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An Evaluation of the Chelsea Collaborative Summer Youth Employment Initiative Program

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Abstract

Chelsea, Massachusetts suffers from a high level of poverty and violence among young people. 23.3% of the Chelsea population lives below the poverty level compared to 9.3% for the state. Our sponsor, the Chelsea Collaborative, has created the Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI) to mitigate factors that make youth at-risk through youth employment and enrichment activities. After gathering feedback from program participants, Chelsea Collaborative staff members, and worksite supervisors, we defined important aspects of their youth employment program and assessed Chelsea Collaborative's program accordingly. After analyzing the information we gathered, we provided the Chelsea Collaborative with a set of recommendations that can be used to improve their program.

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Executive Summary

We worked with our sponsors at the Chelsea Collaborative to evaluate the Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI) and develop a set of recommendations to improve the program. We completed our project by identifying the perspectives of youth participants, worksite supervisors, and Chelsea Collaborative staff members in regard to the SYEI, while developing an assessment framework to be used to further assess the program. This framework includes metrics the program will be evaluated on, and a data analysis tool. This project was the first step in an effort to highlight and improve upon the important contributions provided by the Chelsea Collaborative's Summer Youth Employment Initiative

Introduction to the Problem

Many youth in the US face difficult conditions. Crime among youth are at high levels in the United States. International studies comparing death rates show that violence among U.S. youth is a much more severe problem than in other countries. Youth are also especially vulnerable to being victims of crime, including violent crime. In 2010, 4,828 young people ages 10 to 24 were victims of homicide—an average of 13 each day. Additional problems include teen pregnancy and homelessness. The U.S. teen pregnancy rate is substantially higher than in other western industrialized nations and the National Runaway Switchboard estimates that on any given night there are approximately 1.3 million homeless youth living unsupervised on the streets, in abandoned buildings, with friends or with strangers. “Youth at risk,” are defined as young people whose background places them at risk of future offending or victimization due to their environmental, social and family conditions.

Project Goal

The purpose of the Chelsea Collaborative's SYEI program is to mitigate youth violence in the community by offering employment to at-risk youth. Our goal was to assess Chelsea Collaborative's Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI) and provide a set of recommended improvements for their program.

Methodology

Our project goal included developing an assessment framework to be used on the SYEI program. The framework highlights the different perspectives that are important to the participants involved in the program. Using opinions of these participants in regard to the SYEI, we developed a set of recommended improvements to the program in areas where importance is high and satisfaction is low. This assessment framework will provide them with a more thorough process for evaluating the success of their program in the future with minimal effort.

The goal we had when making a more structured process was to provide more meaningful feedback on the success of their program, and to make the process faster and easier to help Chelsea Collaborative save time when evaluating themselves.

We accomplished our goal by:

1. Identifying the perspectives of youth participants, worksites, and staff, about the effectiveness of the Youth Employment Program

When undergoing any assessment process, specific metrics are needed. In the case of this project, our metrics were based on the point of view of different groups associated with Chelsea Collaborative's Summer Youth Employment Initiative. We specifically identified the perspectives of the youth participants, worksite supervisors, and Collaborative staff, since each of these groups play important roles in the SYEI program as a whole. To identify the perspectives of these stakeholder groups we gathered different types of information from each. The feedback from worksites and staff was collected from interviews while the feedback from the youth was collected from interviews and focus groups.

2. Developing an assessment framework, including metrics and methods, for gathering data from past participants and worksites.

We created an assessment framework for Chelsea Collaborative to improve the ease of yearly evaluation and provide a mechanism for recognizing trends in survey responses from year to year. The assessment framework is a combination of the following:

- metrics for evaluating the program,
- a process for data gathering
- a survey for distributing yearly to gather data, and
- a spreadsheet for organizing and visually representing survey data (Data Analysis Tool).

The process we developed to assess the SYEI consists of two parts. The first part is the process our IQP team used to evaluate and provide recommendations for the program. The second part is the process we provided Chelsea Collaborative with to help track the progress of any recommendations they implement and keep up to date on people's opinions in relevant aspects of the program. The second process uses survey data from a survey that Chelsea Collaborative distributes at the end of the each year's program.

3. Assessing the youth employment program using the assessment framework.

After creating the two parts of our assessment framework, we assessed the program using the metrics we gathered and we gave them an example of how to use the data-analysis tool. We assessed the program and identified areas of improvement by using the feedback we gathered from our three target groups, staff, worksites and past participants. The findings were grouped based on the metrics from the assessment framework. We compiled the feedback from all three

groups, and were able to identify the areas that the groups liked the most about the program and determine that those areas were the strongest parts of the Summer Youth Employment Program. Topics such as Fifth-day activities or Worksite Training are some examples of metrics that we grouped our information by. If any finding was repeated by multiple sources, the number was kept track of to show the prevalence and how widespread the idea was amongst the group.

By compiling all the findings and comparing the different groups' opinions on how the Collaborative was lacking, we were able to figure out the areas Chelsea Collaborative should improve upon.

4. Developing a set of recommended improvements to the program and an assessment framework that the collaborative can use for other programs too.

We created a set of recommendations by prioritizing the comments that the youth participants, worksite supervisors, and CC staff members had in common and making recommendations based on what each group regarded as most important for the SYEI. By solving problems that all three groups have in common, it would allow them to spend their time efficiently instead of focusing on things only one group may deem as an issue. Cataloging the comments also allowed Chelsea Collaborative to prioritize and improve individual relationships. For example if they wanted to focus specifically on worksite related issues they would be able to see how their worksites felt about the program and collaborate with them. The Collaborative can also observe differing opinions on the program and how what matters are more important for different types of businesses.

After completing our project objectives we were able to fulfill our main goal of creating an assessment framework and evaluating the program with it. Evaluating the program and the database provided a lot of opportunities to show the work Chelsea Collaborative is doing in the community. Throughout the evaluation process we also created a video that highlighted the strengths of Chelsea Collaborative's program and show how the organization helps the Chelsea community.

Findings

Completing our goal included determining the aspects of the program that were most important to the youth, worksite supervisors, and CC staff members, while gaining an understanding of how effective the program itself actually was. After analyzing the data we gathered from our focus group and interviews we were able to identify these perspectives and categorize them as being a positive about the program or a weakness that could be improved. Our findings were as follows:

I. Positives:

- A. Youth enjoy having enrichment activities.
- B. Youth credited the SYEI with giving them confidence.
- C. Students showed support for an expansion of the program.

- D. Worksites liked the goal of the program and what it is trying to accomplish.
- E. The program provides a cheap and effective way of hiring new youth for participating businesses.
- F. Fifth day activities provide students with an environment to learn new things and be open to different trainings.
- G. The SYEI is a very valuable program for the youth, the Chelsea community, and for the Chelsea Collaborative as well.
- H. SYEI was very good for local businesses in the Chelsea Community.

II. **Where There is Room for Improvement:**

- A. Youth dislike lecture-style fifth day activities and are more drawn to hands on activities.
- B. Some youth were not happy with their job placement or felt underutilized at their workplace.
- C. Some youth were not prepared enough by orientation to start working at their workplace.
- D. Some students are not completely satisfied with the application process and the process for selecting candidates.
- E. Worksites have to spend time training the kids if their worksite required more than clerical work.
- F. The organization of the program is a bit difficult to work with for some worksites
- G. Planning and organizing fifth day activities is a challenge for staff members.
- H. The Chelsea Collaborative is really restricted by the requirements provided by their funders.
- I. Receiving funding is very unpredictable. It is not known when funding will become available and the exact amount being funded is unknown until the money is given to the Collaborative.
- J. It is a challenge to organize and administer the SYEI program throughout the summer.
- K. Evaluating the program's progress regularly is too time consuming for their small workforce.

Recommendations

As a result of our focus groups and interviews with the youth participants, worksite supervisors, and Chelsea Collaborative staff members, we realized that some improvements could be made to the SYEI's organizational skills, fifth-day activities, and worksite experiences. Based on our findings about the organization of the program organization, we developed the following recommendations:

Fifth-day Activity Recommendations

- Make the fifth-day activities more engaging and hands-on for the youth. Have worksites work with the Chelsea Collaborative to plan fifth-day activities throughout the summer to reduce workload.
- Ask youth for feedback on fifth day activities before they are planned.

Organizational Recommendations:

- Hire an assistant to help the SYEI director run the program including help with the organization of the overall program.
- Reduce the paperwork required to manage youth by utilizing online paperwork.

Worksite Recommendations:

- Provide Worksites with an opportunity to participate in the student orientation/20 hour training, so that they can meet the youth they will be supervising and be able to provide direct training tailored to the work the youth will be doing.
- Invite worksites to the end of the year debrief meeting to get direct feedback from worksite supervisors.

Deliverables

By completing our research objectives, we provided the following deliverables:

- A set of recommendations to improve the Summer Youth Employment Initiative program.
- An assessment framework consisting of metrics for evaluation, an evaluation process, and a data analysis tool.
- A video highlighting the program's impact on the community.

Conclusion

To provide further support to help the Chelsea Collaborative maintain and improve the Summer Youth Employment Initiative we produced three deliverables for the Collaborative. First, our assessment framework, which consists of the metrics we constructed and the data analysis tool. It is being provided to the Collaborative for future use their self-assessment process or to review our process themselves. Second, our content analysis done on information gathered from past participants, Collaborative staff members, and worksites will be provided as well so the Collaborative can form their own opinions in their annual self-assessment. Third, the data-analysis tool affords them the opportunity to look at opinions and implement changes to the program on their own, but it will also be necessary to track the progress of any changes made as a result of this project. Without providing them this tool to follow up on any recommendations we have made, it would have been hard for them to know if their program really did improve and become more 'successful' as a result of our recommended changes. The video we delivered provides a short overview of Chelsea and how the employment program has had a tangible effect on the community from the perspective of past youth and the worksites. The video can be used to show the impact the program has on the community and can be shown for fundraising purposes.

In conclusion, the Chelsea Collaborative created the Summer Youth Employment Initiative in efforts to reduce violence among Chelsea at-risk youth by providing employment, mentoring and character building activities to young people aged 14-19 years old. "At-risk Youth," being young people whose background places them at risk of future offending or victimization due to their environmental, social and family conditions (Urban Youth At Risk, 2015), can really benefit from the SYEI as it gives youth a

platform to grow from. The SYEI has had a big impact on the lives of many youth and we wanted to understand how effective this program truly was for the community. The goal of our project was to assess the Chelsea Collaborative's Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI) and provide a set of recommendations based on our findings that could be used to improve their program.

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1. Introduction

Many youth in the US face difficult conditions. Crime among youth are at high levels in the United States. International studies comparing death rates show that violence among U.S. youth is a much more severe problem than in other countries (U.S. Teens in Our World, n.d.). Youth are also especially vulnerable to being victims of crime, including violent crime. In 2010, 4,828 young people ages 10 to 24 were victims of homicide—an average of 13 each day (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Additional problems include teen pregnancy and homelessness. The U.S. teen pregnancy rate is substantially higher than in other western industrialized nations (About Teen Pregnancy, 2015) and the National Runaway Switchboard estimates that on any given night there are approximately 1.3 million homeless youth living unsupervised on the streets, in abandoned buildings, with friends or with strangers (Homeless And Runaway Youth, 2013). “Youth at risk,” are defined as young people whose background places them at risk of future offending or victimization due to their environmental, social and family conditions (Urban Youth At Risk, 2015). In the U.S. these youth are quite often exposed to difficult situations including poverty, more than 16 million children in the United States – 22% of all children – live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level – \$23,550 a year for a family of four (Child Poverty, n.d.). These difficult conditions can hinder a youth's personal development and successful integration into the economy and society (Urban Youth At Risk, 2015).

Furthermore, unemployment has been increasing because of the economic downturn. The national youth unemployment rate is currently 12.3%, and unemployed youth often become unemployed adults (Gelber, 2014). Providing employment could be a successful means to reducing risk and obstructing the cycle of poverty. Without employment, these at-risk youth may face a lower chance of staying out of trouble, which could contribute even more to the rise of violence among youth in several communities.

Chelsea, Massachusetts, a city in the Greater Boston area, is home to a substantial number of at-risk youth, and is directly affected by youth unemployment and its violent repercussions. The youth unemployment rate in Massachusetts is 13.8% but is likely higher in Chelsea because Chelsea has an overall unemployment rate of 6.3%, which is higher than the unemployment rate of Massachusetts is 4.9%, (*Massachusetts Budget And Policy Center*, 2011) (International Labor Office, 2013). This heightened unemployment rate can be seen as a contributing factor to the surprisingly high violent crime rate in Chelsea. In 2012, the city's violent crime rate was an astounding 378.64% higher than the national average (Chelsea Crime Rate Report, n.d.), which alone is an indication of the scope of this concern.

There are many programs to address the challenges of at-risk youth. Employment is a frequently used and accepted way to engage at-risk youth and try to mitigate youth violence. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts allocates funds to multiple government youth employment programs (totaling over \$16.5 million most recently in 2013) (MassBudget, n.d.). In the Boston area specifically, organizations such as Chelsea Collaborative, Roca Inc., The Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, and Boston Youth Fund all strive towards providing an opportunity for at-

risk youth to achieve a better standard of living with use of these funds. The federally funded programs dwarf state funded grants, totaling between \$800 million and \$1 billion yearly to different programs that combat youth violence and unemployment. The violence at-risk youth are facing is serious, and the funds allocated to providing them jobs in their formative years could be crucial to their development as functioning members of society.

The grants offered by the government, however, are only the start of the process; the real work is left to programs in communities, such as Chelsea, that focus on finding youth jobs and helping them to stay out of trouble in their community. For example. The Chelsea Collaborative is an organization founded in response to the recent rise in unemployment and violence in Chelsea, MA. They are dedicated to helping the community of Chelsea by completing their mission: enhance the social, environmental and economic health of the community and its people. The Chelsea Collaborative has several programs in place to achieve their mission. Specifically, the Chelsea Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI), which provides employment, mentoring and character building activities to young people aged 14-19 years in efforts to reduce violence among Chelsea youth. Roca Inc., Another organization in Chelsea, has a program called Pay For Success, in which employment is provided to reduce incarceration rates among at-risk young adults. This program is projected to reduce incarceration by 45% among participants (*Roca, Inc.*, n.d.). These organizations may provide great opportunities for youth, but it is difficult to assess whether or not these programs are actually effective and working well.

Our goal is to assess Chelsea Collaborative's Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI). Chelsea Collaborative's SYEI, begun in 2001, has impacted the Chelsea community in many ways, but currently they do not have a good way of understanding exactly how they are making a difference. The Chelsea Collaborative is seeking a concrete way to determine how success can be measured in their program. By defining a way to measure success, the Collaborative will be able to evaluate their program and better understand what needs to be improved and what is already working well. Knowledge of what works and what does not work will be helpful when making a set of recommendations that can be used to improve their program. To achieve our goal we completed the following objectives:

- Identified perspectives of youth participants, employers and staff about effectiveness of program.
- Developed an assessment framework, including metrics that are vital to program success and methods for gathering data from past participants and employers.
- Assessed the SYEI using the framework.
- Developed a set of recommended improvements to the program based on our assessment.

By completing our project objectives, we provided Chelsea Collaborative with an assessment framework. The assessment framework improves upon the Collaborative's use of an excel spreadsheet to track information obtained in surveys,. We added graphs to their database in order to make it easier to comprehend the survey data visually. This

included the development of an excel sheet template that automatically generates graphs as data are input into the system following every summer. We used the visual data to develop recommended improvements for Chelsea Collaborative to apply to their program. In addition, we created a video for Chelsea Collaborative to showcase the impact the impact they have on Chelsea youth and the community as a whole.

2. Background

The background chapter first provides information about the circumstances facing at-risk youth. We provide an overview of the differences in the difficulties they face compared to those of higher income families do, and discuss how income and those difficulties are related. After establishing a connection between at-risk youth and poverty we explain youth unemployment and how employment may help the at-risk youth population in greater detail. Then, we will present information about several youth organizations that seek to support at-risk youth with similar goals to that of our sponsor, the Chelsea Collaborative. Even though they have the same goal of helping at-risk youth, they differ structurally. This information will include how they are funded and what role, if at all, the government has in the operation of each program. By explaining the regulations each program is under and the details of their funding, we can discuss how they are assessed and by what criteria. Insights about how to assess the success of these programs will be developed through the review of their structure and the benchmarks they record and present.

