The Decisive Contribution of Youth to Community Well-Being

27

Ilya Shodjaee-Zrudlo and Hoda Farahmandpour

Introduction

Scholars in the field of community well-being and development have long been concerned with the theme of participation. Since external resources of various kinds are often limited (DeFilippis and Saerget 2012), community members need to take charge of their own development—a process which should assist them to engage in deliberate action to improve their quality of life. Some community members may be involved in this process as professionals; government agencies or nonprofit organizations usually employ these individuals. However, the number of such professionals dedicated to any given community usually falls drastically short of the needs, and it is generally not sufficient for community participation to be reduced to their efforts alone. A great deal of time and energy from many volunteers are therefore required. Although all members of a community can contribute in one way or another as volunteers, one of the most important resources a community possesses is its young people (Finn and Checkoway 1998). Recognizing the agency of young people and highlighting the importance of volunteering

one's time to promoting the well-being of the community can substantially broaden the potential for greater participation in community development.

The first section of our chapter begins by articulating some of our key terms—including 'community', 'community well-being', and 'community development'—and the relationships among them. Our understanding of these terms has important implications for the way in which youth can contribute to their communities and the nature of programs that strive to raise their capacity to do so. We then discuss common perceptions of young people, and the possibilities for greater participation in promoting well-being when they are viewed as potential volunteers for community development, as opposed to regarding them solely as consumers (Giroux 2009), potential threats to society (Lesko 1996), or students (Kurth-Schai 1988). Youth are in fact particularly well suited to the work of community development, if we consider their adaptability (Lerner et al. 2005) and the relatively large amount of discretionary time available to them (Larson and Verma 1999). If we examine the Canadian context, youth also have an impressive track record of volunteering (Hall et al. 2009).

With this new perspective on the potential of youth, it is possible to explore a conceptualization of youth and community development that establishes a mutually reinforcing relationship between the two. As youth contribute to the development of their communities, their own development is

I. Shodjaee-Zrudlo (✉)
University of Montreal, Montréal, Canada
e-mail: ilya.shodjaeezrudlo@umontreal.ca

H. Farahmandpour
Wordswell Association for Communtiy Learning, Canada
e-mail: hoda.farahmandpour@utoronto.ca

advanced and their capacity grows (Christens and Dolan 2011). Of course, young people need support and assistance to be able to contribute to the development of their communities in a structured way. Youth programs are required that assist them to acquire the relevant knowledge and to develop the requisite qualities, attitudes, skills, and abilities for participation in the process of promoting community well-being. We therefore explore three elements of such programs—their content, the way this content is delivered, and the youth group itself—to identify characteristics of the kinds of programs that can help advance the two-fold process of youth and community development. The chapter concludes by reviewing a few examples of Canadian programs that incorporate some of these characteristics.

Community Well-Being and Development

The concepts of 'community', 'community well-being' and 'community development' are in need of further articulation. The descriptions and models used to better understand complex phenomena—regardless of their level of sophistication or comprehensiveness—can never completely encompass them, and thus must avoid oversimplification. The following points aim to offer a few basic ideas to help readers understand the logic of the chapter, rather than to establish absolute definitions.

Although the term community can be applied to a group of individuals united by factors other than geographical proximity (Phillips and Pittman 2009), the present chapter will be more concerned with place-based communities. This is in part because examining the contribution of young people to community well-being focuses our attention on groups of individuals and families living in relatively close proximity and the local institutions and structures with which they interact. However, it is important to not lose sight of the greater context within which place-based communities find themselves. In this connection, DeFilippis and Saerget (2012) have convincingly argued that it is impossible to isolate communi-

ties from the larger national and global structures and processes to which they contribute and which in turn shape them. This has implications for our notions of community development and well-being. For example, a community's well-being and development will naturally be affected, though not determined, by the conditions and dynamics of nearby communities, their national and cultural milieus, and, of course, the state of global affairs of the time. It is thus important to remember that a community's vision will, at some point, necessarily need to move beyond its own borders if it is to achieve greater and greater levels of well-being. This point adds relevance to the enthusiasm young people often demonstrate in the context of social action aimed at international issues, such as the environment or cases of injustice in other countries.

