Engaging Somali Young Adults in Cedar-Riverside: Opportunities for Programming and Collaboration

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program (CRNRP) and the Somali American Education Program (SAEP), along with others in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood, have serious concerns about the neighborhood's young adult Somali population due to last year's spike in homicides (3), reports of gang activity, and the disappearances of young adults allegedly returning to Somalia. To address these concerns, CRNRP and SAEP partnered with our team of three graduate students from the Humphrey Institute Cedar-Humphrey Action for Neighborhood Collaborative Engagement (CHANCE) on a research project. We used a community-based research model to achieve the following goals:

- Assess the scope and capacity of current programs for Somali young adults;
- Determine areas where programming was missing or could be enhanced; and
- Engage Somali young adults in a co-creative dialogue to identify their needs and capacities and to make use of their knowledge and experiences in identifying solutions.

Our research included a review of the relevant literature, identification of promising practices, an analysis of current programming for young adults, identification of program funding opportunities, fourteen interviews with community stakeholders, and two learning circle conversations with youth. While we will focus on the Somali population within Cedar Riverside, we believe that our recommendations and program suggestions may be utilized to address the needs of Oromo and other East African immigrants and refugees living in the neighborhood.

Our literature review explored background characteristics related to positive and negative behaviors among young adults including immigrant and refugee status, exposure to violence and trauma, and parental educational attainment. We found that maintaining cultural identification, higher parental educational attainment, English proficiency, participation in structured programming, strength of peer and family relationships, and involvement with religious organizations all had a positive effect on being civically engaged, achieving higher levels of education, and obtaining employment. A lack of these characteristics along with exposure to violence and trauma as children leads to an increased likelihood of violent and deviant behavior as adults.

We also found several other factors that may be important in identifying effective programming:

- Identifying role models who can serve as mentors can support youth development and goal achievement.
- Maintaining cultural identity and breaking down stereotypes can motivate immigrants to engage in their communities.
- Education is crucial to improving economic status and quality of life, even more important than English proficiency or length of residence.

We also identified several promising practices and model programs:

- Our research shows that positive, inter-generational relationships prevent youth violence. Building links to trusted adults was highlighted as a promising practice in the Minneapolis Blueprint for Action addressing youth violence prevention. Nationally recognized Bolder Options addresses this issue through a strength-based intervention program that connects children with adults.

- Local nonprofit, Project for Pride in Living (PPL), works with Abbott Northwestern Hospital through their Train to Work program to train and employ neighborhood residents including three weeks of soft-skill training such as communication and workplace conduct instruction in addition to a week of job shadowing.

- Youth Build builds leadership skills, self-esteem, a sense of power, and a positive image by involving youth with program creation and governance.

- Hennepin County formed the African American Men Project (AAMP) which coordinates local efforts to improve the lives of young African American men who are at-risk.

- The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago are working on educational bridge programs for healthcare, manufacturing, and transportation careers. These programs prepare individuals for the post-secondary education and training needed to advance to career-path employment.

Consistent with findings from the literature, informational interview and learning circles participants told us collaboration among the many institutions and organizations in Cedar Riverside is very important. They felt that the high unemployment rate feeds neighborhood crime. Mentorships, improved job training programs, and college preparation programs were recommended to help Somali young adults achieve positive goals. All participants expressed concern over the ongoing perception of Cedar Riverside as an unsafe neighborhood and generally felt that this was not the case and an issue more fueled by negative media coverage.

From the sum of our research, we have formulated a key recommendation: *to build upon existing collaborative efforts and partnerships to formalize a community-wide initiative to address the needs of Somali young adults*. We outlined the following steps to building a community-wide collaboration: establish a central organization for coordination, convene key organizations, seek feedback from targeted and culturally appropriate populations, build consensus regarding expectations and structures, and establish priorities and objectives in the form of work plans prior to moving forward. Specifically, an organization such as our partner, the CRNRP, can begin this process by convening key organizations and institutions in the area including but not limited to SAEP, Dar Al-Hijrah, Trinity Lutheran Church, The Partnership (including the University of Minnesota, Augsburg College, Fairview Hospital, Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, the West Bank Business Association and CRNRP), Brian Coyle Community Center, Confederation of the Somali Community, the University of Minnesota Somali Student Association and the African Development Center. In addition to these organizations, we recommend that Somali young adults, parents and family members of young adults and imams be encouraged to participate and provide feedback to the greatest extent possible.

While we believe the community must identify their programming priorities, based on our research several opportunities seem worthy of consideration:

1) Institutions involved in The Partnership such as the University of Minnesota, Augsburg College and Fairview Hospital could team with a community organization like the African Development Center (ADC) to conduct short-term, employment readiness training. The Partnership could commit to giving hiring preference to program graduates.

2) University of Minnesota Extension could utilize its current work on a youth-driven public information campaign about negative and violent images in the media to engage Somali young adults in Cedar Riverside and break-down stereotypes and negative perceptions of their population due to recent violence and disappearances.

3) A bridge program helps in preparing underserved populations for post-secondary education and career-path employment. Local educational institutions and organizations in and around the Cedar Riverside neighborhood (the U of M, Augsburg, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, and the Somali American Education Program) could help in planning this program and in providing upwardly mobile jobs for the refugees.

4) The University of Minnesota Somali Student Association and other U of M student groups could serve as a powerful source of guidance and support for neighborhood Somali young adults that have the potential to be first-generation college students.

Our research has confirmed that there is considerable interest and a range of important resources available to address issues facing Somali young adults in Cedar Riverside. Research suggests that an effective first step would be to formalize collaboration among key neighborhood organizations and leaders to address this important and complex challenge. In addition, although the community must decide which programming opportunities to pursue we believe that there are several important partnerships in existence that can be formalized and strengthened and others with a great potential to be built. Given these findings, we believe that particularly in light of the neighborhood's level of dedication to addressing this important issue, Cedar Riverside leaders and organizations can be successful.

1. Introduction

The Cedar-Riverside neighborhood has been the focus of media attention over the past year due to recent acts of violence and the disappearance of young Somali men. In 2008, three young men were killed within the boundaries of the neighborhood. Two of the young men were Somali. In April, 18-year-old Abdullahi Abdi died of gunshot wounds after being shot in an alley (Hirsi, 2009a). In September, Ahmednur Ali, a 20-year-old Augsburg student, was shot outside the Brian Coyle Center (Hirsi, 2009a). According to people who knew both young men, they were well-liked in the community and not involved in any gang or criminal activities (Stratton, 2008; KARE, 2008). The third homicide victim, 20-year-old Joseph Sodd III, was stabbed in the neighborhood and died from the wounds in June. He was a Minneapolis high school graduate who was attending college in Seattle (Bergeron, 2008). In addition to these homicides, the FBI is investigating the disappearance of several Somali men in their late teens who are rumored to have returned to Somalia to fight in a Jihad against Ethiopia (Hirsi, 2009b).

These incidences have spurred community reaction including numerous meetings discussing the level of violence in the Cedar Riverside area and concerns for the well-being of Somali young adults. Whether exaggerated or not, there is now a prevalent perception that the Cedar Riverside community is unsafe (Hirsi, 2009a). At the same time, community members expressed a belief that Somali young adults are an untapped resource for themselves and their community.
To address the situation, the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program (CRNRP) and Somali American Education Program (SAEP) partnered with our team of three graduate students from the Humphrey Institute and Cedar-Humphrey Action for Neighborhood Collaborative Engagement (CHANCE) program on a community-based research project. Together we created a Memorandum of Agreement to research programming for young adult Somali refugees and immigrants and potential sources of support for that programming through funding and partnership opportunities.

The goals of our research included assessing the scope and services of social, educational, and civic engagement programs available to young adults in Cedar-Riverside; identifying programming areas that are missing or could be enhanced; and engaging young adults in a co-creative dialogue about their needs and capacities. Throughout this paper, we will focus on the Somali population within Cedar Riverside, but we believe that our recommendations and program suggestions may be utilized to address the needs of Oromo and other East African immigrants and refugees living in the neighborhood.

This report presents the finding of our research and includes the following sections:

- A look at the demographics of the Cedar Riverside neighborhood and the perception of safety.

- A summary table of the research literature that addresses our goals.

- Summaries of fourteen interviews we conducted with key stakeholders as identified by our community partners.

- Summaries of the two learning circles we conducted with Somali and East African young adults.

- A summary of promising practices that communities and organizations are using locally and nationally.

- A tabular description of current community programs in use in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood.

- Our conclusions and recommendations for solutions that will engage the young Somali adults in the Cedar Riverside community.

- A look at potential sources of funding for our recommendations.

Neighborhood Demographics

Cedar Riverside is a central city neighborhood in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As an entry point for immigrants, it has always had a great deal of diversity. The trend continues today with forty-five percent of the community population foreign born (West Bank Community Coalition [WBCC], 2008). Several ethnic groups are represented including Somali, Oromo, Ethiopian, Hispanic, Vietnamese and Korean. The population as of 2000 was 7,545, and it is growing at a much faster rate than the rest of Minneapolis with a 12.1 percent increase in population since 1980 compared to a 3.1 percent rate overall for Minneapolis (City of Minneapolis, 2009a). The black population—which includes African refugees—saw the largest increase going from 489, or seven percent of the population, in 1980 to 2,409, or 32 percent of the population, in 2000 (City of Minneapolis, 2009a). The white population decreased from eighty-two percent in 1980 to forty-one percent in 2000. Although the exact number of Somali in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood is not known, we can infer that the increase in the black population was due to the arrival of Somalis and that they are currently the largest ethnic group in the neighborhood. According to the Minneapolis Foundation (2004) approximately "a third of Minnesota public school students who speak Somali at home attend Minneapolis public schools." With the continued growth of foreign-born blacks in the Minneapolis-St. Paul seven-county area, it is likely that black population will increase to fifty percent in Cedar Riverside (Twin Cities Compass, 2009).

By most estimates, Minnesota has the largest population of Somali refugees of any state in the US, and many of them live in the Twin Cities metro area. One-third of the Somali refugees came directly from refugee camps and the others settled in another state first and then relocated to Minnesota (Minneapolis Foundation, 2004). The Minnesota State Demographic Center estimates the total population of Somali in the state at 25,000 in 2004 (Ronningen, 2004). Darboe estimated 60,000 in 2003 although she does not tell us where she got this figure. The number of Somali refugees and immigrants coming to the US has exceeded that of any other country for every year since 1997 with the exception of 1999 and 2001. According to Darboe, Somalis, "like other immigrants choose Minnesota because of good opportunities, strong social services, and good educational and health care systems" (2003). Somalis began their exodus after civil war

erupted in 1991, devastating the economy (Minneapolis Foundation, 2004).

The unemployment rate in Cedar Riverside was considerably higher in 2000—17%—than Minneapolis'—5.8%—and has been rising since 1980 while the City's rate went down between 1990 and 2000 (City of Minneapolis, 2009b). Median household income in the community has been far below the City's from 1980 through 1999 and was falling while the City's was rising. In 1999, Minneapolis had a median household income of $37,974 compared to Cedar Riverside's $14,367. That put its income as the lowest in the City (City of Minneapolis, 2009c). The neighborhood also did not fare well in terms of the poverty level. Although it dropped from a high of forty-six percent in 1989 to forty-two percent in 1999, it was still twenty-five percent higher than the overall rate of Minneapolis (City of Minneapolis, 2009d). However, Cedar-Riverside is also home to a large number of college students and at least three senior citizen high-rises, which may help to explain some of the low income figures.

Crime Statistics

The safety of Cedar Riverside neighborhood is also an issue of wide ranging opinion and debate. In 2008, out of the eighty-six neighborhoods in Minneapolis, eight, including Cedar Riverside, had multiple homicides (City of Minneapolis, 2009e). But from 1998 through 2007, Cedar Riverside had only four homicides (City of Minneapolis, 2009e). For several crimes, Cedar Riverside has seen a marked reduction. For example, statistics from 2006 and 2008 show 109 robberies reported in 2006 compared to 36 in 2008; 12 rapes compared to 5; and 45 aggravated assaults compared to 33. Ben Marcy, president of West Bank Community Coalition noted an issue of perception versus reality in terms of crime and also that many of the arrests are of persons from outside of the neighborhood (Hirsi, 2009a).

Police reports in 2008 show an increase in gang activity among Somali young adults in 2006 and 2007 and a rise in the categories of assaults, felony assaults, robberies and threats that were perpetrated by Somali suspects (Stratton, 2008). The Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights also released a report in 2006 that detailed Somali gang activity in south Minneapolis and gave recommendations for working with the Somali community and addressing the gang issues (Adan, 2006). The report estimates fifty-two Somali youth and young adults involved with gangs, which is one percent of the total Minneapolis gang population. However the gang activity does provide some basis for negative perceptions of safety and crime issues in the neighborhood.

2. Literature

Our literature review explored background characteristics related to positive and negative behaviors among young adults including immigrant and refugee status, exposure to violence and trauma, and parental educational attainment. As detailed in Table 1, we found that maintaining cultural identification, higher parental educational attainment, English proficiency, participation in structured programming, strength of peer and family relationships, and involvement with religious organizations all had a positive effect on being civically engaged, achieving higher levels of education, and obtaining employment. A lack of these characteristics along with exposure to violence and trauma as children leads to an increased likelihood of violent and deviant behavior as adults.