2.1 At-Risk Youth

“At-risk youth” is a very broad term that is often used as a catch all for children that have many factors in their lives that could lead to a path of crime and poverty. A common definition for youth at-risk is young people whose background places them at-risk of future offending or victimization due to their environmental, social and family conditions (St. Thomas Police Service, n.d.). The risk factors listed by the National Center for Children in Poverty, a leading organization on low-income families in the United States, are (NCCP, 2015):

- Being in a non-English speaking household,
- A large family size,
- Low parental education,
- Residential mobility (frequently moving),
- Single parent,
- Teen mother, and
- Non-employed parents.

These factors do not encompass all the factors that can cause a youth to be labeled at-risk, but are some examples of factors that could lead to difficulties in their lives. An “at-risk youth” would be failing in aspects socially or economically because of one or more risk factors.

2.1.1 Associating At-Risk Youth with Poverty

The difficulties at-risk youth face manifests themselves in ways such as higher dropout rates, higher teen pregnancy rates, and higher crime rates. The statistics for these at-risk indicators found in low income, middle income and high income families in the nation can be found in Table 2-1 with at least a 95% confidence level. (ASPE, n.d) This shows a strong association between income and factors associated with youth that are at-risk.

Table 2-1. Showing Difference Between Socioeconomic Statuses of Income Rates (ASPE, n.d).

	Low income	Middle income	High income
College graduation rates	10%	28%	50%
Teen Pregnancy	7%	2%	1%
Adult Crime by age 24	20%	16%	12%

There are a couple possible explanations for why the socio-economic status can cause the differences seen in these statistics for at-risk youth. The first possible explanation is because their lower income means low-income families have fewer opportunities to give to their children. As The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) states “Youth from low-income families are vulnerable to poor outcomes as adults, as these youth often lack the resources and opportunities found to lead to better outcomes” (ASPE, n.d). With a lack of disposable income, it means less extracurricular and afterschool programs that could help the child succeed in life (Dodson, 2012). The second explanation is that youth from impoverished families face greater social adversities. As Eric Jensen states, in his book *Teaching with Poverty in Mind*, “In many poor households, parental education is substandard, time is short, and warm emotions are at a premium—all factors that put the attunement process at-risk” (Jensen, 2009). The lack of time spent by low income parents with their children robs them of crucial development and guidance that children in middle income and high income families have in their younger years, leading to more social issues that can set them behind academically and then economically.

As seen in Table 2-1, low income youth have a 5-6% higher rate of teen pregnancy, almost 20% less chance of graduating college and have a 4% higher rate of convicting a crime by age 24 compared to youth from middle income families with an even greater disparity compared to high income families (ASPE, n.d). A paper completed for the Center for Social Policy states “there is ample evidence that low-income youth are facing disproportionate challenges to their overall well-being” showing that income is one of the most important factors to keep track of when talking about helping at-risk youth. (Dodson, 2012).

Youth are also more likely to exhibit at-risk symptoms if they have a high stress environment at home. “A child who comes from a stressful home environment tends to channel that stress into disruptive behavior at school and be less able to develop a healthy social and academic life” (Jensen, 2009). Stressed children act out and appear to be troublemakers at school. The early years children spend in school are very crucial for a child’s development of social skills. Children from a stressed family environment can fall behind in their social development, which could lead to future problems that would put them at-risk (Jensen, 2009). Joy G. Dryfoos states in his book *Adolescents at Risk: Prevalence and Prevention*, adolescents that act out often come from a family “with a history of criminality, mental illness or alcoholism” (Dryfoos, 1990). Living in a community with a high crime-rate increases the chances of youth in the area to partake in

illegal activity. Compounded with other factors, such as poor schools and being surrounded by poverty, “peer influence here is strong, and delinquent gangs emerge from such deprived environments” (Dryfoos, 1990). Children growing up in environments with high criminal activity behave worse in school due to the effects of stress on memory. Tests done with the stress enzyme cortisol showed that it had a detrimental effect on verbal declarative memory (Jensen, 2009).

There is an important connection between stress, economic status, and at-risk youth factors because there is a correlation between stress and income levels. In an analysis completed on delinquent behavior and socio-economic status there was “significantly higher incidence rates for serious offences among lower-class males” and middle-class youth had a lower frequency for crime in all categories. (Dryfoos, 1990). Moreover, there is “evidence for a new, complementary pathway that links early childhood poverty to high levels of exposure to multiple risks, which in turn elevates chronic toxic stress” (Gary, Jeanne, Pamela, 2011). Higher income families experience less stress. This evidence shows a clear relationship between poverty and at-risk youth.

2.1.2 Relationship between At-risk Youth and Employment

Unemployment can be a cause for concern among youth, especially those at-risk, and often has lasting negative effects on their lives. For example, unemployment affects not only a youth’s ability in getting a job in the future, but can have mental health effects during their early years and beyond. Hammarstrom and Janlert (1997) found that a significant number of youth who were unemployed in the five years after they finished school experienced noticeably more mental health effects than the young people who were employed. Such effects are lack of self-confidence, self-blame, stress, isolation, lack of control and resignation. Along with these mental health concerns, many at-risk youth have become involved in gangs creating a culture of violence among the at-risk youth.

In the case of this most recent recession, unemployment rates among the ages 16-24 reached a peak at 19.2% in September 2009 (Borges-Mendez, Denhardt and Collett, 2013). The most recent recession also saw a dramatically larger increase in unemployment among youth than in any of the three recessions in the last thirty years. In a report done by the New England Journal of Public Policy, youths comprise only 13.5% of the workforce, but they comprise 26.4% of the unemployed. (Borges-Mendez, Denhardt and Collett, 2013). Action is required because the toll of being unemployed negatively impacts a young person’s future.

2.1.3 Combatting Youth Unemployment

An understanding of the factors that give rise to at-risk youth suggests that a way to help at-risk youth is to provide them with employment so that they can spend more time working and afford themselves more opportunities all the while staying off the streets. Jobs can also provide structure in the youth's lives and oversight that their parents cannot provide. Job training skills will improve youths’ opportunities for obtaining jobs as adults. Jobs for at-risk youth provide structure, increased self-esteem and confidence, better skills, and income. Providing opportunities for employment is a seemingly obvious

way to combat this problem and set youth on a positive path. Pre-employment programs, such as the one ran by Chelsea Collaborative, help youth find work after high school or college by providing experience working at a job, and by teaching them smart fiscal habits (Chelsea Collaborative, 2015).

The large numbers of unemployed youth have already drawn a sizeable amount of attention on the national and local scale. The efforts against unemployment are usually focused on providing employment to people who are in need and willing to work. Federal grants and programs are essential to the running of youth unemployment programs that are providing jobs to youth and provide most of them with a large majority of their funding. Without the federal government programs, most youth unemployment programs would not be able to operate. The Department of Labor currently has a program in place called Job Corps, it is the largest residential education and job-training program for at-risk youth, ages 16-24, in the country. Private companies, state agencies, federal agencies and unions recruit youth who are classified as low-income to participate in Job Corps where they are trained for a career, given the opportunity to get a GED, and offered assistance in the process of finding and keeping a job. The Department of Labor has grant programs focused on helping to provide youth with employment, specifically discretionary grants and formula-funded grant programs. Discretionary grants are given to certain populations of at-risk youth, whether it is youth offenders, foster children or youth living in high poverty areas. These grants go to programs, which also have their own specific goals, and both the federal grant and the individual program have criteria the program must pass every year. Formula-funded grants are given to states that are statistically in need of help with their at risk youth. This could be anything from states with high youth unemployment rates to states with a large number of at-risk youth (U.S. Dept. of Labor, n.d.). Individual unemployment programs need these funds to run and be successful in helping their community, but that alone is not enough. How programs structure themselves and what goals they set out to achieve are what set them apart from one another. In the following section we will look at the inner workings of a youth unemployment program, and different ways that are employed by programs across the country today.

2.2 Examining the Structure of Youth Employment Programs

When conducting our research, one of our goals was to understand the organization of programs similar to Chelsea Collaborative's SYEI. Like many of these programs Chelsea Collaborative is located in an impoverished city, in this case Chelsea, Massachusetts, a city in the greater Boston Area that is currently the home to 35,080 residents spread over only 2.5 square miles. The city has the highest crime rate of all cities in Massachusetts, (Homeseurityshield, n.d). Forty-two percent of Chelsea's youth live in poverty and 30% of their high school dropouts are unemployed (Wright, 2012). Not only does Chelsea face economic hardships, many youths are drawn to gangs in the area. Providing youth with a healthy outlet in place of gangs and other violence is the goal of the Chelsea Collaborative.

To understand the organization of similar programs we will consider how 4 programs are structured and identify aspects that are pertinent to their success or failure for later use in our assessment framework. The four programs represent a range of

approaches to support at-risk youth. To start, we will explain each program, and at the end of the section we will compare and analyze the methods they employ.

2.2.1 Juventud y Empleo

Juventud y Empleo is located in the Dominican Republic and is focused on providing job education and training to youth in an impoverished area. By doing this, they also intend to address the problem of unwanted pregnancy among youth that is prevalent in the community. They, like most unemployment programs, have specific guidelines of who can be in their program (Ibarraran, 2014):

- Age from 16 to 29 years
- Being outside the formal education system without having completed secondary education
- Belonging to poor areas.
- Being unemployed, underemployed or inactive;
- Be Dominican citizens with identity cards and electoral.
- PJE accept regulations and be ready to meet the demands of the course.

This particular program provides theoretical and practical job training to their program participants before providing them with employment in an internship setting. This allows the youth to learn valuable skills prior to employment, and also opens the door to providing them with jobs which may require more skill or which require previous completion of a training course or program. After receiving jobs the participants are paid 70 pesos per day of work. They follow a very structured framework, with each student having a completely planned progression through the program when they enter (Ibarraran, 2014).

2.2.2 Project Pyramid

Another strategy we came across was implementing a “boot camp” environment that is focused on developing each youth’s core values (*PRWeb Newswire*, 2012). Project Pyramid, which uses this approach, is based in Crestview, Florida and it is a Juvenile Intervention Program. Among our examples this program focuses the most heavily on developing youth’s core values, which they define as: respect, integrity, discipline, structure, self-worth, accountability and accepting responsibility (*PRWeb*, 2012). In concretely defining these aspects of a youth’s character they aim to improve on, they are able to better assess themselves using these specific benchmarks. Along with focusing on these values, they provide substance awareness and school monitoring to assure the lessons and skills being taught in the program are being applied in the real world (*PRWeb*, 2012).

2.2.3 Youth Employment Service (YES)

Youth Employment Service (YES) is a summer program that is different in that their focus is on youth who are currently enrolled in school. In fact, it is a requirement that a participant attended school the semester before summer and is planning on attending classes in the following fall semester (*Youth Employment Service*, n.d.). The organization is located in Orange County, California and believes that employment can teach youth many lessons that are critical to their positive development into adulthood. YES provides their participants the skills needed to secure and maintain employment,

while offering programs that help young people improve their employability, career choices and quality of life. Like the programs mentioned before, they also provide training before employment and other classes to help participants gain useful skills.

2.2.4 Roca Inc.

Roca Inc. is an organization dedicated to transforming the lives of the most high-risk young people in Chelsea, ages 17-24, including youth involved in gangs, high school drop-outs, or young aged parents (*Roca Inc.*, n.d.). Roca's mission is to help young people transform their lives by disrupting the cycle of incarceration and poverty in the community. The employment program called Pay for Success (PFS) is an innovation in state government and criminal justice reform where public officials identify an area of government that is producing poor outcomes (fiscal and social) and contract with a private entity to produce better outcomes for the state (*Roca Inc.*, n.d.). What makes this program innovative is the structure of the contract, where the government will reimburse Roca if better outcomes are achieved. Through the program, Massachusetts will focus on reducing incarceration rates among high-risk young men that were formerly involved in the justice system (*Roca Inc.*, n.d.). Roca's intervention model places youth in employment so they can gain life skills, education and employment while they move towards economic dependence and a safe future. They also focus their efforts on young men coming out of Juvenile Probation or that are at-risk and their model claims employment will give them the skills needed to turn their lives around.

2.2.5 Chelsea Collaborative

Our sponsor, the Chelsea Collaborative, is an organization dedicated to the needs of the community of Chelsea. Their mission is to enhance the social, environmental and economic health of the community and its people (*Chelsea Collaborative*, 2015). They strive to achieve their mission through education and community organizing. Chelsea Collaborative has several programs that they implement in the community of Chelsea, such as their voters' block, green initiative program, and the program that will be the focus of this project, the Summer Youth Employment Initiative. (SYEI).

The Chelsea Summer Youth Employment Initiative was created to reduce and ultimately put an end to youth violence. This program provides employment, mentoring and character building activities to 150-200 youth per year depending on funding, ages 14-19 years old. The youth are given workplace training for 20 hours by the Chelsea Collaborative before the program starts, along with enrichment activities that take place every Friday known as Fifth-day activities. These activities are meant to educate youth and give them skills they may not gain just from their workplace experience. Activities include a career and college fair, programs that teach life skills like financial literacy and resume building, as well as activities that promote interaction and exposure to new cultures. These are the activities that allow Chelsea Collaborative to call themselves an enrichment program focused on build character and skills of youth rather than just a program that provides employment. The Collaborative pays for all the youth's salaries through grants from federal and state government as well as private funders and they are expected to meet guidelines set by some of the funders to continue receiving funding in future years. Because of this the funders do actually have a sizeable influence in the way the program is run. Since the inception of this program Chelsea Collaborative has placed

over 2000 youths in summer jobs and currently have 52 worksites where the youth are placed to gain employment skills and offer summer help to Chelsea organizations, city government, community parks and businesses (*Chelsea Collaborative*, 2015).

2.2.6 Summary: Structure of Youth Employment Programs

Each of the programs works to instill healthy core values as well as job skills in the youth. The programs have equal focus in character building and job training to instill a strong work ethic. These qualities involving character are deemed vital by Roca, Juventud y Empleo, and YES. These three programs prioritize unemployment as the most important issue and aim to keep as many youth employed as possible by focusing very heavily on job skills. However, job skills are not just having the skills to perform at the jobsite, but also how to act and represent themselves. Project Pyramid is not strictly focused on employment, but they have the strongest emphasis on character development with their boot camp structure geared for misbehaving youth. The structure for teaching youth job skills is quite similar. Groups of youth are required to show up for workshops or classes throughout the program term with the goal of learning necessary skills. We will use our knowledge of these different approaches to decide what aspects of each would be fit for use in the Chelsea Community as a part of the Summer Youth Unemployment Program.

2.3 Methods of Self-Assessment

Each of the programs we researched had a method for assessing themselves and obtaining feedback regarding their program. The methods vary between the respective organizations, but still aim to accomplish the same goal of helping at-risk youth. For these organizations, constant reevaluation of their programs is critical since it provides information about where improvements are needed, and how those improvements could be implemented. The importance of reevaluation and improvement of a program is what motivated Chelsea Collaborative to propose a project in partnership with WPI. In this section we review the approaches taken by the organizations to assess their own youth programs.

2.3.1 Following Performance Measures and Tracking Statistics

A common way for organizations to assess themselves is by developing a set of performance measures to follow and by tracking certain statistics that show the effectiveness of their organization. For example, Juventud y Empleo has developed a set of guidelines to follow which they hold themselves accountable to throughout the duration of their program. They claimed that if they did not meet the benchmarks they had laid out, then they did not achieve their objectives.

The benchmarks were as follows (Ibarraran, 2014):

- Three months after internship, between 30% and 50% should be employed at the establishment they completed their internship at.
- Six months after internship, 50% of participants should have a job in the field they trained in or be self-employed.
- 60% of participants must reside in the priority areas I and II that the organization has identified.
- 45% of participants should be women

By tracking these statistics, it is clear that Juventud y Empleo is focused on employment retention after their program and ensuring that they are assisting people who are truly in need.