At a basic level, community well-being can be conceived of as the aim or end towards which a community wishes to strive. While notions of this aim or end vary greatly (Lee et al. 2015), we would like to avoid a position of extreme relativism in this regard, in which 'anything the community wants' becomes a potentially valid definition of community well-being. Of course, time and place, among other factors, will naturally influence a particular community's notion of what its well-being might be, and rightly so. However, all too often has a community defined its well-being in terms that exclude one or another group of individuals. It is clear, then, that certain principles and values, such as inclusion, are independent of the needs and desires of particular communities and shape our notion of community well-being. The question of the universality of such principles and values is beyond the scope of this chapter. It is sufficient to state that we will strive to avoid a relativistic notion of community well-being, while at the same time acknowledging that every community has a particular reality that will shape its priorities and goals at any given moment and, perhaps more importantly, the path it walks towards its well-being.

Recent literature emphasizes that community well-being is multi-dimensional and should not be reduced to narrow notions of social and economic development (Lee et al. 2015). One

implication of this idea is that, while there are certain measures that may give us insight into the quality of life in a given community, in light of its broad character, it could never be reduced to a single measurement. Broadening our notion of community well-being also creates opportunities for greater participation in its promotion. For example, if our notion of community well-being is restricted to economic development and income-generating activity, much of the work of volunteers no longer becomes pertinent, and the potential for youth to contribute is greatly reduced.

Another idea central to the concept of community well-being is a notion of togetherness (Lee et al. 2015). Members of a community, including its youth, do not strive for well-being in isolation from one another, nor would the well-being of a small segment of a community be considered equivalent to the collective well-being of the whole. At the same time, community well-being is much more than just the aggregate of its individual members' well-being. While a community strives to provide an environment that will contribute to the well-being of individuals, communities do not exist solely for the benefit of their members. An individualistic interpretation threatens to reduce communities to settings that enable individuals to pursue their own self-interest while limiting the damage they do to one another. Such an understanding of the role of community seems inconsistent with the discourse of scholars in the field of community well-being. In general, it seems that the field strives to overcome the tension that is often assumed to exist between individual and community priorities (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky 2006).

Yet another pertinent idea is that the community itself—its members and local institutions—is the key protagonist in the process of increasing well-being. While certain outside resources—financial, human, intellectual, and other kinds—are required, in the final analysis, it is the community itself that must play an increasingly active role in this process. What is more, resources from outside are, unfortunately, often quite limited (DeFilippis and Saerget 2012), reinforcing the need to consider the important role of local

participation. In addition to being a key element of the process of striving for community well-being, participation is also often used as an indicator of quality of life (Phillips 2003). Emphasizing the role of the community as a protagonist in its own development also creates space for its younger members to contribute to promoting well-being.

Much of what has been mentioned in relation to community well-being can also be said of community development, a concept often broadly defined, incorporating a vast array of goals and priorities, that can be economic and social, among others (Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan 2012). Lee et al. (2015) argue that community well-being and community development share many of the same underlying concepts and principles. Community development is described as both a process and an outcome (Phillips and Pittman 2009). For the purposes of this chapter, we will use the term community well-being as an equivalent term to community development as outcome. In other words, the process of community development will be considered the same as the process of striving to achieve community well-being.

Despite the significant overlap with the concept of community well-being, a few additional ideas in relation to community development are worth highlighting. First, while the concept of participation is present in the discourse on community well-being, there seems to be a much more substantial body of literature on participation in the field of community development. Participation is often evaluated in terms of its depth and breadth. Depth pertains to the degree of participation: for example, are community members simply being surveyed by professional community developers from outside (a relatively superficial level of participation) or have many individuals from within the community been consulted, educated, and mobilized as volunteers and decision-makers (a more profound level of participation)? Breadth, on the other hand, refers to the percentage of community members that are meaningfully involved in the process in different ways. The highest degree of participation, in the sense of its breadth, is universal participation, in

which all community members are involved in the development of their community in different ways. As a process, then, community development usually seeks to extend and deepen the level of community participation (Phillips and Pittman 2009). These changes, in turn, are usually among the expected outcomes of community development and, as mentioned above, indicators of quality of community life. In relation to youth, then, one can ask what percentage of youth in a community are involved in its development, and how deeply they are participating.

