

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNITY IMPACT

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PREPARED BY:



DENDRŌS
GROUP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Design Center of Minnesota (CDC) has been an active agent of community development since its founding in 1969. This St. Paul-based organization's mission is to help revitalize low-to-moderate income communities by providing technical assistance and operating programs that will enhance the physical, economic, social, ecological, and spiritual well being of the community and its residents. One of CDC's fundamental beliefs is that building and renewing a community requires a holistic approach that creates long-term sustainable change. Its work focuses on youth, food, and the environment.

Key stakeholders respect the CDC as a community leader and for the impact it has on the community and the environment, and the outcomes it achieves with its youth participants. CDC's work has positive impacts on the watershed and the Mississippi river, especially through the rain gardens and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. There also is an understanding that the work of CDC creates benefits such as lower crime, higher education levels and better outcomes for youth. In addition, stakeholders report that CDC gardens and the visible presence of positive activity makes the community a safer, better, more beautiful place, and discourages negative behaviors.

At the beginning of the project, a Project Leadership Team consisting of the Board President, the Board Vice President, the former, long-term executive director and the new current director was assembled. The Project Team developed a process in which CDC identified specific stakeholder groups, and board and staff members participated in in-person and phone interviews. In all, 36 people participated in 34 interviews (two were group interviews.) Board members and staff conducted the majority of the interviews, connecting with 28 stakeholders; Dendros Group interviewed 8. In addition to being a cost-effective way to collect data, this structure also allowed CDC Board and staff the opportunity to build relationships with stakeholders and hear first-hand how key decision-makers and stakeholders valued CDC's contribution to the community. The thirty-six (36) interviews included stakeholders from local businesses, nonprofits and government agencies.

When discussing the impact of CDC programs, all (100%) of those identified CDC as an organization that has a youth development impact. Nearly everyone interviewed named impacts in two or more of these areas: youth, environment, quality of life, social capital, community aesthetics, and human health and nutrition.

Although some key stakeholders are unaware of the breadth of the work of CDC, those interviewed felt CDC has an excellent reputation for its work and the results it achieves. Stakeholders offered the perspective that CDC could benefit from finding ways to elevate its visibility in the community about its programs, accomplishments and intended results.

KEY FINDINGS

The key stakeholders interviewed were very generous in sharing their time and perspectives with the board members, staff and consultants conducting the interviews. Without exception, everyone interviewed noted great respect for the work of CDC. It was difficult to find substantive criticism of the operations or reputation of CDC.

All those interviewed identified the youth development impact of CDC's work. A majority (59%) also understood the environmental impacts. Other impacts identified by interviewees include improving community quality of life (44%), building social capital (44%), enhancing community aesthetics (29%) and human health and nutrition (24%). 18% of those interviewed pointed to a secondary impact, such as crime prevention.

Many participants struggled to find ideas and advice for improving CDC, and likewise, found it difficult to name some role or function of CDC as less valuable than the others.

There are four main themes in the perspectives held in the interview data

- **CDC makes a valuable impact in our community.**
- **CDC achieves valuable outcomes for youth participants.**
- **CDC is a respected community partner and leader.**
- **CDC needs more visibility for its work.**

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTER AND ITS PROGRAMS

(From CDC materials and reports)

The Community Design Center of Minnesota (CDC) is a St. Paul-based organization whose mission is to help revitalize low-to-moderate income communities by providing technical assistance and operating programs that enhance the physical, economic, social, ecological, and spiritual well being of the community and its residents. One of its fundamental beliefs is that building and renewing a community requires a holistic approach that creates long-term sustainable change. CDC has been an active agent of community development in Minnesota since its founding in 1969. Its work has evolved to focus on youth, food, and the environment.

The Community Design Center of Minnesota currently operates the Youth Enterprise in Food and Ecology Project. Community Design Center's year-round project engages children, youth, and families in community development through education, internships, and leadership development, primarily on the East Side of St. Paul and in a new pilot project in Minneapolis. Each year, CDC provides opportunities for children and youth to learn basic work skills and habits, expand their knowledge of career opportunities, develop leadership skills, improve academic performance, increase their knowledge of the local environment, improve personal and community health, and develop an ethic of community service.

In 2007-08, the project directly served at least 1,750 children, youth and families, the majority of whom were low-income. This included a large increase in individuals served, particularly through partnerships with St. Paul Public Schools, the City of St. Paul, and the East Side Learning Collaborative. At least 1,050 additional individuals were reached as members of the Salad Share Community Supported Agriculture program, customers at the farmer's market stands, and participants in tours, demonstrations and other outreach efforts.

Garden Corps Internship program

Approximately ten youth participated in the Garden Corps program during the 2007-08 school year. During the summer of 2008, twenty-one youth participated. During the summer program, youth participated in ongoing education and training; planted, maintained, and harvested seven produce, herb, and flower gardens; operated two market stands and a 27-member Community Supported Agriculture program. Throughout the course of the summer, each youth intern spent at least 100-200 hours in hands-on learning and outreach activities. During the school year, they participated in educational activities, explored careers, and created and sold garden-related products. Throughout the year, interns conducted outreach and demonstrations at community events that educated the general public about sustainable agricultural issues. Events included the Minnesota State Fair

Horticulture building, the Garden Works Garden Resource Fair, and Living Green Expo. As part of the program, youth also participated in mini-internships with local food businesses. Four youth interns participated in internships at Cooks of Crocus Hill.

