5-2008

Designing a Creative Leadership Program

Randah Taher
Buffalo State College

Recommended Citation

Taher, Randah, "Designing a Creative Leadership Program" (2008). *Creativity and Change Leadership Graduate Student Master's Projects*. 125.
https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects/125

Designing a Creative Leadership Program
by

Randah Taher

An Abstract of a Project
in
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2008

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

Designing a Creative Leadership Program

Designing a leadership program can follow one of two paths: using a model that worked before and had a great impact, or creating something from scratch. Once chose the second path, it created two additional options: build it in-house within the team, or open up to other contributors.

The design of the leadership program offered by the Organizational Capacity Building (OCB) Unit of United Way Toronto (UWT) adopted a participatory approach in building it with participants and partners' input. The conception of the program started in early 2007 with the Board of Trustees approving the allocation of resources in June 2007. In the following months, the program went through a development phase that consisted of having internal and external discussions with key stakeholders, setting the stage for expansion, and opening up resources for managing and supporting this program. The program is launched as a pilot initiative and is expected to evolve in the coming months and year. I joined the OCB team in November 2007.

The making of the program modeled the leadership skills I foresaw the participants take from it. The planning and implementation of the program incorporated three phases: design and development, implementation, and evaluation. This Master's project focused on phase one, the design and development of the program, and it documented the process starting from January until May 2008. In this write-up, I would like to share with you the journey of designing and building the Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders (CITY Leaders).

8.5.2008
_____
Date

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

Designing a Creative Leadership Program

A Project in
Creative Studies

by

Randah Taher

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2008

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

Designing a Creative Leadership Program

A Project in
Creative Studies

by

Randah Taher

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science
May 2008

Dates of Approval:

May 30, 2008

Dr. Mary C. Murdock
Associate Professor

30.5.2008

Randah Taher
Student

Acknowledgement

First and last, I thank God for giving me the strength, the patience, the joy of seeking knowledge and the ability to apply it in my life. Next I am forever grateful for my mother, Hayat Taher, and her great support and encouragement. She motivated me when I felt down and cheered for me when I was on top of my game. She was my eyes, my heart and my soul every step of the way even when she lived far from me. On a day to day basis, I had my husband, Mohammad Lataifeh, on my side. He took charge of daily issues and freed my mind to focus on my studies. He temporarily scarified his career to life up mine, and became my best friend, brother, mentor, sounding board member, and teacher. Without him, I could not take one step in this unforgettable journey. Our children, although very young, played an immense role in my success. Sari, who was 5 years old, gave me the opportunity to look at life through his eyes and opened up my mind. Joud and her 18 months charisma brought joy and laughter at the beginning and end of every long day. Both inspired me to achieve my goals and reach for the stars. My sisters, Rana, Reem and Dala Taher have each provided her support in her own special way, and it was always what I needed, at the right time. But I wouldn't be true to myself if I didn't thank the one person who shaped me the way I am today: my father, Taher Taher, who held the world's love in his heart. He believed I could do anything I wanted and used to tell me *inti gad-ha we-gdood* (you are up to it, and you can do it). And although he is no longer with us in this world, his words and thoughts have always guided my way throughout my life.

Since I focused this project on my work, I instantly had a second family that supported me on this journey, my team at the Organizational Capacity Building unit. I want to thank my director, Amanuel Melles, for giving me this creative challenge, and staying flexible and supportive of my studies during these hectic times. He has shown generous guidance that helped bring this project to its success. I also could not have done it without the program's assistant, Nadeesha Watawala, for she had made those tedious jobs look like a sail on the beach, and has provided extra support, and needed humor, during our high tense periods. Many thanks for Cara Naiman and her creative distractions, Linney Lau and her "project-saving" memory, and Yonatan Ghebrey for keeping me on track and focused when it came to measuring my success. For all those whom I met and have made my days brighter at United Way Toronto, Thank you.

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

"Because I have been athirst

I will dig a well so others may drink".

- Arabic proverb

Purpose

The goal of this project was to document the design and planning of a youth leadership program developed by the United Way Toronto (UWT) in early 2008. The program was launched to enhance managerial and leadership skills of young adults working in the social services sector in the City of Toronto, Canada. This program was very unique in the way it emphasized collaborative leadership, creative methodology and a bottom-up approach. I wanted to document the process in which it was developed and built for learning purposes.

Background

United Way Toronto offers capacity building supports to its member and funded agencies and other non-profit organizations through its Organizational Capacity Building (OCB) Unit. The mandate of OCB is to provide training, tools and support to increase the capacity of staff and board volunteers of non-profit organizations who deliver services and meet community needs. It aims to create stronger, more effective organizations and programs in the city, and it supports a new generation of nonprofit leadership that reflected Toronto's diversity. Additionally, OCB aspires to create a more organized and educated sector that is able to articulate systemic challenges and responses. It does so by focusing on four pillars: (1) Investing in leaders for change; (2) enhancing organizational management and governance systems; (3) building a vibrant social services sector; and (4) supporting new priorities.

Under the first pillar, investing in leaders for change, several strategies and programs aided this stream. One of them is the youth leadership program, an initiative to support up to 100 young adults – people in their twenties and early thirties – working in the social services sector of Toronto, and to offer them training in management and leadership development.

Description

   This initiative developed for the targeted audience and emphasized both leadership and managerial skills training, was not available anywhere else in the province of Ontario (Crammond & Howarth, 2005). Other programs dealt with either an educational approach to management, or leadership through activism. Doing it right and not just implementing a pre-designed format was extremely important to prove the value of investing in young leaders in the sector, as well as considering non-conventional methods of delivering a program. Not only was the social services sector suffering from a lack of fresh leaders and change agents, young people were frequently undervalued in their ideas and time (because of age, expertise, organizational politics, or other reasons).

   According to the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network's (YNPN, n.d.) survey of their 10,000 members, forty-eight percent of young leaders considered lack of management experience a barrier to reaching an executive position, and many looked for professional career advancement through the private, public sector or graduate schools. In addition, young adults were increasingly stretched in their capacities to do more work with fewer resources, and usually their work is on a contract basis with minimal benefits. As a result, they tended to work two or more part time jobs and stay in their job levels longer, missing on opportunities for career advancements (Crammond & Howarth, 2005; Grassroots Youth Collaborative [GYC], 2005). Many considered leaving the sector for multiple reasons; including burnout, low salary and wages, lack of career advancement, and job related stress (YNPN, n.d.).

   In terms of designing a program for this audience, experts and literature reviews emphasized the importance of youth engagement in decision-making at all levels of program design and implementation (GYC, 2005; City of Toronto, 2006; Crammond & Howarth, 2005; Bonnell & Zizys, 2005), which was sometimes referred to as a "youth-infusion approach" (Crammond & Howarth, 2005, p. 11). To build on this element, I consulted participants early in the program development stage. And while searching for trainers for each session, we quickly realized their interest in understanding the process of building this program. Consequently, we created a consortium of learning partners that connected different stakeholders who were involved in the program at various times and levels and who had an interest in both youth programming and leadership in general.

Rationale for Choice

As the Program Development Manager for youth leadership, I had a vast interest in creating a unique program that impacted both the participants and the trainers as well. I also wanted to enhance our knowledge as the Organizational Capacity Building Unit within the United Way Toronto. For example:

Our Learning Partners Consortium (LPC) included several leading educational institutes, provincial foundations, social enterprises and youth organizations that assisted in developing this program, as well as learned from the process of working together.

Some of the learning partners were interested in adapting part of the program to their specific audience (youth at-risk, newcomers, etc).

Organizations in the Canada might realize the benefits of collaborative leadership in program design and processes.

Partners and participants were interested to learn about the different programs available in the city and work together on future projects.

The aim of this initiative was of a dual purpose: a) to affect the participants receiving the training and enhance their professional and managerial expertise in working in the non-profit sector, and b) to open up conversation with other partners on changing the system of running programs from a silo mode to a more collaborative style. It was a chance to impact both individual and organizational ends at the same time, and at this level, much creativity is needed to make it a success.

How it Improves Quality of Life for Me

On a personal level, I had a great interest in this project because I saw myself learning many things about running a venture that promoted creativity and change as its core components. It provided complex and unique opportunities that I dealt with and learned a lot from as well as made me feel a true agent of change. My list of personal goals outnumbers the space provided in this paper, however, my main aspirations were to:

Coordinate a number of resources and tasks to build a one-of-a-kind leadership program.

Facilitate discussions among individuals and groups, both separately and jointly.

Create the guidelines for a creative leadership development method to be used in different programs throughout Canada and the world.

Coach groups who go through the program to become visible and influential in their fields.

Advance my skills in making key decisions with the least amount of information and time.

Transfer the newly acquired knowledge to other ventures I embark on in the future.

How it Improves Quality of Life for Others

Participants who contributed to the open forum and the online survey expressed their desire to apply for this program because it advanced their skills and experiences. Their reasoning were wide and ample, and some examples of what this program provided include:

Receive training in finance, communication skills, fundraising, management, conflict resolution, and understanding the organizational structure.

Network with other young leaders who are also committed to social justice.

Find an outlet for sharing information and expanding knowledge in current field of expertise.

Partners and trainers who expressed their interest in becoming part of this program listed some of their benefits as:

Learn what others are doing in the city in terms of youth engagement and leadership

Network with organizations for future projects to build on each others' strengths

Connect with the program to offer training, provide a space, or bring in mentors.

What This Project Adds to Creativity

Since its inception, the program relied heavily on being open to new ways of planning a program, generating ideas and connecting with other networks. At every milestone of the design, issues were raised as "In what ways can we engage everyone in the process?", "How might we address this challenge?" or "How might we build on each others' strengths?".

When moving from one task to the next, creativity was included in everything I worked with. From deferring judgment, to building on each others ideas, up to considering novel solutions; much attention was given to model the creativity and leadership skills that I wish to see participants use regularly by the end of the program.

SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE

"If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the

house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the

threshold of your own mind".

- Lebanese-American poet/writer, Gibran Khalil Gibran

Literature Introduction

One of the advantages I had at my job is the access to a wealth of resources and materials of program design and evaluation. I browsed all previous programs of UWT and other collaborators in the city, and learned from their evaluations and impact. I also looked into the library of my colleagues who ran other leadership program at the OCB unit that targeted Middle Managers and Executive Directors in the social services sector of Toronto. From these reports, I was able to get a sense of what was expected from a leadership program and what were the main elements that must be present, such as the importance of mentoring and the peer learning network in any successful program. Mainly, I learned in great depth about evaluation, community impact and logistics management. Equipped with information on the technical side, I started searching in my creativity library for literature that handled leadership as its main component. I immediately recognized the fortune having my teachers the authors of a book on creative leadership (Puccio, Murdock & Mance, 2007). I used the outline presented in the book as my road map for further research on a more specific leadership that dealt with community initiatives and empowerments. Beyond these two areas, my next search was specifically on youth; their programs, learning styles, expectations, important issues, and management skills. I paid attention to those who are working in the nonprofit sector and can benefit from the extra support provided by the program. Out of this research, it was apparent that three additional elements, not previously embraced in other programs must be in this initiative in order for it to be a winner: First, the availability of an online forum for asynchronous discussions that happens in between sessions. Second, using a hands-on approach meant testing their newly acquired knowledge right away on a project of their choice. Finally, having multiple presenters provided the maximum exposure to different thinking styles and numerous options of networking and optimal learning.

Selected Bibliography

The following resources were examined to understand the impact of a leadership program on youth working in the nonprofit sector. I used my own networks in addition to the ones provided by my employer, United Way Toronto, to research most effective ways of collaborative leadership and participatory approach in programming. The list includes:

Bloom, P.N. & Dees, J.G. (2008). Cultivate your ecosystem. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. 6(1), 47 – 53

Bonnell, J. & Zizys, T. (2005, February). *Best practices for youth programs* (Available from the United Way of Greater Toronto, Organizational Capacity Building Unit, 26 Wellington st. East, 11th floor, Toronto, ON, M5E 1W9, Canada).

Centre for Community Leadership (CCL) (2005, July). *Trends and issues in the voluntary sector: A youth leadership perspective.* Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario: Leadership Connext. Retrieved on December 13, 2007 from http://www.communityleadership.net/index.php/weblog/detail_news/460/

City of Toronto Social Development, Finance and Administration Division. (2006). *Involve youth2: A guide to meaningful youth engagement.* Toronto, ON: City of Toronto (www.toronto.ca/involveyouth)

Comparetta, C. & Fien, A. (2006). Technical leadership development program: Participant guide. Unpublished manuscript.

Crammond, R. & Howarth, R. (2005, February). *Capacity building for organizations working with youth.* (Available from the United Way of Greater Toronto, Organizational Capacity Building Unit, 26 Wellington st. East, 11th floor, Toronto, ON, M5E 1W9, Canada).

Fix, E., & Sivak, N. (2007). The growing case for youth engagement through culture [Electronic version]. *Our Diverse Cities, 4,* 145 – 151.

Grassroots Youth Collaborative (GYC). (2005). *Youth on youth: Grassroots youth collaborative on youth led organizing in the city of Toronto.* Toronto, ON: Remi Warner.

Hannum, K.M., Martineau, J.W., & Reinelt, C. (2007). *The handbook of leadership development evaluation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Hedge, C. A. (2007). *Community leadership programs: Where they have been and where they are going*. Unpublished masters' project, Buffalo State College, State University of New York, NY.

James Irvine's Foundation. (2000, March). *How to Strengthen youth-serving nonprofits? Experiences of the James Irvine's Foundation's Youth Development Initiative (YDI).* Encino, CA: Human Interaction Research Institute. Retrieved on January 13, 2008 from www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/former/YDI_Report.pdf.

Kumreuther, F. (2005). *Up next: Generation change and the leadership of nonprofit organizations* (Executive Transitions Monograph Series No. 4). Baltimore, Maryland: The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Mumford, M.D., Zaccaro, S.J., Harding, F.D., Jacobs, T.O., & Fleishman, E.A. (2000). Leadership skills for a changing world: Solving complex social problems. *Leadership Quarterly Journal. 11 (1).* 11 – 35.

Pancer, S.M., Rose-Krasnor, L., & Loiselle, L. (n.d.). Youth conferences as a context for engagement. Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement.

Philanthropic Foundations Canada (2007). *Building leadership capacity: A survey of Canadian funders investing in building leadership capacity in the non-profit sector.* . Montreal, QC: Philanthropic Foundations Canada.

Podolny, J.M. (2007). Networks for good works. *Stanford Social Innovation Review.* 5(1), 32 – 39

Powazek, D. (2002). *Design for community.* Indianapolis, IN: New Riders Publishing.

Puccio, G.J., Firestien, R.L., Coyle, C., & Masucci, C. (2006). A review of the effectiveness of CPS training: A focus on workplace issues. *Creativity and Innovation Management Journal. 15 (1).* 19 – 33.

Puccio, G.J., Murdock, M.C., & Mance, M. (2007). *Creative leadership: Skills that drive change.* Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Rosenberg, M.J. (2007, June 3). *Beyond e-learning: New approaches to managing and delivering organizational knowledge.* Paper presented at the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) International Conference and Exposition. Handout retrieved February 7, 2008, from http://astd2007.astd.org/speakerhandouts.htm

Rowan, L & Dumont, J. (2007, June). *Leveraging organizational culture and leadership development: The American Eagle Outfitters culture and Emerging Leaders Program story.* (conference handout ASTD. Five Star development, inc.

United Way of Greater Toronto (2005). *A toolkit for outcome measurement: Building on logic models.* Toronto, ON: United Way of Greater Toronto.

Wellesley Institute. (2007, October). *Wellesley institute executive leadership program: Program evaluation.* Toronto, ON: April Boyington Wall, Joan Roberts, Pauline O'Connor, & Nasim Haque.

Young Nonprofit Professionals Network. (n.d.). *Stepping up or stepping out: A report on the readiness of next generation nonprofit leaders.* San Francisco, CA: Josh Solomon & Yarrow Sandahl.

SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN

"Instead of allowing ourselves a creative journey,

we focus on the length of the trip".

- Julia Cameron, The Artist's Way.

The design of the youth leadership program started in late November 2007 in the hopes of starting the first cohort in spring/summer of 2008. The planning and implementation of the program incorporated three phases: design and development, implementation, and evaluation. The Master's project focused on phase one, the design and development of the program, and it documented the process starting from January until May 2008. Table 1 gives an overview of the program (all phases), followed by a more detailed description of phase I activities.

Table 1: Masters Project Process Plan.

Phases …	General overview of the activities …
Phase I: Program design. The designing and planning of the program started in January 2008 and continued for the duration of my semester course, until May 2008.	Potential participants of the program were involved in the design process from the start through the open forum and its idea generating tools, followed by the online idea management software. Their inputs shaped the entire program and its components. A consortium of learning partners was created for the training providers and other organizations interested to learn from this initiative as well as share their experiences in running similar programs. At the end of phase I, documentation of the process started and the write-up was finalized.
Phase II: Program implementation. This phase includes all the program components, and it continued from May to September 2008.	The program was created of several components (see appendix A for brochure), starting with the 5-months training; including the off-site retreat, online forum, community visits, final project, and graduation. During this phase, I monitored the progress of learning for both the participants and partners, facilitated online discussions, and started the next group planning.

Phase III: Program evaluation. Graduation was set for the end of September of 2008, followed by evaluation and networking.	The graduation gave an opportunity for participants to present their projects to other groups and partners. Once completed, they started the network activities and connections with the next group. The formal evaluation was planned soon after the end of training schedule, and the second group of participants was planned to start in the Fall of 2008.

Masters Project Final Timeline (Phase I)

Due to the nature of this project being part of my current working hours, I only emphasized the time spent on activities that were directly linked to the design of the program, and excluded the hours spent on coordination and administrative tasks that have taken a significant amount of time to complete for both the leadership program and the LPC arrangements.

January	
Hours initially estimated: 30 hours	Actual hours worked: 45 hours

(1) Literature review of similar programs involved around 20 hours of work.

(2) The open forum titled: "Young Professionals Forum" was held on January 29, 2008 from 2 to 5pm. I finalized the idea generation tools, prepared packages and room set up, and oriented the facilitators. This work consumed approximately 10 hours, while documenting the final outcomes required 2 days work (15 hours). Most of the administrative and logistics effort were carried out by the support team, whom their hours were not calculated for this Masters. However, without them, this timeline would have tripled.

February	
Hours initially estimated: 40 hours	Actual hours worked: 38 hours

(1) Sent an online survey as a follow up to the open forum and to reach additional youth to give their feedback. Three (3) hours were spent on preparing the questionnaire, and three (3) more hours were used to assemble and organize the outcomes.

(2) A name for the program was selected on February 13, 2008. It took 5 hours to arrive to the given name from the short listed names.

(3) The evaluation framework and logic model were initially developed. Many changes were made and the Evaluation and Learning Manager in the OCB team helped shape it to better fit what we are trying to evaluate. Initial work took around 15 hours.

(4) Began working on the program overview, brochure and application form (7 hours)

(5) Concept paper for my course was due Feb 20, 2008. (5 hours)

March	
Hours initially estimated: 30 hours	Actual hours worked: 42 hours

(1) An idea management software service was set up and sent to both participants and partners (by mid March). The JPB Group (jpb.com) worked on the set up (their hours not calculated) and it took me around 4 hours to adjust my questions, test them with my team, fix any technical errors and launch the idea campaigns. I also put aside 1 hour a week to monitor progress. In March, I spent approximately 5 hours on this topic.

(2) The Learning Partners Consortium was conducted on March 6, 2008. Preparation for the event took 20 hours (up to the last minute), however, much have to do with administrative tasks. I estimated the hours spent on designing the day's event, the handouts, and material produced was around 11 hours.

(3) Drafted the training program overview (6 hours)

(4) Created the brochure and application form (6 hours)

(5) Drafted sections 1, 2, and 3 of the write-up by March 27. (10 hours)

April	
Hours initially estimated: 70 hours	Actual hours worked: 64 hours

(1) Finalized the training sessions with all providers and reserved the space (I did not add the hours in this stage as it is considered part of the job, and not part of the design).

(2) Produced all handouts (brochure, program overview and application form (10 hours)

(3) Continued to work on the logic model and evaluation framework to reflect the progress of the program (7 hours).

(4) Continued to participate in Jenni idea management software, proposed challenges and submitted ideas (based on one hour a week, 5 hours)

(5) Met with different partners to build further relationships. Considered part of my job.

(6) Outreached for applicants, conducted two information sessions, and reviewed applications. All considered part of the job. They are documented here simply for learning purposes.

(7) Interviewed and selected participants for the first group (part of the job).

(8) Drafted sections 4, 5 and 6 of write up for the April 13 due date (22 hours).

(9) Prepared for final presentation and compiled final write-up (first draft). (20 hours)

First week of May 8	
Hours initially estimated: 20 hours.	Actual hours worked: 34

(1) Closed Jenni© and gathered information to present later during the training (5 hours).

(2) Prepared participants and trainers bios (part of the job)

(3) Finalized write-up and handed in copies (20 hours).

(4) Ordered books, tools, handouts and resources for participants (part of the job)

(5) Presented findings for class on May 1st, 2008 (including travel time) (9 hours)

(6) Commenced phase II and started the program with the orientation on May 20, 2008.

SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES

Stretch your legs as far as your quilt can cover.

- Arabic proverb

Introduction: Program Overview

The Youth Leadership Program's objective was to develop the capacity of young leaders and enable them to stay and enhance their careers in the nonprofit sector. In addition, Crammond and Howarth (2005) emphasized the need to "strengthen the capacity of individuals to fulfill their personal objectives and to exercise control over conditions that affect their lives (i.e. acting on their behalf, rather than through or on behalf of an organization)" (p. 5). Our target audience faces daily complex circumstances that forces them to juggle many objectives simultaneously, including "supporting themselves financially; continuing their education; preparing for future careers; not depleting already limited resources; dealing with crises that come up in their lives; and staying physically, mentally, and emotionally balanced (Crammond & Howarth, 2005, p. 5).

With that in mind, I wanted to build the capacity of individuals, within their group, and trace the progress of the development of their respective organizations. In Marc Rosenberg's presentation at the American Society for Training and Development (Rosenberg, 2007), he explained how communities can be formal, or informal, as well as vertical or horizontal (see figure 1). Based on his model, participants in the program would form a knowledge network among each other, therefore develop the horizontal community. At the same time, each individual in his or her own organization and work environment, are considered a separate vertical entity.

Figure 1. Community Types and Models.
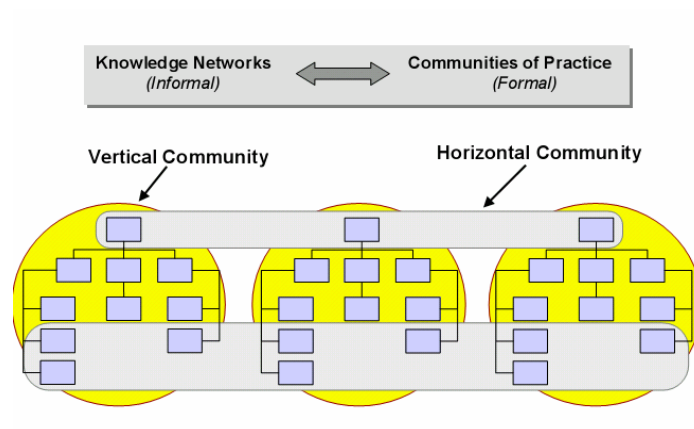
According to the Centre for Community Leadership (CCL, 2005), the Information Age Generations (IAGs) are made up of youth between the ages of 15 and 34. They are the first generation of Canadians who have been thoroughly shaped by equal rights and diversity and, as a group, IAGs have been found to be more tolerant than their parents (p.5).

Most of those young adults were "drawn to social change nonprofits because of personal experiences – their own or what they witnessed – and a desire to help those in their communities or in situations similar to their own" (Kumreuther, 2005, p. 6). For those working in smaller nonprofits, "resources for professional development and career advancement are limited"(YNPN, n.d., p.1). Many of the younger staff sought training through the private, public sector or graduate school (YNPN, n.d.). Those who did advance to become managers or directors, explained how they learned on the go and did not come to their positions with extensive management experience. "They have had to learn on-the-job about funding, financial systems, administration and board development" (Crammond & Howarth, 2005, p.21).

Many existing programs focused on the personal transformation as a "precondition for organizational transformation" (Wellesley Institute, 2007, p. 3). For example, The Wellesley Executive Leadership Program planned to:

- Build the capacity of non-profit leaders to lead and sustain organizational change
- Develop change leadership skills
- Establish peer support

Its purpose was to "develop and evaluate an advanced training program for non-profit leaders, aimed at facilitating significant shifts in interpersonal skills and critical thinking, including a greater ability to hold oneself as object and an increasing capacity to think non-dualistically" (Wellesley Institute, 2007, p. 3). It continued to focus on the "development of specific capacities related to mindsets, world views and values, as well as shifts in cognitive interpersonal skills (Wellesley Institute, 2007, p. 3).

Based on Rosenberg's suggestions (see figure 2), the focus of the our initiative went beyond the *give a training and a certificate* role to a more *increase knowledge and experience in the sector.* For it to become a personal transformational journey for each individual, and for my role to go

beyond managing the logistics of putting together a program, it had to focus on developing people who will affect fundamental change in their organizations, and to the extend possible, their communities. The final goal for this program was to graduate creative, resourceful, connected and productive young leaders who are adapted to change at the speed it occurs in.

Figure 2: Enhancing Roles in the Organization (Rosenberg, 2007, p.6)
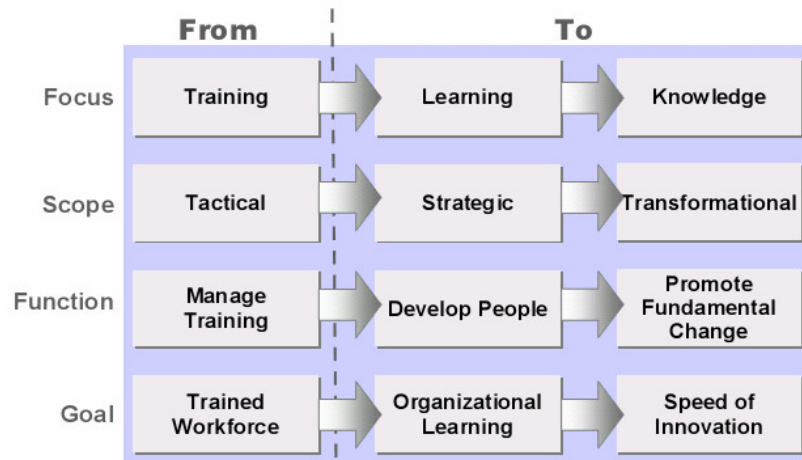
One of the networks in Toronto called the Grassroots Youth Collaborates (GYC) had one of its goals as "to encourage and facilitate networking, collaboration, mutual support and the exchange of expertise, best practices and resources among and between youth-led organizations" (GYC, n.d, p. 10). In essence, the network emphasized the importance of peer learning and the dependency on each other's skills. As the collaborative learning approach explained it, each participant was responsible for the learning of each other, as well as advised to practice skills that helped others in the program "develop new insights about themselves and their workplace" (Comparetta, & Fien, 2006, p.6). This support for other participants "will lead to the discovery of new knowledge, providing a foundation for growth – both personal and organizational" (p.6).One of the benefits of sharing knowledge between group members was the creating, archiving and sharing of valued information, expertise and insight within and across communities of people and organizations with similar interests and needs, which lead to building competitive advantage (Rosenberg, 2007). This exchange was crucial in the nonprofit sector for it to retain its young talents and create opportunities for innovative solutions to community problems. Crammonds and Howarth (2005) continued to

highlight that "supports for peer networking and convening have been central to the success of many capacity building programs with youth" (p.15).

From this literature, I decided to follow Bonnell and Zizys' (2005, p.31) advice in developing a program that suggested to:

> Involve youth, from beginning to end, through initial consultation, design and implementation, and seek input throughout;
>
> Give youth a sense of ownership, by making them responsible for activities and tasks; and
>
> Give youth a chance to better themselves as well as to better their community.

Further more, the Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement (Pancer, Rose-Krasnor & Loiselle, n.d., p.9) documented the impact that arose in their youth conferences, such as:

1. Self-awareness/ personal growth.

2. Empowerment. Delegates expressed the importance of getting to work on solutions and making a difference, as well as gaining specific skills like speaking in front of a group.

3. Awareness raising. A number of delegates described how their increased awareness led directly to motivation to action.

4. Hope for the future.

5. Social relations: Making new friends, who share their opinions or provide a different point of view on issues was imperative to open up for peer learning.

For these outcomes to be visible, we adopted a participatory approach where youth experienced the program from its developmental phase and provided their opinion on its content and format. For Kunruether (2005), " No matter one's age, a transformative experience more often than not provided motivation for pursuing social change work" (p.7). Hedge (2007) added to this definition and explained that

> Participatory and critical reflection approaches transformed the purpose and power of leadership learning. They had the potential to alter radically what was seen as useful and valid knowledge. Participatory approaches involved program stakeholders in designing, implementing and/or analyzing data. By doing so, the participants evaluated their own learning or created new knowledge. Also, participatory approaches allowed participants to be subjects of learning rather than objects" (p.60).

The Wellesley Executive Leadership Program also had specific activities that "were incorporated into the program design according to the following 6 principles, which have been shown by research to enhance the environment for change:

Promoting the development of vision

Offering emotional and structural support

Building knowledge and skills

Developing a systems perspective with a concern for wholeness, integrity and alignment

Using stories, art, images and ritual for learning

Allowing for the quantum factor-spirituality, ethics, luck or synchronicity" (Wellesley

Institute, 2007, p.5)

Examples of such activities were: visioning and planning activities, such as cases, scenarios, role plays, storytelling, and improv; cognitive development activities were found in meditation, journaling, reflection, dialogue, ritual and art; as well as the monthly coaching sessions. Furthermore, the Wellesley's Executive Leadership Program identified several key learning from their program:

The coaching component should be retained because it was highly valued as one of the most beneficial aspects of the program.

The assessment tools used were useful. However, some could be done through a reading assignment rather than an expensive tool.

Reading material was important, especially if distributed before the workshop.

Real life examples were used.

Meditation, yoga, and the sacred circle dancing added another dimension to the program.

To help minimize participant attrition, assessment interviews were held with applicants to ensure they understand the nature of the work and the time commitment involved, and are able to arrange their workload in order to participate fully.

While developing the program, I considered the above remarks as well as other suggestions provided by the Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement (Pancer, et al., n.d.) and ensured that:

Each participant was matched with a mentor based their interests and needs.

Assessment tools were used early on in the program, focusing on the individual's strength and assets. The first cohort completed an assessment tool that focused on thinking styles and they were informed on an Emotional Intelligence model as well.

The final project that participants were asked to produce emphasized the application of their new learning. It created opportunities for them to work in groups on important social problems and issues such as racism, poverty, and the environment. Mentors' help provided extra support in this domain.

The trainers created interactive, hands-on workshops based on their respective expertise. The focus was on the young adults using this information to enhance their work in their organization in specific, and the non profit sector in general.

Participants were informed of the intensity of the program from the very start and were asked about how they plan to manage their time before they were accepted to the program. I emphasized to participants that "you get out of this program as much as you put into it", and so they were prepared to work harder during those training months.

The participants were involved in decisions that affected their program. According to Bonnell and Zizys (2005), "Youth can be consulted individually about their personal goals and desired outcomes at the start of a program and these can be tracked over time" (p.31). The opening retreat included goal setting for the duration of the program and beyond.