We also found several other factors that may be important in identifying effective programming:

- Identifying role models who can serve as mentors can support youth development and goal achievement.

- Maintaining cultural identity and breaking down stereotypes can motivate immigrants to engage in their communities.

- Improving economic status has more to do with education than English proficiency or length of residence.

Figure 1 (p. 15) is an illustration of our hypothesized causal model for young adult outcomes in Cedar-Riverside. The boxes include the concepts we isolated through our literature review as well as some concepts we perceived to be important based on our professional experience in the neighborhood. The left column contains traits that are taken as a given for the population or a particular individual. Things like history of traumatic experience or low parental educational attainment are not changeable and may have negative effects on outcomes.

The middle column contains concepts which may vary with effort. For example, participation in structured programming or English language proficiency are things which may be altered with targeted programming, and increasing participation or improving English proficiency are likely to improve outcomes.

The right column contains the outcomes, the concepts which motivate our research in the first place: increasing civic engagement, education and employment while decreasing crime and violence (deviant behavior). These outcomes are affected by the concepts in the two left columns. However, none of the outcomes may be treated in isolation. Each outcome also affects each of the others. For example, increasing education is likely to increase employment and civic engagement while decreasing deviant behavior. Therefore, we represented the outcomes as a feedback loop. A feedback looping system where the outcomes are negative may be difficult to turn around, but if all the components are addressed simultaneously, it is possible to build momentum toward more positive outcomes.

Limitations of our Review

Much of the research concerning refugee and immigrant youth focuses on children and adolescents. We found it difficult to find research focused on the 18 to 24 year old age range especially in how it relates to the Somali population. Thus some of research focuses on adolescents and even children. While less than ideal, we think this research is relevant in that most issues facing young adults have causal links back to childhood and adolescence and this is noted in some of the literature. For example, an issue of low educational attainment such as high rates of high school incompletion and a lack of college preparation is not an issue that begins at age eighteen. Therefore, in order to address the causes of the problem the research must start before our target age of eighteen.

In addition, there is not yet a large body of work on Somali refugees. As a result, we considered immigrant and refugee issues more broadly with the belief that while every group is unique there

are some likely areas of similarity such as issues with language acquisition and cultural assimilation.

We have summarized our literature findings in Table 1, broken into the following background, mediating and outcome variables: education, employment training, violence, civic engagement, structured programming, family and peer relationships, religion and English language proficiency. Our full literature review is in Appendix 1. In the full review, and where possible, we have taken care to clarify the study population: youth, teenager, adolescent, children, or young adults (our target population).

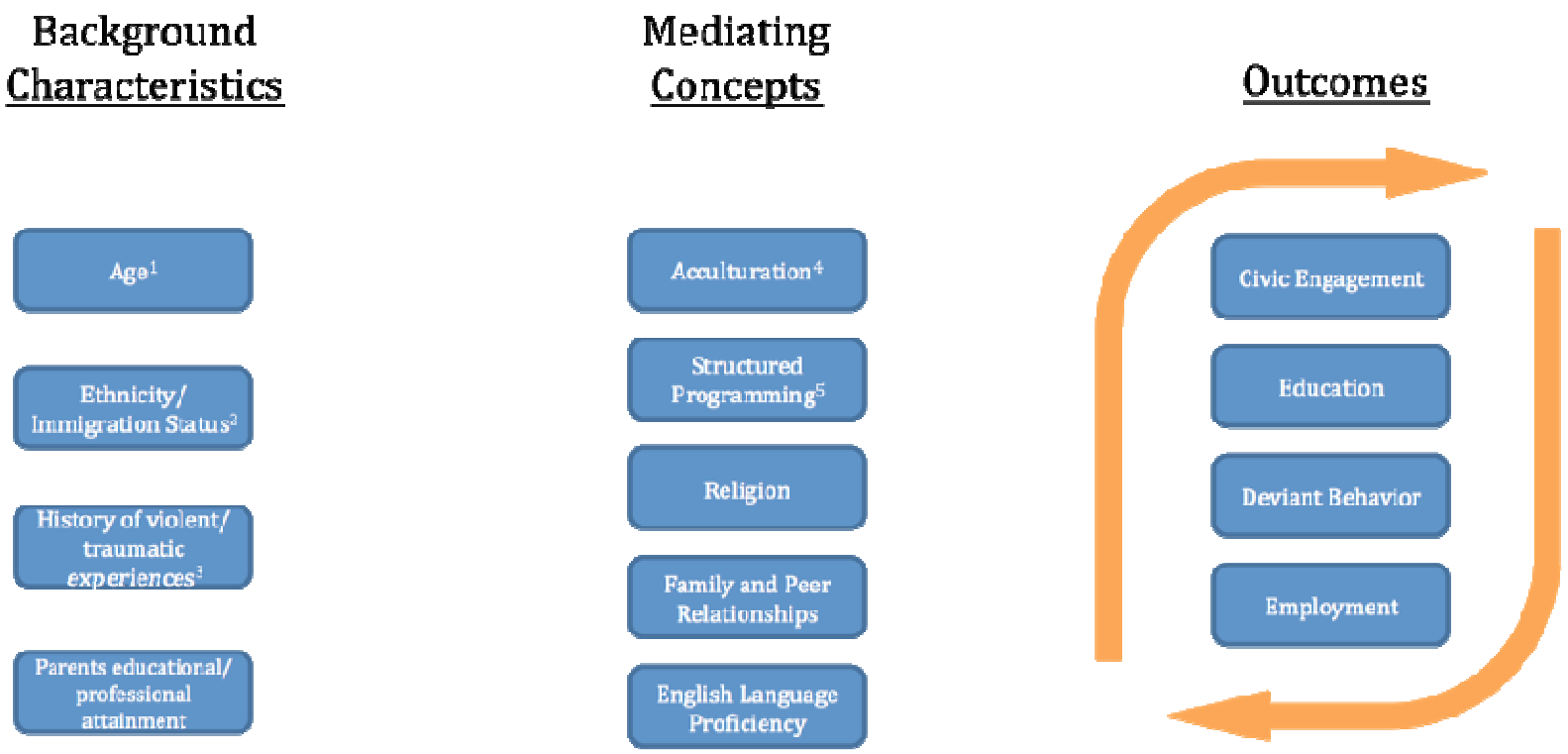
Table 1. Literature Review			
Variables	**Relevant Findings**	**Conclusions for the Neighborhood**	**Citations**
1) Education	• Educational attainment of parents is a strong predictor of their children's attainment. • Greater parental educational attainment reduces likelihood of violent behaviors as young adults. • Total number of developmental assets are a strong predictor of educational attainment.	1) Youth & young adults who are first generation high school or college students must have support in order to overcome additional barriers to educational attainment and stronger likelihood of violence. 2) A focus on empowerment, positive expectations, and other assets can increase educational attainment.	DeBaryshe, 1993; Sprinkle, 2007; Benson, 2002.
2) Employment Training for Immigrants/ Refugees	• Immigrants and refugees generally have a positive effect on local economies. • Refugees can substantially improve their economic status by improving their education. Education is more important to economic well-being than English proficiency or length of residence. • Refugee economic status begins and remains low relative to citizens due to low-income and dead-end employment. • Non-recognition of education, training and licensure from country of origin contributes to poor employment prospects.	1) While immigrants and refugees in Cedar Riverside are more likely to serve as a positive than negative economic force for the neighborhood, additional educational opportunities to move beyond dead-end jobs could greatly improve their economic statues and that of the neighborhood. 2) Programs addressing non-recognition of education and training from Somalia would reduce barriers.	Potocky-Tripodi, 2002; Wilder Research Center, 2000; Minneapolis Foundation, 2004; Hall & Farkas, 2008.
3) Violence	• Experiencing violence at a young age has a strong negative effect on academic achievement and social outcomes and increases the likelihood of violent behavior later in life. • Being arrested increases the likelihood of involvement in crime due to negative effects on educational attainment and employment. • Young people are at particular risk for experiencing violence which undermines personal agency, social networks, and identity.	1) Young adults in Cedar Riverside may face above average pressures toward violent behavior due to past exposure to violence, age and past criminal arrests. 2) Arrests should be minimized when possible due to negative feedback affects on both education and employment. 3) Young people's increased risk of victimization must be addressed to minimize negative impacts.	Sprinkle, Fergusson et al., 2005; Byrne & Taylor, 2007; Voisin, 2007; Sweeten, 2006.

Table 1 (continued). Literature Review			
Variables	**Relevant Findings**	**Conclusions for the Neighborhood**	**Citations**
4)Civic engagement and immigrant status	• Youth civic engagement leads to better work ethics, higher rates of engagement, and more socially responsible attitudes as adults. • Females are more likely to be civically engaged than males. • Minority youth are most likely to engage at the local level. • Culture is more likely to serve as a source of engagement than disengagement. • The most recent generation of immigrants are engaged both in addressing issues in their new communities as well as in their country of origin.	1) Young adult immigrants do have the potential to positively engage in their local communities motivated in part on their cultural identity. 2) Civic engagement is an important consideration for transition into positive adult behaviors. 3) Females are more likely to be a source of civic leadership.	Jenson, 2008; Sanchez-Jankowski, 2002; Stepick & Stepick, 2002; Zaff et al, 2003; Zaff & Michelsen, 2001.
5) Structured youth programming	• Youth involved in structured programming benefit from increases in social, academic and cognitive competencies and decreased school drop-out rates and antisocial behaviors. • Participating in extracurricular activities increases the likelihood of attending college and voting. • A positive approach to programming as opposed to a focus on deficits is most effective.	1) It is important to provide programs that offer structure, perhaps particularly in the case of athletic programs for young adults. 2) It is important to have programs focus on building positive skills as opposed to fixing problems.	Zaff, Moore, Papillo & Williams, 2003; Zaff, J., Moore, K., Papillo, A. R., Williams, S., 2003; Zaff & Michelsen, 2001; Moore & Zaff, 2002.
6) Family and peer relationships	• Parents can influence positive citizenship and adolescent choices and attitudes. • Positive ties are important among teens including siblings, teachers and mentors. • Behaviors tend to cluster and build upon each other either positively or negatively.	1) It is important to identify role models in parents, siblings, teachers, and others. 2) Behaviors will reinforce additional behaviors, so allowing for interaction with others modeling positive behaviors is important.	Zaff et al, 2003; Zaff & Michelsen, 2001; Moore & Zaff, 2002.

Table 1 (continued). Literature Review			
Variables	**Relevant Findings**	**Conclusions for the Neighborhood**	**Citations**
7) Religion	• Participation in a faith community is an important source of identity and promotes positive behaviors and fewer risks. • Religious involvement significantly decreases the probability of involvement in serious crime. • Muslim young males are likely to feel split between American and Muslim identities leading to anger, frustration and a sense of hopelessness while Muslim young women are more likely to see these identities as complimentary. • Muslim-American young adults may feel an obligation to resist stereotypes and educate Americans to reduce faith-based discrimination.	1) Religion is an important avenue to strengthening young adult identity and development while decreasing criminal behavior. 2) Muslim young men are more likely than women to struggle with conflicts between American and Muslim identities that must be addressed in order for faith to serve as a positive intervention. 3) Young adults may have a particular interest in getting involved in opportunities to break down stereotypes based on faith.	Wagener et al, 2003; Benson, 2002; Johnson, 2008; Britto & Amer, 2007; Sirin & Fine, 2007; Zaal, Salah, & Fine, 2007.
8) English Language Proficiency	• According to 2000 census data Somali refugees have higher rates of English language acquisition in comparison to other immigrant groups including Hmong, Mexican and Russians. • Bi-lingual skills are desirable but can produce challenges such as a generational divide between children learning faster than adults and the difficulty of maintaining proficiency in multiple languages. • Strong identification with culture including speaking the language leads to decreased violence and criminal behavior.	1) While Somalis have a relatively high rate of English acquisition and interest in learning the language, there may be a lack of classroom learning opportunities. 2) Generational challenges must be addressed for youth learning at faster rates than their older family members and the difficulty with maintaining fluency in both languages. 3) Language is an important aspect to cultural identification and can address identity issues leading to a greater potential for violence and crime.	Fennelly and Palasz, 2003; Potocky-Tripodi, 2002; Mesch, Turjeman and Fishman, 2008; Stewart et al., 2008

Concept Map

Figure 1. Concept Map



[1] Age matters because our focus demographic is people between the ages of 18 and 25 - they have outgrown existing programming, but have unmet needs.
[2] This concept includes the fact that being an immigrant has an effect on outcomes and the fact that Somali identity and social structures frame the actions and experiences of the young adults. Perhaps surprisingly, immigrant status has been shown to be correlated with increased civic participation.
[3] Experience of violence whether in the home, in the neighborhood, or in wartime East Africa are likely to have a negative effect on a young adult's outcomes.
[4] Included in this concept is the degree to which the young adult is able to become familiar with and comfortable operating in American society. This does not necessarily include forfeiting Somali cultural identity or lifestyle. This concept also interacts with family relationships because young people often acculturate more rapidly and thoroughly than their older family members, which can cause tension within families.
[5] Structured Programing includes structured sports programs.

3. Promising Practices

In addition to the theoretical foundation discussed in the previous section there are several promising practices that may offer guidance to Cedar Riverside organizations. A summary of the practices and how they relate to the qualitative variables from the literature review can be found in Table 2.

