

# Supporting Community Safety through University-Community Partnerships: Exploring Models of Engagement

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores various models of university-community engagement to support youth violence prevention and community safety. A series of case examples from the Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro are highlighted. The case examples—four projects spanning a six-year time period—are the springboard for exploring issues of funding, community collaboration, sustainability, leadership, evaluation, and communication.

## INTRODUCTION

University-community partnerships have been convened and nurtured to address topics as wide-ranging as economic development (e.g., Cardoza & Salinas, 2004) and community arts development (Lichtenstein & McIntire, 2005). The purpose of this paper is to explore various models of university-community engagement to support youth violence prevention and community safety. A series of case examples (Youth Violence Initiative, Immigrant Youth Violence Prevention, Equal Justice Project, and Project Safe Neighborhoods) from the Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) are highlighted. The case examples—four projects spanning a six-year time period—are the springboard for exploring issues of funding, community collaboration, sustainability, leadership, evaluation, and communication.

## PARTNERSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

There are numerous examples of university-community partnerships to address public health issues (Mace, Luken, & Schuster, 2002; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Wolff & Maurana, 2001). One prominent public health concern in the United States is violence (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington, & Cerda, 2002; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2002). Violence exists on a continuum from mildly injurious to fatal and manifests in communities as domestic violence, youth violence, or gang violence. Attention to youth violence prevention and intervention is timely “given its place at the heart of a current public discussion on the state of American youth that cries out for evidence-based practice and policy decisions” (Hudley & Parker, 2006, p. 1). As individual, community, and societal costs of juvenile crime and violence continue to mount, it is imperative that campus-community partnerships address this critical public health issue. While it is clear that broad-based partnership approaches can be brought to bear on various public health issues such as violence, few centers or institutes exist that

feature an explicit partnership-based approach to upholding community safety (notable exceptions are the Academic Centers of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Violence reduction partnerships would be beneficial in communities across the country, regardless of community size, location, or sociodemographic factors. However, a better understanding is needed as to how such partnerships should be framed, developed, funded, implemented, and sustained.

### *Description of the Center and University*

UNCG, with an enrollment of about 14,500 undergraduate and graduate students, is classified as a doctoral/research intensive university and is located in Guilford County, North Carolina (population 435,000). CYFCP was first established in 1996 as the Center for the Study of Social Issues (MacKinnon-Lewis & Frabutt, 2001). This broad, university-wide research center was established to assist faculty in the social and behavioral sciences in developing a multi-disciplinary research agenda responsive to local, state and national priorities. Federal, state, and foundation funding established a track record of youth research and intervention efforts that have focused not only on youth themselves but also on peer, relational, familial, community and cultural contexts that support successful developmental outcomes (Shelton & Frabutt, 2006). The Center for Youth, Family and Community Partnerships is an innovative and catalytic leader in the state and broader region in violence prevention, community collaboratives and partnerships, research and surveillance, and training and technical assistance in the fields of mental health, systems of care and community-based strategic planning.

After a yearlong strategic planning and visioning process, in December 2003, CSSI took on a new name—the Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships—and a

refined mission statement: “to build the capacity of families, service providers, researchers, teachers, and communities to ensure the health and well-being of children.” The areas of youth violence prevention and mental health among children and youth have been and continue to be both a core value and research and practice domain. The new mission, vision, and values of CYFCP provided an even stronger institutional environment that is particularly conducive to carrying out the Center’s program of research, training, and outreach.

### CASE EXAMPLES OF VIOLENCE REDUCTION PARTNERSHIPS

A systematic framework to review community-university engagements efforts provides a uniform lens through which to view the complexities of such partnerships. An extensive literature on partnerships and engagement reveals numerous rubrics for assessing the dynamics of coalition functioning and collaboration (see Granner & Sharpe, 2004 for a review). In fact, Table 1 indicates the scope of variables that one may consider in assessing partnership and coalition functioning. Some elements are referenced among several lists (e.g., communication), while others are unique to a particular list (e.g., trust).

The review of the following four case examples is, in effect, an exercise in reflective practice, since the author was a partnership member in each of them. However, for ease of organization and to apply a common abstracting method to each project, several basic, core elements are reviewed across each. These are project goals, leadership, partnership structure, funding source and amount, communication, research and evaluation, and outcomes and current status.

Table 1. Toward a Common Framework for Reviewing Engagement.