St. Paul Youth Conservation Corps Internship Program

Approximately 10 youth participated in CDC's St. Paul Youth Conservation Corps program during the school year. During the summer of 2008, twenty-one youth participated. During the summer program, youth worked on environmental conservation and restoration projects including the installation of 14 rain gardens and environmental restoration in the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and Swede Hollow Park. Throughout the course of the summer, each youth intern spent at least 100-200 hours in hands-on learning and outreach activities. Throughout the year, interns conducted outreach, demonstrations, and tours that educated the general public about environmental issues and projects. Events included the Minnesota State Fair Eco Experience, Waterfest, the Hmong Resource Fair, Living Green Expo, and tours of the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. Graduates of the program have obtained positions with the National Park Service and the Valley Branch Environmental Learning Center.

Mississippi River Green Team:

This past year, the Community Design Center worked with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the National Park Service to develop a pilot youth conservation corps program in Minneapolis modeled after the St. Paul Youth Conservation Corps. During the summer, the program, Mississippi River Green Team, was piloted with 10 youth participating in hands-on environmental restoration training and education along the river in Minneapolis. The program is continuing through the school year with monthly Saturday educational activities. Plans are to double the number of youth participants for next summer's program.

Environmental Learning Classes and Activities

Classes and activities are aimed at educating and engaging children, youth, and residents with local environmental improvement projects and issues. This past year, 30 youth in Metropolitan State University's "Youniversity" program participated in hands-on environmental restoration activities in our gardens. Twelve elementary school students participated in after school "Nature in the Neighborhood" classes and five of our teen interns served as peer educators for this program. 60 children attended environmental learning activities that were part of one no-school Kidventure day at the Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center.

PEER Cooking and Nutrition Classes

Cooking and nutrition classes provide youth and families with awareness, knowledge and skills to improve their health through what they eat. In 2007-2008, CDC reached 1,140 children and 224 parents at 23 St. Paul elementary schools through hands-on cooking and nutrition classes in partnership with St. Paul Public Schools and the Minnesota Food and Nutrition Network. 32 children and 18 parents participated in a series of after school Cook and Book classes at Dayton's Bluff and Eastern Heights Elementary School that were conducted in partnership with Metropolitan State University. In addition, 180 children participated in cooking and nutrition activities that were part of three no-school Kidventure days in partnership with the East Side learning Collaborative. At least 10 youth interns served as peer educators for youth and family cooking classes.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In the Spring of 2008, the Community Design Center (CDC) contracted with the Dendros Group to help the organization increase its understanding of key stakeholder perspectives on CDC's impact in the community. Because of the desire to understand key stakeholder's perspectives, as opposed to measure results for participants, the Dendros Group proposed to collect and analyze data from stakeholder interviews.

During 2008, CDC was engaged in a strategically planned leadership succession, as the long-time executive director moved to a different role in the organization and a new director assumed leadership for the organization. The launch of the evaluation project coincided with the beginning of the transition and adjustments were made to the process to ensure that stakeholders interviewed were apprised of the change.

A Project Team consisting of the Board President, the Board Vice President, the former, long-term executive director and the current, new director was assembled. The Project Team developed a process in which CDC identified specific stakeholder groups, and board and staff members participated in in-person and phone interviews. In all, 36 people participated in 34 interviews (two were group interviews.) Board members and staff conducted the majority of the interviews, connecting with 28 stakeholders; Dendros Group interviewed 8. In addition to being a cost-effective way to collect data, this structure also allowed CDC Board and staff the opportunity to build relationships with stakeholders and hear first-hand how key decision-makers and stakeholders valued CDC's contribution to the community.

Along with municipal and state elected officials, CDC interviewed local nonprofit executives, business owners, community leaders, appointed officials, nonprofit and government leaders working on environmental and food security issues, as well as

neighbors of some of CDC's projects. Interview participants were given the option to remain anonymous.

The Project Team finalized an interview instrument and CDC staff coordinated interviews. The interview instrument consisted entirely of open-ended questions. To help ensure consistent application of the interview instrument, the interviewers were briefly trained in how to set the stage for the interview and collect data in an interview. The Project Team assigned interviewers to specific key stakeholders. Completed interviews were submitted to an online database for collection, and Dendros consultants did the analysis. In addition to data collected in the interviews, interviewers were invited to reflect on every interview and submit their insights and thoughts on each interview, including follow-up ideas for CDC.

Thirty-six (36) stakeholders and elected officials from businesses, nonprofits and government agencies participated in interviews. A total of forty-four (44) stakeholders were approached for interviews. (For the sample, this is an 82% response rate.) The table below summarizes stakeholder group participation. Note that some stakeholders have multiple affiliations.