The participants supported each other personally and professionally using the online platform. Participants were encouraged to plan and facilitate meetings and activities through the optional community visits.

Crammond and Howarth (2005) expressed that

All literature and key informants agreed that youth need to be involved in decisions about their own programs and activities, and they should feel their opinions and feedback are valued and respected. In addition to building confidence and individual skills, this approach ensures that programming and activities are relevant and can reach out to young people" (p.10).

As coordinators, it was imperative to engage participants from the very start of the design phase. This method accepted participants as partners in the process, "such that youth development is an integral

part of the strategic vision and plan of the organization" (Bonnell & Zizys, 2005, p.19). Appendix A and B describe the Program Brochure and Overview.

Program Development Design Outcomes

The design of the Youth Leadership Program, and essentially the focus of my Masters Project, embraced three main outcomes: (a) consultation and follow up, (b) networking with the training providers, and (c) the program's components and design.

Consultation and Follow Up

The first step in the consultation process was to find other similar programs provided by non profit organizations in Canada and abroad. I started with a literature review, and the UWT library was of great importance at this point. I learned about other leadership programs at the City of Toronto, in Ontario, across Canada, and internationally. I scanned numerous programs, but focused on 14 to examine fully, and made a list of criteria to go through when checking information, such as:

- Program name
- Sponsor
- Modules / training provided
- Certificate component
- Target audience
- Associated fees
- Peer learning or mentorship
- Evaluation tools
- Training providers
- Outcome of program
- Duration
- Any unique aspects

What came out of this initial review was the emphasis on the role of mentor, use of technology, as well as a hands-on rather than theory-based training.

On January 29, 2008, I organized the Young Professionals Forum (YPForum) that took place at the 11th floor boardrooms of United Way Toronto. The objective of this event was to consult future participants and fully engage youth in the building of a program that ultimately served their own needs. As Pencer et al (n.d.) explained, "one of the key things that happens when youth participate in decision-making is that they become engaged in the life of their communities" (p.1).

Around 50 young adults attended the forum. They came from nonprofit organizations all across Toronto, varying between east and west ends, small grassroots and large institutions, different ages and positions; (from front line youth workers to Executive Directors). To accommodate this big number of contributors in the shortest amount of time (3 hours), I planned the event in a way that will produce the maximum outcomes, yet tap into people's different learning styles. There were five tables, each with a separate theme and a facilitator. The themes discussed: a) topics and modules desired, b) current issues at work and in the sector, c) delivery style of the program, d) post-program engagement activities, and e) the duration, certificate component, and suggested names for the program. The group rotated around tables every 15 minutes to give their inputs and thoughts on all themes, and each facilitator used a different idea generation tool to capture participants' thoughts on the subject. You can find the description of the idea generating tools used in Appendix C as explained to the facilitators prior to the event. Appendix D has the space set up, separating the noisy from the quiet tables, and those who need lots of space from those who don't.

The YPForum was a huge success. UWT staff, partners and other organizations have expressed their admiration not only for the event itself, but for the unprecedented process that was taken before launching a program. As one youth attendant described it, "It was a remarkable experience". I immediately followed up with an online survey to evaluate the event and capture further thoughts with other youth who could not attend that day.

One of the results from the YPForum was a list of suggested names for the program. Up until this moment, we were using the generic name "Youth Leadership Program". We wanted the new name to reflect the components of the program and enable it to become a sustained project that lived beyond our commitment to it as organizers. I short listed the names to 10, then with a group of 5 UWT staff, we used the card sort tool. Within 2 hours, and on February the 13th of 2008, the name "Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders (CITY Leaders)" was born.

Soon after the YPForum and the online survey, I arranged for a third component of the consultation process with the implementation of Jenni™ Idea Management Software System, generously donated by the Director of Jenni for this particular Masters Project. This web-based software permits soliciting, capturing and evaluating innovative ideas from an organization's global workforce. The Idea Campaign is a structured process for managing ideas in an organization, or in our case, a group of people who share one purpose but come from different organizations from around the City of Toronto. The campaigns were used in the context of organizing some of the ideas suggested at the YPForum and connecting these outcomes with the training modules. Developed by the JPB Group (www.jpb.com), an Idea Campaign has a five step process:

(1) To start, I offered an innovative challenge based on an issue developed from the YPForum's inputs.

(2) Next, I promoted people to participate in the ideas campaign. The main motivation for participation was that their acceptance into the program was linked to the numbers of ideas they submitted to Jenni.

(3) Ideas were developed in a collaborative environment. Two choices were made in terms of submitting styles:

    a. In the traditional brainstorming method, one person submits an idea, others may create a building block to continue the thread, or submit a separate idea.

    b. The WikiIdea was created to further develop an idea. It was based on the wikipedia style, of one person submitting an idea, and others working on the same submission and modifying it. Additionally, viewers were able to trace back the original idea and see how it evolved.

(4) Evaluation focused on selecting the most promised ideas and sending them to team of experts for assessment. In our case, this step was offered during the training period when participants worked on their individual and group projects.

(5) The last step was implementing winning ideas.

Figure 3: Steps of the Idea Campaign.

(source: http://jpb.com/jenni/campaigns.php).
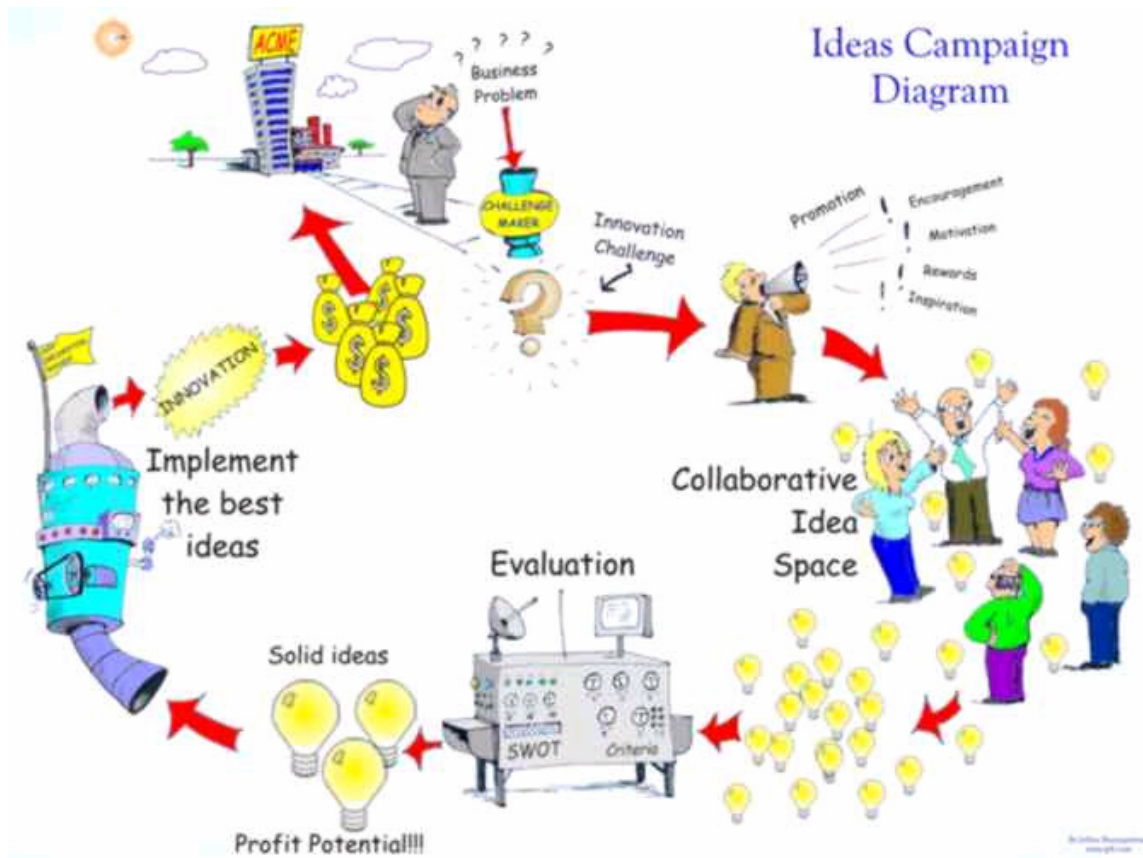
The advantages of using the idea campaign process were plenty. Not only were we able to further develop ideas suggested by contributors, but also connect participants with partners using a group brainstorming tool. Additionally, it served the purpose of heightening anticipation for the program and we succeeded in having a number of people applying to the program who were part of this intense development phase. When we implemented Jenni, we followed the first three steps of the Idea Campaign process and did not evaluate or implement ideas simply because these steps were used later during the training program. Other benefits that Jenni offered (http://jpb.com/jenni/index.php) and we experienced were:

1. It involved partners on multiple levels in idea generation, and connected stakeholders on shared issues faced in the non profit sector.

2. Ideas were developed in an open, collaborative and transparent environment.

3. We had the option of evaluating multiple solutions to a problem simultaneously and applying metrics in order to identify the best solution(s). However, this step was postponed until the program started in May 2008.

4. An innovation challenge motivated people to suggest ideas and really think about ways to solve problems.

In short, the YPForum, the online survey and Jenni Idea Management Software System served as the corner stones of the program developed and offered to young adults working in the community and social services sector of Toronto.

Training Providers and the Learning Partners Consortium (LPC)

When the training topics started to shape based on the consultations, I searched for trainers for each module. Some of them were easy to finalize, while others took some time to find the right instructor. Few never made it to the list for the pilot group because a session and its provider were not confirmed in time. Having several trainers, I wanted to create a space where they met regularly throughout the program to share lessons and key learning about the participants in specific and the program in general. Once we had a group of trainers we opened it up to other organizations not directly involved but still interested in learning from the process used. By the second month of program planning, we had enough partners interested to start a separate project of its own, managing the Learning Partners Consortium (LPC). The long term goal of LPC was to break the habit of developing programs among funders from a silo mode to a more collaborative one. Interested partners came from educational institutes, social enterprises, foundations, youth-led organizations and community centres to our first meeting set on March 6, 2008. The partners varied in their interests from providing a service or training, to funding, or exchanging networks. A few had similar leadership programs and were ready to share their key learning with the group. One thing that every organization present at the table agreed on was to learn from the program's development and the process it embraced. According to the Philanthropic Foundations Canada report (PFC, 2007), "increased collaboration on leadership development could benefit the non-profit sector in Canada in a number of ways" (p.16), for example:

Share resources, expertise, thinking and learning

Work with others to expand thinking and push the boundaries

Share knowledge to prevent duplications

Model collaborative approach as an important aspect of leadership

Increase collaboration of foundations' work leads to further collaboration.

As Rosenberg (2007) explained, "trusting groups of professionals united by a common concern or purpose, dedicated to supporting each other in increasing knowledge, creating new insights, and enhancing performance in a particular domain" (p.11) help achieve each others' goals. "Relationship are key to building momentum and increasing impact" (Rowan, & Dumont, 2007, p.4), and this happened primarily by selecting the right partners who understand or are willing to learn about others' organizational cultures. To ensure the partners' long-term commitment and support, we worked on cultivating strategic partnerships, one with mutual understanding and effort, with a number of our learning partners. And for this partnership to work, Bonnell and Zizys (2005, p.22) emphasized to:

- Seek out champions to support the program

- Seek and secure organizational commitment to ensure program sustainability

- Provide recognition to host organizations

- Network with other community mentoring programs (education, support, sharing resources, exploring funding opportunities, and so on).

However, an important observation the Philanthropic Foundations Canada documented in its analysis of funding leadership development in Canada is that "collaboration is great when it works, but it's really hard to make it work" (PFC, 2007, p.14).

In conclusion,

Networks aren't just pipes; they are also communities that should be nurtured and valued as such – as ends unto themselves. And advocates of social change, in turn, should view themselves as guardians of those communities, rather than just the people who lay the pipes. When society's movers and shakers cast themselves as guardians of communities, the communities themselves become the agents of change (Podolny, 2007, p.33).

Program's Components and Design

At the beginning of the program development phase, I focused on the training provided and skills needed in the sector. After all, "knowledge reflects a schematic organization of key facts and principles pertaining to the characteristics of objects lying in a domain" (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs & Fleishman, 2000, p.20). In a leadership development program, people seek knowledge on multi-faceted levels, given that "skill application requires multiple forms of knowledge – knowledge of the job, knowledge of the organization, knowledge of the business, and knowledge of people, particularly those who implement solutions" (Mumford et al., 2000, p.27). Yet, in addition to knowledge and skills, experts base their concepts on factors they build to help them "more accurately diagnose and assess the implications of different pieces of information" (Mumford et al., 2000, p. 20). Put together, both knowledge and experience are needed to make a truly transformational journey. Mumford explained that "knowledge and skills are developed capabilities that emerge over time as a function of education and experience" (p.21).

Participants Profile

Participants experienced a group journey where peer learning was the basis of newly acquired knowledge and skill development, and team building played an essential part of group formation and coherence. The criteria for choosing participants was based on several factors including overall fit with the institute's criteria, time availability to commit to the intense training and knowledge exchange, and personal merits.

In terms of personal attributes, "intelligence, or general cognitive ability, is perhaps the individual characteristic that has most often and consistently been associated with leadership (Mumford et al., 2000, p.21). Participants provided plenty of such attributes in their Personal Statements they submitted in the application package. Other cognitive abilities that Mumford et al. discussed were written and oral expression, written and oral comprehension, fluency and speed of closure, divergent thinking ability, willingness to enter situations where these skills can be exercised, and willingness to exercise these skills in solving significant organizational problems. It seems thus far, that assumptions made of those applying for the program, is that they have a decent sense of self-awareness and personal recognition. In this awareness, Comparetta and Fien (2006) explained that

Self-leadership consists of two parts – knowing who we are (self-awareness) and acting as who we are (authenticity). Self-leadership keeps us from being engulfed by our own emotions or persuaded to act in ways that are not consistent with our belief systems. Self-leadership is not about being closed to others or our environment. Rather it is about a process of thinking that constantly checks the appropriateness of our mental models against current events from our surroundings. The practice of self-leadership involves self-awareness and critical thinking (p.5).

"Leaders see the big picture, whether they realize it or not. The changes they create make big differences, whereas the rest of us may go about making change through little steps. Their creativity comes from putting their work and their observations/experiences together and learning and understanding both" (CCL, 2005, p.10). Big change requires big thinking, Mumford et al. pointed out that some personal characteristics, such as openness, tolerance for ambiguity and curiosity help tackle novel and unclear problems. While other characteristics such as confidence, risk taking, adaptability, and independence help apply available resources in stressful environment. "Leadership ultimately depends on one's capability to formulate and implement solutions to complex (i,e, novel, ill-defined) social problems" (Mumford et al., 2000, p.26). Additionally, "skills such as identification of restrictions, analysis of downstream consequences, coordination of multiple activities, and sensitivity to relevant goals may all play a role in leader performance" (p.19). I took into account the above skills when I developed the training program, application form and interview questions. Part of the general purpose of the program was to prepare participants for more ill-defined problems they will face as they move up in their responsibilities and positions in their organizations, as "executives face more ill-defined problems, more novel, and involve a larger number of interactions among a wider range of constituencies" (Mumford, 2000, p.19).

Moving outward from managing self to managing others, "a leader's performance is a function of whether he or she can identify goals, construct viable goal paths, and direct others along these paths in a volatile, changing socio-technical environment" (Mumford, 2000, p.13). "To be a successful leader today requires leadership behaviors that create, maintain, and enhance relationships among all members of the immediate and extended community with the expressed purpose of developing meaningful collaborations" (Comparetta & Fien, 2006, p.2). Social perceptiveness in essence is "a

complex skill involving insight into the needs, goals, demands, and problems of different organizational constituencies" (Mumford et al., 2000, p.19). In a society,

> We go through life as individuals, we sense that our internal beliefs, values, intentions, motivations, and passions – that is, our identities – are what drive our actions. Yet we often fail to recognize that our identities have to come from somewhere. And that somewhere is not our stomach or our spleen or even our brain. Instead, our identities ultimately come from our relationships with other people – that is, from our networks (Podolny, 2007, p.54).