<u>Coalition, Collaboration, and Partnership Variables<sup>1</sup></u>		
<b>Borden &amp; Perkins</b>	<b>Kaye</b>	<b>Spink &amp; Merrill-Sands</b>
Communication	Vision and Mission Clarity	Compelling Vision
Sustainability	Coalition Structure	Strong and Shared Leadership
Research and Evaluation	Outreach and Communication	Shared Problem Definition
Political Climate	Coalition Meetings	Interdependency and Complementarity
Resources	Member Responsibility and Growth	Mutual Accountability
Catalysts	Evaluation	Attention to Process
Policies/Laws/Regulations	Research/External Resources	Communication
History	Sense of Community	Decision Making / Power Equity
Connectedness	Meets Needs and Provides Benefits	Trust
Leadership	Partnerships with Power Players	Credit and Recognition
Community Development		
Understanding Community		
<b>Bell &amp; Smith</b>	<b>Taylor-Powell et al.</b>	<b>Carlton et al.</b>
Common Goals	Shared Vision	People
Communication	Goals and Objectives	Relationships
Member Importance	Roles and Responsibilities	Vision
Opportunity to Participate	Decision Making Procedures	Structure
Ownership	Conflict Management	Communication
Delegation	Changing Membership	Clarity
Efficient Effective Meetings	Leadership	Conflict Resolution
Process and Pattern	Plans	Resilience
Shared or Situational Leadership	Relationships/Trust	Flexibility and Change
	Internal Communication	Power and Control
	External Communication	Balance
	Evaluation	Commitment and Teamwork
		Expectations and Optimism Action and Momentum

*High Point Youth Violence Prevention Initiative*

Goals. The goal of the High Point Youth Violence Prevention Initiative was to develop a community-based, preventive approach to identifying and serving young persons at risk of committing violent acts. This goal was achieved through a two-pronged approach: a) a developmental and contextual examination of violence risk and protective factors, and b) an intervention based on

System of Care, a community-driven, strength-based, culturally-competent, family-centered model that was initially developed to help young persons with mental health issues reach their potential (Quijas, MacKinnon-Lewis, & Frabutt, 2001).

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<sup>1</sup> Bell & Smith, n.d.; Borden & Perkins, 1999; Carlton, Whiting, Bradford, Dyk, & Vail, 2009; Kaye, 2007; Spink & Merrill-Sands, 1999 Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998.

**Leadership.** The High Point Collaborative for the Prevention of Youth Violence was founded (in 2000) and co-chaired by the Chief of Police of the City of High Point and the Director of CYFCP.

**Partnership Structure.** The major institutional partners were the High Point Police Department, UNCG (CYFCP and faculty from the Department of Psychology), Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and four middle and high schools in High Point. Collaborative members consisted of parents, teachers, principals, ministers, and social service agency representatives.

**Funding Source and Amount.** Two grants were received over a span of four years. Both were federal formula grants awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice through the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, Governor's Crime Commission. The funding, which supported coalition development, research and evaluation, and service coordination, was \$390,000.

**Communication.** The primary mode of communication was a monthly meeting of all stakeholders hosted at the High Point Police Department. Between meeting communications (e.g., reminders, project updates) were sent via e-mail from CYFCP. Once service coordinators were hired by the project, the coordinators reported out at monthly meetings on the general needs, plans, and progress of enrolled youth and their caregivers.

**Research and Evaluation.** Research and evaluation components were explicitly built into this initiative. The research component centered on discerning the locally relevant risk and protective factors for violence through interviews with court-involved middle school and high school youth. The quantitative approach consisted of self-report questionnaires completed by the youth and primary his/her caretakers to assess family demographics, family functioning, parent-child relationships, parental monitoring, antisocial peer pressure, and spousal/family conflict. A

qualitative, semi-structured interview conducted by community-based stakeholders was designed to elicit narrative descriptions of youth and caregivers' involvement in the juvenile justice system (Frabutt, Forsbrey, & MacKinnon-Lewis, 2003).

**Outcomes and Current Status.** Approximately 20 court-involved youth and caregivers completed outcome/evaluation measures after they were interviewed, and enrolled in wraparound services. An additional 20 at-risk (non court-involved youth) received support from a school-based service coordinator funded by the project. When grant funding ceased, the collaborative continued to convene for nine months, at which point the collaborative rejoined its parent organization, the High Point Community Against Violence.