Second, the concept of capacity building seems to be central to many descriptions of community development. Phillips and Pittman (2009) equate the process of developing the capacity of a community with its development. A large number of more practical and identifiable capacities, of course, contribute to this more general capacity of a community to contribute to its own development. For example, a community needs to develop the capacity to consult on issues that arise in a way that clarifies understanding rather than polarizes opinion; to provide an environment that nurtures the minds and characters of its children and youth; and to encourage cooperation among its members. In addition, individuals and local institutions within the community will also need to develop a range of capacities in order to participate effectively in the process of community development. Local groups, for example, would need to develop the capacity to assess the impact of various technological proposals for the community, which would then help inform the discussions of its decision-makers. Building the capacity of every segment of the population, including young people, to contribute to their community's development would therefore seem to be an important component of promoting well-being.

Broadening Community Participation by Viewing Youth as Volunteers

We have thus far said that community members need to participate in the process of their community's development, and that external resources

for this end are often scarce. Reliance on the talents and resources of community members themselves is therefore called for. Naturally, not all of the individuals residing in a community will contribute in the same way. Phillips and Pittman (2009), for example, distinguish between two types of contributors: paid professionals and volunteers. Since the field of community development is broad, a wide range of professional occupations can, in theory, contribute to the process. If professionals are conscious of the broader context within which they work, are sensitive to the needs of their community, and strive for their efforts to contribute to the common weal, they will no doubt contribute to the well-being of their localities. Some professionals will, of course, be much more explicitly directed towards community development—these are usually employed by the government or in the nonprofit sector. In most cases, however, such full-time workers are relatively few in any given community. In relation to the second type of contributor, authors have described how, given the proper channels and support, any individual can contribute his or her time, talents, and energies to his or her community as a volunteer. Scholars have reported that volunteers represent a significant and growing pool of resources for community work (Downie et al. 2005; Omoto and Snyder 2002).

The term volunteer is used in a variety of contexts and its meaning has taken various forms over time. Through content analysis, Cnaan et al. (1996) have identified four dimensions found in various definitions of the term. These four dimensions are: free choice, remuneration, structure (i.e. formal or informal), and the intended beneficiaries (friends or strangers). According to these authors, a volunteer, in a strict sense, has offered his or her time entirely of their own accord, is not being paid, is contributing to the work of an organization, and is providing assistance to individuals that are not necessarily known to them. In a more broad sense, volunteers could include others who, for example, receive some level of remuneration or help their families and friends informally. In thinking about youth as volunteers, irrespective of whether the act performed is formal or informal, stipended or not remunerated at

all, well-developed educational materials can cultivate within young people a spirit of service so that actions are carried out with the conscious purpose of contributing to society.

In Canada, where an ethos of volunteering is a defining characteristic of Canadian culture and identity, there are a number of social spaces, including schools, community centres, and religious forums that provide all, especially the young, with opportunities to volunteer and contribute to the development of their communities. The most recent general social survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating provides data on volunteering activity across the country (Statistics Canada 2013). It shows that almost 15.5 million Canadians—44 % of the population aged 14 and over—volunteered during the 1-year period preceding the survey. The highest rates of volunteering were among young Canadians, those with higher levels of formal education and household income, those with school-aged children in the household, and the religiously active (Statistics Canada 2013). Canadians volunteered almost 2 billion hours in 2013—the equivalent of close to 1 million full-time jobs, representing a vast reservoir of energy that, if appropriately directed and channeled, can lend great impetus to the process of community well-being.

Young Canadians aged 15–24 were more likely to volunteer (53 % volunteered) than Canadians in any other age group. Thus, young people in Canada represent an eager pool of resources. For the processes of community development, mobilizing large numbers of young people back into their own communities—rather than always volunteering elsewhere—would have several benefits, including avoiding the us/them dichotomy that plagues so many development initiatives. The youth would be a part of the local communities they are serving, and would avoid common challenges when deploying elsewhere, for example, as international volunteers to the developing world, where there is the potential to perpetuate neo-colonial perceptions and practices (Simpson 2004).

Perceptions of Young People

Not only are many youth willing to participate in the process of community development—they are also particularly well-suited to the task, especially when given adequate assistance. However, young people are not always—some would say seldom—perceived in this way. This section will explore three influential perceptions of youth that inhibit society's ability to see them as competent contributors in the process of promoting community well-being, as well as some of the characteristics that are inherent in young people that make them ideally suited to this work.