1) Building Positive, Inter-generational Relationships

One important component to preventing youth violence is building positive, inter-generational relationships. The Minneapolis Blueprint for Action is an initiative currently underway in the City of Minneapolis to address the issues leading to youth violence in several targeted neighborhoods with particularly high rates of youth-initiated violent crime (City of Minneapolis, 2008). The Blueprint also supports program partnership and implementation to prevent youth violence before it starts, and notes that one of its priorities is building links to trusted adults (City of Minneapolis, 2008). However, research indicates that in recent history, there has been a widening gap between daily separations of groups based on age (Camino and Zeldin, 2002). The result is that few young people have even one significant, close relationship with a non-familial adult before reaching adulthood themselves (Camino and Zeldin, 2002). This narrows their options for participation in community life and their ability to access resources into early adulthood.

Bolder Options is a nationally recognized local program working to address this issue through a strength-based intervention program connecting children with adults to build a web of support that encompasses the entire family. They describe their program as a combination of mentoring, goal setting, athletic activities, learning support, case management, life-skills education, volunteerism, community support, and parental involvement to foster the social and academic success of youth who are at risk of academic failure, dropping out of school, and developing delinquent behaviors (Bolder Options, 1999).

Some of the components highlighted as critical for program success include structured relationships; program consistency and duration; and professional, family-centered case management (Bolder Options, 1999). The basic assumptions of the model as it relates to youth are: goal setting and completing builds success, positive role models are critical in shaping youth behavior, physical activity is a good starting point to set and realize goals, building of youth's strengths will lead to success, experiential learning is effective, and youth need community support (family, school, neighbors) to succeed (Bolder Options, 1999). Some basic considerations related to mentors are: relationship building between mentors and mentees takes time, communication is essential to healthy relationships, trust and feeling safe are critical to building relationships, offering support and training opportunities for mentors will lead to program success, and compatibility is essential for effective mentoring experience (Bolder Options, 1999).

While mentorship programs are typically considered most applicable to youth under the age of eighteen, in the case of Cedar Riverside Somali young adults, given their isolation from older generations and the cultural emphasis on the importance of respect for elders, there may be

opportunities to transfer promising practices in the traditional mentorship structure to something more applicable to building intergenerational relationships between Somali young adults and older generations.

2) Creating Business/ Youth Partnerships for Employment

Another critical element highlighted in the Blueprint for Action was the importance of creating business/ youth employment partnerships. In the Cedar Riverside neighborhood, several large institutions potentially could take part in either employment mentorship or employment training programs.

One local program that may serve as a model for an employment training program is Project for Pride in Living (PPL)'s Train-to-Work program in the Phillips neighborhood (www.ppl-inc.org). This program was initially designed as an exclusive partnership with one of their neighboring employers, Abbott Northwestern Hospital (Brekke Inverview, 2009). The two organizations partnered to address concerns about high rates of unemployment among Phillips neighborhood residents and the hospital's challenges to obtain and retain high-quality, entry-level staff. PPL committed to providing four weeks of soft-skill classroom instruction and long-term case management to improve retention rates for placed employees. Abbott Northwestern Hospital committed to provide supervised job shadowing as a part of the training curriculum, and a hiring preference to entry-level job applicants that completed the program successfully. Over the years this program has proven mutually beneficial and the model has been expanded to other Minneapolis employers including additional hospitals and banks.

This model has the potential to be replicated in the Cedar Riverside area given the presence of Fairview Hospital, a large potential employer with an interest in community involvement to address Somali youth issues. Given the same struggle with disproportionately high unemployment rates as was the case in Phillips, the Cedar Riverside neighborhood must seek out similar support from local institutions to build employment opportunities for young Somali residents.

3) Youth Involvement in Project Creation, Governance and Advocacy

We found several modes for youth participation in civic engagement including project creation, institution governance, and issue-based advocacy (Stoneman, 2002). Before addressing this section of promising practices it may be useful to define these two terms. Civic engagement can be defined as being able to influence choices in collective action (Camino and Zeldin, 2002). Youth participation can be defined as:

> "Involving youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunity for planning and/or decision making affecting others, in an activity whose impact or consequences extend to others, i.e., outside or beyond youth participation themselves. (National Commission on Resources for Youth, 1975)."

In a journal article highlighting lessons learned from the nationally recognized YouthBuild program, it was noted that an important aspect of each of these types of participation is the ability for youth to develop leadership skills (Stoneman, 2002). In addition, real decision-making responsibility can heal two common issues for young people: (a) low self-esteem due to

consistent invalidation of their intelligence and (b) feeling of powerlessness and anger due to being raised in a world that does not often listen to the ideas of young people (Stoneman, 2002).

YouthBuild is a program that started through youth project creation. A group of teenagers were invited to define a project and decided to renovate an abandoned building on their block (Stoneman, 2002). Although it was an enormous undertaking that took five years to complete, with the back up of adult support the project was a successful and important learning experience. The experience is credited with the lasting benefits of unleashing positive energy and teaching complex skills for future community leadership (Stoneman, 2002).

Another mode for youth engagement is through institutional governance. YouthBuild considers this type of engagement to be qualitatively different from participation that does not allow for any encroachment on managerial control (Stoneman, 2002). Some examples of governance activities include having a role in staff hiring, setting budgets, raising funds and setting policies. While these activities provide for important learning opportunities for youth, a balance between staff and youth roles must be maintained (Stoneman, 2002).

The last mode of participation is issue-based advocacy. YouthBuild notes that an advantage of having youth involved in advocacy work is that they tend to have fresh and accurate ideas about how places such as schools, job training programs, detention centers, and other areas they may frequently use could do a better job (Stoneman, 2002).

Finally, positive youth involvement in neighborhood programs also begins to address perception issues of youth as primarily sources of negative behaviors. Older generations having a negative perception of youth is not unique to the Cedar Riverside neighborhood. In a recent study, only 16% of a nationwide sample of over 1,500 adults believed that young people under the age of 30 share most of their moral and ethical values (Camino and Zeldin, 2002). One way to address this generational disconnect is by increasing the visibility of youth engaging in their community to address neighborhood issues.

4) Building Collaboration

Rationale for Collaboration:

Research suggests that communities are more successful when they have social and inter-organizational networks, allowing for collective decision-making and a multiplicity of pathways for engagement (Camino and Zeldin, 2002). Given limited funds and a shared stake in the success of Somali young adults in Cedar Riverside, it is important that community members work together to determine the best possible means to addressing the needs of its population.

Also consistent with the above statement, Zaff and Michelsen offer a recommendation that programs adopt multiple strategies for promoting positive youth citizenship, and consider the antecedents from multiple layers of youths' lives (2001). This strengthens the argument for a collaboration of service providers in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood working together and recognizing that their varied strengths in addressing youth needs are each of great importance given the multitude of factors contributing to the opportunities and challenges facing youth.

Fostering Family Involvement in Collaboration:
As we recognized in our discussion of Bolder Options in the recommendation for building intergenerational relationships, the families of youth are an important group to engage in program assessment. In addition, as we stated in the literature review, parents who act as role models and reinforce volunteering behaviors in their children and who also participate in those activities with their children, have children who are more likely to volunteer (Zaff & Michelson, 2001). For this reason, it is also effective to have family members actually join youth in neighborhood activities to reinforce their importance.

Strengths to Faith-based Organizing to Build Collaboration.
Ernesto Cortes, Jr., a community organizer trained by the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), began organizing Hispanic people in San Antonio, Texas, in 1973. The IAF was founded by Saul Alinsky, and its model of organizing puts an emphasis on "the existing social institutions of a community, like churches, block clubs, and small businesses" (Warren, 2001). The organization Cortes helped to build, Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS), focused mainly on San Antonio's Catholic churches. In the beginning, 25 Catholic parishes formed the core of support for COPS, and this allowed Cortes to build a powerful network of church as well as lay leaders.

In his book, *Dry Bones Rattling*, Mark Warren noted that broad-based organizations like COPS are able to leverage the funding, moral legitimacy, and institutional power of faith-based organizations to unite people around broad areas of overlapping self-interest in a sustainable way. They do not simply use outrage about controversial issues of the moment to mobilize a protest. The innovation of COPS was that while its members were churches, the leaders of COPS were "drawn more broadly from the membership of those institutions, and leaders operated together in a single organization" (Warren, 2001). COPS has won over a billion dollars for infrastructure improvements in poor Mexican neighborhoods of San Antonio and has changed the balance of power in San Antonio city politics (Swarts, 2008).

5) Culturally Specific Programming for an At-risk Population
The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners created the African American Men Project (AAMP) in 1999 to research the forces behind poverty, crime, poor health and isolation surrounding African American men ages 18 to 30; build partnerships that can lead to improved outcomes; and make a difference in the lives of African American men. The AAMP focuses on nine priority areas: housing, family structure, health, education, economic empowerment, community and civic involvement, communications and fundraising, and criminal justice (Hennepin County, 2002).

The AAMP initially engaged the community by creating a 130-man advisory board to coordinate efforts to improve outcomes for young African American men who were at-risk. It was a collaborative effort to work with county, city, community and educational organizations to provide training and educational opportunities, provide assistance in enrolling and completing post-secondary programs, help with housing, and create community engagement programs (Crosby & Bryson, 2005). Currently the AAMP sponsors a mentorship initiative, and the Right Turn program which provides young men with support and guidance along with specific support for legal and health issues, job training, and housing (African American Men Project, 2009).

The AAMP could serve as a model for collaboration and program design. The at-risk young black men served by the AAMP are a very similar demographic to the Somali young men.

6) Bridging College Readiness and Career Track Programming

In reviewing the literature, we found that it is clear that all adult immigrants and refugees with limited education should be encouraged to advance their education (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). Programs like the GED Prep courses at the Somali American Education Program and educational workshops at Brian Coyle Center help, but do not have the funding or capacities to meet all the needs of neighborhood young adults.

Bridge programs provide individuals with education and training in the basic skills needed to advance to career-path employment and could benefit the Somali refugee community (Smith, Hagman-Shannon, Kossy, Jenkins, & Henle, 2004). These programs provide a "broad foundation for career-long learning on-the-job and through formal postsecondary education and training" (Smith, et al., 2004). Bridge programs can provide the key to better jobs and higher levels of education (Smith, et al., 2004). These programs are designed for populations typically underserved by educational institutions. This could include low-skilled unemployed individuals or students with GEDs or high school diplomas who are not yet ready to pursue a postsecondary degree. In one of our informational interviews, it was noted that many Somali youth want to pursue a college degree but need remedial training to prepare for college level study. A bridge program would provide that training in a structured methodology.

The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago are establishing bridge programs for healthcare careers and considering programs for manufacturing and transportation/warehousing logistics (Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago, 2007, Smith et al., 2004). In the Twin Cities area, several state colleges have collaborated to create the Urban Teacher Program that seeks under represented low-income, "first-generation" students of color to become teachers in urban school districts (Metropolitan State University, 2008). Although technically not termed a bridge program, its principles and objectives serve the same ends.

Table 2. Promising Practices referencing literature variables				
Variables	**Bolder Options (p. 16)**	**Project for Pride in Living Train-to-Work Program (p. 17)**	**YouthBuild (p. 18)**	**COPS (p. 19)**
Education	Fosters social and academic success of at-risk youth.		Develops community and organizational leadership skills via project development.	
Employment & Education for Immigrants/ Refugees		Provides job training including soft-skill classroom instruction, job shadowing, and long-term case management		
Violence	Builds positive, inter-generational relationships by connecting children (10-14) with adult mentors to build a web of support.			
Civic engagement and immigrant status			Teaches participation in issue-based advocacy.	Organizes community at grassroots level around local issues.
Structured youth programming	Builds programming from components like mentoring, athletic activities, learning support, and life-skills education.		Promotes youth engagement through institutional governance.	
Family and peer relationships	Encourages parental involvement via family-centered case management.			

Table 2 (continued). Promising Practices referencing literature variables				
Variables	**Bolder Options (p. 16)**	**Project for Pride in Living Train-to-Work Program (p. 17)**	**YouthBuild (p. 18)**	**COPS (p. 19)**
Religion				Uses funding, moral legitimacy & institutional power of faith-based organizations to unite people.
English Language Proficiency				

Table 2 (continued). Promising Practices referencing literature variables			
Variables	**African American Men Project (p. 19)**	**Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago (p. 20)**	**Urban Teacher Program (p. 20)**
Education	Provides help in enrolling in post-secondary programs.	Prepare underserved with requisite basic skills for postsecondary education & training.	Seeks and trains low-income, 'first generation' college students of color, for teaching positions in urban areas.
Employment & Education for Immigrants/ Refugees	Collaborates with community and educational programs to provide training and educational opportunities.	Prepare underserved populations to reach career-path employment opportunities in healthcare.	Prepares students for teaching career.
Violence	Works with at-risk men and criminal justice system.		
Civic engagement and immigrant status	Provides training in community engagement.		
Structured youth programming			
Family and peer relationships	Sponsors a mentorship initiative.		
Religion			
English Language Proficiency			

4. Community Program Assessment

This is a listing of current programs that we have identified with our partners and informational interviewees that serve the Somali 18-24 age group. It is not meant to be exhaustive but to give a picture as to the diversity of assets that currently exist in the neighborhood. A description of each program follows Table 3.