Table: Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder Groups	Number Interviewed
East side community residents	8
East side business owners or manager	4
Elected official	2
Government agency representative	8
Program partner	10
Community organizations	7
CSA program members	1
St. Paul Public Schools	3
Higher Education	2
Faith communities	2

*Contains duplicate counts to demonstrate diversity of perspectives included. *The complete list of stakeholders and their affiliations is found later in this report.*

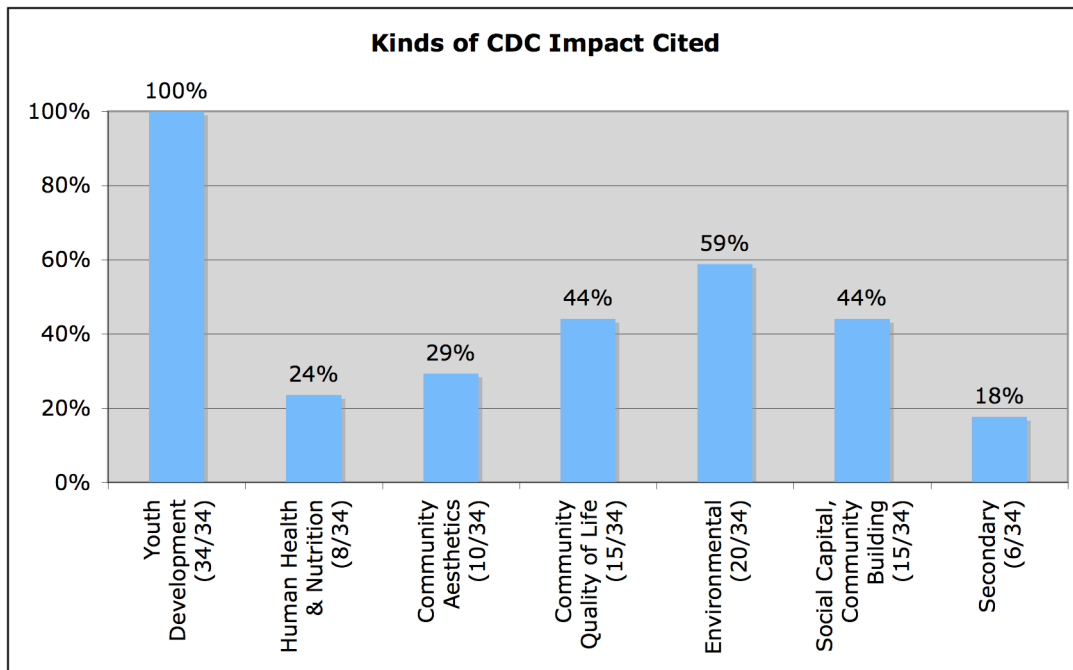
In the summer of 2008, a preliminary report was submitted to the Board for review along with recommendations to the Board from the Project Team and consultants. In that meeting, the Board reflected on the affirming results of the evaluation work and asked the Project Team to include among their future responsibilities a review of CDC's existing program data collection and results, as well as an assessment of the current evaluation capacity and recommendations for future capacity-building.

Before being released to the public, CDC sent a draft copy of this report to each interview participant with a request to know of any concerns about the report.

CDC MAKES A VALUABLE IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY

Respondents believe that the impact of CDC has been to dramatically improve the quality of life for East Side neighborhoods and their residents through its projects. Many different kinds of impacts were cited and are outlined in the chart below.

Figure: Kinds of CDC Impact Cited



When discussing the impact of CDC program, all (100%) of those identified CDC as an organization that has a youth development impact. 59% of those interviewed identified an environmental impact of the work of CDC. Other impacts identified by interviewees include improving community quality of life (44%), building social capital (44%), enhancing community aesthetics (29%) and human health and nutrition (24%). 18% of those interviewed pointed to a secondary impact, such as crime prevention. Nearly everyone interviewed named impacts in two or more of these areas, highlighting an understanding of CDC's work as impacting more than one domain.

Health and nutrition, a specific domain of programming at CDC, were cited fewer times across all of the interviews. This could be attributed to either a bias in the sample selection, that CDC nutrition programming work is less well known, or other factors. As the sample is not a random sample, inferences should be made with caution.

Also remarkable was that some participants (18%) mentioned “secondary” impacts that are “down stream,” for example crime prevention, which is not a primary intended outcome. Other secondary impacts are mentioned as benefits to both the community as well as to the participants in the program. Several respondents cited their belief that programs such as CDC’s create benefits such as lower crime, higher education levels, a positive climate for businesses, improved public health and better outcomes for youth. Some people talked about the positive impacts on the watershed and the Mississippi, especially through the rain gardens and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

Those respondents who are knowledgeable about CDC’s environmental and conservation work felt that the city and region had been vastly improved through projects of CDC and they most often cited the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and the rain gardens as examples of visible, concrete, lasting achievements.

When asked what they would miss most if CDC was not around, most people referenced in some way, “the gardens,” attributing either community or environmental consequences.

The East Side of St. Paul is, as one respondent put it, “A neighborhood in constant transition.” Home to the social problems associated with generational poverty and disenfranchisement, CDC “competes with bad things. It sends out good energy.” Respondents noted that the physical place of the East Side is more beautiful because of the work of the CDC, and along with the beauty and care comes a sense of pride in the community.

**“There would be a big void if the CDC wasn't there- rigorous, life skills, teaching kids to show up on time, teamwork, in the case of Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, kids can come back and see it, have pride in what they've done. Youth investment, role in the community.”
- City Policy Director**

One respondent didn’t care if it cost “\$50 dollars per tomato,” the “visible presence of positive activity” went a long way toward making the community a safer, better place and discouraging negative behaviors. The respondent also acknowledged the challenges and reality in which CDC works, “It has not gotten rid of the drug houses, but there are fewer drug houses.” Other respondents noted they believed CDC’s work brought similar benefits, especially highlighting a feeling of increased safety and decreased violence in the areas around the gardens.

Similar benefits mentioned in the interviews included increasing walking traffic, enhancing and protecting green space and open space, and helping the community develop a collective appreciation of natural spaces and the environment.