One such conception, shaped by forces of excessive materialism and aggressive individualism, promoted by mass media, and perpetuated by free market fundamentalism, is that of youth as consumers, and taken further, youth as commodities. Giroux (2009) describes the "commodification of youth", where youth become targets for commercial growth and, through mass advertising campaigns, are encouraged to see their identity in relation to their purchasing power. In such a process, young people also become objectified themselves. Their sense of agency is reduced to that of consuming and, far from encouraging youth to contribute to the common good, energies are directed towards fulfilling individual wants.

Another representation of youth portrayed routinely in the media is that young people are the source of trouble or danger. Youth are seen as a major social problem, prone to violent behaviour, unplanned pregnancy, and lack of motivation to secure employment (Lesko 1996). Viewed through this lens, they are frequently deemed 'at-risk' and the general mantra in community development becomes to 'keep kids off the streets', away from the potential risks or problems they may get themselves into. In this context, youth are even seen as a threat to society (Giroux 2012). This reality has far reaching consequences; for example, the increasing hostility towards young people, which leads, more often than not, to

criminalization and imprisonment, surveillance, and control (Giroux 2012).

Both of these characterizations—youth as individualized consumers and youth as potential threats to society—have created a kind of 'disposability' for youth, especially for the poor and underprivileged (Giroux 2012). If they do not assume the role of functioning consumers, youth are considered a disposable population, waste products of a society that deems them of little value.

Lastly, yet another Western phenomenon that inhibits young people's abilities to participate in the life of their communities is the tendency to conflate adolescence with childhood, failing to recognize emerging capacities that enable them to take meaningful action in the world. Kurth-Schai (1988) ably describes the predicament:

> Contemporary images of childhood are united in their failure to acknowledge the potential of young people to contribute to the social order. Youth are confronted with confusing and contradictory patterns of protection and pressure, with conflicting perceptions of their abilities and inadequacies, rendering their social presence inconsequential and their social power invisible. Goodman refers to this phenomenon as the "underestimation fallacy" and contends that it represents a serious misconception concerning the nature of childhood, reflected in the minimal expectations provided for children in modern industrialized societies. (p. 116)

Kurth-Schai (1988) argues that the "underestimation fallacy" places upon young people little to no expectation that they can contribute to the welfare of the family or community. Instead, the only responsibility assigned to young people is academic achievement, an objective that today seems to be pursued for the benefit of the individual rather than of society. This situation is exacerbated by attitudinal barriers that claim youth do not have the capacity or understanding to work on complex community issues (Bartsch 2008). Little wonder, then, that those who attempt to overcome this tendency and connect young people to society through community service or 'service-learning' initiatives in schools often see these initiatives firstly as mechanisms by which academic achievement and social development is enhanced, rather than seeing them as meaningful actions for the promotion of community well-being (Karlberg 2005a).

Despite a reality that places seemingly insurmountable obstacles in the way of young people's meaningful participation in the life of their communities, with appropriate support, youth can combat these forces and contribute a great deal to the well-being of their communities. Some have called this view "youth as resources" (Kurth-Schai 1988), and a plethora of programs in many countries around the world exist that operate on the basis of this premise. For example, an article by Finn and Checkoway (1998) asks the question: "What would happen if society viewed young people as competent community builders?" (p. 335). The authors suggest, by examining six community-based youth initiatives, that groups of youth are indeed capable of bettering their communities through meaningful action with the assistance of certain adults (Finn and Checkoway 1998).

When young people in a given locality are viewed as potential volunteers, the scope for local participation in the process of achieving community well-being widens significantly. For example, Bartsch (2008) writes that youth can be resources in revitalizing communities and that by focusing on transforming the relationship between schools and communities, the energies and skills of young people can be directed towards pressing economic, cultural, and environmental issues. The author describes how the State of Maine, in the USA, is identifying and mobilizing its young people to address issues of school improvement and community revitalization. The following example from Poland High School, where educators and community organizations are working hand in hand, is highly illustrative:

> Grade 11/12 students approached the local planning board with a 6-year plan for correcting an erosion problem surrounding school property. It seemed that when the school was built 5 years earlier, plantings had been installed near a major road to avoid a potential erosion problem. Unfortunately none of those plantings survived. The town struggled with the ways and means to correct the problem. Part of

the student's plan was to research and select plants that could reduce further erosion. The planning board voted unanimously to support the student's proposal. Another biology class worked closely with the Tripp Lake Improvement Association and staff from the Androscoggin Soil and Water Conservation District to address erosion problems at the lake's Hemlock Campground, assess water quality, and conduct a purple loosestrife survey to monitor the location of this invasive species. (Bartsch 2008, p. 77)