Roca Inc. has set up guidelines for their programs similarly to the way Juventud y Empleo does. The main variables they tracked are kept up to date on the homepage of their website and are related to their goal of stopping the cycle of incarceration in Chelsea. Unlike Juventud y Empleo, they do not set specific guidelines that need to be completed to exhibit “success” in their program, but they do report important statistics to show that the program is being effective and that the organization is having “success” through the program. The statistics reported are as follows (*Roca Inc.*, n.d.):

Table 2-2 Statistics Reported by Roca Inc.

FY14 Outcomes:	494 high risk young men served
	80% were retained
Of the young men retained in Roca’s model 24 months or longer:	92% had no new arrests
	98% had no technical violations
	89% retained employment for at least 90 days following completion of the program

By utilizing these statistics, Roca Inc. makes it very clear that they are serving young men who are at-risk, in danger of youth violence, and crime and that they are having a positive effect on their lives.

2.3.2 Strict Monitoring of Students

In contrast, Project Pyramid had a more hands on approach to tracking their success. They decided to monitor the academic activity of students in school due to their focus on improving the core values of their students. The program obtained their source of information through their school monitoring program, which provided them with first hand data and several experiences, while allowing them to actively track youth and have a positive interaction with them following the program (*PRWeb*, 2012).

2.3.3 Gathering Feedback from Participants

Chelsea Collaborative does not currently have an effective method for tracking their performance on a yearly basis, hence the goal of our project. Currently, the extent of their personal assessment is obtained from surveys distributed exclusively to participants while they are still enrolled in the program. This system, however, provides little feedback on the lasting effect their program has on individuals, and the community. Now all of these example methods listed above provide feedback to programs, which can be used to improve themselves, but these methods not only can be used to measure improvement or effectiveness of their program, they can also be used to keep track of specific requirements demanded by funders.

2.3.4 Identifying Funding Requirements

Funding often plays a crucial role in the methods a program uses to self-evaluate. Roca's funding being depended on meeting criteria such as achieving a high employment rate represents a good procedure for the program to use as their guidelines. Their goals are clear and more importantly, completely objective. Everything Roca works on can be focused on meeting a specific goal. These goals represent requirements that are crucial when it comes to maintaining their funding. Chelsea Collaborative also goes through this process and has certain guidelines that need to be taken into account in order to achieve their funding needs. According to Sylvia Ramirez, director of the Summer Youth Employment Initiative, the SYEI's biggest funder sets certain requirements that need to be met every year in order for them to continue receiving funding. Some of these requirements are:

- 20 hours of job readiness/career exploration in addition to the time spent in program orientation activities.
- Use of transition planning and personal planning tools.
- Assessment of individual youth job readiness skills using MA Work-Based Learning Plan, pre-test and post-test (or similar program).
- Youth must each complete a portfolio and a Post Program Participant Survey
- Staff participation in up to 2 meetings during the duration of the program.
- Not less than 60% of funds to be used for wages and stipends. A maximum of 35% can be used for program expenses and no more than 55 in administration cost.

2.4 Background Summary

The background section is a complete overview of at-risk youth factors, information about Chelsea, unemployment and its effects on youth, and a brief review of other youth programs located internationally and in Chelsea. The background information gave us an idea of the type of youth we would be working with. Since the youth involved with the program might have had challenging lives, it was important to demonstrate tact and care when talking with past program participants. The background information also helped provide some preliminary ideas for recommendations and areas in the program to keep in consideration. In addition, our background research provides information on how important programs such as the Summer Youth Employment

Initiative are to helping youth stay risk free. The problem we face is not just localized in Chelsea, but affects the world.

3. Methodology

Our goal was to assess Chelsea Collaborative’s Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI) and provide a set of recommended improvements for their program. This goal included developing an assessment framework to be used on the SYEI program. The framework highlights the different perspectives that are important to the participants involved in the program. Using opinions of these participants in regard to the SYEI, we developed a set of recommended improvements to the program in areas where importance is high and satisfaction is low. This assessment framework will provide them with a more thorough process for evaluating the success of their program in the future. The goal we had when making a more structured process was to provide more meaningful feedback on the success of their program, and to make the process faster and easier to help Chelsea Collaborative save time when evaluating themselves.

We accomplished our goal by:

1. Identifying the perspectives of youth participants, worksites, and staff, about the effectiveness of the Youth Employment Program
2. Developing an assessment framework, including metrics and methods, for gathering data from past participants and worksites.
3. Assessing the youth employment program using the assessment framework.
4. Developing a set of recommended improvements to the program and an assessment framework that the collaborative can use for other programs too.

By completing these four objectives, we provided the following deliverables:

- A set of recommendations to improve the Summer Youth Employment Initiative program
- An assessment framework which consists of metrics for evaluation, an evaluation process and a data analysis tool
- A video highlighting the program’s impact on the community.

In the following sections we will further explain how we accomplished our four research objectives and how our deliverables were produced as an outcome of our research objectives.

3.1 Identifying Different Perspectives About the Effectiveness of SYEI

When undergoing any assessment process, specific metrics are needed. In the case of this project, our criteria were based on the point of view of different groups associated with Chelsea Collaborative’s Summer Youth Employment Initiative. We specifically identified the perspectives of the youth participants, worksite supervisors, and Collaborative staff, since each of these groups play important roles in the SYEI program as a whole. To identify the perspectives of these stakeholder groups we gathered different types of information from each based on the preliminary metrics we developed, as shown in Table 3-1. The feedback from worksites and staff was collected from interviews while the feedback from the youth was collected from interviews and a focus group.

Table 3-1 Information Gathered from Select Groups

Specific Group	Type of Information gathered
Youth Participants	Fifth-Day Activities, Worksites, SYEI program in general
Worksite Supervisors	Fifth-Day Activities, Youth Work at Worksites, Chelsea Collaborative Youth Orientation, SYEI program in general
Collaborative Staff	Fifth-Day Activities, Funding, SYEI program in general

Table 3-2 Sources Used to Identify Perspectives of Select Groups

Sources Used	Specific Group: Each source helped us identify information for:
Surveys	Youth Participants
Interviews	Youth Participants, Worksite Supervisors, Collaborative Staff
Focus Group	Youth Participants

Figure 3-2 presents the sources of information we used to identify the perspectives of each select group. For example, we used surveys, interviews, and a focus group to identify the perspectives of the youth participants of the SYEI.

3.1.1 Perspectives of Youth Participants

To identify the perspectives of youth participants in regard to the SYEI, we completed the following steps. First, we examined surveys completed by past SYEI participants, which were provided by the Chelsea Collaborative. Second, we developed interview and focus group questions and made a guide for each set of questions. Third, we identified youths to partake in our interviews and interviewed those who agreed to participate. Fourth, we identified and invited youths to participate in our focus group. Fifth, we conducted the focus group with youths who accepted our invitation to participate. Lastly, we analyzed the data we collected using content analysis.

3.1.1.1 Learning from Response to Past Surveys

Chelsea Collaborative's extensive database contained responses from surveys completed by past participants of the Summer Youth Employment Initiative, dating back for more than 10 years. The database included surveys from youth participants and worksites, but we mainly focused on the surveys given to the youth participants. These surveys were drafted and used by the Chelsea Collaborative to get feedback about the Summer Youth Employment Program from each youth participant. The surveys asked general questions as a means to get a better grasp and understanding of how the participants felt about the SYEI and what their thoughts about it were. Some examples of questions on the survey were:

- A. Did the program help you (student) learn good work habits?
- B. Did you enjoy your summer work experience?
- C. Did the program help you get along with people of different ages and backgrounds?
- D. By participating in the program, were you less likely of getting in trouble this summer?

- E. Did participating in this program make you want to work hard in school in order to get a better job in the future?
- F. Did you help your family financially by working this summer?
- G. Would you recommend this program to a friend?

These surveys contained a great amount of valuable information and gave us a good idea of where to start from in the process of identifying different perspectives of youth participants. We used these surveys as a basis of questions to ask in interviews and focus groups. These ideas we generated all came from the different questions the survey asked, which are listed above. These questions suggested the topics that the Chelsea Collaborative were interested in and presented an example of what type of questions we should be asking to gather our own data.

3.1.1.2 Developing Interview and Focus Group Questions

Using the survey questions as a basis, we were able to get a head start on the development of our youth participants' interview guide, which consisted of the questions we would ask the youth during interviews. Having example questions really helped initiate the ideas that went into developing our final set of questions. In addition to the surveys, we utilized the knowledge we had about Chelsea Collaborative's goals, our knowledge gained through our background research, and our project goal to finalize our set of questions. The knowledge we gained from our background research gave us a good grasp of how Chelsea is as a city and the goals Chelsea Collaborative has for the Chelsea community. This gave us an insight on other important questions that should be asked in interviews to obtain the information needed to identify all the perspectives of youth participants, worksites, and staff of the SYEI. For example, an important question to be asked, based on our background research of Chelsea was: "Do your parents feel comfortable about you (youth participant) working in the Chelsea area?" This question comes from our findings about how Chelsea is known for not being the safest city in the area.

After the completion of our youth participants interview guide, we thoroughly reviewed the questions to make sure we were asking questions about everything we needed to know. The interview questions were also reviewed by the Chelsea Collaborative staff. After coming to an agreement about our interview guide and getting the staff's approval, we began to identify who would be participating in our studies.

In addition to a youth participants' interview guide, we developed a youth participants' focus group guide. The focus group guide was very similar to our interview guide for youth, but not as in depth. Instead of having a large amount of questions like our interview guide, we minimized the focus group guide so that it only contained the most important questions. Examples of these questions include:

- A. What was your favorite part of the SYEI program?
- B. What was your favorite fifth-day activity and why?
- C. What areas do you think the Chelsea Collaborative could improve on?

3.1.1.3 Identifying Youth to be Interviewed

To identify our first set of participants to be interviewed we contacted our sponsor, who gave us a list of 5 recommended students who participate in the ECO (Environmental Chelsea Organizers) program at Chelsea Collaborative. These students also participated in the SYEI over the summer and were working in the Chelsea Collaborative during the time of our project, so they were the easiest to come into contact with. We then asked the ECO group students to recommend students they knew to come and participate in this study. This is a study sampling technique called Snowball Sampling (Chain Referral Sampling). Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used by researchers to identify potential subjects in studies where subjects are hard to locate ("Snowball Sampling - Chain Referral Sampling", 2009). We asked students after an interview to refer other possible participants or to bring a friend to our focus group. This allowed us to get into contact with multiple possible study participants during a time of the year where it was difficult to locate people due to students' commitments to school, new jobs, and extracurricular activities.

While we hoped this was an effective way to recruit youth into our study, there was a chance of it making the sampling biased since someone with a good relationship with the Chelsea Collaborative recommended the other study participants. To diversify the sampling, we also called around 50 youths that had already participated in the SYEI program to ask if they would like to participate in an interview. Only 4 of the youth that we called agreed to participate. More students would have liked to participate, but couldn't due to their extracurricular activities and work schedules. Out of the 4 interviews, 3 took place over the phone. Calling randomly selected youth for interviews helped make sure that we were getting an unbiased sample.

While trying to identify youths to be interviewed, we did have a limitation that made our task at hand more difficult. This limitation was the need to obtain consent. For all the youth participants that were under 18 years of age, we had to receive a parent or guardian signature allowing their son or daughter to participate in our interviews. This made it more difficult to schedule interviews and limited the amount of data we could gather based on just interviews.

3.1.1.4 Interviews with Youth Participants

The main topics we covered during interviews with participants were experiences with worksites, the SYEI program in general, and experiences with fifth-day activities, which are enrichment activities that occurred at the end of every workweek. We conducted 7 interviews with youth participants in high school who had participated in the program last year and the year before that. For an example of the questions we asked, reference Appendix 7.2.

Each interview lasted from 20-40 minutes and was generally voice recorded. In the situations where voice recording was not possible, we took thorough notes about what was being said by the interviewee. If the interview was recorded, the audio was listened to over again and then transcribed as part of our analysis.

3.1.1.5 Identifying Youth for Focus Groups

To gather youth participants of the SYEI to participate in our focus group we made phone calls and handed out several fliers. Making phone calls was not a very effective method for getting participants for the focus group, but handing out fliers at the high school worked well. On the afternoon of Monday, September 28th, we went to Chelsea High School with our sponsor Sylvia Ramirez and handed out around 85 fliers to students who had already participated in the SYEI. We handed out fliers during the four lunch periods. This way, we were able to directly invite students to participate in our study. All of the students that showed up and participated in our focus group were a result of the fliers we handed out during the school day.

3.1.1.6 Focus Group with Youth Participants

Our focus group consisted of 8 students, where the students were asked questions in a group format. During the focus group we were able to ask students about their thoughts on the SYEI and hear their opinions. Also, the students built off of each other's opinions, so we received great feedback about the students' perspectives. During this time, the students had time to think and speak up about their thoughts on the SYEI and the Chelsea Collaborative in general, including specifics about fifth-day activities, worksites, and job experiences. The focus group lasted around 45 minutes.

3.1.1.7 Content Analysis

After completing all of the interviews and the focus group, we organized all of the information we gathered and categorized it using content analysis, which is a technique for drawing conclusions by systematically and objectively identifying characteristics within text and gathered data (Know Your Audience: chapter 16 Content analysis, n.d.). During this process, we developed a coding system to identify portions of text that related to a specific topic. We generated different themes that we used to categorize the data gathered, such as fifth-day activities, worksites, and the SYEI program in general. We took all the comments the students mentioned into account and placed them into themes that they matched up with and furthermore within each theme, we distinguished between the positive and negative comments that were described. This process helped show what was most important to the students about each specific theme.

3.1.2 Perspectives of Worksite Supervisors

To identify the perspectives of worksite supervisors in regard to the SYEI, we completed four steps. First, we developed interview questions and made an interview guide for worksite supervisors. Second, we identified worksite supervisors to participate in interviews. Third, we interviewed the worksite supervisors who agreed to participate in our study. Finally, we analyzed the data we collected using content analysis.

3.1.2.1 Identifying Worksite Supervisors to be Interviewed

To identify worksite supervisors to be interviewed we spoke with Sylvia Ramirez, the current director of the SYEI. She provided us with a contact list of all the worksites, as well as a list of recommended worksite sponsors to contact that would most likely be willing to speak with us. Sylvia sent all the recommended worksite sponsors an email explaining that we were going to contact them and were looking for supervisors to

interview. We also emailed worksite sponsors in addition to Sylvia's email. We then received emails from worksites that would like to participate and set up times to meet. Out the 52 worksites, we were able to set up interviews with 6 worksite supervisors.

3.1.2.2 Interviews with Worksite Supervisors

Similar to the youth participant interviews, the worksite supervisor interviews consisted of a one-on-one conversation in an attempt to get a better grasp of the perspectives of the worksite supervisors. The main topics we covered were fifth-day activities, experiences about the youth working at the worksites, the orientation youth participants go through before beginning work, and the SYEI program in general. Developing interview questions for the worksite supervisors was different than the development of the interview questions for the youth participants. When developing the youth participants' questions we had more resources to help get the process started, such as the Chelsea Collaborative's surveys and our background research about at-risk youth. In this case, we didn't have as many resources about worksites so we began to think of what would be important information to know about the worksites working with the Chelsea Collaborative. We thought about questions that would give us information about the worksites opinions about the SYEI, which we could then use to make recommendation later on in the project. Examples of these questions were:

- A. Do you enjoy participating in the SYEI?
- B. How valuable is this program to you?
- C. What would you like to see changed about the SYEI?
- D. What affect does employing the students from the Summer Youth Employment Initiative have on your business?

After developing a preliminary set of questions, we reviewed them and then finalized the questions we considered best. Also, Gladys Vega, the Executive Director of the Chelsea Collaborative, reviewed our set of worksite questions and approved them. We used these questions to create our worksite supervisors interview guide.

