and methodology must explicitly acknowledge and account for the multiple and overlapping contexts of researcher, co-researchers and participants. During the last decade, the positive youth development perspective emerged from developmental systems theories that emphasized the potential plasticity in human development. Within my research I’m very interested in explaining the positive attributes of the multi-layered ecology of youth and their impact on positive youth development.

#### *Research as Praxis*

The phenomenon of knowing cannot be taken as though there were ‘facts’ or objects out there that we grasp and store in our head. The experience of anything out there is validated in a special way by the human structure, which makes possible ‘the thing’ that

arises in the description. This circularity, this connection between action and experience, this inseparability between a particular way of being and how the world appears to us, tells us that every act of knowing brings forth a world.... All doing is knowing and all knowing is doing (Maturana and Varela, 1987, p.25-26).

The community youth development view is that all acts of learning, understanding and developing consciousness are connected to bringing about fundamental change in the world and the experience of youth within the world. Shulamit Reinharz (1979, p.368) spoke of the aim of experiential analysis to deepen understanding and effect change at three levels simultaneously: “the substantive issue, the research process and the self of the researcher – person, problem and method. It compels critical self-awareness in the context of engagement with others to whom the researcher is accountable, it is a form of praxis for the self and society”.

The research tradition and methodology that I select will need to support the clarification of this intersection and integration of person, problem and method. As I am particularly interested in CYD as resources for individual, familial and community wellness the intersection and integration of research and praxis must be well-defined.

## Appendix L

Agenda for Presentation at International Conference

**Community Youth Mapping**  
**June 14, 2007-**  
**Waterfront Hotel– 3:45- 5:30 pm Princess Louisa Room**

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*Welcome to our presentation on Community Youth Mapping... a session especially designed for you by community youth mappers and collaborative adult researchers. Discover an innovative design utilizing creative focus group techniques, video presentation and demonstrations of photovoice and Goggle Earth Plus. Preliminary Findings are emerging resulting in the discovery of positive people, places and activities that build assets in Surrey especially for teens.*

<b>3:45</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Introduction</b> <b>Who's in the Room</b> <b>Hopes for the Session</b> <b>Digging for Gold</b> <b>Your favorite Activities</b> <b>The Great Sticky Race</b> <b>REPLAY</b>
<b>5:30</b>	<b>**Questions and Answers</b>

***Youth Mappers & Collaborative Adult Researchers***

***Facilitating and leading us through this session are:***

Surrey School District , Tamanawis Secondary Students,: Colten Hayes (Grade 11) Adelen Leon (Grade 12), , Matt Malenstyn( Grade 11) , Shavanna Ram(Grade 12) with Gord Miller ( U of Vic) and Donna VanSant( Healthy Ventures) This project is financially supported by Healthy Ventures, the Community Youth Development Coalition of BC( CYDC BC), Cloverdale Lion's Club and Canada Council of Learning. for information please contact vansantd@telus.net

Community Youth Mapping Presentation – Surrey Community Youth Project  
June 14, 2007

Waterfront Hotel, Princess Louisa Room, 3:45 to 5:30 pm

<i>Timing</i>	<b>Activity – Role</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>People</b>
June 14	<b>Rides at Tamanawis and Pick up at 1:00 pm drive to Waterfront Hotel across from Pan Pacific. Princess Louisa Room</b>		Donna pick up at Tamanawis Bring bins of focus group material and water bottles
2:00	<p><b>Presenters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Set up room <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ basket of masking tape, paper shapes for hopes of the day, felt pens on tables in buckets, stickies, different shape per table</li> <li>○ snacks</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Put up posters / song in background</li> <li>➤ Handouts &amp; prizes organized</li> <li>➤ AV check / song in background</li> <li>➤ Video &amp; PowerPoint cued</li> <li>➤ Extra screen and projector set up</li> <li>➤ Laptops set up for Google Earth connected with internet</li> <li>➤ Coffee &amp; food</li> <li>➤ We are all greeters making people feel welcomed coming into the seminar room.</li> </ul>	<p>#’s, felts, gold coins, tape</p> <p>handouts &amp; prizes video / pp</p> <p>I am not sure that youth will get nametags with day pass</p>	<p>Matt, Adelen, Shavanna, Donna Colten</p> <p>Gord is in charge of technical set up Gord bring screen, Gord please check for compatibility. The people at WF hotel are very accommodating.</p> <p>Donna, facilitator kit</p>
3:40	<p><b>Getting Full Participation</b></p> <p>The intent of the opening is to have each participant fully present, aligned with group purposes and ready to work as part of the whole group...</p>	<p>Slide presentation ongoing as people enter the room.</p> <p>Delegates should have nametags but presenters may need to make big name tags. Nametags and felts</p>	<p>Someone has to be the timer.</p> <p>We start on time and finish on time as respect to the participants. No exception to this rule. Sometimes one can negotiate waiting five minutes. At the beginning I notice that people at this conference are coming</p>