Despite the negative or restricted role young people play in today's society as a result of flawed assumptions, in general, youth possess certain inherent characteristics that assist them to contribute to community well-being as volunteers. Among these characteristics are plasticity and adaptability. Lerner et al. (2005) highlight these characteristics in their presentation of Positive Youth Development (PYD), a theoretical model of the development of young people that emphasizes seeing them as resources with the potential for positive development, as opposed to bundles of psychological problems that require fixing. PYD highlights the strengths of young people and seeks to foster their well-being and civic engagement. Youth also possess a great deal of physical and mental energy that, if properly channelled, could reinforce efforts to improve community well-being.

Besides the particular strengths of young people, their stage in life also often affords them the opportunity to volunteer a great deal of their time. For instance, Larson and Verma (1999) have found that, across North America and Europe, adolescents have between 5.5 and 8 h of "free time" per day (averaged across a 7-day week). Further, although many students seek employment during school holidays, not all youth are able or wish to obtain jobs, thus leaving them with a few weeks per year of discretionary time.

In sum, if we critically analyze the various negative perceptions of adolescents and focus our attention on their strengths, particular characteristics, and discretionary time, young people emerge as ideally suited to the work of promoting community well-being as volunteers.

A Mutually Reinforcing Relationship Between Youth and Community Development

Creating opportunities for youth to become competent volunteers in the process of community well-being enhances both the process of youth development, as well as community development and well-being. It does so by imbuing youth with a sense of mission and purpose and by providing the process of community development with a steady flow of human resources. In other words, there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between both processes.

Scholars from a wide range of disciplines have described this relationship in different ways. For example, Christens and Dolan (2011) have argued that groups of young people can contribute to the betterment of their communities by coming together, identifying issues of concern, and carrying out action-research efforts to effect local change. By studying such initiatives, they have found that both the community and the youth themselves were able to develop and advance in different ways. Thus, by contributing to the well-being of their communities, young people themselves have been able to develop. Finn and Checkoway (1998) describe a similar relationship, emphasizing the leadership qualities that young people develop as they contribute to the improvement of their communities.

Nitzberg (2005) goes one step further and questions the effectiveness of youth programs that are isolated from broader efforts aimed at community building. He argues that these two efforts need to be meshed together, benefitting both youth development and community well-being. Brennan et al. (2008), on the other hand, argue that community development efforts themselves would become much more effective if they made deliberate efforts to enhance the participation of youth. In another article, Barnett and Brennan (2006) argue that the contributions of youth are a central component of the process of community development.

A fairly consistent conceptualization of youth and community development therefore emerges

from the literature. When youth are involved in efforts to improve their localities, a twofold process is advanced: the development of youth and the well-being of their communities. Further, by combining these two aims, they are both advanced more effectively than if they were pursued in isolation from one another.

Many scholars have proposed more general theories that similarly link individual and social progress, suggesting the possibility for a much broader kind of participation in promoting community well-being. Authors who promote ecological theories of human development, such as Bronfenbrenner (1979), have long argued that the nature of our relationship with the environment around us is such that we influence it and it in turn influences us. Developmental systems theory (Ford and Lerner 1992), makes a similar claim—that these two dimensions of our social life are complementary and that the changes that each undergo are the main forces driving human development. Stetsenko (2008) argues along the same lines. She describes a mutual relationship between human development and social change, and links it tightly with a few other concepts, such as human nature and learning, convincingly arguing that "collaborative purposeful transformation of the world is the core of human nature and the principled grounding for learning and development" (p. 474).

Stetsenko's statement helps pull together a number of important ideas, some of which have important implications for youth as volunteers in the process of community development and its related programmes. Connecting purposeful collective action to the core of human nature relates to one of the fundamental principles of community well-being, explored above: that individual and collective well-being is not pursued in isolation. Pursuing community well-being has a clear element of "togetherness". Stetsenko brings this idea to the core of human nature, opening the possibility for universal participation in the process of community development. In other words, promoting community well-being becomes a natural expression of being human, rather than the specialized work of trained professionals. While discussions about human nature and pur-

pose are generally only alluded to in the literature on community well-being, introducing them meaningfully and appropriately into the discourse could significantly broaden possibilities for participation, particularly on the part of youth, who so often seem to struggle with the questions of identity and purpose (Damon 2008). That collaborative and purposeful social action is "the principled grounding for learning and development" also implies that an important dimension of nurturing the development and education (in a broad sense) of young people is to engage them meaningfully in promoting collective well-being as true collaborators.