### *Immigrant Youth Violence Prevention*

**Goals.** This project—formally titled Project SAFE: Supporting, Advocating, and Furthering the Education of Our Immigrant Youth—intended to develop and refine a community-based approach to address youth violence among vulnerable immigrant youth at Smith High School. Project goals fell under two broad umbrellas: increasing community awareness and reducing violent victimization and its impact. To increase community awareness, the project a) convened a coalition of major youth-serving groups, organizations, and entities; and b) engaged in targeted outreach (at Smith High School and its feeder community) to increase understanding of victimization among immigrant youth. To reduce victimization and its impact, the project developed a three-pronged prevention/intervention strategy that included universal (all faculty, students, and community members), selected (at-risk youth) and indicated (victimized youth) components (Frabutt & Castillero, 2004; Frabutt, Parham, & Saunders, 2005).

**Leadership.** The project was led by two CYFCP faculty members working in close concert with the Special Populations Coordinator

at Smith High School. Once an appropriate, site-based service delivery system was selected (CASASTART model) and the school-based service coordinator was hired, she became a regular and central member of the leadership team.

**Partnership Structure.** Major partners were Smith High School, CYFCP, the Center for New North Carolinians (a university-based research and outreach center dedicated to immigrant and refugee populations in North Carolina), the Guilford County Multicultural Advisory Coalition, and the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse based at Columbia University.

**Funding Source and Amount.** Funding for the project was received from the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The cooperative agreement spanned two years and was approximately \$300,000.

**Communication.** At the outset of the project, the leadership and major partners met at least twice per month, usually at Smith High School. Once the CASASTART model was selected, project members attended five planning sessions and trainings/workshops over a four-month period. To integrate the new program into the school as much as possible, the service coordinator met weekly with the Special Populations Coordinator. Clinical supervision of the service coordinator's case management was provided bi-weekly by the Director of CYFCP.

**Research and Evaluation.** Initial research took the form of a school-level needs assessment. The assessment drew upon the most recent Smith High School Improvement Plan, the School Crime and Violence Incident Report, and the Smith High School Safety Survey. The needs assessment featured a comprehensive listing of current programs and special services, as well as a description of how they linked to both short- and long-term outcomes. The project team, with the assistance of a community liaison/interpreter, conducted individual key informant interviews with English for Speakers of Other Languages

(ESOL) teachers, students, school administrators, school staff, parents, and local service providers. In addition to providing case management services, the SAFE case manager also worked with participants and their families to gather intake evaluation measures including the BASC (adolescent and parent reports). The BASC is a multidimensional assessment tool used to evaluate the behavior and self-perceptions of children. Results of the BASC were used to facilitate treatment planning for Project SAFE participants.

**Outcomes and Current Status.** The major short-term outcome was the identification of an appropriate evidence-based intervention and relevant training in its application and implementation. The selected model, CASASTART, was a community-based, school-centered program designed to keep students free of drug and crime involvement. CASASTART used an intensive case management model, preventative services and community-based law enforcement to address the individual needs of immigrant students as well as the broader problems of their families and communities. Project SAFE provided services to 24 immigrant and refugee youth in an 18-month period. The CASASTART case manager, based at Smith High School, delivered the array of eight service components (i.e., social support, family services, educational services, after-school and summer activities, mentoring, incentives, community policing, and juvenile justice intervention) to enrolled participants and their families. Her duties included performing home visits, needs assessments, service plans, crisis interventions, referrals, follow-up documentation, and evaluation. Although a small grant was received from a community foundation to support ongoing maintenance of the project, other revenue sources were not realized to cover the full program costs. As a result, the project was not sustained after the federal funding expired.

### *Equal Justice Project*

**Goals.** The goal of the Equal Justice Proj-

ect—formally titled Reducing Disproportionate Minority Contact in the Juvenile Justice System, Guilford County Demonstration Project—is to reduce the overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile court system. The project was guided by the mission of mobilizing government and community agencies to take strategic actions that will contribute to a reduction of disproportionate minority contact in Guilford County. Guilford County DMC activities focused on four main areas: a) DMC data management and utilization; b) cultural competence used in DMC decision-making; c) utilization of targeted preventive services; and d) agency policy, procedure, and practice modifications to impact DMC reduction.

**Leadership.** The Guilford County demonstration site housed its project management at the Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships. The Center emerged as the grant recipient and manager after the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) chair and several JCPC members recommend the Center as an appropriate base for the initiative. The Guilford site employed a management team approach, consisting of a Project Coordinator, Project Director (CYFCP-based), Management Team member, Parent Management Team member, and a UNCG Graduate Research Assistant (Frabutt & Hefner, 2007).