			and going as there are so many choices. So don't take it personally if people get up and leave your session as this seems to be accepted behavior at this conference. Also our time is a very bad time of day so I am not expecting a large audience. We always cherish and invest in the people who show up and do not overly worry if we don't have a good turnout.
3:45	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>“Today’s session is a work in progress. We are all researchers experimenting with shaping a youth-led adult collaborated project...We started with a framework of sound research on youth development including a two year “on the ground” evaluation project focusing on positive youth development initiatives in BC. We developed a loose training structure knowing that we shared a general philosophy around strengths-based approaches and the importance of youth engagement within this process. We wanted to build knowledge and insight about elements that support youth development from the youth’s perspective”</p> <p><b>Introduction</b> of Community youth mappers and collaborative adults. “Youth mappers/ Adult collaborators” shaping a youth –led adult collaborative project.</p>	Donna	Handout- ladder of participation
3:50		Background song and each committee member entering the room through the doorway	Matt song Space Jam Matt will introduce each member as they walk through the door ( <i>and then we will flash the pictures of the people that aren't able to be present.</i> )
3:55	<p><b>Whose in the Room</b></p> <p><b>Occupation</b> ... call out and response with hands and what occupation. Have we missed any occupation? If someone puts up their hand and tells us some occupation we have missed that person receives a gold coin *big bucket of gold coins...</p> <p><b>Then where are they from...</b> whose is from another continent (Matt’s going to be recording and then working on google earth) (not essential but impressive) We would not demonstrate google earth or this part until later in the program.</p>	Big bucket of Gold coins or glass jar of gold coins.	Donna to bring
4:00		<b>Gord</b> to call out occupations and to present one or two gold coins to those occupations that we missed <b>Shavanna</b> to ask people where they are	Gord to look at registrations and get a feel for occupations ( this is important “pre” research on participants)

	<p><b>The purpose of “who’s in the room” is to establish some idea of who is in your audience. The audience will also be watching one another and understand that there is a wide range of professions and people from diverse backgrounds and places. There is what we call group wisdom present in the room and the best facilitated sessions “tap” that group wisdom.</b></p>	<p>from. Who is from a continent outside of North America? What countries <b>Matt Smith/ Colten/ Adelena/</b> charting these countries <b>Matt M</b> entering data on the laptop computer trying to get them on google earth + we show this later in the program when we demonstrate the map and the GPS technology.</p>	<p>2 big post it charts on either side of the room</p>
<p>4:05</p> <p>4:10</p>	<p><b>Statement of Hopes</b> Talk about today’s purposes within the framework of HOPES. <b>. Hopes for the day</b>... start with ours.... <b>Addy</b>...”I want others to have a clear idea of what we are trying to achieve, I would like to entice others to do the same project within their community”.... <b>Shavanna</b> “What I hope to learn from the session includes how adults change their minds about youth and learn what divides this form of research from audiences ‘ research’ <b>Colten</b>..... <b>Matt M</b> “I hope to enlighten our guests about mapping. ...I want the session to be very interactive....I hope through the session that participants gain a better understanding of what a youth-led adult collaborative research project looks like... ...<b>Gord</b> I hope to satisfy the academics in the room regarding CAR design and process in the design and implementation of cym initiative .... Hoping to share some of our preliminary findings <b>Donna</b> I hope to have the opportunity for the participants to understand that youth can be capable researchers. ... (My bias and if adult trainers take the time to ask youth for their opinions and perceptions that the world would be a better place)... ... I hope through the focus group aspect of this workshop the participants will witness empowered youth in action.  Ask participants to jot down some of their hopes of the session. What they hope that they will get out of our 90 minutes together.</p>	<p>.</p> <p><i>Pp what are your hopes for today</i> <b>Donna</b> leads this session. Everyone picks up the colored sheets and we post</p>	<p>Adelena first Shavanna Matt Smith Colten Matt M Gord Donna</p> <p><i>Gord to have a bibliography for the academics and some of his favorite books if possible.</i></p>