It is apparent from this list that many people are working to address the issues facing young adults in Cedar Riverside. However, existing programs fall short in several areas.

- Existing programs that include mentorship (like the Somali Student Association) don't have a long-term commitment component.

- There are few programs addressing mental health issues (like the mental health effects of traumatic refugee experiences) or culturally relevant ways to deal with alcohol use and alcoholism without stigma.

- While there are educational and employment related programs in the neighborhood, they are operating at capacity and are not sufficient to address the educational and employment training needs of all of Cedar-Riverside's young adults.

- There is no organization specifically addressing negative perceptions (like a public relations committee).

Table 3. Community Program Assessment				
	Organization	**Program/Desc**	**Ages Served**	**Total**
A)	**African Development Center**	Entrepreneur training with Brian Coyle Center	13-28	8
B)	**Brian Coyle Center**	Open gym activities	over 18	No estimate
	Brian Coyle Center	Educational workshops	over 18	15-25 per workshop
C)	**Confederation of Somali Communities**	All girls program	high school & college	15-30/session
	Confederation of Somali Communities	Somali Youth HIV/AIDS Project	14-19	14-24
	Confederation of Somali Communities	Employment help	over 18	25
	Confederation of Somali Communities	Basketball program	18-24	10
D)	**Dar Al-Hijrah**	Youth groups Community service Variety of classes inc. Islamic studies, leadership, civic engagement, literacy	high school & college	Average 150/week
E)	**Trinity Lutheran**	After school program & tutoring	18-24	50 over one month period
F)	**Somali American Education Program**	ESL & GED	over 18	200/yr
G)	**West Bank Community Coalition Safety Committee**	Bi-weekly safety walks around the neighborhood	All	NA
H)	**Somali Student Association**	Mentorship at Brian Coyle Center	18-24	10

Neighborhood Organizations and Descriptions of Youth/ Young Adults Programming:

A) African Development Center

The African Development Center works to build economic prosperity for African immigrants and refugees including entrepreneurial programs to help individuals start their own businesses. They may be well suited to administer the classroom training for an employment program in collaboration with The Partnership (described below).

B) Brian Coyle Community Center

The Brian Coyle Community Center is a part of Pillsbury United Communities and serves the Cedar Riverside community with a multitude of programs and services. While the center offers a number of programs and services for youth below age 18 as well as educational and employment programs for adults, Somali young adults have an interest in access to the center's gym and recreational activities and may benefit from more opportunities to participate in structured athletic programming.

C) Confederation

The Confederation of the Somali Community offers a number for programs including a diversion program and street outreach for troubled youth. As a result, the organization is playing a central role in offering drop-in or emergency services as needed by young adults facing serious issues with alcohol, drug use, gang violence, criminal activity, and other issues requiring immediate intervention.

D) E) Mosques/Trinity

There are two mosques in the Cedar Riverside area: Dar Al-Hijrah and Dar Al-Quba. Both are engaged in programming for young adults with a focus on meeting their spiritual needs. This programming is important in addressing the serious mental health and emotional needs that young adults might be faced with given their traumatic past experiences and current economic hardships. In addition, the mosques serve an important organizational role in bringing together individuals from different generations to foster increased communication and better support for one another. Trinity Lutheran is a third faith-based organization in the neighborhood. It provides tutoring help for secondary and post-secondary students.

F) Somali American Education Program

The Somali American Education Program provides a number of educational programs including English and GED classes. Given that Somali youth are not always able to succeed in the public school system without additional support; this organization fills an important role in addressing barriers to educational attainment.

G) West Bank Community Coalition Safety Committee
The West Bank Community Coalition (WBCC) has united several individual neighborhood groups into one Crime and Safety Committee that meets monthly. The committee oversees the WBCC's NRP-funded crime prevention strategies including a weekly volunteer safety walk.

H) Somali Student Association
The Somali Student Association at the University of Minnesota is actively engaged in organizing work in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood and has an interest in providing support to young adults in the community. Given their ability to communicate effectively with young adult peers in the area, they can serve two critical roles 1) as mentors and 2) as organizers ensuring that at-risk young adults themselves play a role in collaborative efforts to best address their concerns and interests.

The Partnership
The Partnership is a collaborative effort between the University of Minnesota, Augsburg College, Fairview Hospital, Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, the West Bank Business Association and the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Project. This group has come together to partner in addressing community issues in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood and have identified young adult issues as a focus of their joint efforts. Given that this partnership consists of a number of large employers in the neighborhood, this may serve as an opportunity to support young adults through employment mentorship or employment training programs.

5. Interview and Circle Summaries

Interview Methodology

To understand the factors involved in determining Somali young adult programming and outcomes, we conducted fourteen interviews and two learning circles. The interviewees were chosen through discussions with our community partners. Working together, we chose a list of individuals belonging to the following relevant stakeholder groups: neighborhood organizations, potential funders, faith-based institutions, police, the city of Minneapolis, educational institutions, and Somali young adults.

We created two lists of questions to be used for the interviews. One list was for the young adults we interviewed and the second was for the community members. Question topics were based on the causal model described in Figure 1, and they included personal background, residency and other and experiences in Cedar Riverside, current involvement in the Cedar Riverside community, personal experience with Somali young adults, and top priorities for programs to address the needs of Somali young adults. Both interview guides can be found in Appendix 3. We interviewed 14 people and these included three young adults. When possible, the interviews were recorded and transcripts were typed from the recordings. The tape recorder malfunctioned for one interview, and the interviewer took notes by hand.

Learning Circle Methodology

A learning or study circle is a small-group dialogue where everyone's personal experience is considered important, making everyone both a learner and a teacher. The conversation is loosely structured, but open to the direction the group finds most important. One of the strengths of this model is that everyone gains insight through the mutual sharing of diverse experiences and opinions. The discussion guide we used to steer our learning circles is in Appendix 3 although our circles did not always follow the "script."

The learning circles functioned in two ways. First, they allowed us to gain insight into how the groups thought about issues related to Somali young adults. Second, they allowed us to engage the participants (who were themselves stakeholders in the issues of Somali young adults). It was hoped that this civic engagement would contribute to a sense of empowered agency among the participants which may further their interest in involvement, increasing the social capital of the neighborhood while at the same time contributing to a more accurate mutual understanding of Somali young adult issues for both the participants and our research team.

We had originally hoped to have circles comprised of our target population: Somali young adults from 18 to 24 years of age who lived in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood. We were unable to put a circle together with that demographic. Our first learning circle participants were Somalis between 18 and 24 but they did not live in the Cedar Riverside area. They were members of the University of Minnesota Somali Student Organization. The second circle was made up of Somali adolescents who participated in a youth group at Dar al-Hijrah Mosque. Most of them lived and went to high school in Minneapolis. Although these were not our exact target groups, we feel that the discussions were very valuable to our research.

5.1 The Interviews

The headings below indicate themes that emerged from our interviews. *The quotes that follow came from the key informational interviews but will not be attributed to protect the identities of the individuals.*

Safety
While some of our interviewees did assert that the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood was not safe, most of our interviewees felt that the perception of the neighborhood being unsafe was more of an issue than actual safety. All interviewees reported that safety was an important issue in the neighborhood. However, this meant different things across interviews. Almost all of the interviewees who lived in the neighborhood reported feeling safe in the neighborhood. The trend was that people who actually lived in the neighborhood felt much safer than people who did not. Even among Somali interviewees, those who lived outside the neighborhood felt less safe than those who lived in Cedar-Riverside. One interviewee summed up the perception issue, "It [the neighborhood] has a bit of a disorderly feel about it and when it comes down to the numbers, it is not actually true. The feel doesn't match the statistics...things are moving in the right direction. But at the same time, we had two homicides there this year." It should also be noted that there was broad agreement, even among those that didn't feel safe in Cedar-Riverside, that most of the violence that has taken place in the neighborhood was carried out by people who did not live in or have strong ties to the neighborhood: "This is a magnet center for all youths from the Somali culture. It's not surprising that when the police officer stops someone who's doing something bad, and then he checks his ID card, he's not from here."

Age
Age turned out to be somewhat problematic as a concept. One Somali interviewee stated that Somalis did not tend to value keeping close track of age, so he could not tell what his exact age was. "In our Somali culture, normally we don't record where children are born, the exact date… When they were doing my papers, my sister, you know, she just approximated the date. So that's my documents. My real age is a little bit different." Most interviewees expressed the idea that age interfered with the immigration process, resulting in problems like inappropriate school placement. All interviewees agreed that the young adult age range of 18 to 25 was an important one to consider. Two, however, felt that that demographic was already a "lost generation" and scarce resources would be better used on younger people.

A number of our interviewees talked about the immigration process and the education system often interacting negatively for Somali young adults. Several times we were told that when Somalis immigrated, young people were often officially listed as a certain age that was different from their actual age. For example, an older child may be misrepresented as under 18 to make it easier to immigrate. A younger child might be misrepresented as older because he or she may not have kept accurate age records (age being less culturally relevant for Somalis than for American). Upon immigration, these young people are often placed into the public school system according to their new official age, which may be either too advanced or age inappropriate.

Neighborhood Challenges
Several important challenges for the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood were identified by our interviewees. Many people expressed that there are limited resources in the neighborhood, primarily training programs, funding for existing programs, and space for activities. The population density in the Riverside Plaza and the high concentration of poverty compared to other neighborhoods were thought to be key challenges. Also, many people expressed frustration at neighborhood politics that often prevents organizations from effectively working together.

All of our interviewees acknowledged the existence of a group of at-risk Somali young adults in Cedar-Riverside. They were often described as being in the street, standing in front of the Brian Coyle Center, not having jobs, not having education, and using alcohol and/or drugs. Most people thought this was a small subset of all Somali young adults, but this group gets a lot of attention because they are visible and sometimes cause trouble. One interviewee stated, "I'd say most of the kids in that age group [18-25] are either walking the streets with a book bag or a brown bag; a small brown bag with a little bottle in it." Alcohol use and the associated mental health issue of alcoholism are particularly challenging for the Somali community because of stigma. Alcohol is forbidden in Islam, and Islam is an integral part of Somali identity. Thus, consuming alcohol can lead to personal shame or exclusion from social networks which would normally provide care and support. "If somebody drinks alcohol or is an alcoholic, they say, 'Oh, he's very bad.' There's nothing [in between]. You either stop it or you're an alcoholic. They don't know that medically you can be dependent on this thing." Past traumatic experience, weak familial support, poor English abilities, and lack of educational attainment were also seen as causes of negative outcomes for Somali young adults.

Neighborhood Assets
Despite a general recognition of Cedar-Riverside's challenges, the neighborhood was also seen to have substantial assets. The neighborhood's diversity was commonly viewed as an asset: "I think the diversity itself is an asset. The number of languages spoken here, and the people who can contribute to that, even to the services, the state or in government." Other assets included the neighborhood organizations, art/music venues, the history of art and activism, neighborhood programs (especially those at the Brian Coyle Center), the Somali cultural identity of the neighborhood, and the young people. "Many neighborhoods don't have that many youth; youth interested in how they are going to make a better life and how they are going to improve their neighborhood… there's this feeling that ok, we can make it here and I'll try to be an entrepreneur and I can build this business and I can learn the language."

In almost all of our interviews, the University of Minnesota, along with Augsburg College and Fairview were described as important institutions that bear a responsibility to provide resources for the neighborhood. They impose costs on the neighborhood such as taking up neighborhood property as they expand, increasing traffic through the neighborhood, creating an environment of transient student residents (implicitly less stable than traditional homeowners), thus they are expected to give back to the neighborhood. Some of the proposed assets these institutions could direct toward the neighborhood were facilities (libraries, gyms, soccer fields), jobs, and funding for programming.

Somali Young Adults
Somali young adults were widely reported to face many challenges. However, most interviewees asserted that the average Somali young adult is a college student. While most interviewees were sensitive to the particular needs of Somali young adults as a demographic, they also asserted that the actual number of "at-risk" young adults was relatively small. Again, there seems to be a discrepancy between common perceptions and reality.

Two aspects of Somali identity appeared particularly important: family and religion. Family ties were described as particularly important in Somali culture relative to American culture. That being said, conflict within families because of the acculturation process was blamed as a major cause of young adults getting involved with alcohol use and violence. It was also commonly reported that many young Somalis immigrated to the US with people who were extended family rather than immediate family, and that this created a less supportive and stable environment for those young people. Most interviewees reported that strong family support was instrumental in causing positive behaviors and developmental outcomes for Somali young adults.

Faith-Based Institutions
We found broad agreement from interviewees that the faith-based institutions in the neighborhood were the leaders on the issue of youth (youth outreach, youth programs, youth participation, and youth leadership). Only the Brian Coyle Center seemed to rival the mosques in terms of program participation. This is consistent with the prominent role Islam plays in Somali identity. One Somali interviewee explained, "Technically, if you look at it, I'm Somali, but what comes first is my religion. I'm Muslim, and then I'm Somali." It was widely recognized that youth and young adults at the Mosques – predominantly Dar Al-Hijrah and Abubakar As-Saddique (which is in Phillips) – are effectively designing their own programs to address young adult issues. These programs include theater groups, discussion circles, and religion classes. Many interviewees saw these activities as innovative, home-grown assets for addressing the needs of Somali young adults.