The interviews lasted from 20-30 minutes and were voice recorded, as well as video recorded to be used in a video we were developing throughout the duration of the project. The interview audios were then listened to over again and transcribed for analysis reasons.

3.1.2.3 Content Analysis

After completing the interviews, we organized the information we gathered and categorized it once again using content analysis. We then developed a coding system specific for the worksite sponsors. We generated different themes that we used to categorize the data gathered. In this case the themes we used for categorization purposes were fifth-day activities, youth work at worksites, youth orientation before start of jobs, and the SYEI program in general. We took comments mentioned by worksite supervisors and placed them into themes that matched up with content of the comments. Furthermore within each theme, we distinguished between the positive and negative comments that were described. This process helped show what was most important to the worksite supervisors that participated in the SYEI.

3.1.3 Perspectives of Chelsea Collaborative (CC) Staff Members

To identify the perspectives of the Chelsea Collaborative staff members in regard to the SYEI, we first developed interview questions and made an interview guide for the CC staff. Second, we identified staff members to participate in interviews. Third, we interviewed the staff members who wanted to participate in our study. Lastly, we analyzed the data we collected using content analysis.

3.1.3.1 Identifying Staff Members to be Interviewed

When identifying staff members was Sylvia Ramirez. We also received recommendations on staff members to interview from Sylvia and Maria Belen, our other sponsor. Since most of the staff members were at the Chelsea Collaborative daily, it was more straightforward to set up meeting times for interviews.

3.1.3.2 Interviews with Chelsea Collaborative Staff Members

Similar to the interviews with youth participants and worksite supervisors, these interviews were a one-on-one conversation with the goal obtaining the perspectives and opinions of the CC staff members in regard to the SYEI. The main topics covered in the interviews were fifth-day activities, funding, and the SYEI program in general.

Developing interview questions for the Chelsea Collaborative staff members was rather similar to the development of the worksite supervisor interview questions. Once again, we didn't have any resources about the Chelsea Collaborative staff that could jump-start our thinking about questions to ask them in regard to the SYEI. Similarly to the worksite questions development, we began to think of what would be the most important information to obtain from the Chelsea Collaborative staff that worked with the SYEI. We tried to come up with questions that would allow for staff members to share their outlook about the SYEI. Examples of these questions were:

- A. What is your general thought about the SYEI as a whole?
- B. Why does the SYEI have required fifth-day activities?
- C. What role does funding play in the grand scheme of the SYEI? Etc.

We then reviewed our preliminary questions and finalized them, creating our third interview guide; the Chelsea Collaborative staff members interview guide. For an exact example of the questions we asked, reference the Appendix 7.2.

We conducted 4 interviews. The interviews lasted from 20-30 minutes and were voice recorded, as well as video recorded to be possibly used in the video we were developing throughout the duration of the project. The interview audios were then listened to over again and transcribed for analysis reasons.

3.1.3.3 Content Analysis

Once we finished the interviews, we organized the information we gathered and categorized it using content analysis. We developed a third coding system specifically for the CC staff members. We generated another set of particular themes that we used to categorize the data gathered. In this case the themes we used were fifth-day activities, funding, and once again, the SYEI program in general. We separated different statements made by staff members and placed them into select themes that matched up with the content of what was being said. Then we differentiated between the positive and negative

comments that were mentioned throughout the interview. This demonstrated what was most important to the CC staff members in regard to the SYEI.

3.2 Developing an Assessment Framework

The staff at the Chelsea Collaborative have indicated to us that they would like this streamlining to expedite the process and leave more time for the actual planning and implementation of program changes. The method we employ in our framework affords them that opportunity for more timely and accurate analysis of the data.

We created an assessment framework for Chelsea Collaborative to improve the ease of yearly evaluation and provides a mechanism for recognizing trends in survey responses from year to year. The assessment framework is a combination of the following:

- metrics for evaluating the program,
- a process for data gathering
- a spreadsheet for organizing and visually representing survey data (Data Analysis Tool).

The process we developed to assess the SYEI consists of two parts. The first part is the process our IQP team used to evaluate and provide recommendations for the program. The second part is the process we provided Chelsea Collaborative with to help track the progress of any recommendations they implement and keep up to date on people's opinions in relevant aspects of the program. The second process uses data from a survey that Chelsea Collaborative distributes at the end of the each year's program. This section will be organized according to these two processes.

3.2.1 Assessment Framework - Metrics and Evaluation

The first part of the framework is the part our IQP team carried out over the durations of our project. This part of the framework will make the second part, performed by Chelsea Collaborative, much more simple and efficient. Additionally, this part was focused on defining metrics to organize our raw data and give it more meaning. Before we started our interview processes we defined preliminary metrics to organize our interview questioning. The metrics we produced came as a result of our knowledge of the SYEI, gained from our research in the following categories:

- background information about similar programs
- survey data previously gathered by Chelsea Collaborative about effectiveness of program

Throughout the interview process we were open to making changes to our predefined metrics, but did not find it necessary based on the responses we were receiving. The main purpose of the metrics is to separate the program into parts that can be focused on individually. The metrics we developed, previously introduced in figure 3.1, served as our guide in creating interview questions that would highlight important aspects of SYEI.

We performed a full evaluation of the Summer Youth Employment Initiative using the data that came as a product of our interview process detailed in the previous section. We included interviews and focus groups in our evaluation because they provide

different kinds of answers than a survey. They allowed for more personalized questions, as well as answers, and proved successful in getting powerful anecdotes from participants about the real impact the program has had on their lives. It is this reason that the interview process is necessary for a full evaluation; to diversify the data and ensure full coverage of a participant’s opinions. Going this in depth for an evaluation is time consuming, and would be a challenge to do every year for Chelsea Collaborative. Accordingly, this part of the framework is meant to be carried out every three to five years and utilize the data analysis tool as a follow up on any changes coming as a result of the evaluation.

3.2.2 Assessment Framework - Data Analysis Tool

The data analysis tool we created for Chelsea Collaborative is a spreadsheet for analyzing survey responses. We created this tool with their hectic schedule in mind in hopes to make an annual evaluation using this method more feasible. Chelsea Collaborative’s relatively small workforce, and their lack of a process for analyzing survey responses has repeatedly led to the data being gathered successfully, but the responses not being used to assess and improve the program. The data analysis tool is a spreadsheet that will automatically create graphical representations for individual questions for each year and apply the new data to trend graphs to show how responses have been changing. The spreadsheet provides them with a way to visualize responses through graphs and read them in a way that highlights annual trends in participants’ opinions. To decide what questions are relevant and require the most attention terms of program modifications, we used what we learned from the focus groups and interviews to determine what is important to different groups. The Chelsea Collaborative can use what they learn from the data to determine if the changes they implemented that year have been noticeable and positive for the people directly involved, and to make changes for the following year in areas where satisfaction is lacking.

The spreadsheet we use consists of 11 sheets, allowing for ten sheets dedicated to displaying responses to individual questions for the last ten years (with each sheet containing data from one of the ten years) and the 11th sheet being a compiled representation of response trends within those ten years. Each year is composed of a bar graph for each question, making it more intuitive and making the spread of opinions more evident with only a quick glance. An example can be seen in figure 3 below.

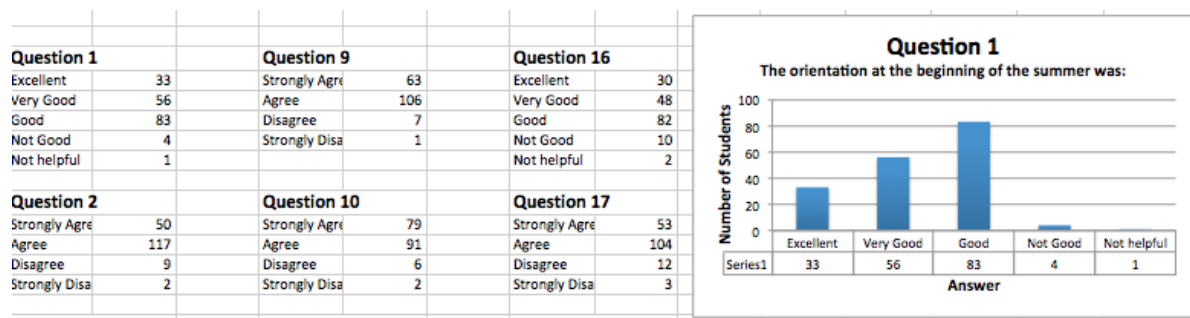


Figure 3-1 Data Analysis Tool 1: On the left of the figure is the format Chelsea Collaborative have been using to visualize data, and on the right is an example of how the responses to each question will now be displayed in the assessment framework.

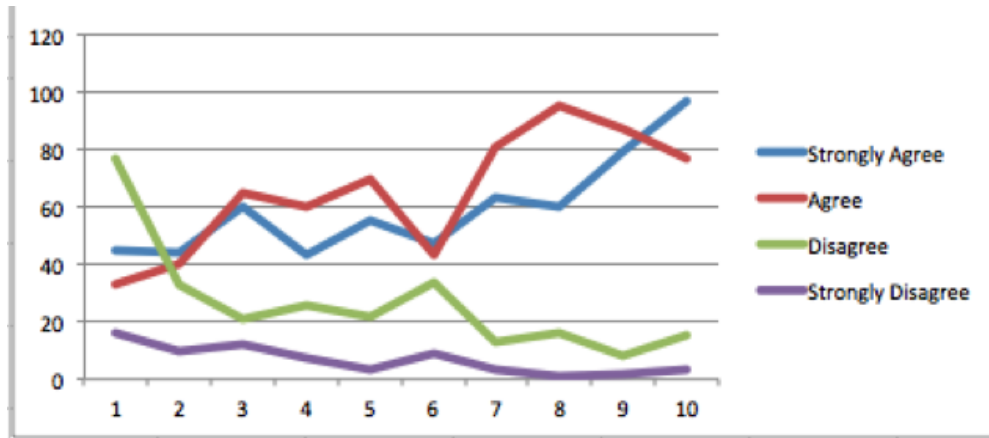


Figure 3-2 Data Analysis Tool 2

We created the Excel template and were able to input the data Chelsea Collaborative had stored in their database from the previous year. The process was as simple as moving all of the separate documents into one (separated into sheets) and letting Excel create bar graphs for each question. Another good thing about using Excel in this case is that the template can be used from year to year by simply taking out the oldest year of data and replacing it with the new data. Since the functions are already written for the graphs, the template will make visual representations automatically and require no additional work by the Chelsea Collaborative.

3.3 Assessing the Youth Employment Program

After creating the two parts of our assessment framework, we assessed the program using the assessment framework, and we gave the Collaborative an example of how to use the data-analysis tool. We assessed the program and identified areas of improvement by using the feedback we gathered from our three target groups, staff, worksites and past participants. The feedback from worksites and staff was collected from interviews while the feedback from the youth was collected from interviews and focus groups. The feedback collection process is where we analyze the interviews and focus group that we conducted throughout the project. The findings were organized according to the created metrics from the assessment framework. We compiled the feedback from all three groups, and were able to identify the areas that the groups liked the most about the program and determine that those areas were the strongest parts of the Summer Youth Employment Program. Topics such as Fifth-day activities or Worksite Training are some examples of metrics that we grouped our information by. If any finding was repeated by multiple sources, the number was kept track of to show how widespread the idea was amongst the group.

By compiling all the findings and comparing the different groups' opinions on how the Collaborative was lacking, we were able to figure out the areas Chelsea Collaborative should improve upon. The set of recommendations was created from those statements. Any sentiments shared by multiple groups were given a higher priority for Chelsea Collaborative to act upon compared to sentiments felt by only one group.

3.3.1 Assessing their Database

Using our assessment framework discussed in the previous section, we compared the current Summer Youth Employment Program with our findings gathered from the assessment framework and found areas that we were able to be improve upon based on survey results and feedback gathered from focus groups and interviews. The evaluation of their information database was done by assessing how easy it was to locate, access and comprehend the data. The comprehension of the data was determined by how well one could summarize the findings of the piece of information, i.e a spreadsheet of survey results, without having outside information. Graphs were intended to make comprehension simpler.

The goal for the new database was, as mentioned earlier, to streamline it for ease of use and reduce the work related to keeping track of their records. Making it easier to comprehend would help the Collaborative generate data on their work for outside use such as presenting to funders. By making the system easier to use for data storage, it would help allow the program to expand by reducing time spent managing their database.

3.4. Developing a Set of Recommended Improvements

We created a set of recommendations by prioritizing the comments that the youth participants, worksite supervisors, and CC staff members had in common and making recommendations based on what each group regarded as most important for the SYEI. Solving problems that all three groups have in common can allow the Collaborative to spend their time efficiently instead of focusing on things only one group may deem as an issue. Organizing the comments based off each group's perspective also gives the Chelsea Collaborative the ability to identify and improve individual relationships. For example if they wanted to focus specifically on worksite related issues they would be able to see how their worksites felt about the program and collaborate with them. The Collaborative can also observe differing opinions on the program and how what matters are more important for different types of businesses.

After completing our project objectives we were able to fulfill our main goal of creating an assessment framework and evaluating the program with it. We also created a video that highlighted the strengths of Chelsea Collaborative's program and show how the organization helps the Chelsea community.

3.5 Process for Creating a Video

The video was originally proposed by the Chelsea Collaborative to help fundraise and to inform people that had no experience with Chelsea Collaborative or their actions in the community. Evaluating the feedback from staff and worksites gave us good stories to use for the video and to show how the majority of the program's participants appreciated it. Gladys Vega, the ED of the collaborative, wanted a video that explained the values and the goal of the organization, helping at-risk youth in the Chelsea community. She wanted to really show the stories of the youth who have been a part of the program and how their employment over a summer has impacted their lives.

The video was planned out in a storyboard. We received advice about the filmmaking process from Sophia M. Jagannathan, the Educational Media Coordinator at WPI with

experience in making videos. An early draft of the storyboard can be found in the Appendix 7.4. Keeping Gladys' original goal in mind we set out to capture stories from worksites, staff and past participants of the program on what the program meant to them and the community. While interviewing the participants we were also able to film some past program participants who are employed at the worksites they once worked at when they still taking part in the summer program. During our interviews with worksites we filmed them as well and how they are glad to be a part of the program and the effect it has on the community. Finishing our deliverables through our research objectives allowed us to complete one of the Collaborative's goals of making this video to help fundraise and spread awareness of their cause.

4. Findings About the SYEI Program

Our goal was to assess Chelsea Collaborative's Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI) and provide a set of recommended improvements for their program. This included determining the aspects of the program that were most important to the 3 different stakeholder groups, and also gain an understanding of how effective the program itself actually was. After analyzing the data we gathered from our focus group and interviews we were able to identify what parts of the program are important to different people. This chapter is divided into three sections according to each stakeholder group: youth participants, Chelsea Collaborative staff and summer worksites. We examined each stakeholder group's opinions of the SYEI to identify relevant metrics, which we used to break down each section for analysis.

4.1 Youth Participants

We gathered the opinions of 15 youth who were involved in the program either during the summer of 2015 or in previous years. The data we gathered from them and will refer to in this section are summarized in Appendix 7.3.1. All of the youth had an abundance of praise for the program, but there was also some constructive criticism that could help the Chelsea Collaborative improve their program following our recommendations. We separated this section by metrics drawn from our analysis of the participants' responses to interview and focus group questioning. The metrics we defined to be most important to youth were the following: fifth-day activities, worksite experience and overall SYEI experience. The major findings discussed in this subsection are summarized as follows:

Major Findings:

- Youth like coming together as a full program for fifth-day activities.
- Youth find lecture style fifth-day activities boring and would appreciate more hands on activities, especially field trips.
- Youth credited the SYEI with giving them confidence and teaching them to take initiative to make their ideas heard.
- Some youth were not happy with their job placement or felt underutilized at their workplace
- Some youth were not prepared enough by orientation to start working at their workplace.
- Students showed support for an expansion of the program worksites, possibly with more in downtown Boston.
- Students are not completely satisfied with the application process and how candidates are accepted

4.1.1 Enrichment Activities (Fifth-Day)

Every Friday during the program Chelsea Collaborative administers enrichment activity for the youth. These activities range from college and career fairs, to drug and violence forums, to a Water Country field trip. In this section we will discuss our findings from our interviews with SYEI youth regarding enrichment activities.