To summarize, the processes of youth and community development can and should be pursued in an integrated fashion. Assisting youth to contribute to the well-being of their communities is an effective way to meet many of the goals of youth development; simultaneously, communities can benefit greatly from the volunteer efforts of their younger members. Further, it is suggested that contributing to community well-being is intimately associated with our purpose as human beings, and an effective means to advance the education and development of an individual.

Building Capacity in Youth to Contribute to Community Development

Community programs have been central in many of the cases that evidence youth's capacity to contribute meaningfully to community development; in their absence, this capacity runs the risk of remaining only potential, particularly given the increasing constraints faced by schools (Heath and McLaughlin 1991). Programs are required to help young people develop the qualities, attitudes, and skills, as well as understand the relevant concepts that will assist them to become effective volunteers in their communities. This section will explore some of the characteristics of programs that aim to raise the capacity of youth to contribute to the well-being of their communities.

It is worth articulating from the outset more clearly the expected purpose of such programs. At a basic level, the kinds of programs explored in this chapter are deliberately aimed at advancing the twofold process of youth and community development as already described. For example, while programs that assist young people to potentially obtain higher-income jobs are laudable in their own right, it is arguable whether such programs on their own necessarily contribute directly to the process of community development. As described earlier in this chapter, literature on community well-being and development advocates for a broader and more holistic conception of economic development that "would include not only wealth and job creation but increasing the quality of life and standard of living for all citizens" (Phillips and Pittman 2009, p. 11). Many youth programs, while ostensibly created to contribute to community development, may in fact simply be facilitating youth employment for a small handful, an objective that would only fall within the narrowest definitions of community development. The call for more holistic definitions of community and economic development would seem to imply that, should youth programs wish to contribute to community well-being, they should strive beyond assisting youth who participate in their activities to obtain employment. While programs that help young people realize their professional aspirations are of value in and of themselves, this assistance alone is not likely to lead to the kind of community well-being defined earlier in this chapter. Rather than exposing youth solely to the workforce, the programs in question would seek to help young people engage more purposely with the community and, in a spirit of service, volunteer their time freely to processes that promote community well-being. In fact, if youth are encouraged to spend their free time participating in activities that only seek to better their own personal standing in society, the value in volunteering their time and energy for the betterment of their communities decreases. "What's in it for me?" is a phrase heard all too often by frontline community workers who seek volunteers among young people. This is yet another reason why the kinds of programs in

which we are interested in this chapter are those that are explicitly oriented towards contributing to youth and community development, in a broad and holistic sense.

There are three distinct elements of youth programs that enhance their effectiveness in raising capacity in young people: (1) the content, (2) who delivers this content and how, and (3) the youth themselves. Content refers to the actual materials and activities of a program, which is usually organized around the idea of a youth group that meets on a regular basis and is facilitated by an older individual (Denault and Poulin 2008). Each of these three elements is shaped by the purpose of a given program, whether implicit or explicit. In our case, of course, the purpose of the programs in which we are interested is to contribute to youth and community development. The below paragraphs will explore the implications of this purpose for each element.

Content

The content of youth programs is a complex theme, somewhat beyond the scope of this chapter; this section will therefore only touch upon a few basic ideas. Generally speaking, the program content needs to be designed in the context of a robust theory of youth and community development (Lakin and Mahoney 2006). With regard to educational materials, they need to be designed in such a way as to assist the youth to reflect upon certain relevant concepts and develop the qualities, attitudes, skills, and abilities necessary to participate in promoting community well-being. In other words, the curriculum used in these programs should seek to enhance a range of competencies associated with community development work. In addition, the materials studied by the program participants would employ a situated learning approach (Krasny et al. 2009), which would encourage youth groups to develop a better reading of their local reality. This approach is necessary if the projects of the groups are to gradually contribute to bettering the community.