Gender
Gender is another aspect of identity that appeared relevant throughout the interviews. All interviewees agreed that the bulk of at-risk young adults were men. It seemed to be taken for granted that the young adults most likely to display negative behaviors (crime, alcohol use, drug use) were men. Only one interviewee explicitly stated that, though they were not always visible, there are some Somali young adult women who are at-risk, and who can sometimes be violent. When pressed, however, this interviewee could not say whether these young women would respond to a given intervention in ways that might be significantly different from young men. Overall, there was a strong consensus that young Somali women are better positioned to succeed than men. This was also evidenced by greater numbers of young Somali women in universities and in leadership positions of youth groups. Somali women seem to be well represented in youth group and student group leadership positions. However, this does not seem to hold for leadership in neighborhood organizations.

Similarities With Previous Immigrant Groups
One of our interviewees pointed out some interesting ways in which the Somali immigrants are similar to other immigrant groups that passed through Cedar-Riverside in the past. Islam is a

major component of Somali identity, as is the rejection of alcohol. In the past, many Catholic immigrants (like Polish immigrants) maintained a strong religious identity, and there was even a strong temperance (anti-alcohol) organization based in Dania Hall (which was dry).

Programming Ideas
Most of our Somali interviewees participated or were interested in participating in sports activities in the neighborhood. Many felt that there were not enough opportunities to participate in sports. Though there are facilities for basketball at the Coyle Center, and there are places to play soccer outdoors when the weather is warm enough, those facilities appear to be operating at full capacity.

Many people suggested programs related to developing human capital: educational programs (GED classes, English language classes), employment programs (skills training, job search assistance, citizenship test preparation), and mentorship programs between college students and at-risk young adults.

Some interviewees felt that the city's Youth Violence Prevention funding would be a valuable resource, but others felt that pursuing it would necessarily entail too much competition and destructive politics. Reactions to the funding ranged from hopeful aspirations to acquire the money to skepticism about the city's true intentions. Many felt that it was not worth pursuing if it would mean intense competition between the organizations in the neighborhood.

Rather, most saw the key to creating solutions to the program gap being a strong collaboration of neighborhood program providers. Nine of the ten key interviewees who were not Somali young adults expressed the need for collaboration. Many explicitly stated that parents and religious groups would have an important role in legitimating any such collaboration. Further, several interviewees thought it crucial to include input from the neighborhood youth themselves.

Many of our interviewees expressed frustration with what they perceived to be a lack of contribution to the neighborhood by the large institutions (like the University of Minnesota and Fairview Hospital). One interviewee made the comment, "if the institutions or the programs or the organizations that exist in this neighborhood come together, I don't think they will need that $75,000 to help these young people."

5.2 Lessons from Learning Circles

Learning Circle 1

Our participants included seven female, young adults who are currently University of Minnesota undergraduate students representing a range of ethnic backgrounds including Somali, Oromo and Ethiopian Amharic. None of the participants lived in Cedar Riverside neighborhood although they all had personal experiences in the neighborhood, and many had friends or family members who were current or former residents. All of them were in our target age range of 18 to 24.

Perception of Neighborhood:
When asked about the safety of the Cedar Riverside neighborhood, participants felt that it may be dangerous for outsiders (given the importance of knowing where to go/ not to go), but for the

most part students felt it was safe at least in the daytime. At the same time the group felt there was more of a perception that it is dangerous than a reality.

When asked what made Cedar Riverside different from other neighborhoods they mentioned the large concentration of Somali and East African residents. As one participant described "It is like one big family where people are united and take care of each other." Another explained "However, it is not that different from when people live in other areas because in the Somali culture we tend to operate the same way no matter where we live." Another positive attribute they mentioned were all of the services for people new to the United States.

However, they did agree that Cedar Riverside is different from other areas because of poorer living standards. They explained that it is often the first place that people can afford to live, but that the housing conditions were not good.

Gender Issues

The group explained that the challenges for Somali young adults are not the same for the women as for the men. While high school can be difficult for both genders, when youth do not speak English well and when the boys are mocked, it creates pride issues that they may resolve through forming cliques. Also, the group reflected that while boys listened to women in Africa, once in the United States they may want to be independent and take on a macho culture. Finally, although young men are equally expected to do well, they are often left to their own devices.

The participants felt that women tend to do better because they are given more support from their family and have different expectations. Girls have more responsibilities from a young age and therefore mature faster, allowing for more focus at school. In addition, the group explained that women are more protected. One participant clarified, "not because we are weaker but because the world tends to prey on us more."

Reasons for not being successful

The group explained that there can be a lack of motivation in school given the intensity of culture shock. They explained that it is difficult to not be understood. One participant said "we are expected to understand everything right away, but the Americans need to understand us better too."

The group talked about a trade off between being integrated and being around people of the same background, which may be important for a transition period. When trying to assimilate, they said that when media filters out the good and emphasizes the bad, that is the thing that young men will try to emulate.

Cultural Involvement

Culture was considered important, and particularly their Muslim identity. They described being Muslim as the most important part of their identity. One participant explained, "Regardless of race or language, Islam comes first." At the same time, they explained that the Somali, Oromo, and Ethiopian cultures are not isolated. Rather, they also connect with other minority groups such as the Latinos.

In terms of cultural activities, most of the students are involved in the Muslim Student Association and Al Medina Cultural Center in addition to the Somali Student Association.

Programming
The following are some programming ideas:

- A college readiness program.
- A language lab for school age youth.
- A partnership program to teach Americans about the Somali culture.
- A mentorship program with college students and other Somali professionals to serve as role models.
- More incentives with programs.
    - At school in Somalia, competition was a big motivation factor.
    - It is important to have incentives for parents to participate due to time constraints from working multiple jobs.
- More bilingual programs for those new to the United States.
- More programs to get girls involved.
- Focusing on homework before fun things like basketball.

Learning Circle 2

General Notes
Participants included four youth leaders at a Cedar-Riverside mosque. Three were in high school and one was in college. They did not live in the neighborhood, but were connected through the mosque where they attend services and events and volunteer for community service including work with organizations like the West Bank Community Coalition.

Perceptions of Neighborhood
When asked about their perceptions about the neighborhood, the youth felt that there were many positive things, including its convenience (universities, mosques, shops all in one place) and the comfortable presence of Somali culture, which they described as sometimes less stressful than interaction with the dominant culture.

However, the youth felt there was also more violence, more bars, and generally more negative things in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood than in their respective neighborhoods. Despite this, some believed that the neighborhood was generally safe and felt that the danger came from outside the neighborhood. One student felt it was a dangerous place. It was also discussed that Cedar-Riverside has more of a perception of being more unsafe than may be true in reality.

Defining Success
Participants defined success as creating a stable base for oneself and others, in part through education. Helping others and the community was considered an important part of success. They expressed feeling tension between the cultural expectations and definitions of success that their parents have for them and the realities of different constraints and possibilities in America, including a need to adapt to living in the United States. “There is a need,” one said, “to reform Somali values for future generations in the U.S.” One youth stated, “Parents want their children

to be doctors and no one respects anything else." Similarly, one youth expressed feeling that Somalis had to be excellent just to be perceived as good enough by the mainstream society.

Reasons for not being successful

Overall, the issue of why their peers were not being successful was complicated and involved some disagreement among the youth. One area of general agreement was that to be successful, the youth felt it was important to have support from elders or parents. They expressed that it is often difficult to get that support from older people due to an inability to relate given their vastly different experiences. They felt that many of their peers were not doing well for lack of trustworthy guides. They also mentioned that many young people came to America with aunts and uncles (rather than their true parents) and were unable or lacked the authority to properly guide them. Nevertheless, they felt they had this support in part from their own parents and the youth leader at the Mosque.

Another issue of more debate was the role of faith. One participant expressed the belief that the main issue was when Muslims did not truly understand and live out their faith. He explained, "Faith should provide the grounding for meaning in other life experiences such as getting an education, judging what is right and wrong, helping others and caring for your community." However, another student said that youth should not be blamed for not living out their faith, but rather their families, who did not teach them how to live it.

There was also debate about whether simply having spare time was a cause for young people turning to drugs and crime. One emphasized that it was a very big problem while another student emphasized that most youth are doing well and doing good things.

Finally, two reasons mentioned specific to not succeeding in getting an education were a lack of motivation or inability to function at the age-appropriate level.

Community Involvement

The participants saw themselves as aiding the community through their efforts at the mosque. They explained that they were guided by the question, "Will this help society?" They regularly participate in interfaith events including Global Awareness Day and Youth Day of Interfaith. Some other activities included PSEO and PCC (getting college credit while in high school), participating in a high school Somali Student Association, planning graduation events, and writing for the high school newspaper.

Program Ideas

- Educational programming – a tutor program by professionals.
- Community service programs.
- Employment programs like a job fair or Step Up[6] program to gain direct experience.
- Adequate funding for existing programs.
- They expressed an interest in being a part of any future youth program-development coalition.

[6] Step Up is a youth summer employment program run by the city of Minneapolis. This program is mentioned in the Youth Violence Prevention Program's Blueprint For Action.

Table 4.

	Variables	Neighborhood Programs									Interviews	Learning Circles
		African Development Center - Entrepreneur Training	Brian Coyle - Open Gym	Brian Coyle - Educational Workshops	Confederation of Somali Community - Girls progam	Confederation of Somali Comm. - Youth HIV/AIDS	Confederation of Somali Community - Basketball	Dar Al-Hijrah	Somali American Education Program - ESL & GED	Trinity Lutheran - After-school Program	Key Interviews and Young Adult Interviews	East African Women from UMN & Youth from Neighborhood Mosque
Variables from the Literature	Civic engagement and immigrant status	X				X		X			• Many people are actively engaged in the community, mostly through existing organizations. • Because of immigrants, Cedar-Riverside has an ethnic identity associated.	• Participants in both circles are active in leadership and service in Cedar-Riverside. • All were immigrants or children of immigrants.
	Structured youth programming		X		X	X	X	X		X	• Many people expressed interest in more sports programming. • Idea that youth need something to occupy their time. • Many people also desired structured educational or job-seeking programs.	• Participants felt the need for more educational and job-seeking programs.
	Family and peer relationships				X	X		X			• Family cited as determinant of either positive or negative youth outcomes. • Having friends engaged in negative behaviors cited as a risk for getting otherwise innocent youth into negative behaviors.	• Family and elder leaders cited as necessary for young people to succeed in the difficult transition to life in America.

Table 4 (continued).

	Variables	Neighborhood Programs									Interviews	Learning Circles
Variables from the Literature	Education			X	X	X		X	X	X	• Education was overwhelmingly seen as the answer to all problems facing young adults. • Education was also problematic for some who are not placed in age or skill-appropriate grades in school upon immigration. • Many expressed concern for those who are too old for the school system and need GED or language instruction in order to find jobs.	• All participants felt that education was very important for success and self-improvement. • They expressed the same concerns about age and skill-appropriate education as well as GED/ESL classes for people too old for school.
	Violence										• Most expressed that last year's violent crime tarnished perceptions of the neighborhood's safety. • Some service providers noticed a decrease in program participation because some people feel unsafe.	• Agreement that perceptions of safety were worse than reality, but disagreement over the actual levels of safety in the neighborhood.
	Religion							X			• Somali interviewees expressed that their Muslim identity trumped their Somali identity. • Somali interviewees reported high levels of participation in mosque activities and programs.	• All participants were Muslim and reported high levels of participation in mosque activities.
	English Language Proficiency								X		• Many interviewees felt that failure to obtain English proficiency drastically limited the chances for positive outcomes (getting good jobs, avoiding crime and violence). • Many expressed the need for ESL programs.	• Participants expressed similar views about language proficiency. • Expressed need for more bilingual programs for immigrants. • Idea of "language labs" in public schools to provide focused language assistance.
	Employment & Education for Immigrants/ Refugees	X		X					X		• Most interviewees expressed the need job training and employment education programs.	• Participants expressed the need for mentor programs and city-funded employment programs (like Step Up).

Table 4 (continued).

	Variables	Neighborhood Programs								Interviews	Learning Circles
Additional Variables drawn from Interviews	Safety									• All interviewees living in the neighborhood expressed feeling safe. Most interviewees expressed that perceptions of safety were worse than reality.	• All interviewees living in the neighborhood expressed feeling safe. Most interviewees expressed that perceptions of safety were worse than reality.
	Age	X	X	X				X	X	• Many expressed the idea that precision with age is not culturally relevant for Somalis. • The idea that people claimed incorrect official ages upon immigration was common. • Most expressed that, because young adults over 18 were not in school or eligible for most existing programs, this was an important group to reach out to.	• Most participants were between age 18 and 25. • They also expressed concern for young adults between 18 and 25 because they were out of school but too old for most existing programs.
	Concentration (population/poverty)									• Two interviewees saw the population density in Cedar-Riverside positively because they felt that if fostered a sense of community. • Several others expressed that the density compounds the problems of poverty.	• Density was not a common theme among participants.
	Alcohol									• The stigma that alcohol use carries for Muslims came through in many of the interviews. • Troubled youth were identified by their use of alcohol. • Some interviewees lamented what they saw as the neighborhood's failure to address alcohol use as a mental health issue.	• Alcohol was not a common theme among participants.
	Faith-Based Organizations							X		X	• Several interviewees expressed the opinion that the mosques were doing the best job among the neighborhood organizations creating successful youth programming led by the youth themselves. • Because of the strength of Islamic identity, the mosques are one of the most culturally relevant public spaces.	• All participants reported being active participants in activities and programming at faith-based organizations. • Some of the participants expressed that the only interaction with the neighborhood they have is through mosque activities.
	Gender			X	X						• Most interviewees noted that most of the at-risk young adults are men. • Only one interviewee expressed the opinion that there are at-risk young women who can become violent.	• Participants were mostly female. • Explained that women tend to do better than men because families actively encourage daughters while leaving sons to their own (believing they will succeed without encouragement).
	Collaboration/ Organizing									• 9 of 10 non-young adults interviewed saw the need for collaboration. • They saw a collaboration as the way around historically dysfunctional neighborhood politics.	• Expressed the desire not only to see collaboration between organizations, but to be part of any collaboration in their capacities as leaders.