Finding #1: Youth enjoy having enrichment activities

Most of the SYEI youth we talked to were supporters of having fifth-day enrichment activities. One interviewee brought up fifth-day activities when we asked him about his favorite part of the program:

I really like how we have these fifth day activities, at the end of the week or so when the whole program, all the youth will come together and um, we'll just see everyone and we would get to hear about your friends' jobs and what they do. Or there will be trainings about other stuff and you know, it's just cool.

Specifically they enjoyed coming together once a week with the whole program and they said they were what made the Chelsea Collaborative live up to being an enrichment program, not just an unemployment program. Most of the activities provide the students with life skills that will be helpful for future employment and what is expected of them as they move through this program. Below we give some examples of activities and discuss their usefulness as enrichment activities.

Some of these activities are meant to teach the youth things they might not learn at home, but that they will need as they grow older and have more responsibility. Such activities focus on things like financial literacy, the consequences of drug abuse, violence in the community, and future college and career options. The youth showed an appreciation for the skills they were being taught through these activities and multiple focus group participants even said they have already used some of the skills they learned in their daily routines. Interviewee #3 used the example of her resume; the resume building skills she learned as a participant in the SYEI allowed her to make a professional resume that she thinks will make a significant difference in her receiving employment elsewhere. When we asked the focus group if they were comfortable managing their money and bank account all of the students immediately started telling us how they set up their own easily. They showed a great enthusiasm for this and many other skills that were taught during fifth-day activities.

Finding #2: Youth dislike lecture-style fifth-day activities and are more drawn to hands on activities.

The problem that recurringly came up in interviews was a lack of interactivity in multiple fifth-day activities. Almost every student we talked to said something about disliking the lecture-style activities. This was without specific prompting regarding the youth interaction in these activities; the youth were asked if there was a specific activity or activities that they thought could be improved or replaced. Specifically the activities they listed as being boring or unhelpful are the following: Drug information sessions, multicultural night and any other lecture based activities. The students said that for activities that took place in an auditorium with a speaker they often lost interest very quickly and some did not have a good idea of what happened certain nights or didn't remember them at all. The overwhelming response we got was for more hands-on fifth-day activities. This opinion, however, is not a good indicator of the opinion of all fifth-

day activities, many of the same students cited multiple activities as being fun and educational.

We asked all fifteen youth we talked to the following question: What was your favorite fifth-day activity? Why? We received similar feedback from this question from most students. 10 of the 15 students cited the Youth Summit (Career and College fair) as their favorite activity of the summer because they said it was informative and useful. The students enjoyed learning about the different careers and colleges they could choose from in the future and a few students said that it got them excited to look at colleges and decide what they want to do in the future. Interviewee #1 said it “helped [them] start thinking about college” and that it made her excited to begin college process and use the information the Youth Summit provided. The fact that something from the program can spark excitement for the future of these youth is exceptionally meaningful and showcases the effect Chelsea Collaborative is having on the youth of Chelsea. The hands on activities were the ones that students used examples like this for. They kept the youth attentive and engaged which allows them to absorb what is being presented and apply it to their lives. The message of every activity Chelsea Collaborative puts on is important, at least to the Collaborative, for the process of enrichment for these youth. Having activities where youth are not engaged and receiving the message that is meant for them is counterintuitive and a waste of time for everyone involved. The youth want every activity to be hands on because they realize the impact a good fifth-day activity that they are engaged in can have on their lives.

4.1.2 Worksite Experience

Another major focus of our interview questioning was the youth experience at their respective worksites. This section details the responses we got from youth pertaining to their workplace experience.

Finding #3: Youth credited the SYEI with giving them confidence

Many students told us that after their participation in the program they had newfound confidence and they were no longer afraid to take initiative and make their ideas heard. There are several ways that the program helped to instill confidence among the participants.

- Many students became more involved in the community
 - Three students we talked to currently work for Environmental Chelsea Organizers (ECO), a year round program that is a part of Chelsea Collaborative. These students said that the SYEI was the reason they became involved with ECO. The program made them want to get more involved in the community. Now, as community organizers, they are using what they learned from the SYEI to directly impact the community and make a difference in Chelsea. One of the ECO youth said the new skills they learned “were what made [her] want to get more involved [at school]”.
- Some youth became more outspoken as a result of their participation.
 - One youth we spoke to who had a job as a receptionist. Before the job she said she was really shy and did not like talking to new people, she gave

credit to the SYEI and her workplace for helping her to open up and even apply that to life outside of the program.

- Interviewee #4 said “I definitely have become more open because of this job...when I first started I was really shy”
- Some youth saw skills they learned as something that will give them confidence in the future.
 - A focus group participant said “What I learned working with kids will help me in the future if I want to work with kids, or even for my own kids”
 - Interviewee #4 said “We communicate and collaborate with people we don’t even know—it’s like random people that we meet everyday, but we still have the same focus and targets... and so, I think in other jobs I would be able to work really well with people and I won’t be shy”

On top of all of these skills to prepare for a future career and life, the youth were able to meet and make connections with people from different generations throughout Chelsea that they may be able to utilize when looking for a job in the future. Another big outcome for a lot of youth was that they learned more about who they are as a worker and as a person. This will always be in their minds as they move forward and will hopefully make their future work experiences easier to adjust to.

Finding #4: Some youth were not happy with their job placement or felt underutilized at their workplace

The negative feedback we received regarding worksite experience from youth was related to the logistics of how jobs are assigned and how students learn about their jobs before starting. Some youth gave some feedback about not enjoying their job, or thinking they would have fit really well at a different job. For example, one student we talked to was working for the DPW, helping to clean up the public parks in Chelsea. This involved emptying trashes and cleaning up trash that was scattered throughout the park. They really disliked the job and thought they might have been a better fit somewhere else where they could use skills they already have. One student suggested that the Collaborative gather information from each student about what job he or she would enjoy before the youth were placed in jobs. They thought this would be better because it would make the program more attractive to youth if they knew they would get a say in that decision. Another statement some of the youth made about job placement was that while they did like their job, it felt like the worksites ran out of things for the youth to do sometimes. Some of the participants even described their jobs as “boring sometimes”.

4.1.3 Overall Experience in the SYEI

Finding #5: Some youth were not prepared enough by orientation to start working at their workplace

The youth are given 20 hours of training before beginning their time at a workplace put on by Chelsea Collaborative. The training is required by funders, but also can prove useful for the youth, helping them get acclimated to the program. The training

is meant to help them be more prepared to function and perform in a workplace environment while also serving as an orientation to the program outlining the expectations of the youth. Even after this training, some youth we spoke to felt unprepared to work at the worksite they were given. When we asked the focus group for feedback to improve fifth-day activities, all eight students agreed that they would like employers from worksites to participate in the orientation and be a part of the training process they go through. They want more professional training, and a lot of the youth we talked to want to know more about their worksite, some even said they would be interested in learning how to get into their worksite field. They said they would feel more prepared knowing the mentor from their worksite and learning about what they will be expected to do before they show up.

Finding #6: Students showed support for an expansion of the program

Students also showed strong support for an extension of SYEI or establishment of a similar program during the school year. Even during focus groups before we addressed a school year unemployment program a student asked us if any employment opportunities were currently available. We observed this reaction from many youth when distributing flyers, when conducting our focus group, and during our interaction with them at the Collaborative.

The youth that attended our focus groups, when prompted, also showed interest in an expansion of the workplaces to downtown Boston and surrounding towns. With this expansion, we gathered from our questioning that there may be more concern for youths' safety with the additional commute on public transit. When we brought up the idea of safety and asked the students if their parents would be comfortable with an expansion, most students said they already use the Boston public transportation with permission of their parents.

Finding #7: Some students are not completely satisfied with the application process and the process for selecting candidates.

We also learned from interview that, in the view of some, sometimes people who “don't deserve (to be accepted)” get selected for the program when there may be some people that are in more need or would take the opportunity more seriously are rejected from the program. This was a problem we had thought may arise from the start because of the sheer amount of applications the Collaborative field each year. Following this complaint we integrated questioning about the application process into our interviews and received much of the same feedback. Of course now people are being prompted to say yes or no to the question “Is this application process perfect?” so more negative feedback was expected and accounted for.

Most of the youth did agree that some people get in that do not deserve it, a few even saying they know people who really needed to get a job and got turned down. Chelsea Collaborative obviously knows that this is an issue in some cases, but it can be really difficult to eliminate these cases when they are working with funders who have certain benchmarks and specifications the program must meet. Our reporting on this does

not imply it is possible to fix this problem soon, but the issue should at least be reviewed to see if there is a way to improve the situation.

4.2 Worksite Supervisors

We conducted interviews with six different worksites in the Chelsea area to gain insight on the worksite experience, the productivity of the youth while they are involved with their worksite and any other feedback they were willing to provide about the program. These worksites came from a wide variety of fields. The worksites were the East Cambridge Savings Bank, The Neighborhood Developers, The Salvation Army Kids Center, The Early Adult Learning Center, Chelsea City Hall, and the Chelsea Police Department. The past year the Chelsea Collaborative worked with 52 different worksites so our sample size represents 11% of the total worksite population for the summer 2015. The goal for our interviews with the worksites was to get feedback on how to improve their program from their perspective and to record their testimonials on how they feel the program has impacted the community for the our video deliverable. After analyzing our findings from the interviews we were able to find information on topics such as how worksites plan jobs and work for the youth at their businesses, their feelings on the youth's training before coming to work and what they think about the organization of the Summer Youth Employment program. We categorized the worksite findings into three main topics: How the worksites felt about the program, the training with the program, and worksite suggestions. Using these three metrics, our worksite findings are described in the following sections and our major findings are summarized as follows.

Major Findings:

- Worksites liked the goal of the program and what it is trying to accomplish.
- The program provides a cheap and effective way of hiring new youth for participating businesses.
- Worksites have to spend time training the youth if their worksite required more than clerical work.
- The organization of the program is a bit difficult to work with for some worksites.

Overall, the worksites were very pleased with the program. There were however, some minor suggestions when asked about anything they would like to see changed to help make the process easier for them. None of these changes were major enough to cause them to drop the program, but some would have to hire less youth due to the structure of the program in order to provide the best experience they can. Most of the suggestions are specific to the worksite and there was only one major area that the Collaborative could improve upon that the worksites agreed upon.

4.2.1 Feelings about the Program

This section summarizes how the worksites felt the program was meeting their expectations and how they feel about the impact it has on the community. Overall, the general feedback from the worksites was very positive. All the interviewed worksites praised and enjoyed what the program was trying to do for the community. They all believed that the method of giving the youth jobs, and training was an excellent way of helping the at-risk youth problem in Chelsea. They understood that the program helped keep youth busy during the summer and “off the streets.”

Finding #8: Worksites liked the goal of the program and what it is trying to accomplish.

One worksite coordinator stated “seeing a young person taking a leadership role and being involved in the community was a refreshing sentiment... their work was making an impact on the community”. The sentiment was shared by the other worksites when they were asked what impact this program had on the community. Another benefit from the program that was explicitly stated by two worksites was the benefits the program has for local businesses in terms of revenue. A different worksite participant said that “One of the greater things SYEI does is provides some form of cash flow to the city...So they are promoting helping local businesses thrive”.

The finding shows that the worksites do not want to change anything major about the core of the program. They want to be apart of the program in the future and only have minor changes in order to help it run better. In our questions we were looking for tangible benefits that businesses were getting from this program. We found that three out of six businesses stated that the program was a valuable way of hiring new employees.

Finding #9: The program provides a cheap and effective way of hiring new youth for participating businesses.

The worksites had these statements to say about how they were able to make good use of the program for new employees:

1. “There are definitely youth that stand out, and the ones that stand out I try to hire”.
2. “It has lead to me hiring at least 3 of them. I wouldn’t have hired them otherwise”.
3. “We wanted to find ways of keeping her around because she was very capable”

One of the main benefits of the program was introducing capable youth to the worksites for free. The worksites knew the collaborative had already interviewed the youth already and provided them with some basic training. By going through the Summer Youth employment process, the youth were already filtered and the businesses knew they were getting a higher quality pool of candidates instead of hiring from the general public. Five out of the six interviewed worksites seriously considered hiring some of the youth they received from the program year round and by doing so, paying the youth’s salaries themselves. Three worksites explicitly stated that they liked having the option to observe the youth work with their businesses before committing to hiring them. Seeing how seriously the youth took their jobs and how well they enjoyed doing their work was a key factor towards several youth being hired year round. Another added benefit was being able to get a young person’s opinion on events or fliers. For one worksite, the youth brought a new and refreshing viewpoint for their businesses. All of the worksites also stated that without having this program, they would not be able to hire youth on their own over the summer due to budget reasons.

4.2.2 Worksite Training

This section provides information on the training and productivity of the youth at the worksites. We evaluated how well prepared the youth were for their jobs at the worksites. The youth are supposed to go through basic training for their worksites, but for some of the worksites, they required more specific training.

Finding #10: Worksites have to spend time training the youth if their worksite required more than clerical work.

Four of the worksites said that they held their own orientation for the youth in addition to the training from the Collaborative. These worksites however, expected their youth to do more than just clerical work. One worksite mentioned “I think the youth would benefit from being able to come in early and get some training before, or an orientation at least before they even start the job”. Two out of four had their youth working with children and another wanted their youth to act as project managers on assignments. Specific training for worksites involving children required training on how to behave around the children, including what is appropriate to say. For five out of the six worksites, when it came to tasks that did not require more technical skills, found the training to be sufficient for basic work such as data entry or filing papers. When asked about the orientations for worksites, two of the worksites felt it was good while the other four had no particular comment on it. The orientation was said to be a clear overview of what is expected from the youth and what is required from the worksite to be a part of the program.

One worksite wanted more technical training for the youth. Their worksite involved using programs such as Microsoft Word and other programs on the computer that the youth were not exposed to. The worksite suggested that providing the youth with these technical skills would improve their work at the business and perhaps allow the business to make better use of their time. In three of the six worksites the youth were not actively engaged because they ran out of tasks for them to do. One worksite supervisor summarized how additional training would help the youth well:

“We have this situation where we have youth who want to work in IT, they have the illusion that they know things that they really don’t know so we provide them general training, and then when they get to that particular office they do not feel comfortable because although now they know how to function in an office space you know a work site they really didn’t know enough to put them on a specific task or project.”

We also inquired if the worksites would be able to plan events or send staff to the Collaborative to talk about their work and perhaps provide more technical training for the youth. Three out of the six were able to send someone to help fill in as an event and to talk about what their job entails. One worksite, the police department, was also open to having youth come to the worksite on a field trip as a way to possibly engage the youth.

4.2.3 Worksites' Suggestions

This section will go into detail on the changes worksites would like to see made. The most common suggestion made by two of the worksites and talked about by the others was to improve the overhead and the paperwork that comes with hiring a youth.

Finding #11: The organization of the program is a bit difficult to work with for some worksites.

The following are quotes from worksites that show some of the frustrations worksites have with the paperwork.

1. "We don't really know what youth we're getting until sometimes a week before they start."
2. "It would be a lot better if they were more succinct and if there were a different way to do them"
3. "The format of the forms itself, the way we got them. I hate writing by hand and having something virtually they can enter would help me a lot"

Having to do surveys, portfolios and keeping track of work hours on paper required a lot of time. They would be very happy to have timesheets online or any way to reduce the paperwork load and one worksite supervisor was questioning their ability to take on more youth because of how much work and time it takes to keep track of them. The same worksite supervisor also suggested more notice on the youth arriving at their worksite. Having only one week to process their own paperwork, the worksite was in a very frantic state, had to reduce the training they could give the youth and experienced a negative impact on the experience as a whole. Since they had no notice on who would be given to them, they had to contact the youth to fill out forms very quickly and this would occur during the start of a busy time for them. The worksites that had these complaints did not know the exact reasoning for why these documents were important. They could only infer that it was because the Collaborative had to report back to their funders.