A second selection criterion was the group formation and how they work together. The curriculum was developed as to start from the self and the group and then move on to include organizations and social systems. The institute relied heavily on peer learning and information exchange through the sessions and online interactions. The offsite retreat was organized to get everyone comfortable with each other and help the group develop friendships rather than merely acquaintances. Creating this supportive social milieu was the ultimate vision for the Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders with the hope of sustaining relationships beyond any end-of-funding cycles from United Way Toronto or other funders.

Modules and Training Provided

When I conducted my literature review of other leadership development programs, many young leaders echoed the value of having formal or structured training opportunities. From the varied program evaluations and suggestions, management training in the nonprofit sector focused on board development, governance issues, human resource retention and recruitment planning, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation systems (Crammond & Howarth, 2005). The Youth Development Initiative, supported by the James Irvine's Foundation, aimed at "improving the agencies' operations and building their infrastructure in eight areas" (James Irvin's Foundation, 2000, p.3). The management areas they focused on were: (a) administration and finance, (b) facilities management, (c) fund development, (d) governance (board and executive leadership, (e) staff development and training, (f) information and technology support, (g) legal (personnel and liability management), and (h) planning and evaluation.

Mumford also gave a general view of knowledge support issues, such as problem solving skills associated with identifying problems, understanding the problem, and generating potential solutions;

social judgment skills associated with the refinement of potential solutions; the creation of implementation frameworks within a complex organizational setting; and finally social skills associated with motivating and directing others during solution implementation. Comparetta and Fien stressed that learning is the key tenet in their Technical Leadership Development Program guide. "This program is not about demonstrating what you already know and have accomplished. This program is all about what you don't know – about yourself and about the challenges that you face. So the emphasis is on *discovery* of new knowledge" (p.6).

Literature review and the YPForum developed a big list of modules and topics to be considered for the program. Working with the raw data, the next step was to create a curriculum that took the individual through a transformational journey, rather than a series of workshops that deals with separate pieces of knowledge. "Effective leadership cannot solely be developed within the context of a classroom setting – it needs to be developed through action-based learning and shared accountability (Rowan, & Dumont, 2007, p.4). In her assessment of community leadership programs, Hedge (2007) learned that community leadership curricula were described in five ways:

1. Focused on topics presented
2. Leadership skill building, or networking / community issues
3. Participatory approach (where participants help in the design and implementation)
4. Instructional or orientation approach
5. Train the trainer

In terms of the curriculum, CITY Leaders focused on the first three types of Hedge's descriptions. The training part of CITY Leaders, and hence the curriculum developed, was built to transform and impact participants from the inside (their strengths and their leadership styles) to the outside (their group and respective organizations). Both leadership skill building and networking played a role in this sense. The training component of CITY Leaders focused on the topics presented, and took participants through a journey of self discovery, group formation and peer learning, skill-based learning and finally organizational systems and social change impact.

However, following a participatory approach to developing the program had put the spotlight on some training modules that were not offered in similar programs in the region. Following are some examples of such training and the research behind each.

Art-based training.

"Art is so expressive", says one of the youth program workers at the Grassroots Youth Collaborative focus groups (GYC, n.d, p.34). "It allows youth to express themselves, to create their own identity instead of having it shaped by the mainstream institutions". Fix and Sivak continued to explain that "culturally based programs foster social skills including co-operative work, negotiation, conflict resolution and tolerance for difference, individual responsibility, perseverance, self-management, and integrity" (p.146). According to the National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project - Montreal (NAYDP), "youth demonstrated an improvement in both social and technical skills, increased confidence, improved interpersonal skills, improved conflict resolution and problem-solving skills, and decreased level of conduct problems, emotional problems, anti-social behaviour, academic failure and alcohol use" (Fix & Sivak, 2007, p.147). It is therefore no mistake to assume that "cultural participation helps connect individuals to the social spaces occupied by others and encourages "buy-in" to institutional rules and shared norms of behaviour" (p.147).

The use of technology.

According to Rosenberg (2007), the learning and performance architecture builds "a systematic integration of approaches (electronic and non-electronic) that facilitate both formal and informal workplace learning and support, and, ultimately, improved human performance" (p.20). The use of technology in this sense "must shift from strictly clerical purposes into more mission-critical functions like fundraising, communications, and planning. One of the most important uses is that of collaboration and researching sectoral best practices" (CCL, 2005, p.12).
Technology was utilized on different levels at CITY Leaders. First, Jenni Idea Management System Software was utilized pre-program to enhance participation of groups prior to applying, as well as used as a brainstorming tool to look at issues and challenges facing youth in the sector. Second, we offered it as a stand alone module, to discuss in technical terms the use of technology in social change, using examples and case studies from around the world. Third, technology was used as a structure interweaving all components of the program. The online platform offered participants a space to share their input and ideas on all sessions, promote their projects, meet their mentors, and provide ongoing feedback on the program and the training providers (this is explained in detail under the "online platform" in Section Four of this write-up).

Communication and interpersonal skills.

For younger staff members, Kunreuther (2005) noted that "vision and communication were key components to leadership" (p.12). Mumford (2000) explained how "the leader must be able to communicate vision, establish goals, monitor progress, and motivate subordinates as they attempt to implement a given solution plan" (p.17). "The use of various conflict-resolution strategies", Mumford et al clarified, "can contribute to group maintenance and leader performance" (p.20). Those "persuasive skills may represent an essential step in getting subordinates to adopt a vision or a proposed solution plan" (p.20), eventually, enhancing the person's leadership skills.

One of the young conference attendants that Pancer, Rose-Krasnor, and Loiselle talked about (n.d.), offered a practical suggestion:

> If you want to captivate me, tell me a personal story. Share with me an experience that changed your life in some way…When you're finished giving me a glimpse into this amazing moment of change, show me that this stuff you just told me about – getting involved, doing something that means something, and accomplishing something awesome – is something that I can do too"(p.5).

The use of storytelling was brought up several times from literature and consultations, and the module we offered focused on the stories the participants will tell, rather than follow a generic example. Participants received direct feedback from the trainers on their presentation and public performance skills.

Social Enterprise.

A social enterprise is an organization or venture that advances its social mission through entrepreneurial, earned income strategies. Social entrepreneurs "have both an entrepreneurial spirit and a business mindset. They are individuals who see possibilities rather than problems, and who use business skills to strategically tackle issues that government and other organizations won't even attempt" (CCL, 2005, p.12). This definition gives all the reason why such knowledge is essential to empower participants to go beyond independence on donations and grants, and look at their issues from a fresh perspective, taking off the limits to what they can do based on donations. This module was offered as a skill-based training that linked the individual's personal strength to the community impact as a whole.

Diversity and integration.

"The leaders of nonprofit groups do not reflect the diversity of the communities they serve", "there is a need to develop strategies to support a more multi-racial group of leaders who better reflect our communities and who bring the full range of knowledge and ideas necessary to invent and implement effective responses to critical problems" (Kumreuther, 2005, p.4). An Executive Director of a youth-led organization further noted, "racism always comes up. It is so entrenched in our daily lives"(GYC, n.d., p.59). Kunreuther (2005) explains how diversity leadership is important:

> [Organizations] should examine how to ensure that the ideas driving strategy and direction reflect the viewpoints of people of all races and backgrounds throughout an organization (and not just the perspectives of a dominant majority at the top). Directors of social change organizations should also consider how addressing race and gender issues can help them to identify new and potential organizational leaders (p.17).

Diversity was rooted in the development of CITY Leaders and was used as a foundation to all activities and milestones. From choosing the representatives to attend the YPForum, to short listing interviews, and even finalizing the trainers list, we ensured that there's a good mix of ethnic diversity, educational background, neighborhood representatives, age and gender, organizations from all over Toronto and even different personality types. A module on "Embedding Diversity" was placed at the beginning of the training program, and the topic was weaved throughout the training sessions. For the program overview and the list of training sessions for the pilot program that started in May 2008, see appendix B.

Final Project

Hedge (2007) described an important component that came from her scan of program evaluations of U.S.-based community leadership programs:

> Leadership curricula should include a project or practicum for participants. The benefits would provide opportunities to practice leadership, needs assessment and change agent skills, and make at least a short-term impact on the community. Over the long-run, a positive practical experience may motivate alumni to become truly effective community leaders (p.53).

By expressing theories and learning through action, participants became involved in an activity with a focus outside of him or herself. "Full engagement consists of a behavioural component (e.g.,

spending time doing the activity), an affective component (e.g., deriving pleasure from participating), and a cognitive component (e.g., knowing about the activity)" (Pancer, et al., n.d., p.2). The Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement carried on with examples of when a young person became engaged in an activity, he or she will:

> Find the activity or participation in the activity fun or enjoyable.
>
> Feel that the activity is meaningful – that it's an important and worthwhile thing to be doing
>
> Derive a sense of pride, accomplishment or satisfaction from achievements in the activity / organization (Pancer, n.d., p.3).

For an experience to be considered beneficial, Mumford (p.24) suggested ensuring:

(1) Job assignments that provide exposure to novel, challenging problems

(2) Mentoring

(3) Appropriate training

(4) Hands-on experience in solving related problems.

All four points were taken into consideration when we included the final project as a requirement for graduating from the institute. In connection with personal development, leadership is held to be a "potential that emerges through experience and the capability to learn and benefit from experience" (Mumford, p.21). For Mumford, leaders are not born, nor are they made. "Their inherent potentials are shaped by experiences enabling them to develop the capabilities needed to solve significant social problems" (p.24). As leaders ascend a hierarchy, "the kinds of problems they are confronted with become progressively more complex and long term. These changes in role demands, in turn, require higher levels of conceptual capacity and greater abstract thought" (Mumford, 2000, p.25). The final project in CITY Leaders played a role in linking their learning back to their jobs, building more capacity in their roles and organizations. To build a meaningful experience, participants were given the choice of what to do as a final project that will reflect the learning they gained during training and sharing knowledge with their peers.

Mentoring Program

"Mentoring relationships produce favorable effects across all youth demographics and backgrounds, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity and family structure" (Bonnell & Zizys, 2005, p.21). What the next generation respondents in Kunreuther's survey (2005) "really valued (and in some

cases wanted more of) was coaching or strong mentoring, particularly from older elders" (p.13). For example, "a common difficulty faced by youth-led organizations is the lack of precedence for the kinds of work they are doing" (GYC, n.d., p.58) says one of the group's project coordinator, "there hasn't been any models to follow. So we have had to develop whole new practices, without really knowing what works and what doesn't" (p.58). Mentoring, in this essence, is critical to the process of leadership development. Rowan & Dumont (2007) explained how this relationship greatly benefited participants. For instance:

> "Identifying and partnering with knowledgeable and experienced external resources minimizes the learning curve and potential pain experienced within the organization" (p.4). Mentors can help assess or analyze participant's progress, build an individual development plan, and hold them accountable throughout the development process.
> It is critical to have objective feedback collected from direct reports (facilitated by the mentor) to enable meaningful improvements.

Mentoring at this intimate level (one-on-one) will ultimately help "participants became more aware of necessary competencies required of effective managers and leaders in the non-profit sector" (Wellesley Institute, 2007, p.10).

When designing the mentoring program for CITY Leaders, I worked closely with two members who enhanced the final program. One OCB Manager with experience coordinating the 1:1 (one to one) Mentorship Programme for United Way Toronto, and the second was one of our learning partners who had a similar online mentoring program and who was responsible for developing our online platform for CITY Leaders. The mentors were offered monthly support through phone conferences and meetings to follow up on their success and concerns in this relationship, and share their experiences among each other. Both participants and mentors were introduced to each other and oriented on available tools to facilitate their professional relationship. In essence, the mentoring program has indirectly adopted many of the best practices suggested by Bonnell (2005, p.22):

- Orientation and ongoing training for mentors
- Structured joint activities for youth and mentors
- Effective screening of mentors
- Matching youth with mentors on the basis of gender, race/ethnicity, or mutual interests

- Defined expectations for frequency of contact and duration of the program.
- Ongoing support for mentors and mentees
- Ongoing monitoring of relationships and overall program implementation
- Recruiting mentors experienced in helping roles or professions
- Flexibility in interacting methods.

The Online Platform

The online platform was developed as requested by participants in the YPForum, but was also recognized to be the connecting tool of many stakeholders: participants, UWT staff, trainers and the LPC. Initially, my idea of the platform reflected Rosenberg's new paradigm of online learning (Rosenberg, 2007); where the participant was "viewed as a knowledge seeker, with constantly changing learning needs and time frames" (p.21). The online component in this program complimented the face-to-face sessions, "to enable greater access to the total set of knowledge and performance resources" (p.21). Figure 4 is a visual demonstration in the new world paradigm of the participant as a knowledge seeker surrounded by other networks and access to resources.

Figure4: Participants as Learners within a Network (Rosenberg, 2007, p.26).
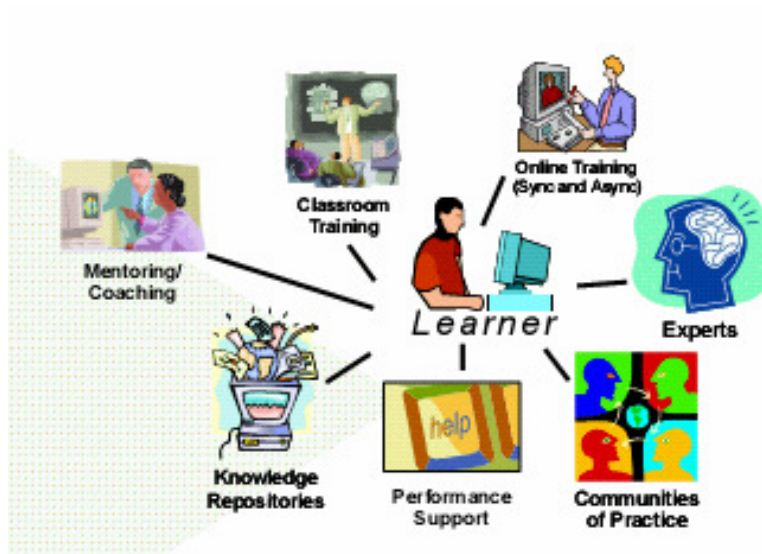
Rosenberg also explained that technology may in fact build a learning culture by:

Keeping everyone informed and involved

Enabling everyone to learn faster

Enabling personalization

Supporting knowledge sharing

Creating institutional memory

An example of keeping people involved is when one includes highlights from local news on the online platform and asks where participant sit with respect (Powazek, 2002). This would trigger further conversation on issues affecting youth in their communities in general, and in their nonprofit jobs specifically.

In conclusion, the online platform served four purposes for CITY Leaders. It:

(1) Provided a space for knowledge sharing, continuous discussions on topics raised in sessions and a place to disseminate further resources and event updates.

(2) Connected participants with mentors and shared their bios for all to know each other.

(3) Became a place to showcase participants' projects and get feedback on progress.

(4) Served as an informal evaluation tool that assessed trainers, sessions and program.

Post Program Network Activities

As with many leadership programs where organizers stayed in touch with their participants beyond the end of the program under the alumni relations responsibility, I wanted the group to stay connected with the institute. The limited nature of the alumni term prohibited outsiders from participating in these activities, and so we opted for naming it a network, to include those who are interested in developing their skills but did not participate in the training component. Activities were scheduled to tap into further knowledge of issues not raised, or barely mentioned, in the training sessions. Participants were also encouraged to lead the discussions and organize activities to further develop their facilitation skills.

Following is an illustration of how the program fits together from the participant's point of view and how they experienced CITY Leaders.