The particular activities undertaken by youth groups will necessarily vary from one context to

another, according to the interests of the youth and local circumstances. Further, if the youth are to feel empowered to contribute meaningfully to the well-being of their communities, they will need to play an important role in designing these activities (Anderson-Butcher 2005). It would therefore be counterproductive to prescribe a precise list of activities that should be carried out by all youth groups. However, regardless of the particular inclinations of any given group of youth, it would seem important for them to undertake some form of "community service" or "social action projects" as part of their activities. This, not only because social action projects would contribute towards the goal of improving community well-being, but also due to the way such activities motivate young people and allow programs to meet many of the objectives of youth development, broadly-speaking (Lauver and Little 2005; Roth 2004). Of course, the expected positive outcomes, including empowerment and a sense of community, depend on how the youth program is actually carried out (Lakin and Mahoney 2006). Examples of typical community service projects include cleaning up a park or street; raising awareness about certain community issues among neighbours, family members, and peers; assisting senior citizens; and working with younger children in the community (Wilson et al. 2008).

Social action projects, even if they are fairly simple, tend to have three phases. First, the group discusses—and may even carry out research—in order to identify an issue or problem they wish to address collectively. Second, a concrete plan is made to meet the need that has been identified. Third, the project itself is carried out. Some projects may last a few hours, while others might last a few days or weeks, or may even take place on a regular basis over a year or more. While the process of creating and carrying out a project is relatively straightforward, numerous obstacles can and do present themselves along the way. A competent facilitator can assist the group to navigate some of these by helping the youth to agree on a project that is appropriate to their circumstances (Wilson et al. 2008). An important element that needs to be woven into every stage of the project

is effective and critical reflection (Eyler 2002). Properly guided reflection ensures that the sequence of projects carried out by a given group can build on one another, especially in terms of gradually raising the capacity of the program participants to understand their local context and exercise their growing abilities. In this regard, the role of the "animator" comes to the fore.

Program Delivery

There are a variety of terms that are employed to describe the individuals who deliver the content of the programmes with which we are concerned, such as front-line youth workers, program staff, youth leaders, non-parental adults, animators, facilitators, and mentors. Historically, their role has evolved considerably over the past few decades, particularly as expectations surrounding youth programs gradually expanded beyond afterschool child care to include promoting youth development and contributing to the betterment of communities (Borden et al. 2011). At a very basic level, in order to deliver the content described in the previous section, these individuals—we will call them animators in this chapter—need to be intimately familiar with this content and, more importantly, its philosophy of individual and social change. They also require certain qualities and attitudes that assist them in carrying out their work, particularly in developing the right kinds of relationships with the youth participating in the program. Finally, animators also need a set of skills and abilities that help them to raise the capacity of the youth to contribute to community change.

First, the kind of animators that will be effective in promoting the processes of youth and community development will be those that have a keen vision and profound understanding of these two processes. In this connection, several authors articulate a need for animators to adopt a critical stance towards society (Erbstein 2013; Stanton-Salazar 2011). Stanton-Salazar (2011) underscores the importance of animators not only questioning conventional perceptions of young people, but also existing community structures,

as some of them, intentionally or not, may be causing injustices. The kind of understanding that emerges from this process of questioning will assist the animator to help the youth formulate projects to improve the well-being of their communities. A note of caution in this regard: it is all too easy for a critical stance to slide into pessimism, cynicism, and even apathy or fear (Seider 2008) if equal attention is not placed on ideas such as capacity-building and constructive change.

One of the most important themes that is often discussed in the literature in relation to the role and function of animators is the nature of the relationships they strive to build with program participants. Beyond seeing in youth the potential to act as competent community builders, it is important for animators to see the youth as collaborators and partners in the process of improving community well-being. While capable animators can be found among all ages and strata of society, it has been noted that older youth from a similar background as the program participants may be particularly well suited to this work (Erbstein 2013). If animators and program participants come from the same community—or, at least, if the animators feel a sense of belonging to the community of which the youth are a part— the collaboration between the two to achieve community well-being takes on a new significance. The relationship between such collaborators, striving towards a common goal, can accurately be described as friendship (of a certain kind), which is indeed one of the ways in which the work of animators is discussed in the literature (see Walker 2011). What, then, is the nature of the friendship that needs to be established between animators and youth?