**Partnership Structure.** The Management Team coordinated day-to-day project operation and served as the organizational hub for the initiative. A broader, county-level DMC Committee consisted of key institutional partners (law enforcement agencies, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Mental Health, Department of Social Services, Guilford County Schools, Office of the Juvenile Defender) and community-based partners (non-profit social service providers, clergy, parents, and community activists).

**Funding Source and Amount.** Since assessing disproportionality and addressing it where it exists is a federal requirement, the Equal Jus-

tice Initiative was supported by federal formula grants. These grants, originating at the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, were channeled through the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, Governor's Crime Commission. Three separate one-year awards have been received totaling \$385,000.

**Communication.** The Project Coordinator served as the primary hub for communication. She maintained a membership list serve and provided frequent project updates, meeting reminders, and relevant news items. DMC Committee meetings of all project stakeholders were held monthly. By design, one communication channel was monthly reporting of the DMC Management Team to the local Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. Communication among the Management Team members themselves was through weekly face-to-face meetings, and often by phone and e-mail several times per week.

**Research and Evaluation.** Research was explicitly built into the initial stages of the project. A qualitative component consisted of focus groups with court-involved boys and girls, caregivers, juvenile court counselors, school staff, and law enforcement officers. Quantitative data were collected from three major sources: schools (e.g., suspension and expulsion data by race and school), juvenile justice system (e.g., number and kind of juvenile complaints, adjudications, and secure confinements by race), and law enforcement agencies (e.g., number and kind of juvenile arrests by race and gender). The data were analyzed and written up on a rolling basis to provide immediate feedback for both the planning and implementation phases of the project. The DMC Management Team provided data directly back to institutional stakeholders, the DMC Committee, and the community at large. Finally, the data were released as full-length printed reports, fact sheets, brief summaries, and community presentations; results were also posted as downloadable documents on the CYFCP website (e.g., Frabutt, Cabaniss, Kendrick, & Arbuckle, 2008; Graves et

al., 2009).

**Outcomes and Current Status.** The quantitative data collected across systems clearly indicated racial disproportionality in juvenile arrests and suspensions at several decision points within the juvenile justice system. Focus groups confirmed the social complexity of DMC and the multiple individual, family, and community risk and protective factors that impact court-involved youth. Based on the data and a community scan of available resources and services for at-risk youth, the DMC Committee secured funding in year two to support innovative prevention and intervention programming. Other major accomplishments included heightened community awareness about the issue, institutional commitment (through a public signing of a DMC Memorandum of Understanding) to review DMC data and consider recommendations for policy and procedure changes, and the creation of a community culture receptive to the timely review of data to make strategic decisions about programming and services. The DMC project continues to maintain momentum, engage new stakeholders, and effect system-level change. A fourth year funding request to continue project efforts has been forwarded to the Governor's Crime Commission.

### *Project Safe Neighborhoods*

**Goals.** Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a federal initiative targeted to reducing illegal gun crime in the United States (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2002). Since PSN was conceptualized as a data-driven approach to crime reduction, CYFCP served as the designated local Research Partner. The goal of this project is to augment research, evaluation, and technical assistance activities that are underway across the Middle District of North Carolina in support of Project Safe Neighborhoods. These activities include community-level needs assessments, evaluations of strategic interventions, gang crime incident reviews, analysis of crime data both pre- and post-intervention, and community safety surveys

(Frabutt, Gathings, & Harvey, 2006).

**Leadership.** Project Safe Neighborhoods was spearheaded by the U.S. Attorney in each district across the country. In the Middle District of North Carolina, the U.S. Attorney convened a primary leadership body called the Middle District PSN Advisory Team. The Advisory Team was lead by two co-chairs.

**Partnership Structure.** Major partners in the PSN initiative consisted of the U.S. Attorney's Office, local law enforcement agencies, city government representatives, clergy, UNCG, Winston-Salem State University's Center for Community Safety, and social service organizations.

**Funding Source and Amount.** Project Safe Neighborhoods, as a national initiative, was funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, specifically the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs. The first round of research partner funding was for a 3-year period and totaled \$150,000. After the initial funding cycle, additional PSN support was received from the federal government via the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission. The additional funding has totaled nearly \$44,000.