In their interviews, respondents discussed the social connection and awareness-raising functions of CDC, how “people are more connected with community issues,

[and] recognize that we are a community...as individuals we are only as strong as our community.”

One person understood that CDC was an advocate for the East Side of St. Paul. The interviewer (a board member) expressed surprise that CDC was understood to have that role. Similarly, among respondents, there are strong associations with CDC as an organization that engages in a variety of strategies and cultivates, intentionally or not, a variety of identities, including: youth work, environmental action, service learning, conservation, leadership development, food security, job training, nutrition, sustainability, citizenship, and community organizing. (Interestingly enough, not one person interviewed used the word “design” to denote what the Community *Design* Center does. One respondent did point out how the name doesn’t accurately reflect the work it does.

Although such a variety of roles and identities may be difficult to grasp for some having limited knowledge of the scope of CDC’s work and mission, clearly respondents highly regard the community function and impact of CDC. In some ways, the multiple roles mentioned in interviews speak to the broad mission and “holistic approach” of CDC:

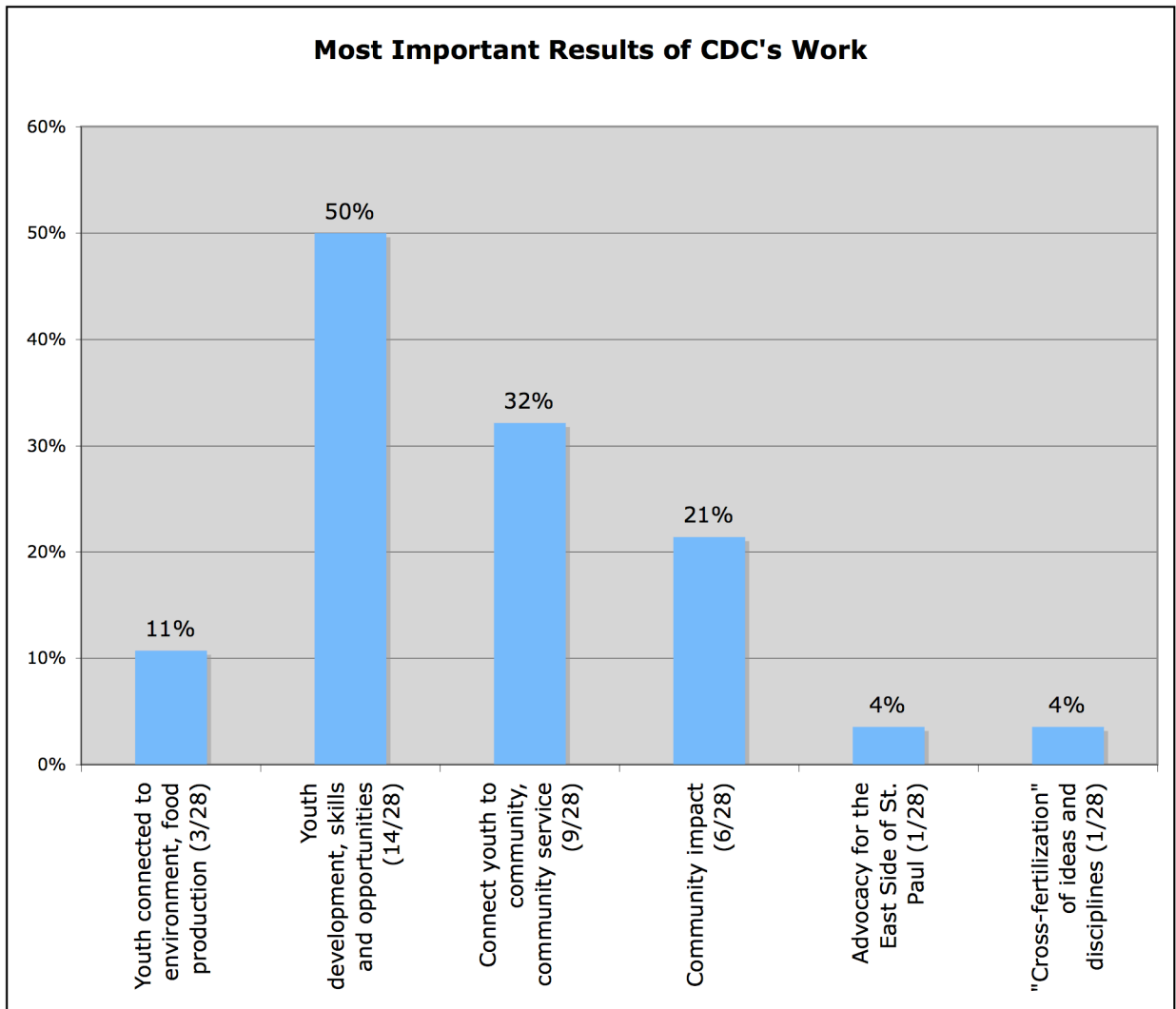
“The mission of the Community Design Center of Minnesota is to help revitalize low-to-moderate income communities by providing technical assistance and operating programs that will enhance the physical, economic, social, ecological, and spiritual well being of the community and its residents. We believe that building and renewing a community requires a holistic approach that creates long-term sustainable change.” (From the CDC website.)