Lastly, one worksite supervisor felt it was a bit difficult contacting the director of the Summer Youth Employment Initiative. They had an example of a youth not showing up for work and they did not find out until a couple days later from the director. They suggested finding a way to help Sylvia manage everything that she has to do since they recognize that she has a lot of work running the program.

4.3 Chelsea Collaborative Staff Members

We gathered the thoughts and opinions of four Chelsea Collaborative staff members that were involved in the Summer Youth Employment Initiative. Two of these staff members also served as worksite supervisors. They were very proud of the program they have been running for the past few years, but they did have some opinions about the program that could be seen as negative comments. Along with the positive comments, these negative comments were a form of constructive criticism that could be used to understand what recommendations would be best to improve the SYEI. During the staff member interviews, the staff members shared their opinions about certain aspects of the program. After analyzing the data we gathered we were able to get a better understanding

about how the Chelsea Collaborative staff members felt about the SYEI. We divided the staff member findings into three topics: fifth-day activities, funding, and the SYEI program as a whole.

Major Findings:

- Fifth-day activities provide students with an environment to learn new things and be open to different trainings.
- Planning and organizing fifth-day activities are a challenge for staff members.
- The Chelsea Collaborative is really restricted by the requirements provided by their funders.
- Receiving funding is very unpredictable. It is not known when funding will become available and the exact amount being funded is unknown until the money is given to the Collaborative.
- According to staff members, the SYEI is a very valuable program for the youth.
- SYEI is very good for local businesses in the Chelsea Community.
- It is a challenge to organize and administer the SYEI program throughout the summer.
- Evaluating the program’s progress regularly is too time consuming for their small workforce.

4.3.1 Fifth-Day Activities

The fifth-day activities are enrichment programs that were held at the end of every workweek on Fridays. The staff members considered the fifth-day activities to be a very important part of the SYEI program.

Finding #12: Fifth-day activities provide students with an environment to learn new things and be open to different trainings.

A staff member stated, “It is a learning opportunity for them, it’s an opportunity to learn also some discipline that they maybe were looking for from the structure or the work environment.” showing how great of an opportunity it was for these students to be able to participate in the fifth-day activities. According to another staff member, “The educational interpersonal relations aspect and the training they receive on how to work, preparing resumes, preparing for interviews; all of those things are really good skills they learn through the program and we are eager to provide them with that”. The staff of the Collaborative are eager to provide students with new skills that they can use in their future, which come from the fifth-day activities. These enrichment programs bring new knowledge to the students of the SYEI that they will need further down the line in their lives, which makes the fifth-day activities an opportunity that students need to take advantage of.

The staff members agreed that the fifth-day activities provided the SYEI students with great enrichment opportunities to learn more, while providing a good setting to be able to train the students so they can continue to build their skills.

Fifth-day activities provided great opportunities for students, but at the same time they brought many challenges for the CC staff members, since they had limited time due

to other programs they had going on at the same time as the SYEI. One of the biggest difficulties staff members faced was planning and organizing the fifth-day activities.

Finding #13: Planning and organizing fifth-day activities are a challenge for staff members.

Fifth-day activities are a great opportunity for the youth, but present a challenge for the Chelsea Collaborative, due to the difficulty to organize these enrichment programs. Another CC staff member said,

“I think we need to get better at planning for the fifth-day activities in a more productive and strategic way in order for the fifth-day activities to be successful. I just feel strongly that it’s too much work for one person and there’s not enough hours in the day.”

The Collaborative staff members realize that they need to improve the way they plan fifth-day activities, but they already have so much to do in regard to the SYEI. The Collaborative members are in need of more assistance when trying to organize these activities. It is a big challenge to try and organize fifth-day activities while having to take care of everything else that is already going on in the Collaborative. Another challenge mentioned by a staff member was that students were not learning enough job skills, such as presentation skills, social skills, and an understanding of proper dress code for job related commitments. Staff think that students need to be more exposed to this knowledge than they already are during the fifth-day activities and that they should have an opportunity to demonstrate the job skills they learned. These are great points to have in regard to fifth-day activities, but the difficulty of organizing these enrichment programs restrict staff members and make it a challenge to try and to implement these aspects mentioned into a working fifth-day activities schedule.

4.3.2 Funding

Without adequate funding, the Chelsea Collaborative would not have the resources to pay all the youth workers, as well as not have the resources to pay for the general costs of running an employment program. The staff members agreed that the Chelsea Collaborative was doing a good job of efficiently using the funds that they were currently receiving, but also had many negative comments about the difficulties that obtaining funding, in general, causes to the staff, including difficulties with funding requirements.

Finding #14: The Chelsea Collaborative is really restricted by the requirements provided by their funders.

According to a staff member, “There is a funder that funds specific youth with specific criteria and I need to identify who those youths are that are going to be paid with that money promised to the Collaborative or to the program.” This is an example of how funding requirements restrict the Collaborative staff members. Funding received cannot always be used for any area of the SYEI that is in need. It has to go to a specific part of the program, such as fifth-day activities or to pay the salaries of specific students that fit

the criteria left by the funder. This makes it difficult to make a budget because certain funds can only be used for specific aspects of the program. This forces the Chelsea Collaborative to account for all their spending and makes sure that the money is spent sensibly.

Funding requirements also provide restrictions to the Collaborative staff members about the trainings students must go through to participate in the program and that students have to meet certain requirements to be eligible to be part of the program. A Chelsea Collaborative staff member said, “The main funder requires training, 20 hours of training in career readiness focused on success, through YouthWorks and the youth need to be under the criteria, the risk factors. They have to follow under these guidelines that they provide and need to be income eligible.” This is an example of how the Collaborative have to meet specific requirements to receive funding and this can be very restricting. Staff members cannot hire any student that applies and if a student is accepted to the program, he or she needs to go through a 20-hour training, where the details of training, specified by the funder, are overly restrictive.

The Collaborative needs to meet certain requirements before being able to receive their funding and money needed to be spent in an appropriate manner that is approved by funding organizations. In addition to this, the process to receive funding restricted the Collaborative in terms of paperwork. The funding requirements requires a great amount of paperwork to be completed, which can become a difficult challenge, especially when preparing for the SYEI program to begin. Another challenge was that the Collaborative goes through the tiresome funding process and sometimes they do not receive enough funding to be able to continue the plans they had for the SYEI.

Finding #15: Receiving funding is very unpredictable. It is not known when funding will become available and the exact amount being funded is unknown until the money is given to the Collaborative.

According to a staff member, “The first challenge is not knowing how much we have until it’s so close to the beginning of the program.” The Collaborative staff members usually have no idea of how much money they will be receiving from funders until the program is almost beginning. Not knowing makes it very difficult to plan the SYEI program for the summer, especially because it makes it difficult for staff members to put together an accurate budget. This also makes it difficult to know how many students can be hired since the number of students hired is directly influenced by the amount of funding that is received. “It’s very challenging to plan a program for 7 weeks during the summer if you don’t know in reality how many youth you are truly hiring. Am I truly hiring 125 or am I truly hiring 175?” Not knowing how much money will be received makes it very difficult to organize the program, especially since it is not known how many students can be hired.

Lastly, another difficulty that funding brings to the staff is that funding may be received by the Collaborative after the program has already started. This is a big challenge because some students may drop out of the program and cause the

Collaborative to not meet a funders standards leading to the Collaborative losing out on money they were promised to receive.

4.3.3 SYEI Program in General

The SYEI is a program that makes a great impact on the youths that participate and the Chelsea community.

Finding #16: The SYEI is a very valuable program for the youth, the Chelsea community, and for the Chelsea Collaborative as well.

According to a staff member,

“It’s valuable because it’s helping other organizations in the community, it’s helping families with youth, keeping them off the streets and preventing them from getting into some type of trouble. Also, it is helping the Collaborative in creating partnerships with other organizations and the community, and that alone is valuable.”

The program is valuable for the work it does in keeping youth off the streets. The SYEI program provides activities and jobs to keep students involved in the community while providing them with something to do during the summer, which helps the youth stay out of trouble. This program also created many partnerships between the Chelsea Collaborative, other organizations, and the community. Also, the SYEI provided youth with a great opportunity to grow as people. The program is valuable because it not only provides youths with jobs that pay, but it also teaches youths life skills that they can take away from the program and use in the future. The positives about the SYEI listed by the staff members include:

- A. Teach youths about responsibility.
- B. Provides youths with the confidence they need to take on life.
- C. Helps prevent gang affiliation and youth violence.
- D. Teaches youths job skills they can use in the future.
- E. Helps youths develop a sense of who they are.
- F. Helps improve status of a youth’s life.

In addition to these positive outcomes, staff members also said the SYEI was very good for local businesses in the Chelsea Community, so the program not only brings benefits to the youths, but it also brings benefits to the worksites as well.

Finding #17: SYEI is very good for local businesses in the Chelsea Community.

According to a member of the Collaborative staff and steering committee,

“It is very valuable for the employer because it is a way of refreshing the office when you have younger people that might be asking questions and you have to explain to them what you are doing. It is very valuable to the city because it is a way of developing some cohesion. It is very valuable for different generations of people living in the city because they interact at a different level.”

What is said in this quote demonstrates how the SYEI is positive for local businesses the Chelsea community as well. It allows for youth to integrate themselves with business leaders, allowing for youth to bring a new perspective of work to the businesses. In addition, it creates a way of somehow uniting the community, businesses, and youth, which make up the Chelsea Community.

Lastly, the SYEI program has a great impact to the Chelsea community as a whole, but it is not an easy task to plan, organize, and administer this program. It presents a big challenge for everyone at the Collaborative.

Finding #18: It is a challenge to organize and administer the SYEI program throughout the summer.

According to a CC staff member and director of the SYEI,

“The SYEI, I call it the monster of the Collaborative, because it truly is a monster... We do have the staff get engaged helping us with trainings, and they do interviews and some of the process, but the summer youth employment program is like a branch on it’s own of the Collaborative as a whole.”

According to a staff member, “We have other commitments as community organizers and commitments to the Collaborative as an organization as a whole, so I cannot just simply do this.” It is really difficult to organize the program for the entire summer and the amount of paperwork that needs to be filled out by staff and youths is extremely large. Since the Collaborative has 7 other programs they administer, it is difficult to focus all energy into just the SYEI program. Also, only one director focusing all their energy into the SYEI program isn’t enough. A collaborative member and SYEI director stated, “I hope that we can have the opportunity of hiring somebody who can support me in the program... I think this should be done full time by two people.” The program needs to have at least two staff members that are 100% focused on administering the program. The program is too much for just one main staff member to handle.

4.4 Findings Summary

After analyzing the findings we gathered, we summarized the strengths and weaknesses of the program, as indicated by the interview results.

Strengths:

1. The SYEI is an important and highly valued program in the community that its participants want to be involved in and help improve.
2. The program provides good training for the youth. The youth often report positive changes such as being more open and having better job and financial skills after the program.

Weaknesses:

1. Having to plan around funding impacts the delivery of the program. The variable components such as receiving funding right before the program begins and paperwork required for funding and tax purposes make the program hectic.
2. Communication with worksites could be increased.

3. Youth enjoy the program but have mixed opinions on the wide range of fifth-day activities.

The interview responses indicate that the program is successful overall, but could be improved upon. These findings were generated from our participating worksites, youth and staff members that responded to our requests for interviews and focus groups so response bias must be taken into consideration with our findings. There may be many factors that could explain the strengths or weaknesses of the program that we did not encounter. However, our limited findings were still based on interviews we conducted. They provide insight into the program especially with youth, worksite and staff that are responsive to requests for interviews and willing to spend time to improve the program. Making changes to the program based on these findings would help a portion of each group that would likely be willing to provide future feedback. Our recommendations in the next chapter sought to address the weaknesses of the program in meaningful and practical ways.

5. Recommendations and Conclusions

Through accomplishing our goal of evaluating the Summer Youth Employment program we have concluded that the Chelsea Collaborative is a very well liked organization because of the work it has been doing in the community. The impact they have manifests through the engagement and confidence youth have after the program. Staff, worksites and the youth themselves have all proclaimed that the youth leave the program feeling more empowered and prepared for the job market. Youth enjoy earning money over the summer and being more engaged in their community. They understand their living situation in Chelsea and are very interested in what options are available for them in the future in terms of education and career wise. Besides feeling more empowered, many reported themselves being more outspoken and more comfortable with the employment process. Worksites enjoy the free labor the Collaborative provides and having the opportunity to give back to the community. By providing a site for youth to work at, it helps keep them off the streets and they report that the youth gain valuable work experience and social awareness. Staff members that run the program know the importance of the program as well. The Collaborative employees try to employ as many youth as possible and know that they are helping reduce the at-risk youth problem in Chelsea.

However, because of the limitations due to the size of the staff, and funding requirements the program has issues with organization and preparation for the worksites. Youth feel that the organization is unorganized at times. They also reported not liking some of the fifth-day activities because they were not engaging enough. Worksites were varied in their suggestions, but one opinion that was shared by multiple worksites was to reduce or simplify the paperwork required for hiring youth. Since the Collaborative requires paper documents for their organization, it was a hassle to keep track of and many worksites preferred having some if not all documents online. Staff members were primarily concerned with funding. Because the funders have such strict requirements and funds can come in a week before the program begins, the organization of the Collaborative suffers. This means that the hiring process is very volatile.

5.1 Recommendations

By taking into consideration our findings about the pros and cons from the different groups we propose the following list of recommendations, which are listed in table 3-3.

Table 3-3 Recommendations for the Chelsea Collaborative

Fifth-day Activity Recommendations	Make the fifth-day activities more engaging and hands-on for the youth. Have worksites work with the Chelsea Collaborative to plan fifth-day activities throughout the summer to reduce workload
	Ask youth for feedback on fifth-day activities before they are planned
Organizational Recommendations	Hire an assistant to help the SYEI director run the program including help with the organization of the overall program
	Reduce the paperwork required to manage youth by utilizing online paperwork
Worksite Recommendations	Provide worksites with an opportunity to participate in the student orientation/20 hour training, so that they can meet the youth they will be supervising and be able to provide direct training tailored to the work the youth will be doing.
	Invite worksites to the end of the year debrief meeting to get direct feedback from worksite supervisors

5.1.1 Fifth-Day Activity Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Make the fifth-day activities more engaging and hands-on for the youth. Have worksites work with the Chelsea Collaborative to plan fifth-day activities throughout the summer to reduce workload.

This recommendation comes as a result of finding #2 in which we uncovered that youth are more drawn to hands on activities and lecture-style activities lose their attention. Over the course of the interview process, we repeatedly received feedback that some of the fifth-day activities are dull and students are not engaged in some of them. Students said they felt like they were being “talked at” rather than being involved in the activities and that such activities were “boring”. Accordingly, one of our recommendations to improve the fifth-day activities was to make sure these activities were all engaging, while retaining their educational content. Every enrichment program that Chelsea Collaborative puts on for the youth has some kind of educational value they have deemed as important to these developing youth. If the students are not engaged in the activities they are missing out on information that is important to their futures.

The time spent organizing and hosting these activities is valuable to the Collaborative. If they were not preoccupied by the planning of these events there would be more time to focus on other parts of the program and organization. Rather than letting this time go to waste on an activity that students will not even pay attention to, the program should be making sure these activities are as productive as possible. Youth unanimously said that more hands on activities would engage them more and allow them to learn valuable lessons.

Recommendation #2: Ask youth for feedback on fifth-day activities before they are planned.

We asked many youth for their feedback on the effectiveness of fifth-day activities as a part of the SYEI. They provided in depth explanations of why certain activities were effective and why other ones were “boring” and therefore ineffective. If this process of gathering youth opinions of fifth-day activities had occurred prior to their planning, the Collaborative would have been much more informed to what students want to learn about different topics, what will keep them engaged and what to avoid when planning these events.