Figure 5: Participants Experience in CITY Leaders
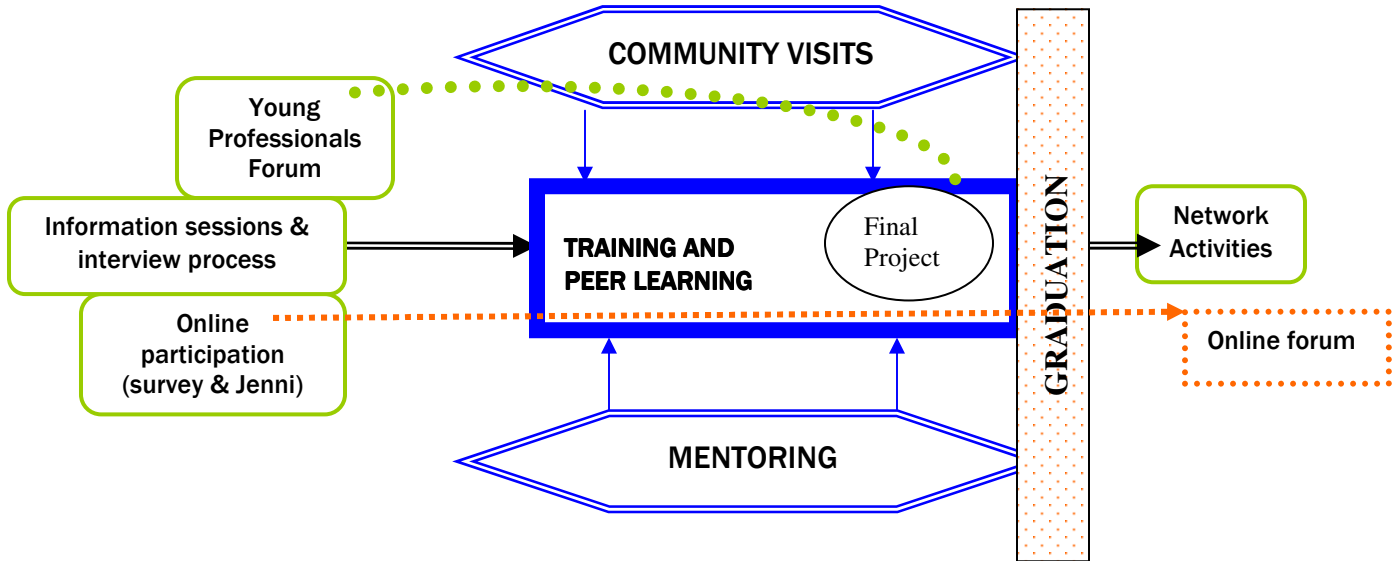
Evaluation

As a first step in setting the evaluation framework, we asked: what do we want to know? One of my OCB team members is the Learning and Evaluation Manager, who has provided extensive amount of resources and advice to complete both the evaluation framework and the logic model. These formal evaluation tools were needed to establish a process that will not only measure the impact of the program, but also provide a foundation for future adjustments to the program. Some of the questions that Bonnell and Zizys (2005) suggested asking:

> Do participants increase their own assets and economic position because of the program?
>
> What outcomes should be measured, using what yardstick?
>
> How can we determine that the program is effective?
>
> Over what time should one assess an increase in civic participation, enhanced group and civic skills, or leadership abilities?

Additionally, I set out some assumptions that helped me create the framework. Such as:

> What conditions are required to make success happen?
>
> What contextual factors will influence the desired outcomes positively or negatively?
>
> Continued to ask: what do I need to know?

These questions were then embedded into methods for gathering the data we pursued. My plan was to take advantage of different learning the "mixed methods" approach made possible. "The purpose of this approach was to guide programs as they began and strove for improvements. With the mixed method approach, validity of the data was improved and different kinds of data were collected" (Hedge, 2007, p.60). Furthermore, "using multiple methods yielded the fullest picture of a program's impact" (p.26). In addition to the infamous quantitative and qualitative methods, other evaluation tools as Hedge observed (p.61) were:

- surveys
- 360° assessments
- interviews
- journals
- site visits
- participant observation
- focus groups
- tracking accomplishments

For self evaluation, participants were responsible for their own learning. A reflective approach emphasized a particular learning process and valued the participants' abilities to articulate what they learned (Hedge, 2007). However, "evaluators and researchers must be aware of the limitations of self-reporting survey methods. Other evaluation tools should be used in order to insure accuracy" (p.53).

Going back to the first question "what do we want to know?" and the purpose of CITY Leaders, I built my post-program evaluation to see the difference in people's lives from the time they entered the institute until they graduated. I was interested in assessing three issues:

(1) Individual growth,

(2) Participants' impact on their organizations and communities, and

(3) CITY Leaders evaluation, including components, process and content.

The questions I developed spanned the duration of the training program and were required for the participants to partake in three months after graduation. This evaluation measured the program as a whole as well as gathered information on individual sessions and how they impacted the program and participant's knowledge as well. But most importantly, the evaluation assessed the impact of the training on the personal development of each participant and documented how they compared their

progress before and after the training. It was crucial to complete this task very close to the end of the program to capture any thoughts on paper before they are lost to memories. The OCB unit was more interested in the long-term change rather than the very short one; as "usually a year is necessary for shifts of this caliber" (Wellesley Institute, 2007, p.9), but keeping in mind that future "longitudinal studies would help document impact resulting from the leadership training" (Hedge, 2007, p.53). Both the evaluation framework and the logic model were considered a continuous work in progress, and were updated as we moved along the process and phases of the program.

On a personal level, Hedge observed the positive impact community leadership programs had on participants, including:

- Advanced career
- Developed networks and increased resources.
- Created a unified spirit
- Encouraged involvement
- Increased knowledge regarding societies and cultures
- Increased local community involvement
- Improved family and peer relation.

On a more specific skill level, those programs impacted participants in terms of (p.41):

- Improved communication skills
- Teamwork
- Networking
- Community awareness
- Increased self confidence
- Increased motivation
- Took risks
- Understood and interacted with others
- Had a broader perspective on issues.

These potential impacts were transformed into CITY Leaders and I included them in my post program assessment indicators. Being able to realize the immediate changes that the program affected on an individual level was very important for future programs, especially that I started planning for the second group well before the first one ended their training.

Interesting enough, Hedge also noted the positive impact the leadership development programs had on the coordinators of such programs, such as:

- Increased community awareness
- Worked better with others
- Increased sense of teamwork
- Developed local leadership
- Implemented community projects
- Became future instructors
- Increased networking for coordinators of program.

Although no measures have been put to assess the impact on the program on myself and others involved in planning the first phase, this might be a good place to start.

On an organizational level, the Wellesley institute's program (2007) impacted and observed organizations that sent their staff to participate in the program. Some of the results were:

"More funding for specific projects

Resource gains

Saved or expanded programs

Increased community profile

Improved labour relations

Improved efficiency within the organization

Post-course networking with peers / peer support

Personal advancement

Expanded knowledge within the organization" (p.13).

The logic model of the CITY Leaders addressed the impact on the organizational level in a general manner. Luckily, some of the learning partners were interested in supporting those organizations that send their young staff for this training as part of their professional development resources.

SECTION FIVE: KEY LEARNING

Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped.

- African proverb

I joined this initiative at its formative stage and worked with an experienced and most talented team at the Organizational Capacity Building unit. We relied on key learning from previous leadership programs and worked our way to customize the process to fit the goals of CITY Leaders. On a personal level, I had some examples in mind about what I expected to learn from this venture, but I believe I surpassed this list even before the first group was selected. Being new and working within the guidelines of UWT imposed certain challenges to the institute's progress but not more than the advantages it provided. Another key issue was working within a team and using all their expertise while still having the speed of making my own decisions helped move the limits of the program even further. The good relationship I had with my director helped us both set key decisional points from the beginning, giving me the flexibility to deal with situations as they arose, and together we worked on fitting the components of the institute.

As I embraced a participatory approach in designing the program, several opportunities opened up to collaborate with different organizations and further talks enabled us to open this initiative for specific target audiences within the youth community. Although I had anticipated creating a model for other leadership programs to adopt later on, I did not realize that it would be used even before launching the very first group.

Key Learning in Project Content

In building the components of the institute, I connected readings, consultation, and my own judgment to create and shape a unique product. When I shaped the curriculum, I used the OCB's four working pillars as my corner stone. They were:

(1) Investing in leaders for change

(2) Enhancing organizational management and governance systems

(3) Building a vibrant social services sector

(4) Supporting new initiatives

After customizing and rearranging those pillars, I shaped the training program to move from the self to the group and then to the organization and community. My three invisible pillars were:

(1) Investing in self-awareness

(2) Building skills in the social services sector

(3) Enhancing organizational management and governance systems.

From there, it was easier to categorize the training workshops to fit those pillars and schedule them accordingly. However, as it was apparent that CITY Leaders was not only a training program, but an institute with other services and components, numerous research and case studies supported certain actions to ensure successful program implementation; as such, we:

Created a semi-structured program that enhanced the knowledge and skills of participants, yet allowed them to determine and develop their own projects.

Connected participants with community resources and mentors to help develop or build new skills.

Offered a virtual and physical non-partisan space to explore ideas and develop new solutions to old problems.

Involved participants in decisions and supported their capacity to play their part and feel how their opinions and feedback were valued and respected. In essence, they were considered as partners in their own development, not resources to be exploited or passive recipients of adult wisdom or experience (http://proxied.changemakers.net/journal/98june/davidson.cfm).

Connected participants with others doing similar work through networks, conferences, community visits, alumni of previous or similar program.

Built their inner skills to reflect on their outer capabilities and develop new connections to solve community problems. Making identity support a focus in the program not only helped assess their own skills and interest, but also reflect on their development through activism and project initiatives.

Provided basic management skills helped ease the learning curve and develop their organizations more effectively.

Some key elements I learned from the content of the pilot were later addressed in the following groups, such as:

(1) The use of technology was entrenched in the development process even starting before the application process with Jenni Idea Management System. Technology has greatly enhanced the program, providing extra resources for those who need the information exchange and connectivity with peers and mentors. It was also used in its right purpose, as a tool and not a strategy of the program. According to Rosenberg (2007, p. 26), technology cannot by itself build a learning culture. In fact, if used poorly, it can defeat its purpose.

(2) Although art-based learning and evaluation were included in the programming, in my opinion, that is not enough. Planning one or two workshops within an intensive training program is as good as giving fourth grade students the multiplication table a day before their math exam. When no time is provided to practice their skills, those who are not already good at it will simply miss the boat, at least the first time. Cultural based training also "serves to connect people across diverse communities and thereby generate bridging social capital" (Fix & Sivak, 2007, p.147). Bonnell and Zizys even suggested to include popular culture in the program such as "graphics, photography, music concerts, dance, fashion design, fashion shows, art displays, magazines, online publishing, recording music, design and produce CDs" (p.32). One way of doing it, is to use some of these elements throughout the program, as part of learning and evaluating at the same time.

(3) From my experience working with learning partners, I soon realized that "creating successful coalitions is challenging because it is often difficult to attract the right partners, agree on a joint strategy, select the best leaders (or leading organizations), hold the coalition together, and make strategic adjustments as the situation unfolds" (Bloom & Dees, 2008, p.52).

(4) Evaluation tools used were both formal and informal. The logic model as a formal tool was built and communicated with key partners. As we progressed, I realized that for my personal thinking style and working habits, I preferred a Theory of Change instead. In my opinion as well as that of Bloom and Dees (2008),

> Human societies are just as complex as ecosystems, with many different types of players and environmental conditions. Management scholars have recognized the parallels between biological and economic systems. Recently, researchers in the field of strategic management have focused greater attention on the parallels between biological and organizational systems, even adopting the phrase "ecosystem strategy" to refer to an approach for guiding an organization's strategic choices. Proponents of an ecosystems framework stress the value of understanding the complexity and dynamics of the wide-ranging forces an organization faces (p. 47).

To make this theory work for the institute, I would create a map of its ecosystem "that identifies all of the players and environmental conditions along with the relationships between them"(Bloom & Dees, 2008, p. 49). As noted by Rowan & Dumont (2007), "leadership development is an ongoing process. It is developed over time rather than in a single event" (p. 4).

In conclusion, "it would be helpful to create opportunities for dialogue between interested funders to gain greater understanding about what we mean by leadership in the non-profit sector and where the inter-relationships lie between leadership, management and organizational development"(PFC, 2007, p. 5). For we know, as one grows in skills, one will develop more complex principle-based knowledge structures (Mumford et al., 2000).

Key Learning in Project Process

From the start of this program, I realized there was nothing conventional about it. I experienced Rothenberg and Hausman's (1976) process of "Janusian thinking", which is holding together of apparently contradictory views at the same time. I was able to hold two or more opposite thoughts at the same time and still come up with a solution that builds on each thought. I also used creativity tools and atypical development processes throughout. The YPForum invited a large number of people, rotating them in a room with five tables, to give their input on the content, format, and

everything related to the program, all in 3 hours time. The Idea Campaign developed by Jenni Idea Management and its online brainstorming software was also one of its kind to be offered in a nonprofit setting, for the public to participate in. Traditionally, this tool was used for major corporations, mostly international ones, to innovate their products and services. This unique aspect has engaged people in the process and connected the outcomes of the forum, with the final projects, all the while keeping everyone informed of progress. I believe those aspects have played a crucial role in promoting the program as a truly creative process and content alike.

Starting with my position, I felt a great deal of achievement working with a team at UWT in creating this program within a four months period, on a part time basis (3 days a week). In order to move up to speed, my director accommodated my need to work remotely on certain days to complete tasks. Having an open minded and approachable director was my personal foundation to succeed. His support and mentorship helped me understand the bigger picture of working within multiple internal and external levels. In this case, I have personally experienced the power of having a mentor and a director at the same time. Additionally, having a team to rely on was my next best thing. I was the main person responsible for the program, but I also had a bright and dependable Program Assistant who took care of all details and provided extra support when needed. We both worked closely when making decisions on our collaboration networks and participant outreach, but we also involved the rest of the OCB unit. Everyone helped tremendously at some milestone; whether it was for evaluation, mentoring, orientation or team building with participants; being part of these amazing minds only moved the program forward to its current success.

Looking at participants' engagement, the YPForum was a great method to gather input on building the program. The next access point was Jenni Idea Management System. Although a great source for networking with other youth and partners alike, few people realized how to use and benefit from it. When the invitation was sent out to use Jenni, three people registered within the first five minutes and within a week there were 31 people submitting ideas to the challenges offered. I believe that Jenni could have had a tremendous impact on truly breaking the barriers between partners and participants, but lack of orientation and training gave people the wrong message; that this tool is an added work for them. And so as the time passed, less people submitted ideas.

A third discovery was how the Learning Partners Consortium (LPC) extended to include organizations not directly connected with CITY Leaders. It was convenient that the March 6, 2008

partners meeting came a month after the YPForum; giving me some time to develop a semi-final training program, but at the same time open it for suggestions and changes from partners, which we included. According to the Philanthropic Foundation Canada (PFC, 2007), some of the reasons for being involved in leadership development from funders perspective were:

> Organizational capacity building
>
> Community engagement
>
> Building leadership for the sector
>
> Recruitment and retention. "Providing professional leadership development opportunities could provide an incentive to attract and retain leaders in the non-profit sector" (p.10).
>
> Creating and sustaining networks. "Leaders are resources to each other. They use each other as sounding posts, undertake joint projects, facilitate learning in each others' organizations and create opportunities to deepen collective learning in areas of leadership and change." (p. 11).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, If I am to redesign another program such as CITY Leaders, I would give extra time to certain aspects and milestones more than others. For example, the YPForum initially was looked at as a simple consultation method. Yet this event not only took much preparation and arrangement time (finding the right tools, securing and training facilitators on the tools, arrangement event logistics, and documenting outcomes), it also was the foundation of the program as I realized later on when I revisited it very often for key decision making. Another key example is finding and matching mentors with participants. This process has proved to be time consuming and critical at the same time, there was a great need in hand-picking the mentors in the same manner the participants were chosen. Moving forward, I've learned a great deal on the importance the preparation phase (providing enough time, orientation, and resources), while staying flexible for changes throughout the program.