**Communication.** District-level communication was maintained through quarterly meetings of the Middle District Advisory Team. The meetings rotated among five cities (Durham, Greensboro, High Point, Salisbury, and Winston-Salem) involved in the partnership. Each locality also hosted its own violence reduction meetings monthly. A District-level list serve was moderated by a law enforcement partner and used to send e-mail updates regarding project activities.

**Research and Evaluation.** Research activities centered on the target localities were classified into four general domains that emerged based on local need, federal reporting requirements, and ongoing input from the Middle District PSN Advisory Team. The major research foci were: a) overall cross-city data collection; b) initiation of crime incident review process; c) evaluation and consultation on existing and new crime reduction strategies; and d) city-specific or event-

specific research questions (Frabutt, Gathings, & Harvey, 2006; Frabutt, Gathings, Harvey, & Di Luca, 2010).

**Outcomes and Current Status.** The Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative in the Middle District of North Carolina has helped to institutionalize a problem-focused, data-driven approach to violent crime reduction. Communication among segments of the criminal justice community (i.e., police, sheriff, state and federal prosecutors, probation and parole) has improved, especially via the crime incident review process encouraged by the PSN partnership. Several target cities have undertaken novel, police-community initiatives geared to specific crime problems. Winston-Salem and High Point, for example, have adopted an innovative approach to reducing violence by eliminating overt, street drug sales (Hunt, Sumner, Scholten, & Frabutt, 2008; Schoofs, 2006; Sumner, Hunt, & Frabutt, 2005).

#### SYNTHESIS OF CASE EXAMPLES

As noted, each of these case examples was ultimately directed toward the overarching goal of reducing violence and increasing community safety. While an even more in-depth, fine grained, case-by-case analysis would reveal the particular nuances and subtleties of each project, a more abstract level of analysis is useful to highlight commonalities and differences. Several cross-cutting themes are apparent among this set of case examples from one university-based applied research center.

#### *Common Goals*

The higher-orders goals across each of the projects are fairly similar. Each focused on a general outcome of reducing violence in the local community. The projects differed, however, in the means to achieve that outcome. Both the High Point Initiative and the Immigrant Violence Prevention projects espoused a direct service orientation. The university-based center (CYFCP)

recruited, employed, trained, supervised, and supported masters-level human service professionals in support of children and families. Both projects employed a service coordinator that linked families with support systems on a daily basis. In the Equal Justice Project, CYFCP did not host and provide direct services but it did act as a pass-through for those who did. That is, in the second year of the project, CYFCP competitively awarded three mini-grants to local community-based agencies (Frabutt, Kendrick, Cabaniss, Horton, & Arbuckle, 2006). While CYFCP provided monitoring and tracking of service delivery and outcomes, it was not an immediate service provider. Only in the fourth project, Project Safe Neighborhoods, was CYFCP not at all engaged in some type of direct services focused on youth violence prevention. CYFCP functioned purely in a research and evaluation capacity, providing ongoing input on overall strategy development, project foci, and implementation outcomes.

#### *Models of Leadership*

The leadership structures showed variability across projects. CYFCP played an initiating role in the development of two of the projects. The CYFCP Director and the High Point Police Chief convened and launched a community-driven effort to address youth violence in High Point. In the case of the Immigrant Youth Violence project, a CYFCP Associate Director approached the administration of Smith High School about the possibility of pursuing a federal grant to support school-based violence prevention efforts. In both cases, CYFCP maintained a prominent lead role in the projects—setting goals, engaging additional partners, facilitating communication, and assisting in overall implementation. CYFCP's leadership role in the Equal Justice Project differed only slightly in that a community-based group first approached the Center to take a major role in the launching of the project. CYFCP responded to that opportunity and eventually provided the central leadership structure for the project

through a management team approach. CYFCP's leadership contribution as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods was to serve on the Middle District Advisory Team. This management body set priorities for the Middle District of North Carolina in terms of funding, service provision, outreach activities, and the general research agenda. As the PSN Research Partner, the research team had voting privileges for the conduct and execution of PSN business.

### *Variability in Partnership Structure*

In this regard, three of the projects used a broad, board-based partnership structure, while the Immigrant Youth Violence Prevention project espoused a project-focused management structure. For example, in the High Point Initiative, even though the direct services were provided through the collaboration of a few institutional partners—the university, the department of juvenile justice, and the schools—the guiding framework was developed and supported by a cadre of professionals and community members. The same is true of Project Safe Neighborhoods and the Equal Justice Project in that numerous formal and informal connections among those devoted to the issue were in place. In contrast, the Immigrant Youth Violence Prevention project functioned on a much smaller scale featuring the service coordinator, one to two CYFCP representatives, a Smith High School administrator, and a parent liaison. The relative difference in project scope is the factor that most likely explains the observed variability in the size of the partnership structure. Whereas the other projects were oriented to a network of schools, an entire school system, or a district-wide law enforcement jurisdiction, the Immigrant Youth Violence project centered on one high school.