As one might expect, the multiple roles and identities do create differing perspectives on the function of the organization

Many respondents were aware of a social fabric-building function of CDC, connecting people in the community. Several respondents noted their extra efforts to purchase food from the CDC farmer’s market simply to have contact with young people proud of their work and happy to be making “a real contribution.” Some expressed the understanding that the CDC was building youth as the next generation of community leaders and stewards of the land for future generations.

Some mentioned benefits to businesses; although they did not articulate very specific benefits, it is clear from their interviews that they believe the gardens enhance the areas near businesses.

Figure: Most Important Results

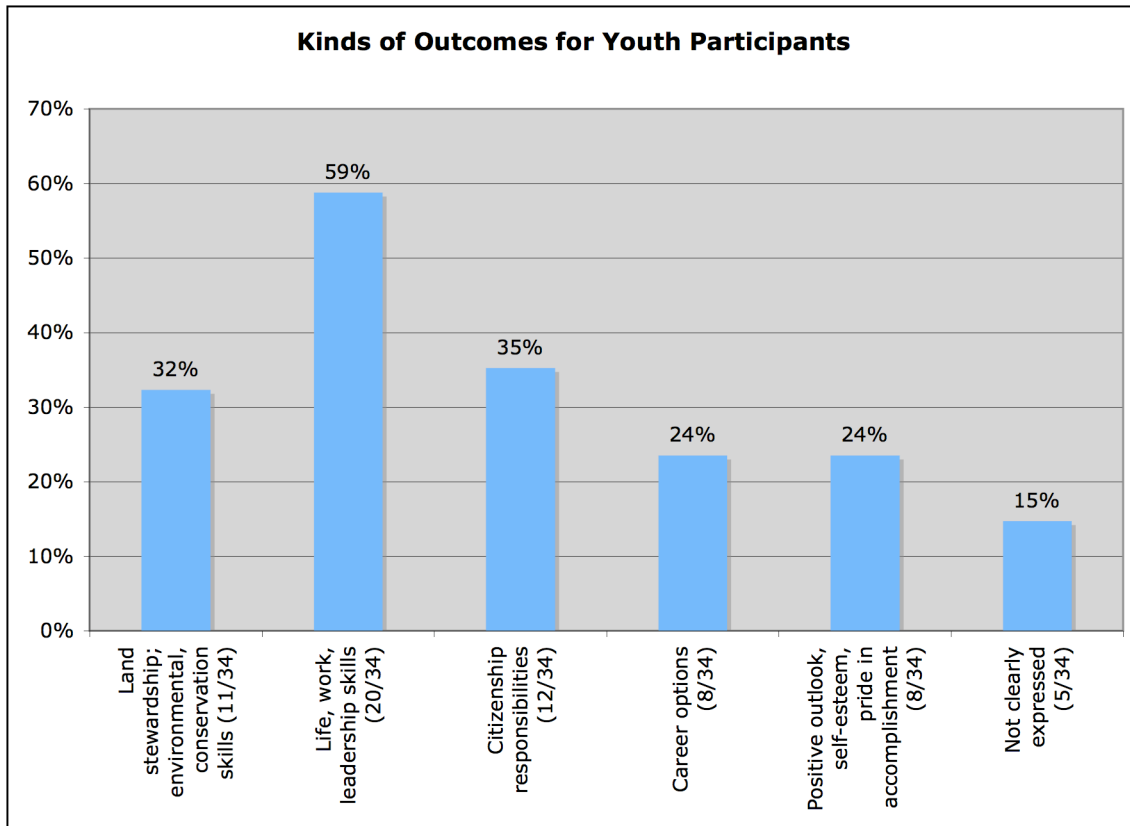


While discussing the results of CDC's work, respondents were asked what they understood the most important result that CDC accomplishes. 28 of 34 interviews articulated a judgment. Nearly all responses focused on the youth aspects of programming. 50% of respondents mentioned youth development, skills and opportunities. 32% talked about the connection of youth to the community and community service. 11% talked about youth and the environment and/or food production. 21% understood the most important result to be the community impact, such as quality of life or aesthetics. Two individuals listed very different ideas as their most important results: advocacy for the East Side and the "Cross-fertilization" of ideas and disciplines.

CDC ACHIEVES VALUABLE OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS

As discussed above, everyone interviewed noted the positive impact on the development of youth participants. Again, a variety of results were cited, and are outlined in the chart below.

Figure: Kinds of Outcomes for Youth Participants



For youth participants, respondents tend to understand the impact of CDC's programming in the domain of life, work and leadership skills (59%). In addition, people believe that CDC builds a commitment to the responsibilities of citizenship (35%) and a commitment and real skills for land stewardship and conservation (32%). Further, nearly a quarter (24%) of those interviewed understood CDC's impact on youth in terms of career options for the young people's futures. Likewise, 24% also understand that CDC's work helps its participants have a positive outlook on life, an increase in self-esteem and a sense of pride in accomplishment.

Many respondents focused on the benefits to kids from, as one person put it, "economically disenfranchised" families. Several people expressed the understanding that through CDC young people learn to become stewards of the land and the watershed; they learn to care for a place. One person expressed

satisfaction that in an often-neglected place, young people were learning to keep things “neat and tidy.”

When reflecting on the benefit to youth participants, many different outcomes were discussed in the interviews. One person called the skills gained, “true life skills.” Several mentioned learning how to be good citizens and responsible for our community. One person said it was important to learn “being a member of a community is both an opportunity and a responsibility.”