		them on a big sheet or window. Facilitators check these hopes throughout the session and we will try to address some of these hopes where they are appropriate.	
4:20	Start with a design team with partners and the whole process of building the knowledge base. Adults didn't really have time .... Structure evolved around youth team leaders and three teams  CONTENT, PROCESS, AND PRACTICE  CONTENT Design  PROCESS Open agenda involving the youth in the design and action  PRACTICE Strengths-based, youth engagement, youth development (human development), community development, youth led adult collaborative	Gord 5 minutes mini lecture	
4:25  Video is 7 minutes 4:40  4:45	<b>Question One</b> Elements hand out. There are two handouts One the element sheet as used in our interview and then an element ranking sheet  <b>Question One: For you, what are the most important elements? (I don't have the revised questions but it asks participants to rank these elements.</b> <b>Process:</b> (1)Participants Watch the video which was our attempt to teach the elements to our focus group participants.  (2) Participants Are asked Questions #1 "reflecting on the video, the element sheet could you ..... And given a ranking sheet.  (3) Participants: "Pair-share" with one other person. They share which elements were the most important to them and their reasons. We collect the ranking sheets and again we will "try to collate their rankings to the findings of our last 2 focus groups but we may not have time to do this quickly.	Introduction of element sheet. Building common Language was paramount in this work. What are assets? What are the important ingredients within a setting that either enhance or impede positive youth development?  As a way to end this questions we can report the conversations that we witnessed that were highlighted on the videotape. <i>(I think Gord was going to try to highlight two of the youth's comments on the tape?) That would be a good way to end this section.</i>	Donna  Adelena leading this questions  Adelena with Donna and Shavanna doing the tally. .
4:50	Questions #2 The Carousel questions Where do you go to build assets? Your favorite places. <i>(I don't have the new wording of the revised questions but Gord will</i>	Shavanna lead pm this question End this session with	Shavanna

	<p><i>have that on Power point? Gord we should also have the questions on one sheet as a handout. 1-4.</i></p> <p>Three rounds, 2 or 3 ideas the first round, pass to the right add different ideas to the list, round three as many different places as possible.</p> <p>The idea of the carousel is to get as many activities as possible...the more the better. Collect the carousel sheets as they are data.</p> <p><b>Teen Hot Spot AWARD</b></p>	<p>call out of some ideas with Donna and Gord charting.</p> <p>Shavanna to speak about the Teen hot spot award as an idea to reinforce places that try to be positive place for teens.</p>	<p>Donna &amp; Gord chart</p>
5:00	<p><b>Questions #3 The Great Sticky Race What activities build strength and reliance? (I don't have the new wording of the revised questions but Gord will have that on Power point as well as a handout?)</b></p> <p>Each table has a different sticky shape or color and they are to elicit as many places as they can and post them on the windows. The group that has the most activities gets a group prize</p> <p><b>Google Earth Plus demonstration</b> showing the places that have been mentioned in some of the interview data. Or the places that the people in the room are from.</p>	<p>Matt and Colten handle this questions</p> <p><b>Ready set go....</b></p> <p>Each team counts their different activities.</p> <p>Matt</p> <p>Group prize are package of Canadian pencils.</p>	<p>Matt and Colten's question</p> <p>List in process</p> <p>As a finish to this question we could show them our draft list of PPA?</p> <p><i>We have a power point picture of Colten working on adding to the list.</i></p>
5:15	<p><b>Replay section:</b></p> <p>Reflections on Design and Training</p> <p>Reflections on CAR</p>	<p>Gord to comment on Carr if there are interested people in the room. Donna to check needs of participants...hopes of the day. What we were able to cover....</p>	<p>Note: When you are not in the facilitating role it is very important that you spread out around the room and support the person who is facilitating. You must not be disruptive by engaging in side talk but really on your toes to help the team or whomever is in charge. We haven't had a real chance to practice so we can just be sensitive to one another and try our best.</p>
5:20	<p><b>Testimonial from youth</b></p>	<p>Adelena, Matt, Shavanna read testimonials from other youth.</p>	<p>As you can see the timing is very tight.</p>
5:25	<p><b>End slide show</b></p> <p><b>Questions from participants.</b></p>		