We recommend that the Chelsea Collaborative consult youth on the plans of fifth-day activities before they are finalized this year. This would be a very useful tool that would be simple for Chelsea Collaborative. Youth are always coming through the collaborative and there are even six current or former SYEI members working for the Collaborative. These students could give great feedback and ideas for fifth-day activities and it requires no more than a five minute conversation from the Collaborative. Gathering the opinions of people who are in or who have been through the program would be extremely valuable in deciding what can make these events useful and educational for the youth.

5.1.2 Organizational Skills

As a result of our interviews with the Chelsea Collaborative staff members and the worksite supervisors, we realized that some organizational changes in the program would be a great benefit. Based on our findings about the organization of the program organization, we developed the following recommendations.

Recommendation #3: Hire an assistant to help the SYEI director run the program including help with the organization of the overall program.

According to Finding #18, staff members spoke about how much of a challenge it was to organize and administer the SYEI program over the summer. The director of the SYEI even referred to the program as being the “monster” of the program due to how big of a task it is. Administering the SYEI is substantial challenge that the Chelsea Collaborative faces every year. They already have so many commitments and programs going on, which limits how much they can do to prepare and administer the SYEI. The SYEI director said that she hopes to have the opportunity to of hiring somebody who can provide her with support and that this program should be done by two people working full time. Having an assistant to aid the SYEI director will help take a load off of the

director and will make the program more manageable and easier to deal with. Two people working full time on a program are more efficient than solely one.

Recommendation #4: Reduce the paperwork required to manage youth by utilizing online paperwork.

Based on our findings from our interviews with the CC staff members and worksite supervisors, we recommend that the Collaborative try to implement the use of online paperwork. Both, the CC staff members and the worksite supervisors, provided us with feedback about the amount of physical paperwork the SYEI program required. Participation in the program creates a great amount of paperwork for worksites to fill out, whereas funding requirements from the government create a great amount of paperwork for the Chelsea Collaborative staff members. Since the Chelsea Collaborative has various other programs going on during the time of the SYEI, filling out paperwork becomes an even bigger challenge. A good way to respond to this amount of paperwork is by utilizing online paperwork services. Having online paperwork will make it easier to keep track of documentation, while also making it easier to complete all the paperwork needed. It is also easier to get access to online paperwork. This may not be a recommendation that can be implemented short term, but it is definitely a recommendation that could save the Collaborative a lot of time in the future.

5.1.3 Cooperating with Worksites

We developed a set of recommendations that the Collaborative should be more involved with the worksites and integrate them more into their structure and program. The recommendations in this section are aimed towards being more receptive to worksite feedback and letting them have more say in the training of the youth before they show up at the worksite.

Recommendation #5: In order to get worksites more involved we suggest the Collaborative invite worksites to take part in the mandatory 20-hour training that the Collaborative has to run.

This recommendation was created after reviewing finding #10 that worksites wanted more technical training for the youth and that some worksites would be willing to send a staff member to talk about their work experience. This could help alleviate some of the funding requirements while also making an easier transition between youth with no work experience and their job sites. Worksites could be provided with a list of requirements that the Collaborative would have covered otherwise, and create their own presentations that could fulfill what they feel the youth should learn and anything required by funders. This recommendation would help worksites, the staff and the youth combined by creating a better experience without adding much to the Collaborative's workload.

Recommendation #6: Create a more open dialogue with worksites the Collaborative are having trouble with.

Recommendation #6 was created from feedback on an earlier draft of recommendations. The worksites had recommendations that Sylvia felt were not realistic and that the worksites did not truly understand how the organization was run. For example, the Collaborative often do not know how many youth they can afford hire because of the timing funding comes in. A dialogue could be inviting them to come to the end of the year debrief to get feedback, going to lunch one day or even sending a brief memo on the difficulties the Collaborative has to the worksites. By completing this recommendation the worksites and staff would benefit from more communication between the two. More understanding from both parties would not result in the complaints being fixed, but an understanding that the program is operating as well as it can, given the situation.

5.2 Conclusion

To provide further support to help the Chelsea Collaborative maintain and improve the Summer Youth Employment Initiative we produced three deliverables for the Collaborative. First, our assessment framework, which consists of the metrics we constructed and the data analysis tool. It is being provided to the Collaborative for future use their self-assessment process or to review our process themselves. Second, our content analysis done on information gathered from past participants, Collaborative staff members, and worksites will be provided as well so the Collaborative can form their own opinions in their annual self-assessment. Third, the data-analysis tool affords them the opportunity to look at opinions and implement changes to the program on their own, but it will also be necessary to track the progress of any changes made as a result of this project. Without providing them this tool to follow up on any recommendations we have made, it would have been hard for them to know if their program really did improve and become more ‘successful’ as a result of our recommended changes. The video we delivered provides a short overview of Chelsea and how the employment program has had a tangible effect on the community from the perspective of past youth and the worksites. The video can be used to show the impact the program has on the community and can be shown for fundraising purposes.

In conclusion, the Chelsea Collaborative created the Summer Youth Employment Initiative in efforts to reduce violence among Chelsea at-risk youth by providing employment, mentoring and character building activities to young people aged 14-19 years old. “At-risk Youth,” being young people whose background places them at risk of future offending or victimization due to their environmental, social and family conditions (Urban Youth At Risk, 2015), can really benefit from the SYEI as it gives youth a platform to grow from. The SYEI has had a big impact on the lives of many youth and we wanted to understand how impactful this program truly was for the community and point out any areas with room for improvement. The goal of our project was to assess the Chelsea Collaborative’s Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI) and provide a set of recommendations based on our findings that could be used to improve their program.

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7. Appendices

7.1. Consent Agreement Form



The University of
Science and Technology.
And Life..

Informed Consent Agreement for Participation in a Research Study

Investigators: Gordon Gao, Isaac Coelho, Alex Grammenos

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Title of Research Study: Evaluating the Chelsea Collaborative Summer Youth Employment Initiative Program

Sponsor: Chelsea Collaborative

Introduction:

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you agree, however, you must be fully informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and any benefits, risks or discomfort that you may experience as a result of your participation. This form presents information about the study so that you may make a fully informed decision regarding your participation.

Purpose of the study:

In this study, we will investigate the perspectives of youth participants, employers, and staff, about the effectiveness of the Summer Youth Employment Initiative Program. This information will be used to develop an assessment framework, including metrics and methods for gathering data, that can be used to assess the employment program.

Procedures to be followed:

You will be seated and asked questions in an interview or focus group format. Questions will be related to personal experiences and different perspectives about the Summer Youth Employment Initiative Program.

Risks to study participants:

There will be minimal to no risk towards study participants. We will be mostly asking about experiences people have had through the program and what is most important about the program. Some may be uncomfortable sharing some of their experiences in the program.

Benefits to research participants and others:

There is no direct benefit to you, but by participating you will be providing us with the information needed to provide recommendations to improve the Summer Youth Employment Initiative program. By improving the program, society can expect a decrease in youth violence and more employment opportunities for youth.

Record keeping and confidentiality:

Records of your participation in this study will be held confidential so far as permitted by law. However, the study investigators, the sponsor or its designee and, under certain circumstances, the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Institutional Review Board (WPI IRB) will be able to inspect and have access to confidential data that identify you by name. Any publication or presentation of the data will not identify you.

Compensation or treatment in the event of injury:

In the unlikely event of physical injury resulting from participation in the research, you understand that medical treatment may be available from WPI, including first aid emergency care, and that your insurance carrier may be billed for the cost of such treatment. No compensation for medical care can be provided by WPI. You further understand that making such medical care available, or providing it, does not imply that such injury is the fault of the investigators. You do not give up any of your legal rights by signing this statement.

Cost/Payment:

Subjects will not be paid for participating.

For more information about this research or about the rights of research participants, or in case of research-related injury, contact:

The investigators, Gordon Gao, Isaac Coelho, and Alex Grammenos (Email: BOS15CC@wpi.edu). You may also contact the chair of the WPI Institutional Review Board (Prof. Kent Rissmiller, Tel. 508-831-5019, Email: kjr@wpi.edu) or WPI's University Compliance Officer (Michael J. Curley, Tel. 508-831-6919).

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will not result in any penalty to you or any loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. You may decide to stop participating in the research at any time without penalty or loss of other benefits. The project investigators retain the right to cancel or postpone the experimental procedures at any time they see fit. Data obtained in this experiment will become the property of the investigators and WPI. If you withdraw from the study, data already collected from you will remain in the study.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have been informed about and consent to be a participant in the study described above. Make sure that your questions are answered to your satisfaction before signing. You are entitled to retain a copy of this consent agreement.

Study Participant Signature

Date: _____

Study Participant Name (Please print)

Signature of Person who explained this study

Date: _____

7.2. Examples of Interview Question Guides

Basic Introduction Questions (Opener Questions to build rapport and enter a conversation with the interviewee)

1. What is your name?
 2. When was your last participation with Chelsea Collaborative's Summer Youth Employment program?
 3. How long have you been participating with the program?
 4. How did you find out about the organization?
-
1. Experience with Chelsea Collaborative (including fifth day activities)
 - a. **Basic - (Information on the experience the Chelsea Collab provides. How it impacted their lives and useful experiences to show that the Collab is providing a meaningful impact on their lives.)**
 - i. Why did you decide you wanted to apply to the program?
 - ii. How many times did you apply before you were accepted into the program?
 - iii. Have you had a job outside the CC before? If so how were the experiences different between your jobs outside the CC compared to those in your job for CC?
 - iv. What was your favorite part of the program?
 - v. Could you give an example of something you learned while participating in CC's SYEI?
 - vi. Would you like to have a program like the SYEI during the school year? **(Areas it can be improved from participants perspective)**
 - vii. In what areas do you feel CC can improve their program?
 - b. **Fifth day activities (educational) (Ways to improve the cultural aspect of the program and not just the employment portion. How to engage the community and to keep the kids coming back.)**
 - i. The Chelsea Collaborative takes pride in being an "Enrichment program" rather than just a job. Do you think they lived up to that statement?
 - ii. What was your favorite fifth day activity? Why?
 - iii. What did you think the most useful fifth day activity was that you will use in your future?
 - iv. Do you have any ideas for new fifth day activities?
 - v. Have you found the info provided by SYEI to be useful or not?
 - vi. Would you attend the CC educational programs if they weren't mandatory

2. Experience at the workplace (**Statistical information that can be looked at it to see if there are ways to improve the job experience. An example could be matching jobs based on commute time?**)
 - a. What was it like for you to work there?
 - b. How long was your commute to work?
 - c. How many hours did you find yourself working daily? Weekly?
 - d. Did you enjoy the experience you got from your summer job?
 - e. Did you enjoy working with your supervisor from the worksite?
 - f. Is there any intangible things you think you gained from this experience? Confidence? Work-experience?

3. How CC is changing people's lives after/during the program? (**Assessing the effectiveness of the program. More questions on what impact Chelsea Collab has had on the children. Looking for ways to link the work Chelsea Collaborative has done to success. We hope to provide tangible proof that the organization is working**)
 - a. Has SYEI helped you get any opportunities following your participation? Skills? Connections?
 - b. How have your SYEI experiences or the skills you developed as part of the program helped you do other things? Have they? Why do you think so (or not)?
 - c. Could you see yourself working in the same field in your future?
 - d. How do you think you will use your experience in SYEI later in your life or for future employment?

Wrap up

1. Do you do any other extracurricular activities? if so, Were the hours flexible enough to fit other activities into your schedule?
2. If you could, would re-apply and return to the SYEI?
3. Would you recommend this program to a friend
4. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you would like to mention?

- GET TANGIBLE SUCCESS STORIES (assessment and video)
- what are they currently doing (if not currently in program)?
- did their life improve after going through the SYEI?

Worksite Questions Interview

1. Would you stop partaking in the Summer Youth Employment program if you had to pay the children's salaries yourselves? **(Looking for possible area of improvement. Maybe find some businesses that are willing to pay the salaries)**
2. Why do you choose to participate in the Summer Youth Employment program? **(Reflecting on why the company was interested in participating in the first place. Use that to market to other donators or companies)**
3. Do you assign a mentor for the kids that are assigned to your business? **(Looking for areas to improve the experience. Do the kids get the most out of the program?)**
4. What affect does employing the kids from the Summer Youth Employment Program have on your business?
5. How valuable is this program to you? What would you like to see changed? **(the worksite's expectations and perspective)**
6. Do you believe that your participation in the program helps the community? **(Trying to find the impact on the community in a broader sense.)**
7. Can you describe a daily routine for a Chelsea Collaborative employee at your place of work?

Parents Questions

1. Have you been a part of any other youth service program? If so how did it compare to Chelsea Collaborative? **(Looking for areas of improvement based on parent's experiences)**
2. Do you feel that the Chelsea Collaborative tries to actively engage you in its program? **(Could be an area to improve on. Measuring how active Collaborative is versus what Sylvia says they do)**
3. What impact do you feel the Chelsea Collaborative is having on your child and has had on your situation? **(Looking for effects of CC on the community. Positive or negative)**
4. What problems have come up from having your child take part in this program? **(Looking for areas Chelsea Collaborative could maybe help in)**

7.3 Content Analysis from Interviews

7.3.1 Youth Interview Data

I. Fifth Day Activity event

A. Positives

1. Student enjoyed fifth day activities **(12 students)**
 - a) Enjoyed how he/she was able to come together with all the youth from the program.
2. Student believes the Collaborative lived up to the statement of being an Enrichment program
3. Youth Summit/Career and College Fair **(10 students)**
 - a) Was nice to see options for after school. for example how a good GPA means that they will give you a certain amount of financial aid.
 - b) Sparked interest in careers that may not require college education (such as EMTs)
 - c) Enjoyed learning more about career choices
4. Metro Credit Union **(2 students)**
 - a) Enjoyed learning more about saving money in a bank since its very new to workers with little experience with their own money.
5. Interview Skills day
 - a) Learned a lot of skills about how to do well in an interview and how to present yourself. Could see students improving in interview skills after this fifth day activity
6. Communication skills learned from the Collaborative. **(2 students)**
 - a) Learned how to communicate more effectively at the Collaborative
7. Multicultural Night **(6 students)**
8. Enjoyed annual trip to Water Country **(7 students)**

B. Negatives

1. Drug Info sessions **(9 students)**
 - a) Felt they lacked enough information to be useful. Wanted more facts about how drugs affect the brain
 - b) Not hands on
2. Fifth day activity involving performances [event name not remembered] **(7 students)**
3. Lecture type fifth day activities. **(1 student)**
 - a) Really boring
 - b) Sitting in an auditorium and having someone speak to them for 1 to 2 hours.

4. Fifth day activities (such as career/college fair) not catered to the specific student population **(2 students)**
 - a) Student recommended giving a survey at the beginning of each year for events like this, so they would know exactly who the youth looked forward to seeing
5. Students most likely would not attend if it wasn't mandatory. **(1 student)**
6. Multicultural night needs some help **(2 students)**
 - a) This year it was just finishing up paperwork, eating food and a few performances. Could have more to offer/be more interactive?