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSION

One sesame seed won't make oil.

-Burmese proverb

What do I know Now

My position as the Program Development Manager in the Organizational Capacity Building Unit at United Way Toronto and a lead in the development of the Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders has enhanced my knowledge tremendously in program design using a participatory approach. Personally, this is the approach I use with most of my projects, but what is different about this experience was that I lived every part of the design and implementation, in its best and most challenging moments. I realized that I personally experienced what I planned to offer my participants; the importance of both knowledge (of work, peers, networks, processes) and experience in dealing with several ill-defined challenges simultaneously. Those entities are what build a leader's competence in the complex, changing environment of the non profit sector. I also realized how the voluntary sector as a whole "needs to encourage a culture of learning because many of the leaders who want, and need, to learn the essential skills noted above will not have the means to do so without support from their organizations and funders" (CCL, 2005, p.10). Leadership training have been concentrated predominantly in the "development of individual leaders operating in an organizational or community context" (PFC, 2007, p.8), and "no findings of staff and board members embarking on leadership development together" (p.8).

I found the Centre for Community Leadership's (2005) characteristics of cultures that enhance learning to be very suitable for this experience of ours. Table 2 connects those characteristics with my experience leading both the CITY Leaders and the LPC components.

Table 2: CITY Leaders as a Learning Culture

Cultures that enhance learning	Culture of learning in CITY Leaders and LPC
The interest of all stakeholders is balanced	All points of view of stakeholders were considered when putting the institute's components together: the participants, trainers, partners, coordinators, mentors and organizations.
The focus is on people rather than systems	Applicants were encouraged to write their Personal Statement focusing on their goals rather than their organizations'. LPC Partners were encouraged to discuss their own interests in CITY Leaders.
People are made to believe they can change their environment	This was an objective for both CITY Leaders and the LPC. Participants were continuously encouraged to evaluate the program as well as analyze their own settings and environment. The LPC were offered the chance to tweak the program before it was finalized, giving them ample of time and space to influence changes.
Time is made for learning	For participants, the online platform facilitated continuous discussions and reflection. The LPC discussions were facilitated by a partner who's experienced in holistic approaches to learning.
A holistic approach is taken to problems	We embraced this trait continuously throughout the process, taking into account facts and emotions together.
Open communication is encouraged	All stakeholders were persuaded to give their feedback during and after sessions and meetings. They shared their concerns as well as their encouragements to follow up.
Teamwork is believed in	A corner stone of the program. The opening retreat evolved around the importance of team building and the LPC was invited as a team with varied interests and similar goals.
The leaders are approachable.	The unit's team was always accessible and provided their support on multiple levels, to each others and to participants and partners alike. Partners were open for collaboration and saw this experience as a breakthrough in program development history in the City of Toronto.

Next Step, What I See Myself Doing

What I know now is that the Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders (CITY Leaders) has started on solid grounds and is primed to achieve great success. From a creative and participatory program design perspective, it has lived up to its expectations and well beyond. My future plans are no less progressive and I will use a lot of the skills I gained in this experience in my future career. I welcome comments and suggestions at all time, and you are invited to find more about this initiative by emailing me at ttrtaher@hotmail.com. Thank you for reading about this incredible journey in my career and my life.

REFERENCES

A known mistake is better than an unknown truth.

- Arabic proverb.

Bloom, P.N. & Dees, J.G. (2008). Cultivate your ecosystem. *Stanford Social Innovation Review.* 6(1), 47 – 53

Bonnell, J. & Zizys, T. (2005, February). *Best practices for youth programs* (Available from the United Way of Greater Toronto, Organizational Capacity Building Unit, 26 Wellington st. East, 11th floor, Toronto, ON, M5E 1W9, Canada).

Centre for Community Leadership (CCL) (2005, July). *Trends and issues in the voluntary sector: A youth leadership perspective.* Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario: Leadership Connext. Retrieved on December 13, 2007 from http://www.communityleadership.net/index.php/weblog/detail_news/460/

Comparetta, C. & Fien, A. (2006). Technical leadership development program: Participant guide. Unpublished manuscript.

Crammond, R. & Howarth, R. (2005, February). *Capacity building for organizations working with youth.* (Available from the United Way of Greater Toronto, Organizational Capacity Building Unit, 26 Wellington st. East, 11th floor, Toronto, ON, M5E 1W9, Canada).

Fix, E., & Sivak, N. (2007). The growing case for youth engagement through culture [Electronic version]. *Our Diverse Cities, 4,* 145 – 151.

Grassroots Youth Collaborative (GYC). (2005). *Youth on youth: Grassroots youth collaborative on youth led organizing in the city of Toronto.* Toronto, ON: Remi Warner.

Hannum, K.M., Martineau, J.W., & Reinelt, C. (2007). *The handbook of leadership development evaluation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Hedge, C. A. (2007). *Community leadership programs: Where they have been and where they are going.* Unpublished masters' project, Buffalo State College, State University of New York, NY.

James Irvine's Foundation. (2000, March). *How to Strengthen youth-serving nonprofits? Experiences of the James Irvine's Foundation's Youth Development Initiative (YDI).* Encino, CA: Human

Interaction Research Institute. Retrieved on January 13, 2008 from www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/former/YDI_Report.pdf.

Kumreuther, F. (2005). *Up next: Generation change and the leadership of nonprofit organizations* (Executive Transitions Monograph Series No. 4). Baltimore, Maryland: The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Mumford, M.D., Zaccaro, S.J., Harding, F.D., Jacobs, T.O., & Fleishman, E.A. (2000). Leadership skills for a changing world: Solving complex social problems. *Leadership Quarterly Journal. 11 (1).* 11 – 35.

Pancer, S.M., Rose-Krasnor, L., & Loiselle, L. (n.d.). Youth conferences as a context for engagement. Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement.

Philanthropic Foundations Canada (2007). *Building leadership capacity: A survey of Canadian funders investing in building leadership capacity in the non-profit sector.* . Montreal, QC: Philanthropic Foundations Canada.

Podolny, J.M. (2007). Networks for good works. *Stanford Social Innovation Review.* 5(1), 32 – 39

Powazek, D. (2002). *Design for community.* Indianapolis, IN: New Riders Publishing.

Rosenberg, M.J. (2007, June 3). *Beyond e-learning: New approaches to managing and delivering organizational knowledge.* Paper presented at the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) International Conference and Exposition. Handout retrieved February 7, 2008, from http://astd2007.astd.org/speakerhandouts.htm

Rothenberg, A., & Hausman, C.R., (Eds.) (1976). The creativity question. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Rowan, L & Dumont, J. (2007, June). Leveraging organizational culture and leadership development: The American Eagle Outfitters culture and Emerging Leaders Program story. (conference handout ASTD. Five Star development, inc.

Wellesley Institute. (2007, October). *Wellesley institute executive leadership program: Program evaluation.* Toronto, ON: April Boyington Wall, Joan Roberts, Pauline O'Connor, & Nasim Haque.

Young Nonprofit Professionals Network. (n.d.). *Stepping up or stepping out: A report on the readiness of next generation nonprofit leaders.* San Francisco, CA: Josh Solomon & Yarrow Sandahl.

Appendix A:

Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders

Program Brochure

Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders
(CITY Leaders) – Program Brochure

CITY Leaders is a certificate program for young leaders – aged 18 to 33 years – working in the community and social service sector in the City of Toronto (GTA). The institute is open to United Way Toronto member and non-member agencies that have full/part time as well as contract staff.

The duration of the pilot is five months of training starting May 2008, followed by networking activities. There are 13 required sessions in addition to optional workshops and events. Three months after completion, participants will participate in an evaluation assessment and commence the network activities and events.

CITY Leaders provides a supportive and stimulating experience delivered through training sessions, online forums, residential retreats and off-site learning activities. Towards the end of the program, participants will produce a final project that reflects their learning and present it to an audience during the graduation ceremony. Experienced practitioners will facilitate participants' discussions through hands-on workshops and peer-based learning. Extra support will be provided through mentoring opportunities and online knowledge exchange.

Institute components:

Training:
Modules were organized as a result of consultation with young people and various partners. Please see Program Overview for a complete list

Offsite retreat:
Performed by experienced team-building facilitators, the offsite is desirable to get everyone comfortable with each other and promote group formation. The opening retreat will double as a module on "leadership presence".

Online platform:
An online forum was developed to offer a virtual space for discussions, material dissemination, case studies and networking opportunities among participants, trainers, staff and mentors. The forum will also serve as an ongoing evaluation tool for the training module and institute in general.

Mentoring system:
In collaboration with similar programs, mentors are recruited and matched based on interests and needs of participants of CITY Leaders.

Action Learning
For learning to be grounded in applicable approach, practice is needed to translate theories and discussions into social change action. Before graduating, each participant is expected to work

individually or in groups on a project that demonstrates the newly-acquired skills. The project can be a temporary event, or an ongoing series of activities that goes beyond the program's timeline. This will encourage leadership and youth involvement in the sector and community.

Evaluation:
Evaluation will be integrated early and throughout the program using an evaluation framework and a logic model. The online tool will be used to seek timely feedback from participants and make adjustments accordingly.

Graduation:
Participants will attend a graduation ceremony along with funding and sectoral partners and potentially future participants of the program. During graduation, participants will have a chance to make present their project to the public.

CITY Leaders Network activities:

Once the training is completed and graduates are ready to face their challenges individually or in groups, post-training network activities will be supported to keep participants connected and focused on applied learning. Events will take place on a regular basis based on the participants availability and interest.

The participants' experience in the program:
Throughout the program, CITY Leaders will not only thrive because of the diverse group of participants graduating, but also from the flexible and distinct partners, funders, trainers and organizers. It will be a truly transformational experience. The following is an illustration of how the program fits together.
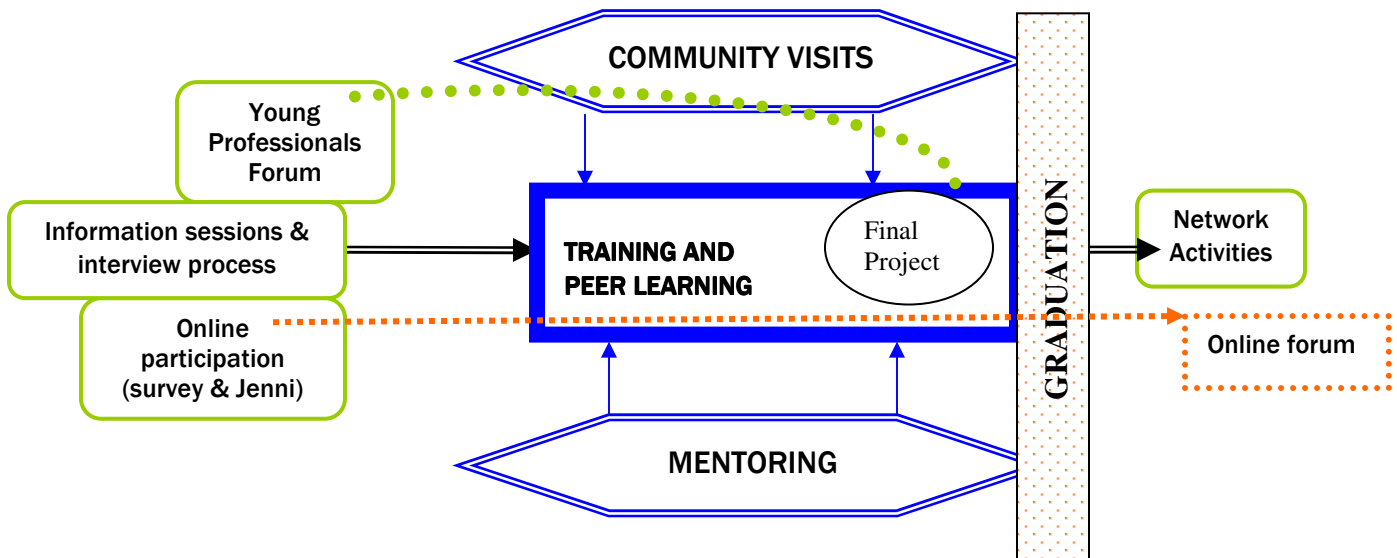
Appendix B:

Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders

Program Overview

**Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders
(CITY Leaders) – Program Overview**

April 2008 – Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders (CITY Leaders)

Setting Youth on Pathways to Success is one of United Way Toronto's priorities. CITY Leaders aims at building leadership capacity and creativity in young leaders as a sectoral youth retention strategy.

Offered in partnership with key sectoral partners, CITY Leaders intends to promote leadership and influence the involvement of youth in community organizing, social activism and civic engagement. CITY Leaders provides supportive, stimulating learning experience delivered through classroom sessions, online forums, peer-learning support and an offsite learning retreat. Towards the end of the program, participants will produce a final project that reflects their learning and present it to an audience. Experienced practitioners will facilitate participants' discussions through hands-on workshops and peer-based learning. Extra support will be provided through mentoring opportunities.

How will you benefit

Participants will:
> Build their skills to respond to complex challenges and opportunities in their workplace.
> Enhance their ability to lead organizations in the future.
> Learn strategies for understanding and adapting to change.
> Develop leadership tools to influence decision-making processes.
> Benefit from the mixture of networking opportunities.
> Gain knowledge of creative problem solving and change leadership methods.
> Learn from each other as well as from the trainers and experts linked to the institute

Eligibility
> You are a young adult between 18 and 33 years old, working in the community and social service sector that is both community-based and located in the City of Toronto (GTA).
> You want to develop your leadership and management capabilities to tackle issues faced in your current position or in your community.
> Contract, part time, and full time staff are welcome to apply.
> Not eligible if you are working in government, hospital, college or university.

Training program overview 2008

The CITY Leaders engaged participants in a forum where they submitted their input on the format, content and delivery style. Their input shaped the design of the institute and how it is currently offered. Key partners were grouped to reflect the needs of the institute and to provide their expertise in their respective modules and post-training support.

In addition to the topics covered in the modules provided below, some elements were incorporated based on the needs of participants. Such as, mentoring opportunities, off site retreats, project-based approach, online resources (information, chat, courses), art-based learning and community visits.

The program starts in May 2008 and continues for five months of training followed by evaluation and networking activities. Modules are grouped into 2-3 sessions per month, varying between evenings, days, and weekends. There are 13 required sessions to complete in the program and receive a certificate, with additional optional workshops and networking events that go beyond the training part of the program. The final project of each participant will be presented at the graduation in early October 2008. Three months after completion, all participants are required to attend a follow-up evaluation assessment. Following is a description of each module, the training providers, dates and locations to reserve.

The following is a description of the training sessions that runs from May to September 2008.

Embracing Diversity: From Accommodation To Engagement.

The social services sector must be in synch with the growing diversity of the communities it serves. So, the question remains, is diversity a challenge to be reckoned with or an opportunity to be harnessed?

Participants will be exposed to a variety of approaches to diversity and will customize approaches that are most suitable for their workplace environments. The session will be interactive with the use of case studies and scenarios to promote reflection and team empowerment.

Leadership Presence/ Opening Retreat

Leaders who act from a place of deep authenticity bring out the best in others. They create a climate of both challenge and trust, so that others are inspired to take risks and rise to their potential. Although authenticity is an innate quality, leaders can cultivate the capacity and courage to bring more of who they are into their everyday interactions.

In this module participants will strengthen their leadership presence. They will enhance their capacity for trusting the moment, and for acting with decisiveness, clarity, and compassion. They will also learn how to initiate and host authentic conversations and meetings, and how to generate a culture of coherence and meaning without imposing control. The module will be highly experiential, incorporating exercises drawn from The Art of Hosting and the martial arts. Participants will have the opportunity to determine their own learning aspirations for the program as a whole. Reflective practices such as journaling and peer coaching will be introduced as practices that can be continued throughout the program.