“I truly believe that being involved in the community provides a sense of ownership and pride for the kids and their families. All the studies indicate that that type of connection results in lower crime rates, higher education, and better outcomes - it helps to turn around some of the disincentives and poor outcomes that have happened in East Side neighborhoods the past decades.” - City Employee

Respondents were aware that young people have access to mentoring and role models, and are regularly exposed to career options about which they might not have otherwise known.

In interviews, several people talked about the work that youth engage in with CDC as an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the community. Some

“I am so impressed with how motivated the youth are. They are so engaged, so eager to learn. CDC has had a dramatic effect on their lives and on the future directions they will take...CDC work is such a model. I have talked about it at a national conference. It shows that things are happening in Minnesota. I have been involved in and aware of a lot of projects for youth and CDC's is one of the most successful.” -University of Minnesota Faculty Member

described the work of CDC as “service learning.” Survey respondents who interact with CDC youth participants were impressed with the level of commitment, enthusiasm and community connection that the children and youth consistently display.

Along with leadership skills, people understand that youth experience a sense of achievement and pride in their work, and that they also learn how to be a good team member and work towards a shared goal.

One respondent believed that CDC’s work addresses “Nature deficit disorder” for urban kids. One educator noted that young people “learn important stuff not taught in schools.” Someone thought that CDC teaches young people to be “resourceful.” Another person working in education believes that there has to be an academic impact because the work of CDC “ties theory to practice and can help meet school standards and college requirements.”

CDC’s efforts in teaching urban children to raise their own organic food, eat healthy food and bring that knowledge home to their families were also seen as an

important part of life skills training that will pay dividends to children and families for the balance of their lives.

A small but significant number in the sample (15%) did not know or did not clearly detail their understanding of the impact on youth. As everyone understood that CDC has an impact on youth, it may be important to consider strategies to increase people's understanding of *how* youth benefit from participation.

CDC IS A RESPECTED COMMUNITY PARTNER AND LEADER

Stakeholders felt that CDC has done an excellent job of establishing meaningful, positive, productive, long-term partnerships with people and organizations in the

“They have changed expectations about what is possible and what can take place. They have changed what residents will really engage in and stay engaged in for the long term. They are not a big operation but they are making a big difference here.” - Nonprofit Executive

community. Everyone who was interviewed felt that CDC is a unique program that inspires others and those they serve. One person said that CDC is a “reliable, significant partner” in environmental work. Several respondents felt CDC has been ahead of its time for a long time with its focus on sustainability and local food.

Many noted that CDC operates with high standards, and holds everyone involved accountable for results. In addition, many respondents cited the longevity and program stability of CDC as an inspiring and admirable attribute of the organization. A few participants felt that CDC needed to develop new partnerships with diverse organizations and focus on developing positive working relationships with other youth development programs and agencies.

A few of those interviewed said at times a sense of “competition” might have stood in the way of developing relationships with other youth-serving organizations. One expressed a desire for CDC to put more effort into “structured collaboration.” Several respondents indicated that they would like to partner more with CDC or would like to assist CDC in raising money or other endeavors but they did not know what CDC needed or how to go about helping.

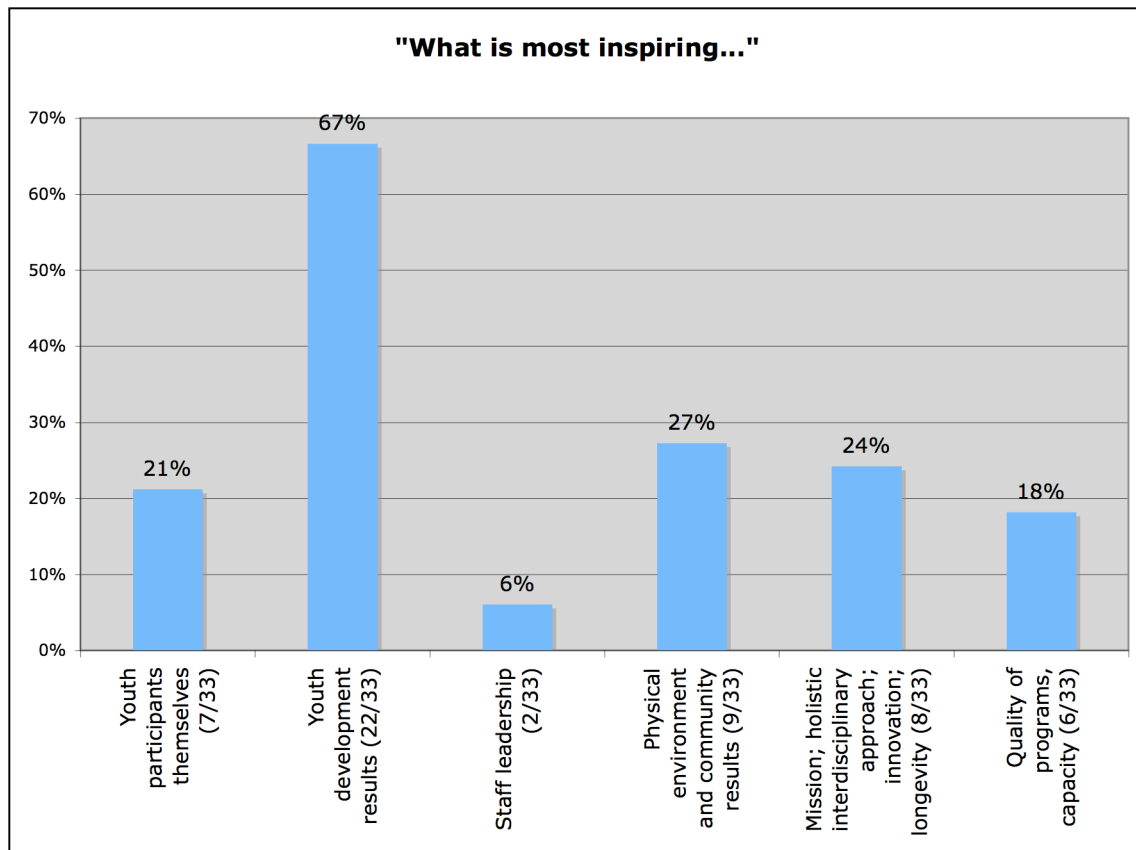
“[CDC is] really creative and entrepreneurial both for the work it is encouraging from kids and for meeting community needs. CDC does not box itself in and so can respond to the real world. - Nonprofit Executive