C. Student Ideas

1. More Field trips **(8 students)**
2. Hands on Nursing **(2 students)**
3. More training done by professionals **(8 students)**

II. Worksites

A. Positives

1. Jobs being located around Chelsea so they are close to home **(10 students)**
 - a) Safer for parents knowing their kids are in the area.
 - b) Very easy to get to worksites for kids.
2. Parents liked that their children had jobs **(8 students)**
3. Working for ECO
 - a) Enjoyed working for ECO **(3 students)**
 - b) Student would consider continuing to work as a community organizer in the future through college, but probably not long term/could see themselves working in the same area in future **(2 students)**
 - c) More open to getting involved in different activities at school now
 - (1) students from the high school came in to explain to the SYEI students what their roles were in the school and that prompted her to get involved
4. Being more engaged in the community **(3 students)**
 - a) liked getting to know what was happening in the community, which she did not have before this opportunity. Learning about the community as well.
5. Enjoyed their job **(14 students)**
 - a) Enjoyed earning money

- (1) Enjoyed being able to buy things with their own money
- b) Enjoyed working with their supervisor
- c) Helped pay bills at home **(3 students)**
- 6. Learned how to take initiative through job experiences **(3 students)**
- 7. Became more outspoken through job experiences **(8 students)**

B. Negatives

- 1. Youth not knowing about their jobs beforehand **(1 student)**
 - a) Might end up with a “bad” or “unenjoyable” job
- 2. Did not enjoy job: had to clean up trash everyday **(1 student)**

III. SYEI in general

A. Positives

- 1. Working in the SYEI (ECO) has taught the student that he does have a voice and that he can enforce his ideas and advocate for others. Learned that this all can truly lead to a change.
- 2. Student has become more open and less shy due to their job. **(9 students)**
 - a) Student thinks that in other jobs he will be able to work well with others and not be shy about collaborating with unknown colleagues.
 - b) At first was really shy but opened up after being part of the program. Had to talk more at her job as a receptionist and that translated after the program as well.
- 3. Students enjoyed making their own money **(10 students)**
- 4. Students enjoyed learning new skills **(10 student)**
 - a) students saw this as a strong benefit of the program
 - (1) learned how to work together in teams **(8 students)**
 - (2) learned how to take care of children **(2 students)**
- 5. Students felt more prepared after completing the program **(8 students)**
 - a) Learned several skills such as making resumes, filling out timesheets, and knowing how to run a bank account.
 - b) Communication skills improved
- 6. Enjoyed meeting new people during the SYEI **(6 students)**
- 7. Program is Organized **(6 students)**
- 8. Learned more about themselves and the type of worker they are. For example how well they can visualize things..

B. Negatives

1. Disliked Mandatory portfolios (**2 students**)
 - a) Students disliked portfolios but completed them since they were mandatory before getting paycheck
2. Some youth do not want to see people from their high school that may also be applying. (**1 Student**)
 - a) Some kids are antisocial?
3. Student had issues with being paid (**1 student**)
 - a) Didn't get paid for all hours/confusion about payments
4. Program is Disorganized (**7 students**)

IV. Other Statements

A. Suggestions

1. Having a similar program over the school year would be a good thing/offer the program outside of the summer (**13 students**)
2. An expansion into Boston for summer jobs (**8 students**)
3. Switch up the annual trip to water country?
4. Jobs students would like
 - a) Jobs involving police force or hospitals
 - b) Domino's (food places). Would like to gain experience about working with food

B. Improvements Students would like to see

1. Make more money (**7 students**)
2. More work hours (**7 students**)

C. Positives

1. Would recommend program to a friend (**11 students**)
2. Would apply again (**9 students**)

Other statements

- Boring jobs?
- When hiring the youth, sometimes people get in who don't deserve it
 - Understand it's a lottery and you can't interview everyone but something less random maybe.
- Keeping mentor - youth relationships the same. (**1 student**)
 - No issues with the mentors. When asked if mentors should engage the youth more about their careers and how to get into it, responded that only if it's handled correctly. Not mentioning not needing to go to college for example or assuming anything about the youth's situation.

7.3.2 Worksites Interview Data

Fifth Day Activities

Positive

1.

Negative

1. Would be nice to have an email blast about the Friday activities. Some details and information to ask the kids and get them engaged at the worksite and the organization. Combine both experiences. **(1 worksite)**

Youth working at the worksites

1. Youth did a lot of clerical work. **(3 Worksite)**
 - a. Filing, shredding, data entry, faxing...
2. Youth worked in a leadership type role. **(1 worksite)**
 - a. Taking ownership of their role and acting as sort of project manager.
3. Worksites try to find something the kids enjoy doing **(4 worksite)**
 - a. Worksites try to accommodate what the kids are comfortable doing.
4. Youth was extremely bright and picked up on skills quickly **(3 Worksite)**
5. Youth hired took the jobs seriously and were into their jobs. Enthusiastic about it and were great candidates to hire. **(3 worksites)**
 - a. Worksite looked to hire local kids based on funding restrictions and great for the community.

Negatives

1. Youth have to learn new skills on the job. **(3 Worksite)**
 - b. Using scanner, office equipment use.
 - c. Being a leader and taking initiative. Taking the lead to ensure work is completed.
2. Youth was bored at the worksite. **(2 worksite)**

Orientation

Positive

1. Very helpful, informational. Explained expectations well and what students have gone over. Basic things like dress code, showing up on time, calling ahead have been addressed before the program has begun. **(2 Worksite)**

Negative

General

1. Opportunity to give back to the community. **(4 work site)**
2. The business gets a benefit from hiring through the program **(5 worksite)**
 - a. Background check, interview process done through Chelsea Collaborative.
 - b. Improves quality of students they receive and can hire from.

- c. Get a chance to see the youth's skills and deciding to hire them year-round then. **(x3)**
- 3. Worksite might be available to help run a fifth day activity **(3 worksite)**
 - a. available to send a person to talk about jobs and talking about daily work lives and how to get into that career
- 4. Youth were paired with themselves sometimes instead of being with a mentor. **(2 worksite)**
- 5. One mentor per youth all the time. **(3 worksites)**

Negative

- 1. Did not adequately train them for dealing with younger kids and realizing what is appropriate **(2 worksite)** .
 - a. Worksite did not expect knowledge of how to work. Every aspect such as timesheets and dress code are explained to them.

Suggestions

- 1. Sylvia (Director) is sole point of contact. Does a lot during the program. **(1 worksite)**
 - a. 1 - 2 delay for a follow up and she seems overwhelmed.
- 2. Training for kids. More professional training so they are better prepared at their worksites. **(4 worksite)**
 - a. Example doing some IT training for job sites that might require that for their work.
 - b. Provide more guidance like employers or college students to come talk to the kids. Get them more interested and provide guidance on what they want to do in the future.
 - c. Training on talking to people in public and engage people.
- 3. Some worksites could use more information on which youth they are getting. **(1 worksite)**
 - a. Need to do background checks and other forms and it gets very rushed.
 - b. Worksites willing to host orientation and training themselves before the work begins on the specific worksite.
- 4. Paperwork needs to be better. Shorter, online. The paperwork on their progress can come earlier. Timesheets for example could be online. **(2 worksite)**
 - a. Other organizations have contact with online time sheets already.

7.3.3 Staff Interview Data

I. The Program in general

Positives

1. Valuable because it gives life skills
 - a. Makes kids take responsibility (x4)
 - b. Gives confidence (x4)
 - c. Helps prevent gangs. (x3)
 - d. Jobs skills (x2)
 - e. Helps them develop their own sense of themselves.(x2)
 - f. Really helps out with the children's lives.
2. Good for local businesses. (x1)

Negatives

1. Too many restrictions based on funding. (x1)
2. Paper work and organization. Is a two person full time position to run the SYEI.(x1)
3. hard to run in tandem with the rest of the activities Chelsea Collaborative is trying to organize at the same time.

II. Fifth day activities

Positives

1. Provide good enrichment and training for the kids. (x1)

Negatives

1. Hard to plan sometimes. Need more help organizing the fifth day activities (x1)
2. More training on job skills. Need to learn how to interact with people, dress code, and then the chance to apply what they learned. (x1)
3. Restrictions on fifth day activities? Tried to plan something concerning work hours but did not fit into the restrictions (x1)

III. Funding

Positives

1. Chelsea Collaborative does well with what they have. (x2)

Negatives

1. Restrictions on what the Collaborative can do. For specific youth with specific youth factors. (x2)
 - a. Need to use money raised on a year by year basis over the summer mainly. No money outside the summer.
2. Creates a lot of paperwork and overhead (x2)
3. Not enough funding (x3)

4. Funding comes after the program has started. Some kids may drop out and cause the collaborative to not meet the funders standards so the Collaborative loses out on promised money. **(x1)**
5. Not knowing how much funding is available until close to the program. Hard to play unexpectedly. **(x1)**

Suggestions

1. Need to find more money with less restrictions. **(x3)**
2. Hire another person to manage the SYEI. **(x1)**
3. better planning for the fifth day activities. Be more productive and strategically. **(x1)**
4. Better training with kids. Technical skills that will allow them to talk more about the program about what it gives to them. **(x1)**
5. How to deliver training effectively with a revolving program. **(x1)**

7.4. Example of Video Story Board

Chelsea Collaborative Video Guidelines

Length: 3 – 4 Minutes (180 – 240 seconds)

Development time: ~2.5 weeks

Purpose: Promote message of Chelsea Collaborative and could be used for fundraising.

Groups interacting with: Youth participants of Summer Employment Program, Staff members of

Chelsea Collaborative (Project sponsor), and Worksites that youth work at over the summer.

Message we want to convey: Chelsea Collaborative helping at-risk youth by giving them jobs in the community.

Music playing: ????

Opening shot

Scene 1: A shot of Chelsea (From somewhere high to showcase the city?) ~ 10 seconds.
Sound effects: City sounds

Straight Cut to scene 2.

Scene 2: One shot from Chelsea panning over the Tobin bridge and focusing on it from the foreground. ~ 10 seconds.

Sound effects: City sounds

Voice over: Chelsea is a small vibrant community in the Greater Boston area located just over the Tobin Bridge from the main city.

Straight cut to scene

Scene : Panning shot of Chelsea parks. ~ 5 seconds

Sound effects: City sounds. People talking if possible.

Straight cut to scene 3.

Scene 3: Different shot of Chelsea City from street view. Shows people walking around ~ 15 seconds.

Sound effects: City sounds

Voice over: The city has an estimated population of 35,080 people within its 1.8 square miles and there is a deep Hispanic culture rooted in the community.

Straight cut to scene 4.

Scene 4: Different shot of Chelsea from the streets. ~10 seconds.

Voice over: Unfortunately Chelsea is an impoverished community facing problems such as drug abuse, and high crime rates.

Straight cut to scene 5

Scene 5: Footage walking through Chelsea streets to the front site of Chelsea Collaborative. Go inside and show kids in there? (Eco group just sitting at a table?). ~10 seconds

Voice over: At the heart of the city is the Chelsea Collaborative. An organization that works to help the citizens of the Chelsea community through

Straight cut to scene

Scene : Footage of community gardens, Creekside commons and Kaboom parks. ~ 7 seconds

Voice over: Green initiatives such as the planning and construction of city parks.

Straight cut to scene

Scene : Images of the tenants right protests and workers rights rallies. ~ 8 seconds

Voice over: Chelsea Collaborative also works intensely to fight for the rights of people in the city to ensure everybody gets fair treatment even when they would not normally be able to afford it.

Straight cut to scene

Scene : Video of youth walking or doing stuff (Highschool? Can we film there?) ~ 10 seconds

Voice over: One of Chelsea Collaborative's most important initiatives is the Summer Youth Employment Initiative.

Straight cut to scene

Scene : Cut to youth shots again. Doing basic activities. ~ 10 seconds

Sound Effects: Child's laughter/ talking?

Voice over: The Summer Youth Employment Initiative helps keep youth safe and off the streets by giving them jobs over the summer.

Straight cut to scene

Scene: Youth working ~ 10 seconds.

Voice over: The youth work in various worksites around Chelsea, giving back to the community and making some extra money to help their families.

105 seconds so far.

Straight cut to scene

Scene : First youth testimonial ~25 to 30 seconds

How the summer youth employment program has affected their lives. Family wise? Story they have to tell.

Sound: Youth recorded

Straight cut to scene

Scene : Second youth testimonial ~25 to 30 seconds.

How the summer youth employment program has affected their lives. Family wise? Story they have to tell.

Sound: Youth recorded

Straight cut to scene

Scene : Staff testimonial ~ 25 - 30 seconds

Why do they choose to work at Chelsea Collaborative. What it means to them to help the community.

Sound: Adult recorded.

Final Scene

Message want to convey? Discuss on how to end.

Input: 600 – 700 applicants. Money goes to getting more youth. Focus on how money goes to helping there.

Do not need to explicitly ask for donations.

Very successful stories. Add them in.

How do kids view their lives after the program??

7.5 Data Analysis Tool

This Excel Workbook is a Data Analysis tool for Chelsea Collaborative's SYEI survey data. The workbook consists of 11 sheets. There are ten sheets dedicated to ten years of survey data, with each year having its own sheet. The last sheet of the spreadsheet is a trend sheet that shows the trend line over ten years of each multiple-choice question assuming it stays the same year to year. If questions are changed the template can still be used for up to 19 multiple-choice questions. Accordingly, do not put a new question into one of the columns for the first 19 questions, as it will compromise the accuracy of the trend sheet. The trend sheet will only be useful if the same questions are used in consecutive years. For more information on changing questions see below.

Organization

This template makes use of the template previously used by Chelsea Collaborative, but with added graphs and visuals. There is space for the 33 questions on the current survey in each of the first ten sheets.

- Yearly Sheets

The yearly sheets look exactly the same as the old survey data spreadsheets. Data is input the same way and no further work is required. At the bottom of each sheet starting at row 180 the results will be compiled in the previous way, numerically by question. Additionally, each question's results will be represented in a bar graph for each individual question. For these bar graphs the x-axis is the response and the y-axis is the number of participants.

- Trend Sheet

The trend sheet is what will be most useful timely yearly evaluation. This sheet is meant to give a good idea of the way responses have been changing for each question. The goal of this being to provide Chelsea Collaborative with an indication of if changes they have implemented are successfully changing youth opinion in that area. The sheet is set up with questions as the y-axis (each question having the five possible responses). For example question 1 would have a column for answer 1, answer 2, etc. on the y-axis. The x-axis is the year. The data for this sheet is taken from the compiled results from each year and imported to the line graph.

Changing Questions

Changing any of the questions past question 19 is as simple as changing the name of the question, just as in any other spreadsheet, because it does not affect the graphs. For the first 19 questions, the process is still quite simple. After the question change, the only thing that has to be done is to change the name of the respective graph on that sheet. In regards to the trend sheet doing this will make the trend line for that question useless. We recommend keeping the first 19 questions because they are and always will be a good indication of the perspective of the program. Varying the other questions will have no effect and can address the more specific questions the Collaborative wants to ask.

7.6 Summative Assessment

Our team has a relatively relaxed work environment which we feel has contributed to what we see a strong team dynamic. Our daily process evolved over the course of the term as we noticed areas where our team could be more productive. For example, at the start of the project our delegation process was lacking and it showed in our productivity. We realized that we were not informed of the progress on other group members' tasks, which led to a lack of accountability at some points. To address this issue we started making better use of our commute time and used it as time for a daily team meeting to catch each other up on our work. This change was absolutely needed as we approached the heavy writing portion of the project. We also used this meeting time to address any concerns, talk about where we are in the project, what part of the project needs to be focused on primarily etc.

Over the course of the project, we can honestly say that there was never a major conflict. Whenever there was a disagreement, whether it be about writing, interviewing, or what time to meet in the morning, we were able to have a discussion where everyone was able to voice their opinions. This can really be attributed to our relaxed environment, we are all laid back by nature and that proved to really work well in a group dynamic. As a result of this we all feel like we take constructive criticism in a much better manner following our group experience.

One of major challenges was writing our report. The writing was split up amongst all members, but we did not allocate enough time peer editing and reading our work. Our writing showed a lack of unity and cohesion and often sections within the same chapter would repeat information or represent key topics in a different way. This could be attributed to the relaxed environment of our group. We needed to be more organized so we set up a plan to always have another person peer edit a written section and the same section cannot be edited by the same person that wrote it. This was important to follow because our writing was submitted at times without sufficient editing as seen in our methodology. We did not completely review our methodology process that had evolved from its creation in ID2050, until major comments were made by our project advisors. Only then, did we talk about it as a team and realized we ourselves had confusions on what our assessment framework really was. Only after defining the assessment framework did we feel confident in our paper and writing. One of the ways we could improve on this as a team was to sit down and go through it step by step, which we did once we realized that there was confusion with our assessment framework.

As a team our relaxed environment contributed to both our successes and shortcomings. It proved to be a positive for handling conflict, staying on the same page, and generally getting along and enjoying each other's company. In hindsight, some parts of our relaxed dynamic should have been more serious. We should have tightened up our process at some points and it may have allowed us to be more efficient in our work. Overall we are very happy with our team and all we have accomplished. We are proud to have been a part of the Chelsea Collaborative IQP team.