6. Conclusions

Our research set out to assess the scope and capacity of current programs for Somali young adults, the extent to which the population needs additional programs or program enhancement, and to engage Somali young adults in a co-creative dialogue to identify their needs and capacities and make use of their knowledge and experiences in identifying solutions. In order to meet these objectives for our community partners, we catalogued neighborhood projects, reviewed the relevant literature based on a model of factors that contribute to either positive or negative outcomes, and conducted interviews and held learning circles with community members and stakeholders.

Given the concerns and values we heard from those working and living in the neighborhood, several priorities came to the forefront for addressing the issues facing Somali young adults in Cedar Riverside:

1. The need for and interest in community collaboration to address serious issues facing this population.
2. A lack of resources to address the significant barriers to educational attainment resulting from their unique circumstances, particularly in light of refugee experiences.
3. A lack of resources linking young adults to employment opportunities.
4. A difference between the realities of crime, violence and other issues in the community and perception considered to be a harmful exaggeration.
5. A need for guidance and support leading to a strong interest in mentorship opportunities.
6. The importance of the neighborhood's faith community in building supportive relationships and outlets for positive community engagement.

1. Collaboration

Our assessment of community programs revealed a caring, engaged community with many people operating effective programs that often lacked funding or otherwise did not have the capacity to fully meet the needs of this neighborhood's residents. Many of the neighborhood leaders expressed the opinion that the best way to maximize the effectiveness and the reach of the neighborhood's capacities would be for neighborhood organizations to better collaborate with each other. While several collaborative efforts exist in the neighborhood, a systematic collaborative effort to specifically address issues facing Cedar Riverside young adults would be particularly important when opportunities arose for outside assistance for the design and implementation of comprehensive interventions. Additionally, there are many examples in the literature of neighborhood stakeholders organizing themselves around areas of mutual self-interest such as a concern for youth to achieve a more unified voice and more powerful capacity to act.

2. Education

From our key informational interviews, we gathered that many Somalis who immigrated as young people had a very difficult time in school because they were not prepared to enter the level of schooling associated with their age and lacked adequate programs to catch up. This translates into lower graduation rates, inadequate preparation to attend college, and diminishing job prospects. A promising practice that addresses this issue is a bridge program, which serves

young adults in need of additional preparation in order to begin targeted, career-specific continued education. Without such resources as research about youth in similar circumstances indicates, we can assert that lower levels of educational attainment are associated with higher levels of violence and lower levels of employment.

3. Employment

As just discussed in relation to education, employment is a significant issue for Somali young adults. Many young men are not able to finish school or do not speak fluent English, and therefore, they have a difficult time finding living-wage employment. However, the neighborhood includes several large employers: the University of Minnesota, Augsburg and Fairview Hospital. Given an opportunity to access these local opportunities as opposed to competing for employment outside of the neighborhood, the community as a whole could benefit from lower rates of unemployment and the lower levels of neighborhood issues such as crime that are associated. A promising practice identified to address just such an issue in near-by Phillips neighborhood is a partnership between a community nonprofit and a neighboring hospital to conduct soft-skill training to create the mutual benefit of a well-trained workforce composed of neighborhood residents making a livable wage with high rates of retention.

4. Perceptions

Most people we talked to, including our partners, felt that perceptions of safety in the neighborhood were worse than reality. We found that most of the people we talked to who spent significant amounts of time in Cedar-Riverside felt safer than those with limited experiences. It is unclear if the recent issue of three homicides in the neighborhood in 2008 is an anomaly or an emerging issue given that there were only four over the previous ten years. However, other crime rates have shown a measurable decline over the past several years. Despite the crime statistics, many community members felt the need to address negative perceptions and stereotypes they believe have been fueled by negative media attention.

5. Mentorship

Both the literature and experiences of neighborhood youth emphasized the importance of guidance and support in order to succeed, particularly in relation to educational and employment goals which may be new experiences to younger generations of refugees. Several local promising practices in the arena of mentorship highlighted the importance of structured, long-term programming that requires building trust and can be enhanced with a focus on family and culturally appropriate activities and needs.

6. Faith

Research shows that religious participation buffers the affects of neighborhood disorder and increases exposure to supportive relationships. Faith-based organizations can be particularly effective in building collaboration given their actively engaged constituents and ability to unite values with interests. In our conversations with the Somali population of Cedar-Riverside, they strongly identified with Islam and the mosques as a respected source of moral and social leadership already maintaining active, youth-led programs. In addition, a local Christian church is currently running a well-attended program serving Somali youth.

7. Recommendations

We recommend convening a collaborative group to address Somali young adult issues in Cedar Riverside. There are several advantages to neighborhood organizations working in collaboration:

- A spirit of cooperation versus competition for resources among service providers.
- An ability to utilize the unique strengths of each organization interested in committing to the greater good of the collaboration.
- An opportunity to better understand the services and resources provided by other organizations both to avoid duplication and to ensure resource allocation to critical service areas.
- While daunting to any one organization, the serious issues facing Somali young adults can be addressed when neighborhood leaders come together as a united front.

Despite the economic challenges in the Cedar Riverside area, the community has significant strength in of its many active neighborhood organizations. While we may have missed some important organizations, the following organizations have expressed both an interest in addressing issues for Somali young adults and a willingness to work in collaboration with others: Dar Al-Hijrah, Trinity Lutheran Church, SAEP, The Partnership (including the University of Minnesota, Augsburg College, Fairview Hospital, Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, the West Bank Business Association and the CRNRP), the Brian Coyle Community Center, the Confederation of Somali Community, the Somali Student Association and the African Development Center.

In order to build collaboration among these organizations we propose the following steps:

1. **Establish a central organization for coordination**.
   While decisions should be made collectively, there is still a need for one organization to take the lead on general group coordination and to serve as a point of entry for community concerns. This organization must also manage the group's budget and thus will play the administrative role of distributing funds to other collaborating organizations as the group sees fit. While funding decisions will be made collectively, it is important that the coordinating organization not be competing for such funds to avoid a conflict of interest. The Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program (CRNRP) is not a service provider and therefore is not in competition for funds. In addition, the organization is charged with the specific purpose of engaging neighborhood organizations and individuals in collective work to address community issues. Not only is the CRNRP interested in dedicating staff time to this role, the organization can also leverage its available funds to cover administrative expenses while working to build the collaboration.

2. **Convene a meeting of stakeholders.** Throughout our research process, three things became clear: 1) There is a strong interest from virtually every community organization and leader in the neighborhood to address Somali young adult issues in Cedar Riverside; 2) At present there is not an effective mechanism for communicating current and

proposed solutions, which leaves many concerned community members unaware of what others are doing to address these issues; 3) There is a strong interest across the spectrum of community organizations in working collaboratively with others, but no one group is initiating the collaboration.

We believe the first step should be to open the channels of communication and build awareness of the strong community interest in addressing the issues impacting Somali young adults, and to put into action the willingness of organizations to work collaboratively. The convening should build an understanding of each participating organization's current activities and strengths, determine the most effective structure for an ongoing collaborative entity, and form collective goals.

3. **Seek feedback.** We think it is important that organizations interested in building a collaborative entity solicit feedback from appropriate groups in the community. We recommend that focused conversation circles take place for groups of particular importance either culturally or by the very nature of their proximity to the issue at hand. At a minimum, we recommend three conversation circles: one to focus on imams or other representatives from the faith community; one for parents or other family members of at-risk young adults; and a third for the young adults themselves including both those at-risk and those in a position to serve in leadership roles.

4. **Build consensus.** The nature of collaborative efforts inherently presents challenges. Members of the collaboration will come bearing their own agendas and will see the issue from their particular frames of reference. We think it will be critical that the coordinating organization first establish buy-in from others, and second take the lead in a conversation to build consensus for ground rules and expectations. While the CRNRP seems to be in a particularly good position to serve in a coordination role, this must be determined by the group. After choosing a coordinator, the first task will be to discuss ground rules and expectations. In exchange for a seat at the table members of the collaborative must be willing to commit to the greater good of the group. This and other expectations should be well documented in a Memorandum of Understanding. The document should also address a governance structure and decision-making process.

5. **Establish priorities and objectives.** Once a collaborative entity is in place, the group should develop a work plan to establish priorities and objectives. The group will need to consider plans to raise funds in support of projects and programs. They should also begin to explore opportunities for particularly promising projects and programs. We think it will be important not to take on too many initiatives at once, necessitating a process for determining priorities. Our recommendation would be to form working groups to develop work plans for each initiative that can then be reviewed by all members of the collaboration.

Program Recommendations for Consideration

While we believe the community must identify their programming priorities, based on our research several opportunities seem worthy of consideration:

1) Mentorship with the Somali Student Association
Often first-generation college students, Somali students face additional challenges to educational attainment as documented in the literature. Members of the Somali Student Association as well as other University of Minnesota Somali and East African students expressed a strong interest in working with young adults in Cedar Riverside in both our individual interviews and learning circle conversations.

When asked what makes some Somali young adults in Cedar Riverside succeed, support and guidance—particularly in terms of education and career choices—came up in both learning circles. As a result, the Somali Student Association sees a powerful potential in serving as mentors. In terms of structure for such an initiative, the Bolder Options program may offer some insight as highlighted in the promising practices section.

2) Employment Training with The Partnership and African Development Center
As our research shows, Cedar Riverside neighborhood has a high rate of unemployment and immigrants often end up in "dead-end" low wage jobs. The Partnership includes several large institutions in Cedar Riverside that have the potential to provide livable-wage and career path employment to neighborhood residents. Using the Train-to-Work model highlighted in the promising practices section, these institutions could make a commitment to give hiring preference to neighborhood residents upon completion of a four-week soft-skill, employment-readiness program. The African Development Center may be in a good position to take on the classroom instruction in their new location especially given their focus on employment opportunities.

3) University of Minnesota Extension Program in Partnership with Young Adults
The University of Minnesota's Extension Program is currently working in partnership with the Minneapolis Foundation to build a youth-driven public information campaign to combat negative and violent images in the media. This may also provide an opportunity for young adults in Cedar Riverside to address perception issues regarding their involvement in violent gang activity and recruitment to return to Somalia to engage in terrorist activities. As described in the literature review, youth often have a strong interest in breaking down stereotypes, which may serve as a powerful engagement tool. This interest was demonstrated both in individual interviews and learning circle conversations. As described in the promising practices section, the City of Minneapolis Blueprint for Action also lists a goal to "recognize that violence is learned and can be unlearned by reducing the impact of violent messages in our media, culture and entertainment."

4) Bridge Program with The Partnership and local state and community colleges.
Our research shows that education and employment are key to improving the lives of at-risk young adults. The bridge program that we described in our Promising Practices section could bring both post-secondary education and career-path employment to Somali young adults. The institutions that make up The Partnership in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood could help in planning this program and in providing upwardly mobile jobs for the refugees. In addition, there may be an opportunity to tie a bridge program to Metropolitan State University's Urban Teacher Program (described in the Promising Practices section).

Recommendations For Future Research:

In the course of our project, we uncovered areas for potential future research:

- A formal community program assessment to gain a full picture of current programming and numbers served;
- Measures of efficacy for promising practices;
- Determining the total number of Somali young adults in Cedar-Riverside;
- Determining culturally specific interventions for the Somali population (including interventions for mental health issues such as addiction and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder);
- Consideration of the following recommendations from our learning circle conversations:
    - A language lab for school age youth.
    - A partnership program to teach Americans about the Somali culture.
    - Incentives for both parents and students to encourage participation in education and programs. For example, incentives for parents to participate due to time constraints from working multiple jobs.
    - Bilingual programs for those new to the United States.
    - Programs to get girls involved.
    - Educational programming – a tutor program by professionals.
    - Community service programs.

8. Funding Opportunities

The City of Minneapolis – Blueprint for Action

The most promising source of funding for the Cedar Riverside neighborhood to address issues facing Somali youth is the Mayor's initiative called the "Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence in Minneapolis". The initiative was launched in 2008, and is "a report and action plan that recognizes youth violence as a public health epidemic that requires a holistic, multi-faceted response" (City of Minneapolis, 2008).Cedar Riverside was not one of the initial neighborhoods targeted for support, as of a February 2009 quarterly report, officials recognized that the latest juvenile/young adult homicide occurred in the Somali community and responded by allocating resources to "either develop or fund culturally competent and effective intervention strategies that would potentially have an immediate impact and would augment law enforcement's efforts" (City of Minneapolis, 2009). Since that time city leaders have been meeting with representatives from the Cedar Riverside community, but an agreement has not been forged nor have the multiple service providers in the neighborhood agreed to work collaboratively to capitalize on limited funds (informed by interview).