Respondents listed several organizations that CDC should consider developing collaborative relationships with; those most mentioned were the Minnesota Conservation Corps, the Mayor's Second Shift Initiative, Metropolitan State University, and Invest St. Paul. (Note: CDC is currently engaged in partnerships

with many of these organizations or actively developing relationships with their staff.) In addition, many participants offered contact information for specific individuals and programs in the course of their interview. This information was shared with staff.

Many very well connected St. Paul citizens, including key elected officials or those working in high-level positions with elected officials felt they were not well informed about CDC, its mission, programs, and results. Several respondents indicated that it would be beneficial for CDC to provide greater clarity about organizational structure and communication with external stakeholders in order to streamline access to staff.

Figure: Most Inspiring



When asked to name what is most inspiring about the work of CDC, 67% of respondents focused on the results achieved for youth participants. 27% noted they were most inspired by the changes to the physical environment and the community. 24% remarked that they were most inspired by the interdisciplinary approach, the mission itself and/or the longevity of the program. One respondent said, that at first, the project appears to be “more of a warm fuzzy” kind of project and that he thought it would not last more than a season. What he found most

inspiring is that the project has done what it has said it was going to accomplish and that he has never seen any problems. 21% noted that the youth participants themselves were most inspiring.

18% were most inspired by the quality of the programming; 6% pointed to staff leadership, naming the former executive director in particular.

CDC NEEDS MORE VISIBILITY FOR ITS WORK

Several interviewees were impressed at CDC's ability to engage not only the children and youth but also their multi-generational families. Many respondents expressed the desire that CDC raise funding to be able to expand the programs to serve all the children and youth who want to participate.

A great many participants were unclear about the total scope of CDC programs – many had a singular perspective, only being familiar with the program of CDC in which they were involved. Many respondents were unaware of the diversity of program participants and thought that CDC serves primarily Hmong youth. Some mentioned confusion of CDC with other programs or organizations with similar names and activities.

“I am unclear as to whether CDC is neighborhood based, or an organization with a larger mission of service throughout the metropolitan area.” - Elected Official

One official responded, “I do not understand the overall work of the CDC... I did not even know they had a board of directors.”

Some mentioned difficulty contacting the organization or getting information about the gardens. They recommended including visible signs that include the CDC phone number and website at the garden.

“I have all good things to say about CDC. Our partnership has been a fabulous adventure for both of us. Our relationship has been a real partnership, very reciprocal. I can't say enough about them. I don't know where our grant would be without their help.” - Educator

The nonprofit and community leaders interviewed hold CDC in high regard and admire CDC's spirit. One nonprofit executive said, “I like their can-do attitude. They look at things that might be negative to others and tackle it. They have better success at engaging Hmong youth than just about anyone.”

School professionals also spoke highly of CDC's work: “There is a feeling on the East Side of pride - there is an overall sense of pride in East Side that is not there in other places. Through the environmental piece, we have pride and are making things better for our children and for the future. For instance, the Dayton's Bluff

and Swede Hollow Gardens are incredible. The watershed work is an important piece for the future to make sure that the water that is going into the Mississippi is healthy for the river - all that is tremendous.”

A few of those interviewed expressed a desire to ensure community connections and the continued success of the organization during the executive leadership transition. It is worth noting that the Project Team took note of this concern and worked with the Board to address stakeholder concerns. As the project and leadership transition went on, the new executive director and board members made efforts to connect with elected officials and other critical stakeholders to build good relationships and continue partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING

Working with the consultant, the Project Team reviewed results from the interviews and helped to craft the following recommendations.

Mission and Statement of Values

The Project Team recommends that the Board review the CDC Mission Statement to ensure that it captures the best current understanding of the role of the CDC in the lives of its stakeholders. A Statement of Values may also be helpful to guide what kind of community partner CDC wants to be. Such strategic thinking will help the organization define what opportunities are “good” or “right” to pursue.

Program Theory of Change and Rationale

The Project Team recommends that the CDC staff develop a clear program theory of change and rationale for its programming with consistent and unified language. This theory and rationale should be used in the development of a comprehensive communication and marketing plan, fundraising, and ongoing program development and evaluation. The Project Team recommends that the board have an appropriate governance role in reviewing the program theory of change and rationale, building on the existing evaluation work.