As the opening Retreat of the CITY Leaders, this module will establish a tone of innovation and engagement, build community, and initiate a learning culture.

Thinking Preferences and Ways of Knowing to Assess Leader Strengths

Self-awareness, empathy, and social skills play a part in the development of one's personal mastery and vision. Effectively influencing and leading change requires anticipating roadblocks, an understanding of one¹s problem solving preferences and management of self and relationships. Assessment of thinking preferences and ways of knowing provide a deeper understand of one¹s approaches to problems and emotional aspects of intelligence.

Leading Change Through Problem Solving and Creative Action

Facilitating change requires effective clarifying, transforming and implementing one's thinking. Creative Problem Solving provides strategies to meet challenges and lead new opportunities. It includes tools to clarify challenges, generate ideas and turn ideas into action while effectively managing judgment. Groups build skill in teaming and more effectively manage diverse preferences for solving problems.

Fundraising

Building a broad base of individual donors gives you financial security and political clout, and it is possible for any organization and group to create an individual donor program. This interactive session will provide information on basic steps involved in developing fundraising plans and will give you the tools to fundraise for social change. Participants will be provided with resources outlining tips for fundraising small amounts, general tips for successful fundraising and more.

Art Based Evaluation

Art-based evaluation is built on the premise that using creative language to respond to creative activities is a good fit. For example after a theatre project participants are asked to paint a response to the experience or after a dance project participants are encouraged to use poetry to express their feelings. This non-linear evaluation technique is a revealing way to better understand the journey of the project and the impact it has had on participants. Participants will try out some art-based evaluation techniques and end with a discussion of the viability of implementing an *evaluation-as-process* approach. Participants will be provided with handouts on art-based evaluation techniques.

Technology for Social Change

A hands-on training component to give participants guided experience with a variety of technology tools and an interactive discussion on ways to use technology in social change. Participants will receive handout materials to take home and review that would provide a reminder and overview of their learning in the session.

The focus of the session would be to provide participants with an overview of all of the main Internet-based tools that can be leveraged to assist social programs, including blogging, podcasting, social networks, video sharing, photocasting, and content syndication. Participants will be guided through the use of the main "Web 2.0" sites that provide each of these tools, helping them gain experience using each tool and discussing how each tool could be used to benefit their work, as well as a demonstration of how they can use the numerous free tools on to enable their organizations.

Non-profit Finance

This workshop will support young people to develop skills in the areas of project and organizational budgets, cash flow statements as well as systems for program spending, invoicing, and petty cash. The templates and systems will span from basic to advanced. Participants will be provided with resource binders and CDs that contain sample budgets and tools to help keep finances in order.

A Changing Sector: Social enterprise social entrepreneurship and social innovation

The objectives of the workshop is to
* Establish a basic understanding (definitions and overview) of the emerging fields of social enterprise, social entrepreneurship and social innovation
* Understand the state of these fields in Canada and within a global context
* Address the implications of these fields on the nonprofit sector and the future work of participants in the program
The workshop will draw on lessons from complexity theory and network theory as a strategy to understand recent developments in the nonprofit sector and to begin thinking about future trends. The workshop format will be a mix of presentation, discussion and interactive activity over a three-hour timeframe.

Organizational Governance and Board Development

An expert panel will discuss issues on organizational systems, governance, and the role of board of directors, including understanding the dynamics in working with boards. The panel will consist of both theory and practice examples of managing and working with boards.

Not-for-Profit Communications: The Power of Storytelling

A hands-on workshop that uses the power of storytelling to raise awareness, funds and profile. Using individual coaching and in-class exercises, our instructors will help you uncover—and tell—your organization's unique story.
Emphasis will be placed on understanding the need to have something concrete and compelling to present, be it in the media, across a boardroom table, to staff or with potential donors. You will learn how to tailor your issues to the distinct needs of the audience at hand.
You will discover how to anticipate events that can help get your story out, and how to find and

prepare your best spokespeople. You will learn how to develop key messages, to help establish your organization's reputation in the media, and with the public at large.

Together, the Power of Storytelling instructors have a 360º view of not-for-profits and media.

Cultural Fluency: An Enabler of Organizational Effectiveness.

Maintaining a safe and productive workplace requires the interest and participation of all employees. This session will examine the impact of intimidation, harassment and marginalization within a workplace context and offer skills around cultural fluency to deal with such issues. The session will be interactive with the use of case studies and scenarios to promote reflection and team empowerment.

Aligning organizational culture for community development

How do we bring new life to our organizations and the communities we serve? How do we build resilience and innovation from the inside out? How can our organizations truly embody the values that we express in our missions? How do we connect the key players within our communities? How do we craft partnerships and networks that hold? These are some of the questions we will explore as we learn new, more nourishing, sustainable, and effective approaches to building organizations that can help transform communities.

In this workshop we will draw on practices and new learning from ABCD, the Shambhala Institute, the Art of Hosting, Deep Democracy, and others engaged in designing new tools and ways of creating organizational change, building alliances, fostering social innovation, and resolving conflict.

Presentation skills (CITY Leaders network)

Whether you are applying for funding or simply telling someone about what you are working on, having a clear, concise and unique message is essential. The Presentations Workshop will explore creative and effective ways of conveying your message with a focus on the end-of-term presentations. The workshop will be hands-on and focus on your project presentation for the graduating ceremony.

Appendix C:

Young Professionals Forum

Tables and Idea Generation Tools

The YPForum utilized several idea generation tools to capture thoughts on themes. The forum was designed to tap into the different learning styles of participants, offering a chance to voice their opinions in verbal, written, or drawing format. For those kinesthetic learners, the process was made that each person sits with a group of people and would rotate every 15 minutes together to the next table. As an ice-breaker to the event, I asked each group of 10 to 12 people to come up with a name for their individual group. This enabled instant connection and facilitated open discussions. Q

The idea generation tools used were: (a) affinity diagram, (b) discussion and brainstorming with post it, (c) drawing, (d) brainwriting, and (e) success zones tools. The tools were altered to fit the style of this event (new group adding to each table every 15 minutes). Following are the tools in their modified form. Further minor changes happened during the day which were briefly documented in this write-up.

Appendix C1

Idea Generation Tool: Affinity Diagram (For Program Topics)

A tool designed to help gather large amount of data and organize them into groups based on their natural relationship. A process performed by a team, should be applied to large amount of data (more than 20). It is based on situations that seem confusing, uncertain or disorganized, where issues need to be clarified and teams need to be 'unified'. This tool can also be used effectively after a brainstorming to quickly organize ideas into clusters. The purpose of this tool is to:

a) Organize large volumes of data: facts, thoughts, opinions, issues, insights, ideas, etc.
b) Gather perspectives, opinions, and insights of a group of people who are knowledgeable about the issue at hand.
c) Encourage new patterns of thinking and non traditional connections among issues (by stimulating 'gut level' reaction approach).
d) Identify patterns within data and allow breakthroughs to emerge naturally.
e) Overcome 'team paralysis' (i.e., endless verbal discussions over issues) and encourage ownership of results.

Directions:

1. Define& phrase the issue discussed in full sentence:
2. Each member writes on post-it (thoughts, information, opinion, insights)
3. Display data on a chart on the wall (or table) randomly.

Round one: group writes on post-its, stick on chart and read other post-its.
Round two: group reads what's on, then group them and create 'headers' (a concise sentence that captures the central theme of each grouping), group adds whatever they feel is missing.

Spend time creating 'solid headers' that clearly convey the essence of all data in grouping
Round three: Divide data into subgroups as needed and create sub-headers, add anything missing
Round four: If a meaningful relationship between two or more groups is discovered, arrange them in a column with a 'super-head', discuss and clarify groupings and headers if needed. Use stickers (dots or stars) to highlight great suggestions.
Round five: Draw the final Affinity Diagram. Have them arrange it such as in the example below, adding & changing as needed. (in a drop down menu style, or clustering it in a group)

Example: "What topics a leadership program must cover …"

Collective individualism		
Financial management	**Engaging communities**	**Self development**
Fundraising	Facilitation skills	Self assessment
Accounting	Team building	Personal style
Bookkeeping	Mobilizing communities for projects	Presentation skills

Materials to get:
- post its (big sizes)
- markers
- stickers
- flipchart paper

Appendix C2

Idea Generation Tool: Discussion and Brainstorming with Post it (For Length of Program, Certificate, and Name Suggestion)

This table will discuss a new topic every 15 minutes.
The facilitator will simply pose the questions and engage everyone.
The note taker will document everything.

Materials:
- note taker
- laptop
- big yearly calendar
- extra pens
- paper for sketching
- post its

Length of program (round one and two).
A full year calendar will be provided on a big sheet, participants will note any holidays or time offs, discuss the best length for the program (months), how it will cover all issues, and the best time of day to deliver (full or half day, nights, weekends, bi-weekly, etc.). if time allows, discuss the number of hours to spend each month on varied activities (attending lectures, participating in online discussions, working on projects), note down everything

How long should the program be? For example, part of the advantages of a short program is that since it is completed faster, it allows for immediate implementation; while the longer program, in addition to providing more information, allows for reflection time in between sessions and shared learning with other participants.

Question to consider: How long should a leadership program be?

Certificate component (round three and four).
Offering a certificate from an educational institute as part of the program has its advantages, as well as its disadvantages, in terms of topics to cover, flexibility in delivery style or location of sessions.
Questions to consider: Is obtaining a certificate as part of a leadership program important to you? One of our potential partners in this program is an international centre linked to a university. Does it matter to you to have a certificate from a centre that is known internationally?

Name of program (round five).
Questions to consider: What can a name tell you about a leadership program? What name do you envision written on your CV? What alumni group do you want to be part of?

Appendix C3

Idea Generation Tool: Drawing (For Delivery Style)

Originally, the tool planned was the cartoon storyboard. After discussions with the facilitator, it seems more complicated that it need be, so we decided to opt for a simpler version of having participants draw their ideal learning situation on a paper (on red sheets of paper), and other groups will draw the unproductive method of learning (on green sheets of paper). Participants were allowed to write one or two words to explain their drawings if need be, and add stars and dots to others drawings if they saw it resembled their style.

Materials:

- lots of red and green sheets of paper.
- plenty of markers of all colors and sizes.
- stickers of signs and icons.
- colored dots
- highlighters.
- varied pictures of social interaction concept (lectures,

Appendix C4

Idea Generation Tool: Brainwriting (For Issues and Challenges for Youth in the Sector)

Questions asked in the five groups were:

What do you aspire to achieve in your current position?
What issues do you face daily that makes your work more difficult?
What concerns you have with regards to work/life balance?
What do you need of resources to complete this program?
What struggles do your face in your current position?

Directions:
1. Each person starts with a brainwriting worksheet, facilitator will ask the question for the group, and each will write it on top.
2. put 12 blank worksheets in the center of the group
3. Ask to write one idea per box, and include anything that comes to mind, you never know who else might be thinking the same.
4. Silently think of three ideas and write each one in a separate box on the first open row of your worksheet
5. Pass your worksheet back to the center and pick another one with writing on it.
6. Read the ideas on the new worksheet and build on them, or put three new ideas.
7. Keep swapping worksheets until all the boxes are full.
8. for the next round, start the table with half-filled sheets

Materials needed:

- lots of copies of brainwriting worksheets
- pens in colors
- highlights
- colored dots

Row one		
Row two		
Row three		

Tool developed by Horst Geschka (Creativity unbound, Miller, Vehar, Firestien, 2001). More info on http://contagiouscreativity.wordpress.com.

Appendix C5

Idea Generation Tool: Success Zones (For Post training engagement)

A tool designed to help form a clear vision of what future states are the most promising to pursue. The two judging criteria in reference are: degree of importance and probability of success

First round: list the options of the post training engagements / activities needed to continue the networking that happens in the program after its ending (one idea per post it and place on table).
Second round: evaluate each option using the scale against degree of importance (red markers)
Third round: evaluate each option using the scale against probability of success (black markers)
Round four: locate options on searching for success zones matrix
Round five: continue to locate options, change if needed and identify option(s) most important and promising to pursue.
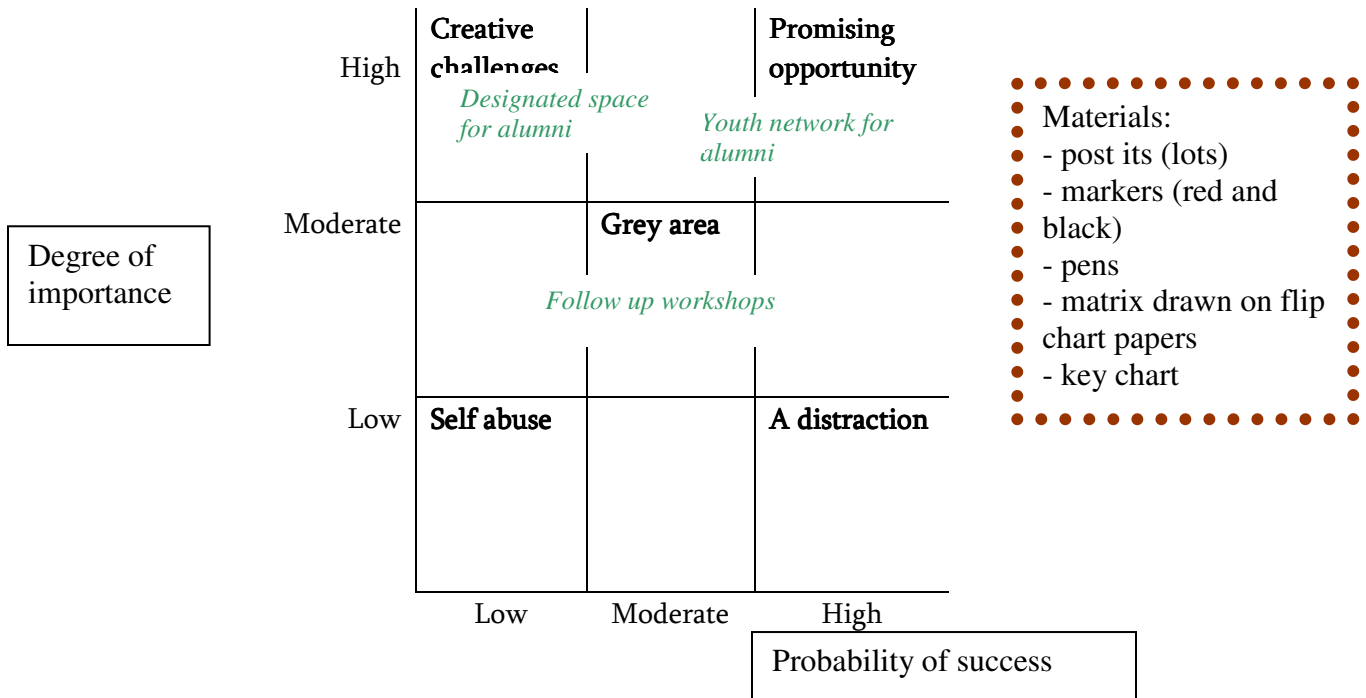
Example: What are post-program activities that you would like to see developed

Options – future states	Degree of importance	Probability of success
Have follow up workshops	4	4
Create a youth network solely for the alumni	8	7
Designated office space for alumni	7	2

Key:
Low 1-3
Mod. 4-6
High 7-8

Degree of importance: How critical is this option to the core purpose mission of the centre
Probability of success: given current & expected resources how likely can we achieve this state.