The four major goals of the Blueprint for Action are:

- Every young person in Minneapolis is supported by at least one trusted adult in their family or their community.
- Intervene at the first sign that youth and families are at risk for or involved in violence.
- Do not give up on our kids, work to restore and get them back on track.
- Recognize that violence is learned and can be unlearned by reducing the impact of violent messages in our media, culture and entertainment (City of Minneapolis, 2009).

The funding dedicated to the Somali community in Cedar Riverside is for the current budget year. This underscores the importance of forming a collaborative plan as soon as possible.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

While the overwhelming majority of resources from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will be disbursed through a formulaic process, there will be a number of limited competitive grants available to nonprofit organizations (Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, 2009). These funds may require complex application processes and will be made available on varying timeframes and through a wide range of state and federal agencies (Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, 2009).

Funding applicable to Cedar Riverside youth programs may be available within the areas of Education and Employment and Job Training. For education, there will be $53.6 billion for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund including post-secondary education opportunities. For employment, there will be $3.95 billion for job training and employment services for both adults and youth, with priority given to green jobs and programs focused on the healthcare sector.

Community Grant-makers

Given the complexity and competition throughout the United States for federal funding, it is recommended that emphasis be placed on local opportunities for support. The following are some examples of potential sources of funds for programs focused on Cedar Riverside Somali youth:

- Best Buy Children's Foundation
- Comcast Cable Company
- Deluxe Corporation Foundation
- Frey Foundation
- Gannett Foundation
- General Mills Community Action
- Peter King Family Foundation
- Life Time Fitness Foundation
- Mall of American Foundation for Youth
- The McKnight Foundation
- The Minneapolis Foundation
- The Nash Foundation
- The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation
- RBC Foundation
- Slawik Family Foundation
- Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation
- Women's Foundation of Minnesota

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Literature Review

Literature Findings by Variable:

Violence
The experience of violence; whether through domestic violence, neighborhood violence, or wartime violence; has been shown in the literature to have strong negative effects on a young person's academic achievement and social outcomes, as well as increasing the likelihood of that person committing acts of violence later in life (Sprinkle, 2007), (Fergusson, Horwood, & Ridder, 2005), (Byrne & Taylor, 2007), and (Voisin, 2007)). Bernburg and Krohn (2003) suggest that being arrested (even if not charged) increases the likelihood of involvement in crime in early adulthood because the arrest negatively affects educational attainment and employment opportunities. Sweeten (2006) supports this assertion with analysis of data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. He showed that a "first-time court appearance during high school increases the chance of drop-out independent of involvement in delinquency."

Macmillan (2001) explains that

> young people are at a greater risk of experiencing violence. Violent victimization undermines perceptions of individual agency, disrupts social networks, and increases negative ideation. Given that violent experiences often take place during formative stages of life; they increase the risks of long-term involvement in crime and deviance and undermine processes of educational attainment and social achievement. Neighborhood effects are also examined: neighborhoods provide conditions that either facilitate or inhibit child development by fostering either collective efficacy that enables pro-social development or criminogenic conditions that undermine the ability of families to effectively supervise and socialize their children. Finally, the tendency of violence to proliferate early in the life cycle and afflict those already at risk for adversity further links violence to broader patterns of inequality that undermine quality of life.

Religion
Based on the literature, it seems that two aspects of religion affect outcomes: religious participation and religious identity. In their study of how religion affects outcomes, Wagener et al. constructed a variable for religiousness, which included a measure of how important religion was in the youth's life as well as the number of weekly hours participating in religious activities the youth reported. They found that "the influence of religious participation and importance upon thriving and risk outcomes were clearly mediated by developmental assets. These assets play an important role in promoting positive behaviors and are associated with fewer reports of risk

behavior," (Wagener, Furrow, King, Leffert, & Benson, 2003). This is compatible with Benson's Development Asset Framework. In fact, Benson (2002) describes faith communities as important sources of positive assets. The argument is that participation in faith communities improves youth "risk and thriving indicators," but that this effect is mediated by the fact that religious communities "increase participants' access to some of the developmental strengths known to inform health outcomes". While this result might seem to invalidate the role of religion in youth development outcomes, Wagener et al. states, "religious influence is better understood within the network of supportive relationships, personal obligations, and shared values common to religious communities. Participation in religious life results in greater exposure to developmental assets and this in turn is reflected in the positive relationships found between religious variables and developmental assets," (Wagener et al., 2003).

Johnson (2008) studied the role of African-American churches in reducing crime among black youth using fifth wave data from the National Youth Survey, a longitudinal survey of 1,725 people between 11 and 17 years of age. He constructed variables for neighborhood disorder, quality of family ties, attachment to family, and conventional attitudes and controlled for deviant peer influence. Religious involvement was shown to be non-significant for minor crime, but to have a significant and negative effect on serious crime: "Church attendance tends to buffer the effects of neighborhood disorder on serious crime among black youths," (Johnson, 2008).

Religious identity also seems to affect young adult outcomes in important ways. Britto and Amer (2007) conducted a study of cultural identity patterns and family context among Arab Americans. While Arab Americans are notably different from the Somali young adult population that our research is focused on, the findings of this study are relevant because 1) the target population was 18-25 year olds, 2) family ties for both Arab-Americans and Somalis are a key element of identity, and 3) Islam is a prime element of identity for both Arab-Americans and Somalis. This study indicated that Arab-American young adults that maintained a bi-cultural identity (Arab and American) as opposed to a predominantly Arab identity was more likely to be successful academically, but also experienced "greater acculturative stress and less family support" than those who identified more strongly with an Arab identity (Britto & Amer, 2007). The authors also hypothesize that because Arab identity is so strongly associated with a Muslim identity, young adults in their study did not report a predominantly American identity.

Research also suggests that religious identity varies according to gender. In a study of 12 to 18-year-old Muslim-American youth, it was shown that

> Muslim young men see and live in a much more fractured world where they perceive 'Muslim' and 'American' as two, almost contradictory parts of their hyphenated selves. Even when they may have experienced less discrimination by integrating in both worlds, they seemed to still feel 'split' between immersing in their home culture and integrating in both cultures. Partly as a result of the complex nature of their identity formation process, we observed much more anger and frustration, more silences and even a sense of hopelessness in the all-male group. On the other hand, young Muslim women live in a much more fluid, intertwined world where 'Muslim' and 'American' are not two contradictory influences on their identity, but are rather complementary 'currents,' each offering

> its own opportunities and challenges. The young women seem to have gained more freedom in the U.S. to choose their own path in terms of their religious practices, educational goals, and career expectations. They see both of these worlds as equally important parts of their identity… (Sirin & Fine, 2007).

Another study looking exclusively at second generation Muslim-American young adults (age 18 to 24), found that "[the participants] are all intensely aware of discrimination and surveillance and feel an obligation to respond with intention and purpose to protect themselves and loved ones, to resist reifying stereotypes or to negotiate the pressure to educate the misinformed. For these young women exercising their agency and freedom furthers justice for their collective communities." (Zaal, Salah, & Fine, 2007). While the authors recognize that their sample is not meant to be representative and their results not necessarily encompassing of the experiences of immigrant Muslim women in other contexts, they assert that many of "theoretical constructs, (such as fusion identities, scaffolding of scrutiny and a deep sense of social responsibility borne by daughters of the second generation) weigh heavily on young Muslim-American women throughout the U.S. and perhaps the globe," (Zaal et al., 2007).

English Language Proficiency

In analyzing determinants of English language proficiency using data from the Wilder Research Center (Wilder Research Center, 2000), Fennelly's and Palasz's (2003) findings show that in terms of English language acquisition, Somali refugees are doing well in comparison to some other major immigrant groups. The results showed 39.4 percent of Somali speaking and understanding English "very well." This was more than two times any of the other ethnic groups. At the same time however, only 10.1 percent spoke English at home. In English reading ability, Somali were again almost twice as high as other groups at the highest level. The breakdown by gender shows almost twice as many Somali men speak well compared to Somali women.

However, problems in immigrant families can develop when children learn the language much faster than adults. Mouw and Xie state that parents want their children to continue to speak the language of their homeland (as cited in Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). Potocky-Tripodi, (2002) does point to bilingualism as the preferred outcome and discusses that this does not usually mean equal proficiency in both languages. Bilingualism can provide an advantage in the workplace as the economy becomes more global (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). Mesch, Turjeman, and Fishman (2008) also discuss the advantages of bilingualism in their study of Russian immigrants in Israel. Their findings show that strong identification with either the ancestral or dominant culture including speaking the language means that it is less likely for youth and young adult immigrants to become involved in criminal and violent activity.

In Stewart et al. (2008), Somali refugees and Chinese immigrants and refugees in Canada identified language difficulties as their primary challenge stating "Language mediated the effects of other challenges faced by these newcomers." Their findings also indicated that adults have a difficult time learning a new language.

Employment and Immigrants and Refugees

Contrary to the idea that they are a net drain, immigrants and refugees generally have a positive effect on local economies (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). Overall immigrants contribute more to an

economy than they remove except in times of recession or in geographical areas with high numbers of immigrants (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). Studies showing immigrants as a net drain are usually flawed for a number of reasons including understated tax contributions from immigrants, over stated service costs for immigrants, ignoring economic benefits of immigrant-owned businesses, and overstating the immigrant population (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002).

Potocky-Tripodi (2003) looked at the Wilder survey data (Wilder Research Center, 2000) used by Fennelly and Palasz (2003). For her secondary analysis, she chose only individuals of working age (18-65). Her study then "used a cross-sectional design to test five of the six explanatory factors in Kuhlman's theory [as cited in Potocky-Tripodi, 2003, p. 68] of refugee economic adaptation: demographic characteristics, flight-related characteristics, host-related characteristics, residency characteristics, and noneconomic aspects of adaptation." Her findings are consistent with her three previous studies and show that programs to enhance refugees' economic adaptation should target demographic characteristics with the greatest influence. These are gender, disability, education, and household composition. She notes: "Among these, education is the one variable that is much more amenable to intervention than the others.... The accumulated data clearly indicate that refugees can substantially improve their economic status by advancing their education" (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003).

Her findings also show that a refugee's length of residence does not improve economic status (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003). This is sometimes due to rapid employment, which will often place refugees in dead end jobs with no upward mobility. This early employment focus has changed under the federal refugee resettlement program where agencies have begun to recognize the problem and design programmatic elements aimed at long-term economic enhancement.

Research shows that income is lower for noncitizens in the US as compared to native-born citizens and naturalized citizens with forty-six percent of noncitizens making less than $20,000 compared to twenty-one percent and twenty-three percent for native-born citizens and naturalized citizens respectively (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). More noncitizens live below the poverty level (21%) than naturalized or native-born (9% and 11% respectively) (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). Nearly 30 percent of all children of foreign-born parents live in poverty (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002).

Most immigrants will be working jobs in the service industry or as operators/laborers/ fabricators; the service sector alone employs 19 percent of recent immigrants compared to 9 percent of the native-born (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). Underemployment caused by having to accept jobs below one's level of education or abilities is also a troublesome problem in refugee communities and often caused by non-recognition of education, training, or licensure obtained in the country of origin (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002; Minneapolis Foundation, 2004).

Education

The literature suggests that parental educational achievement is a strong predictor of child outcomes. Lower academic achievement is associated with ineffective discipline and child antisocial behavior as well as the child's own achievement (DeBaryshe, Patterson, & Capaldi, 1993). It has also been shown that greater parent educational attainment decreases the chance that children will behave violently as a young adult (Sprinkle, 2007).

In attempting to understand how young adult education affects development outcomes, it is helpful to employ the Development Asset Framework developed by Peter Benson and his colleagues at the Search Institute. The Development Asset Framework links individual and contextual factors that contribute to development outcomes. The frame isolates 40 “assets” – factors that contribute to positive youth development, including external assets (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time) and internal assets (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity) (Benson, 2002). Results of research making use of this frame indicate “first, the higher the total number of developmental assets, the stronger a variety of educational attainment outcomes, including class rank and grade point average in core subjects; and second, the total number of assets as well as a particular configuration of assets account for as much variance (or more) in educational achievement as do conventional schooling factors such as per-pupil expenditures, curricular requirements, teacher preparation, and leadership.” (Benson, 2002).

Employment and Education

Human capital is one of the most important factors for immigrants and refugees and the greater an immigrant's human capital resources, the greater is their economic wellbeing. Potocky-Tripodi (2002) lists education as "one of the single most important human capital variables." She regards it as even more important than English proficiency or length of residence. Bleakley and Chin state that "English ability has only a small direct effect on earnings" in itself and is largely mediated by schooling (as cited in Hall and Farkas, 2008).

Hall and Farkas (2008) used monthly Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) data from 1996–1999 and 2001– 2003 to create age/earnings profiles of low-skill immigrant and native male workers. Their findings show immigrants earning 24% less than native workers in the same employment. The findings also show that education was a positive factor and lead to economic gains for immigrants both natives and immigrants.