### *Federal Funding Was Primary*

Perhaps as a testament to the heightened awareness and national concern around issues

of youth violence, each project received primary funding through federal dollars. Two projects were funded directly through federal agencies: the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs. The other two projects were funded by a state agency—the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission—that serves as a pass-through for federal crime prevention funds. With amounts ranging from \$75,000 to \$145,000 annually, projects were funded in increments ranging from one year at a time (Equal Justice Project) to three years (Project Safe Neighborhoods). Competitive applications for foundation funding were submitted but not received during the time period under review.

### *Keeping in Touch*

The commonality across projects in terms of communication was regularly scheduled work sessions/meetings of the entire project body, interspersed with subcommittee or smaller work group sessions. For example, Project Safe Neighborhoods Advisory Team meetings occurred quarterly, rotating among different jurisdictions in the Middle District. In between the quarterly meetings, each city or county would hold its own monthly meetings to work on a more geographically focused agenda. A Project Safe Neighborhoods list serve with about two or three updates per week conveyed important information and updates to the entire membership. Among the internal leadership or primary stakeholders in the given projects, communications were much more frequent, informal, and responsive to upcoming tasks or deadlines.

### *Research and Evaluation*

As a university-based partner with both relevant content expertise and data management and analysis skills, it is perhaps not surprising that CYFCP contributed to or led the research/evalu-

ation component in each of the four projects. In each of the projects, a research/evaluation component was either required by the grantor agency or was a necessary condition of implementing the strategy. In one case, Project Safe Neighborhoods, research was the primary and organizing element of CYFCP's involvement in the initiative. Research methods drew upon quantitative and qualitative methodologies and included paper-and-pencil surveys, one-on-one semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and review and analysis of archival data. In two cases—the projects that had a strong service delivery component—data collection served two major purposes. One was to immediately inform an assessment of youths' health, wellness, and overall level of academic and behavioral functioning. Questionnaires and assessment instruments were used to form the basis of a timely and responsive prevention/intervention plan. The second major use of the data was to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon more generally. As an example, in the High Point Initiatives, findings were used: a) to refine the project in the context of monthly meetings; b) to add to the understanding of mental health issues and juvenile justice (Forsbrey, Frabutt, & Smith, 2005); c) and to contribute to the youth development literature more broadly (MacKinnon-Lewis, Frabutt, Arbuckle, Weissman, & Smith, 2003).

#### CONCLUSION

In reviewing these projects and scanning across their major elements, one is struck by the sheer diversity of forms, functions, and outcomes among these violence reduction partnerships. Even within a mission-focused Center at one university, there was significant diversity among the incarnations that partnership projects take. Thus, the major take-away of this review: such diversity attests to the need for a systematic framework to review engagement, and a commitment to do so regularly. Within a particular center—or even within a university as a whole—it may be

an instructive periodic practice to review the nature, quality, and forms of completed and extant university-community projects.

Especially for strategic planning purposes, clarity of mission and focus may be brought to light by reviewing project commonalities and differences. Each of the frameworks summarized earlier in Table 1 may serve as a useful point of departure for this exercise. For example, Carlton, Whiting, Bradford, Dyk, and Vail (2009) suggested a potentially useful distillation of the literature on successful partnerships that describes foundational components (i.e., defining factors) and procedural components (i.e., refining characteristics). Both of these components ultimately contribute to successful university-community partnerships. Embracing such an accessible framework allows faculty, community stakeholders, and university and community leaders to reflect on the process and products of their collaboration. At a more macro level, universities have an opportunity to engage in thoughtful, reflective review through such efforts as pursuing the Carnegie Foundation's elective classification for community engagement. The careful and systematic self-assessment demanded by the application process surfaces important issues and brings a welcome scrutiny to university-wide engagement efforts. University, school, department, center, and community lenses may all be focused by such introspection and self-reflexivity. In so doing, all stakeholders essentially partake in a quality control effort, helping to ensure that the promise of engagement is fulfilled.

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