Degree of importance

	Creative challenges	Promising opportunity
High	*Designated space for alumni*	*Youth network for alumni*
Moderate	Grey area	
	Follow up workshops	
Low	Self abuse	A distraction

Low   Moderate   High

Probability of success

Materials:
- post its (lots)
- markers (red and black)
- pens
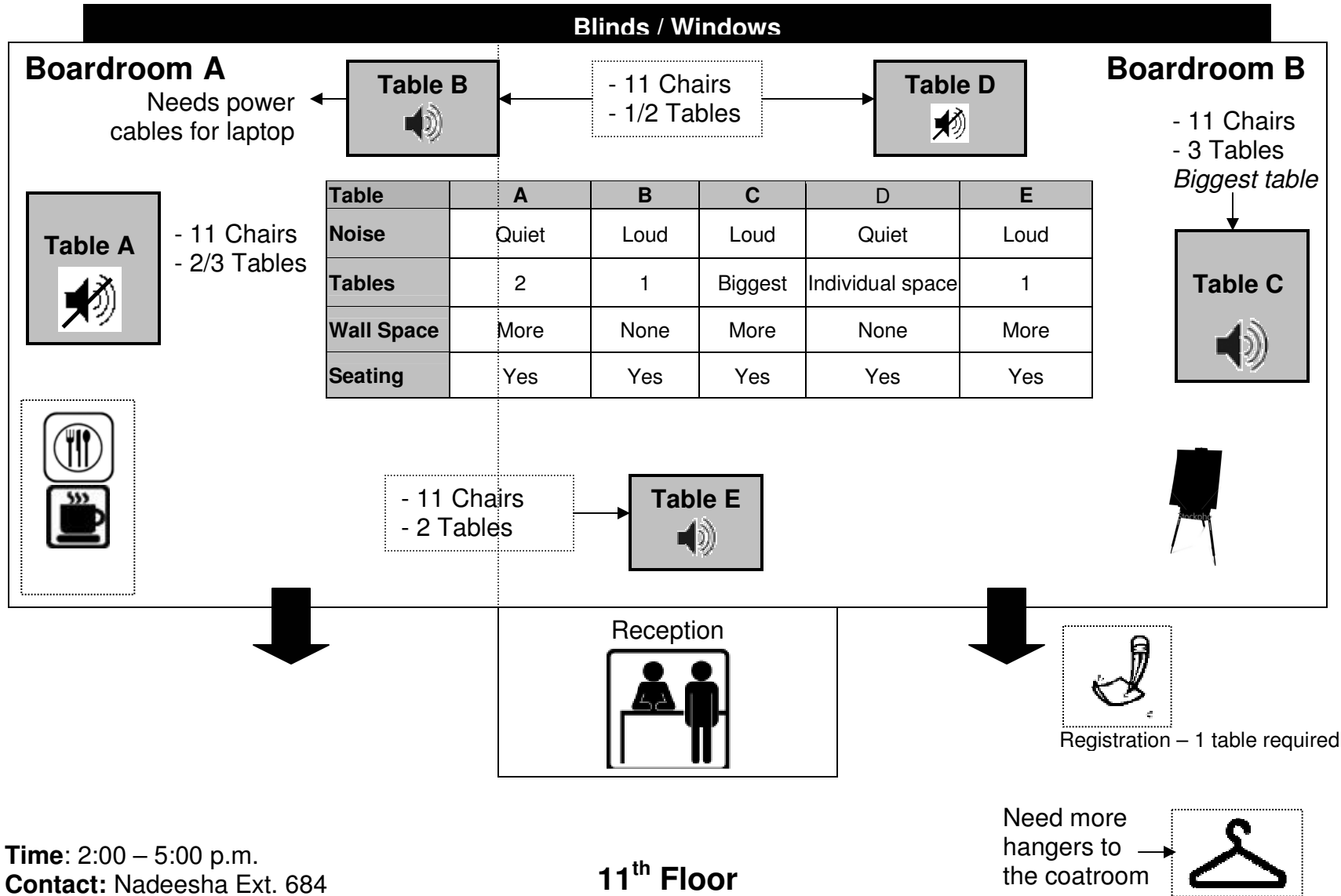- matrix drawn on flip chart papers
- key chart

Source: Treffinger, D.J. (1992). Searching for success zones.

Appendix D:

Young Professionals Forum

Room Set-Up

Young Professionals Forum - Setup
Tuesday, January 29, 2008

Blinds / Windows

Boardroom A

Needs power cables for laptop

Table B 🔊

- 11 Chairs
- 1/2 Tables

Table D 🔇

Boardroom B

- 11 Chairs
- 3 Tables
Biggest table

Table A 🔇

- 11 Chairs
- 2/3 Tables

Table	A	B	C	D	E
Noise	Quiet	Loud	Loud	Quiet	Loud
Tables	2	1	Biggest	Individual space	1
Wall Space	More	None	More	None	More
Seating	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table C 🔊

- 11 Chairs
- 2 Tables

Table E 🔊

Reception

Registration – 1 table required

Need more hangers to the coatroom

Time: 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Contact: Nadeesha Ext. 684

11th Floor

Appendix E:

Concept Paper

Designing a Leadership Program

Name: Randah Taher
Date submitted: Thursday February 21st, 2008
Project Type: Use the skill and talent of designing, implementing and evaluating unique projects to improve the quality of life for others.

What Is This Project About?

This project is about designing a creative leadership program for those working in the nonprofit sector in Toronto, Canada. The Organizational Capacity Building (OCB) Unit at United Way Toronto (UWT) is initiating a unique program for young people in their twenties and early thirties to help develop their managerial and leadership skills to better navigate their way and enhance the sector in the city. It is a unique program in the way it emphasizes collaborative leadership, creative methodology and a bottom-up approach. I am interested in documenting the process of designing this program and employing the various resources that will enhance such initiative.

Rationale for Choice:

I will be working with UWT as a Program Development Manager – youth leadership, and this opportunity provides me – with the help of others in the OCB unit – a chance to create a unique experience for myself, my department, and our partners. In addition it helps facilitate positive change in the lives of participants who complete the course. I foresee many opportunities to use hands-on creative tools and techniques throughout the design and implementation of the program. The impact of the project goes beyond my personal learning, and will help shape the leadership programming in the city. For example:

Our learning consortium and partners include several leading educational institutes, foundations, social enterprises and city departments who will not only aid in developing the program, but also learn from its outcomes and our work together.
The program developed could be implemented in other organizations in Ontario and possibly other provinces.
More organizations will aim for working in a collaborative style, using the program design as a model.

What Will be the Tangible Product(s) or Outcomes?

The outcome of this project is the documentation of designing the leadership program process. In my final product, some of my headlines will be:
Consulting with potential participants and the use of idea generation tools.
Meeting with various partners, and creating the learning community.

Producing program materials, recruiting and selecting participants.
Training sessions and applied learning.
Choosing a name for the program.
Developing a network of collaborators for the participants.
Creating an effective evaluation framework.

Since the program itself will start after the end of this course semester, I will not be able to document the implementation and evaluation phases in my write-up. Those who read this paper and are interested in the future outcomes are encouraged to email me directly at ttrtaher@hotmail.com

Therefore, the final product for this project will present a description of the process we took in designing and evaluating a leadership program that emphasizes: a) engaging participants in program design, b) utilizing creativity tools and problem solving methods, c) orchestrating a group of institutes and organizations who will provide training and services to participants, and d) connect all aspects of the program using technology.

What Criteria Will You Use To Measure The Effectiveness Of Your Achievement?

Does the final product reflect its participatory approach throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation phases?
Will it create a sense of community of shared inquiry and reflection among participants, partners, UWT staff and the public?
Does it incorporate evaluative activities throughout the program?
Does it include different methods of learning?
Will the design incorporate the strengths of each partner's expertise?
Will it allow partners to develop further networking alliances outside the program's parameters?

Who Will Be Involved or Influenced; What Will Your Role Be?

The project has a community that will shape the program in different ways. As the Program Development Manager, I will be working closely with the OCB Unit Director and a Program Assistant to orchestrate the resources, design the final program, and facilitate discussions and learning throughout the process. Two other staff from the OCB Unit will assist with aspects of the program (evaluation and mentoring). The partners for the pilot program consisted of educational institutions, foundations, social enterprises, youth-led organizations, technology-based companies and the United Way Toronto.

When Will This Project Take Place?

Phase I – The planning of the program modules started in January 2008. The development and design will progress throughout the duration of my semester course, until May 2008. By that date, I would have completed the program design, established the deadlines and session duration, tested the idea

management software with partners and potential participants, developed the program's evaluation framework and logic model, selected participants, and documented the whole process of this phase.

Phase II – The program duration is five months of training, including the online forum, offsite retreat, community visits, final project, and graduation. The plan is to start in Spring 2008. During this phase, I would monitor the progress of learning for both participants and partners, facilitate online discussions, resolve any raising conflicts, and evaluate initial outcomes.

Phase III – End of training and start of network activities. Follow up with participants and evaluation sessions to discuss the effectiveness of the program and distribute material for all learning partners.

Where Will This Project Occur?

The program is designed for and will happen in the City of Toronto (Ontario, Canada). The training component will take place in downtown Toronto, but there will also be an online forum to connect participants and partners to share their skills and feedback of the program. Furthermore, participants will be engaged in extra-curricular activities other than the training modules that will happen in different parts of the city.

Why Is It Important to Do This?

This initiative, as it is being developed for the targeted audience, is not available anywhere else in the region (Crammond & Howarth, 2005). Doing it right and not just implementing a pre-designed format is extremely important to prove the value of investing in young leaders in the sector. Not only is the social services sector suffering from a lack of leaders and change agents, young people are frequently undervalued and work on contract basis (because of age, expertise, organizational politics, etc.). In addition, young adults are increasingly stretched in their capacities to do more work with fewer resources. As a result, they tend to stay in their job levels longer, work 2 or more part time jobs with no extra benefits, and become trapped in the hierarchy levels of the sector since they cannot get a full time job right away (Crammond & Howarth, 2005; Grassroots Youth Collaborative [GYC], 2005).

Experts and literature emphasize the importance of youth engagement in decision-making at all levels of a program (GYC, 2005; City of Toronto, 2006; Crammond & Howarth, 2005; Bonnell & Zizys, 2005), and Crammond and Howarth referred to the term "youth-infusion approach" (p.11). To build on this element, the plan is to consult with participants on the program's content, format and delivery styles through an open forum, using several idea generating tools. An online idea management software will follow as a way to capture initiatives developed during the forum and prior to starting the program. To further maximize the learning potential, I will also create a consortium of learning partners for those who wish to realize new opportunities for youth in the sector and to open up discussions on other possibilities of connecting this program to the community.

The impact of this program will not only affect the participants, who will enhance their professional and managerial expertise in working in the sector, but also open conversation with other partners on

changing the system of running programs from a silo mode to a more collaborative style. This is a chance to impact both individual and organizational ends at the same time, and at this level, much creativity is needed to make it a success.

Personal Learning Goals:

I have a huge interest in this project as I see myself learning many things about running a "change making" venture. While this might not be the first time I initiate a project from scratch, it certainly is most complex and provides unique opportunities that I will deal with and learn a lot from. My list of personal goals outnumbers the space provided in this paper, however, my main aspirations are:

- Θ Coordinate a number of resources and tasks to build a one-of-a-kind leadership program.
- Θ Facilitate discussions among individuals and groups, both separately and jointly.
- Θ Coach groups who go through the program to become visible and influential in their fields.
- Θ Advance my skills in making key decisions with the least amount of information and time.
- Θ Transfer the newly acquired knowledge to other ventures I embark on in the future.

How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes?

Phases	What to do …	How to do it …
Phase I	Involve youth in the design process using idea generating tools and software	Organize a forum and invite participants to share their input and priorities. (Jan - Apr.)
	Building the learning partners consortium	Invite partners to work together before and during the program. (March and beyond)
	Design and build the program, including training and online activities.	Select a name, coordinate the sessions with partners, prepare online forum. (Feb-Apr.)
	Document the development process for my final write-up.	Deadlines for write-ups are: March 27, April 13, and May 1st, 2008.
	Set up the evaluation framework	Select assessment tools, quantitative & qualitative data to gather, set up the monitoring & follow up process (Jan-Mar.)
Phase II	Program implementation (training, online discussion, community visits)	Spring / Summer 2008
Phase III	Program closure, follow up and evaluation report.	Fall 2008

Evaluation:

I would like to emphasize the importance of continuous evaluation rather than end-of-program survey style. I will be working closely with the OCB Unit's Learning and Evaluation

Manager to implement this method as I'm using the logic model as a formal tool, but also creating an online platform for discussions and feedback as an informal method. All stakeholders (internal and external) will be key people who provide lots of input & feedback on effective methods to use in certain circumstances while running the program. In addition to the above, I keep notes and monthly sheets of my progress at each phase to track progress.

Prepare Project Timeline:

January 2008 – Contact interested partners, consult with youth in an open forum, literature review of similar programs. Estimated time: 30 hours

February 2008 – Continue literature review on creative models to incorporate in the design, originate the name of the program, develop the logic model for evaluation, produce the brochure and application forms, finalize concept paper. Estimated time: 40 hours.

March 2008 – Commence the activities using the idea management software service, follow up on program implementation, test and activate online forum, finalize sections 1,2,3 of the write-up. Estimated time: 30 hours.

April 2008 – Select participants for the cohort, commence program with the off-site retreat, participate in online discussions, present program design to stakeholders, finalize section 4,5,6 of write up, prepare for presentation, compile final write-up (first draft). Estimated time: 70 hours.

May 2008 – Commence Phase II and implement the program, finalize write-up, bind and hand in copies. Estimated time: 20 hours.

Identify Pertinent Literature or Resources:

I browsed a wide range of resources to connect all the different sections of my project, such as other leadership programs; their brochures and websites. I also reviewed reports on youth engagement, programming, and assessment measures developed by United Way Toronto and other nonprofit organizations. Additionally, I accessed materials from some of our partners' libraries to educate myself on their work and expertise. Some of my reading materials are:

Banach, M., Zunz, S., & LaPointe, N. (2006). Community collaboration: Effective partnerships with steering committees. *Journal of Extension, 44(1)*

Bonnell, J. & Zizys, T. (2005, February). *Best practices for youth programs* (Available from the United Way of Greater Toronto, Organizational Capacity Building Unit, 26 Wellington st. East, 11th floor, Toronto, ON, M5E 1W9, Canada).

City of Toronto Social Development, Finance and Administration Division. (2006). *Involve youth2: A guide to meaningful youth engagement.* Toronto, ON: City of Toronto (www.toronto.ca/involveyouth)

Crammond, R. & Howarth, R. (2005, February). *Capacity building for organizations working with youth.* (Available from the United Way of Greater Toronto, Organizational Capacity Building Unit, 26 Wellington st. East, 11th floor, Toronto, ON, M5E 1W9, Canada).

Grassroots Youth Collaborative. (2005). *Youth on youth: Grassroots Youth Collaborative on youth led organizing in the city of Toronto.* Toronto, ON: Remi Warner.

Hannum, K.M., Martineau, J.W., & Reinelt, C. (2007). *The handbook of leadership development evaluation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Hedge, C. A. (2007). *Community leadership programs: Where they have been and where they are going*. Unpublished masters' project, Buffalo State College, State University of New York, NY.

Mumford, M.D., Zaccaro, S.J., Harding, F.D., Jacobs, T.O., & Fleishman, E.A. (2000). Leadership skills for a changing world: Solving complex social problems. *Leadership Quarterly Journal. 11 (1).* 11 – 35.

Powazek, D. (2002). *Design for community.* Indianapolis, IN: New Riders Publishing.

Puccio, G.J., Firestien, R.L., Coyle, C., & Masucci, C. (2006). A review of the effectiveness of CPS training: A focus on workplace issues. *Creativity and Innovation Management Journal. 15 (1).* 19 – 33.

United Way of Greater Toronto (2005). *A toolkit for outcome measurement: Building on logic models.* Toronto, ON: United Way of Greater Toronto.

Wellesley Institute. (2007, October). *Wellesley institute executive leadership program: Program evaluation.* Toronto, ON: April Boyington Wall, Joan Roberts, Pauline O'Connor, & Nasim Haque.