Comprehensive Communication and Marketing Plan

Upon review and reflection on the data collected the Project Team recommends that the CDC consider undertaking a comprehensive marketing planning process that includes the strategic development of key messages for specific stakeholder groups. The Project Team recommends that this process include answering the questions: 1) Who do we want to know about us? 2) Why do we want them to know about us? 3) What do we say? (What are our key messages?)

The Project Team recommends this process be developed quickly to leverage the opportunity presented by the executive leadership succession to provide clarity about the transition and the organization in general.

This communication and marketing plan should be tied to the organization’s strategic plan as well as rooted in the program theory and rationale.

The Project Team also recommends this plan include the development of marketing materials using different types of media. The Project Team imagined follow up interviews with different stakeholders that could be video taped.

Flexibility and Structure

The Project Team recommends that staff continue to find ways to balance the need for entrepreneurial activity with the need for structure, definition and clarity.

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. The Community Design Center has a commitment to evaluating its work. As part of that commitment and to help us understand how the community understands the work we do and the impact we have, the Center is asking for input and perspectives from a variety of key stakeholders.

If you don't know the answers to the questions, don't worry. Knowing that helps us, too.

I also want to encourage you to speak frankly and honestly. It's only through direct feedback and reflection that we improve our value to our community.

1. How have you come to know the Community Design Center?
2. Given what you know, who do you think participates in Community Design Center activities and programs?
3. From your perspective, what does the Community Design Center do?
4. What is inspiring about the Community Design Center's work?
5. Where are you unclear about what the Community Design Center does?
6. What do you like most about what the Community Design Center does?
7. Imagine Community Design Center doesn't exist. What would you miss in the community?
(Don't worry, CDC's not going away!)
8. Because of what Community Design Center does...
 - a. How do you think our East Side neighborhoods are different?
 - b. How do you think participants in Community Design Center programs and activities are affected?
 - c. How do you think our city or region is changed because of the work of the Community Design Center?
9. Of all that you've listed in your previous answer, what do you think are the most important results of the Community Design Center's work?
10. What do you think is the least important?
11. What would you change about the way the Community Design Center does its work?
12. As the Community Design Center considers its future direction, what other advice do you have?
13. Is there anyone else we should interview or connect with? Who?
14. What other comments or ideas do you have that you'd like me to share with the Board and Staff at the Community Design Center?

Thank you, again, for taking your valuable time to talk with me. Your participation will help the Community Design Center build a stronger program and help us understand our impact in our community.

Sometimes we like to use quotes from stakeholders in our communication efforts, and we like to attribute the quotes when possible.

Do you wish to remain anonymous? Yes/No

Name: _____ (If not anonymous.)

Interviewer Notes:

1. What stands out from this interview?
2. Where were you surprised or concerned?
3. What do you think is the key implications of this stakeholder's perspective?
4. What should CDC keep in mind?

APPENDIX: INTERVIEWERS

Board member interviewers:

Cynthia Cone –Professor Emeritus of Anthropology/Department Chair, Hamline University

Dan McGuiness – Owner, Dan McGuiness & Associates

Dorothea Gumbrill – former head of Human Resources Department, Science Museum of Minnesota

Debra Stone – Coordinator Lead Peace Plus Project, University of Minnesota Healthy Youth Development Prevention Research Center

Janet Rice – Psychologist

Sheldon Johnson – Minnesota State Representative, District 67B

CDC Staff:

Tamara Downs, Director

Ruth Murphy, former Executive Director

APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS

Cliff Aichinger

Administrator, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District

Christine Baeumler

Assistant Professor; University of Minnesota Art Department

Rich Batdorf

Eastside resident (garden neighbor)

Bob Bierscheid

Retired Director, St. Paul Parks & Recreation Department

Carol Carey

Executive Director, Historic St. Paul

Whitney Clark

Executive Director, Friends of the Mississippi River

Andrew Collins

Principal, Dayton's Bluff Elementary School

Karin DuPaul

Community Organizer, Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council

Paul Garding

Eastside resident (master carpenter)/Community Volunteer

Anne Hunt

Mayor's Deputy Policy Director/Environment; City of St. Paul

Gilbert Kinnunen

CSA member

Ed Lambert

Executive Director, Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council

Council Member Kathy Lantry

7th Ward Council member & St. Paul City Council President

Phil Manz

Eastside resident (garden host)

Amy Middleton

Lower Phalen Creek Project

Tally (Tarig) Mohamed

Manager, Phoenix Market (garden neighbor)

Senator Mee Moua

Minnesota State Senator, District 67

Liz Parr-Smestad

Former PEP Grant Content Coach, Physical Education Specialist, St. Paul Public Schools

Sage Passi

Watershed Education Specialist, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District

Cordelia Pierson

Former Program Director, Parks for People Twin Cities, Trust for Public Land

Dave Murphy and Jane Prince

Eastside residents

Steve Randall

Recreation Leader, Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center

Adam Robbins

Environmental Coordinator, St. Paul Parks & Recreation Department

Evelyn Rolloff

Associate Director, Center for Community Based Learning, Metropolitan State University

Jayne Ropella

Principal, Eastern Heights Elementary School

Kirsten Saylor

Executive Director, Gardening Matters

Dave and Jenny St. George

Owners, Dave's Auto Body (garden neighbors)

Kao Thao

Park Naturalist, Fort Snelling State Park

Mike Voss

Owner, Roy's Service (garden neighbor)

David Wiggins

Supervisory Park Ranger, National Park Service

Anonymous (2)