Immigrant Status and Civic Engagement

According to the results of 80 immigrant interviews examining the role of culture in terms of engagement or lack thereof, it was determined that while all considered it important to be civically engaged at the community level and almost all felt the same at the political level, the majority of immigrants were not engaged in culturally focused civic behaviors (Jensen, 2008). This is somewhat in contrast to the literature that concludes that among "exclusion" or minority groups and particularly those subject to discrimination, civic participation focuses on activities that promote the interests of their ethnic group—most commonly in the form of voting for candidates that support policies beneficial to that group (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2002; Stepick & Stepick, 2002). However, a common theme among the literature and interviews was that involvement at the community level is most important, which Sanchez and Jankowski conclude is because minority youth feel they have been systematically excluded from the mainstream of American society and believe they have little political or economic power nationally.

In terms of motives in the Jensen interviews, culture was twice as likely to be mentioned as a source of engagement rather than disengagement (Jensen, 2008). Seven cultural themes were

identified as motives for civic participation: cultural remembrance, tradition of service, welfare of immigrant or cultural communities, assistance to country of origin, bridging communities, building a new social network, and appreciation of American democracy (Jensen, 2008). Although most of the participants were engaged, of those that were not three themes emerged as to their lack of participation: working hard, ethnic exclusion, and not having citizenship (Jensen, 2008). Stepick and Stepick also found that the ways immigrants engage in their new communities depends on their experiences and characteristics.

Finally, in terms of a historical perspective on youth immigrants and their relationship to civic engagement, it was found that today's immigrant youth are adjusting to a different world than the last great wave of immigrants 100 years ago and thus have different opportunities (Stepick & Stepick, 2002). Similar to their predecessors, there is an expectation that immigrants become American, but no longer at the cost of demeaning and abandoning their home country culture (Stepick & Stepick, 2002). As a result, a new form of citizenship has emerged that is transnational where immigrants retain ties to their homeland while also engaging in their new communities.

Structured Youth Programming and Resulting Behaviors

The fact that youth have a significant amount of free time can be viewed both positively and negatively. Structured programming can turn free time into a positive is structured programming. Studies suggest that structured youth programs have demonstrated strong, positive impacts on youth development including increases in social, academic and cognitive competencies and decreases in negative behaviors such as dropping out of school and antisocial behaviors (Zaff, Moore, Papillo & Williams, 2003). In addition, participation in structured programming as youth leads to increased civic engagement as adults (Zaff et al., 2003).

Examining a panel of 13,120 adolescents, there was a significant linear relationship between participating in extracurricular activity and attending college (70.4% more likely), voting (66.4% more likely) and volunteering (51.1% more likely) (Zaff et al., 2003). Attending religious services either weekly or occasionally was related approximately to a 24% increased likelihood of voting (Zaff et al., 2003). These findings are similar to a literature review on young people's involvement in civic engagement programs. Young people who are involved in civic engagement programs are likely to be more involved in school, to graduate from high school, to hold more positive civic attitudes, and to avoid teen pregnancy and drug use than those who are not (Zaff & Michelsen, 2001).

Overall, consistent participation in extracurricular activities from 8th grade through 12th grade predicts academic achievement and pro-social behavior in young adulthood (Zaff et al., 2003). Analyses of nationally representative datasets revealed that participating in civic activities or any extracurricular activity during high school predicts participation in civic activities in adulthood (Zaff & Michelson #1). Adolescents who are involved in civic affairs have been found to have better work ethics as adults, to be more likely to volunteer and vote, and to have more socially responsible attitudes. Experimental studies demonstrate that participating in service-learning or service and mentoring programs is associated with an increase in positive citizenship.

Several proposed reasons for the apparent positive effects that extracurricular activities were skill acquisition, engagement in school and community, and positive relationships with adults. In

addition, it was noted that community-based programs are especially important for high school dropouts who do not have access to school-based activities (Zaff et al., 2003).

Finally, research suggests that positive approaches in programming (promoting skills and assets instead of preventing deficits) seems more likely to engage adolescents and to help them realize their potential and avoid negative influences (Zaff & Moore, 2003).

Family and Peer Relationships among Youth and Resulting Behaviors:
Evidence suggests that parents can influence the positive citizenship of youth. To be specific, parents who act as role models, reinforce volunteering behaviors in their children, and participate in activities with their children, have children who are more likely to volunteer (Zaff & Michelson, 2002).

In a literature review of influences on positive adolescent development, (Zaff & Moore, 2003) demonstrate that relationships are key to adolescent well-being: parent-child interactions and bonding greatly influence adolescents' choices and attitudes; peer relationships—including positive ties among teens-—are important; and siblings, teachers and mentors can provide additional support to young people. Another important finding is that adolescent behaviors tend to cluster, meaning that a teen with one positive or negative characteristic has other corresponding characteristics. For example, young people who are engaged in civic activities also tend to do better in school, to be in better psychological health, and to take part in fewer risky behaviors. This relationship has also been effective in reverse - adolescents who take part in programs that build relationships, engage young people, and provide well-implemented and structured activities tend to have lower rates of pregnancy and drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and higher rates of civic engagement and school achievement (Zaff & Moore, 2003).

In a statistical regression used to determine the effect of extracurricular activity participation, several similar findings emerged including a positive peer influence predicting a 23% increased likelihood of participating in volunteer efforts and a negative influence predicting a 14% decrease in volunteering (Zaff et al., 2003). Some of the variables were also found to be related to one another. Having one parent and one guardian in the home is associated with a 29% decreased likelihood of attending college (Zaff et al., 2003). Consistently low parental involvement resulted in a 20% decreased likelihood that adolescents would vote (Zaff et al., 2003).

Appendix 2 - Organizing Team

Because this research project was undertaken according to the methodology of community-based research, and since the research explicitly focused on the needs and outcomes of a specific group of people ("at-risk" Somali young adults), we felt it important to include, as much as possible, that target demographic as a community partner in addition to our two official partners. To accomplish this, we worked in tandem with a team of students from the University of Minnesota which included four Somali young adults and one Oromo young adult and which was established for the purpose of organizing in Cedar-Riverside around the issues facing Somali and Oromo young adults.

Organizing as a methodology involves the understanding that there is power in relationships, and that powerful, effective relationships may be built across differences by understanding ways in which individuals' self-interests overlap. This may also be understood in terms of social capital. Robert Putnam explains, "Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000). That is, social capital does not reside within individuals. The capacities of individuals make up human capital. Social capital exists in the *relationships* between individuals in that community, with the implication that extending and strengthening those relationships builds the capacities of the community as a whole to act. And the capacity to act *is* power (Chambers, 2003).

The organizing team members held one-to-one meetings with neighborhood leaders in an effort to discover and promote awareness of areas of overlapping self-interest. Though it proved quite difficult even for not-"at-risk" Somali young adults to build to find and build relationships with "at-risk" Somali young adults, the organizing team made a concerted effort to find and get to know members of that group.

Because of the efforts of the young adult organizing team, awareness of and participation around the issues of "at-risk" young adults in Cedar-Riverside has increased. The groundwork has been laid for relationships with the young adults, which is, in part, associated with this capstone project and our community partners. Also, the efforts of the organizing team show that, for any potential programs to be effective and credible, young adults themselves must be consulted and incorporated into the program design process.

Appendix 3 – Interview Guides and Learning Circle Discussion Guide

Key Informational Interview Guide:

1. Tell me about your background and experiences within the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.

- Probes:
    - Personal background
    - Work experience
    - Personal time spent in neighborhood
    - Overall impression of the neighborhood
    - Community assets
    - if applicable, how long living in neighborhood
    - if applicable, why did you move to C-R

2. Tell me what you/your organization are working on now and the most important priorities and programs relating to the Cedar Riverside community

- Probes:
    - Working with immigrants?
    - Working with youth?
    - Working with young adults?
    - What ages and numbers participate?
    - How does safety in the neighborhood affect your organization?

3, What is your personal experience (if any) with Somali young adults (ages 18-25)?

- Probes:
    - Causes of positive behavior
    - Causes of negative behavior
    - What solutions (and programming) would you like to see
    - How would you describe these youth to a friend?

4. If you were in a position to design or create a program addressed to the interests and needs of these Somali adults, what would be at the top of your list?

- Probes:
    - Every 2nd generation of young adults has faced special challenges when it comes to becoming engaged citizens and employees. How do you see the challenges and opportunties they face as similar or different from other groups and times?
    - Is this something that fits the mission of your organization?
    - Have you heard of any exciting programs addressed to Somali young adults or another immigrant group in that age range?

Young Adult Key Informational Interview Guide:

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

- Probes:
    - Ethnicity: Oromo? Somali? Other?
    - Do you identify with any religious group?
        - Do you visit any neighborhood mosques?
        - Do you participate in religious activities?
    - Who do you live with (family? Mother? Father? Extended?)
    - What does your family (or whoever they live with) do (job, activities)?
    - What level of education do the people in your family have?
    - Do you self-identify with any clan or group?
    - Can you tell me anything about your life before moving to C-R?
        - Did you ever live in a refugee camp? If so, what was that like?
        - Have you ever experienced violence?
        - Have you ever talked to someone about these experiences (getting at whether they have received any mental health care)?

2. How long have you lived in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood?

- Probes:
    - why did you move to C-R
    - what do you do for fun in the neighborhood
    - are you working right now, if so where
    - are you in school now, if so where
    - overall impression of the neighborhood
    - what are the things you like about the neighborhood
    - **how many years of school have you completed**

3. What programs or organizations are you involved with in the neighborhood?

- Probes:
    - What are the age groups and ethnicities of people participating in the same programs as you?
    - Do you think there are enough programs and opportunities for Somali people to get involved?
    - Do you think there are enough programs and opportunities for young adults to get involved?
    - How does safety in the neighborhood affect your participation?

4. How would you describe the typical Somali young adult in your community?

- Probes:
    - What do you think are the main concerns of your age group?
    - Causes of positive behavior
    - Causes of negative behavior
    - What solutions (and programming) would you like to see
    - **Do most of them have a job?**
    - **What type of work do they do?**
    - **Have most complete high school? How many go on to college?**

5. If you were in a position to help create a program for Somali young adults, what would be some of your ideas?

- Probes:
    - How do you see the challenges and opportunities your group is facing as similar or different from other immigrant groups and generations?
    - Have you heard of any programs happening anywhere else that you think would be good for Somali young adults here?

Anything else we should know?

Learning Circle Discussion Guide:

Introduction
The moderator and note taker will introduce themselves and thank everyone for coming. Next the moderator will ask everyone else to introduce themselves and say something about why they decided to participate in the focus group as an ice-breaker. Then the following introductory statement will be made:

You are all here to take part in a "learning circle" conversation about issues facing Somali young adults, programs for Somali young adults, and resources available to Somali young adults. We hope to learn about your experiences, especially your innovations for addressing problems people of your age group are facing. Because we value your time and input, we have a few ground rules we would like to share—and we encourage you to build upon them and make adjustments as needed so that we are all comfortable and can have a good experience in today's learning circle:

1) Everyone should participate in the discussion. Please join in the conversation when you have something you are able to add.
2) Please do not interrupt someone who is speaking. If you would like to say something while someone else is speaking, please raise your hand to indicate that you would like to speak next.
3) Please be aware of how much you are speaking to make sure others have as much of a chance to speak as you do.
4) Please respect other people's opinions. We expect and encourage differences of opinion and the sharing of different experiences.

Is there anything else you would like to suggest or changes you would like to make to this list? If not, the moderator will begin with the following discussion questions:

1) If you were speaking to an outsider, how would you describe what it is like being a young Somali adult in Cedar Riverside?
Probes:
How is life similar or different from other generations of Somalis in Cedar Riverside?
How is it similar or different from people you can identify with living in other areas?

- Are there different challenges here?
- Are there different opportunities here?

Is there anything else you would say if you were explaining life here to an outsider?

2) Describe what it is to be a successful young Somali adult in Cedar Riverside.
Probes:
What do you believe causes Somali young adults to succeed?
What do you believe causes them to be unsuccessful?
What do you believe causes them to take part in criminal or violent behavior?

3) Can you describe the activities you are involved in?

Probes:
How do you see them addressing some of the challenges mentioned before?
How do you see them taking advantage of the resources and opportunities mentioned before?
How do your activities involve reaching out to others that don't usually participate?
How do your activities involve collaborating with others (people or organizations)?

4) If you had the necessary funding and were in a position to design programs and services specifically for Somali young adults in Cedar Riverside, what would you say is your first priority?
Probes:
Would education be an important aspect of programming?
Would employment be an important aspect of programming?
Would safety and violence reduction be an important aspect of programming?
Would you have different recommendations if you were told that safety and violence reduction were to be your first priority?
What organizations, groups or individuals would you want to see directly involved?

5) Is there anything else that anyone would like to bring up as other important questions or topics relating to programming and opportunities for Somali young adults in Cedar Riverside?

6) Please give feedback about this learning circle.
Probes:
How have you been affected by participating?
Do you feel empowered?
Do you feel that others care and are listening?
Do you feel that their work is important and making a difference?
What actions might you take now, after participating in the discussion, that you might not have taken before?

After feedback, the moderator will thank everyone for their time and express appreciation for having an opportunity to learn from everyone.

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