There are, of course, many different notions of friendship. Several authors use the word "authentic" when describing this relationship, which should be characterized by respect, care, and high expectations (Erbstein 2013). Communication skills have been highlighted as important in this regard. Jones and Deutsch (2011) describe how animators use certain relational strategies to develop this relationship with program participants, including minimizing rela-

tional distance and active inclusion. They describe how these strategies can cultivate the emergence of a supportive culture among the participants in a youth program. Drawing on the concept of a "mentor", other authors add empathy, collaboration, and companionship to the notion of authenticity (Spencer 2006). As this relationship develops between animators and program participants, the youth begin to trust the animators and often turn to them for advice and help in several different areas of their lives (Erbstein 2013). All of these ideas help clarify the nature of the kind of friendship we envision between youth and animators.

A certain tension has been described in relation to the nature of the support animators should provide to program participants. Larson (2006) has called it the intentionality paradox: that the animator is intentionally trying to empower the youth, but that this empowerment depends on the youth themselves experiencing intentionality in relation to their own development. Underlying this are certain assumptions about power that we would call into question, namely, that there is only "so much" ownership of the processes of youth and community development and that the animators need to gradually "hand it over" to the youth themselves if they are to be truly empowered. While it is true that, as Larson (2006) explains, animators need to reflect carefully on the way in which they act and speak so as not to inadvertently disempower program participants, it is also possible for them to act together with the program participants in such a way that both exercise ownership and experience empowerment in a mutual way (Karlberg 2005b). Ownership, we would contend, does not necessarily become thin or diluted when shared among many individuals; implicit in the very notion of universal participation in community development is the idea that a whole community can feel ownership for its own development. Placing the relationship between animator and program participant in the context of a common mission to improve community well-being helps resolve many of these tensions. In the context of this common mission, animators provide support to program participants in whatever way they need,

depending on the particular circumstances and the level of capacity of both the youth and the animator him or herself (Sutton 2007); there is no formula or pre-determined set of interactions that leads to the empowerment of youth.

An interesting area of research with regard to program delivery is the way experienced animators are able to respond to the complexity of their work in ways that meet the various objectives of both youth and community development successfully, leading to a quality program. No matter how good the content of a given program, much of its quality will depend on the capacity of the animator. Larson et al. (2009) as well as Larson and Walker (2010) provide insightful analyses of various complex situations faced by animators that reveal some of the qualities, attitudes, and skills that distinguish experienced animators who are able to deliver high quality programs. These authors describe how animators need to understand—in some cases quite swiftly—complex and dynamic systems of feelings, personalities, social forces, interests, and relationships, and, in this context, devise creative means of meeting the twin goals of individual and community well-being. Their ability to place situations in context is critical.

For example, let us consider a typical situation faced by animators: Program participants are carrying out a project to improve the well-being of their community which involves interacting with a large number of their neighbours by, for example, going door to door to raise awareness on a certain issue. While the majority of residents in their locality appreciate the project, one or two neighbours, due to past experiences perhaps, feel somewhat nervous about the presence of a large group of youth. Moreover, while the energy that the youth possess is naturally channeled into enthusiasm about the project, some of them may only just be beginning to learn how to express this enthusiasm appropriately. The energy of a group of youth, then, can sometimes trigger negative responses from such residents. Some of the youth, in turn, can become defensive in the face of such negative responses, particularly since they feel they do not deserve them because they are in fact helping the community. A capable ani-

mator needs to be able to address all of the complexities inherent in this situation in a way that fosters the individual development of the youth, while at the same time not alienating certain residents, which would be contrary to the objective of promoting community well-being. Working through tensions that naturally arise in the course of youth and community development is itself a means of further strengthening ties of solidarity and understanding in a community.

While there are other dimensions of the work of those who facilitate youth programs, the above paragraphs should demonstrate the importance of investing in this element of programs that promotes both individual and community well-being. Animators need adequate training and ongoing support if they are to develop the requisite qualities, attitudes, knowledge, and skills described above. In this connection, the question of professional development for youth workers has become increasingly important in recent decades, and there is an ongoing debate about how "professionalized" the field should become, if at all (Astroth et al. 2004; Borden et al. 2011; Quinn 2004). In any case, it is clear that, if we hope to advance the two processes of youth and community development, a share of the available resources would need to be allocated to the training and support of youth workers (Erbstein 2013).

A Youth Group

The final element of youth programs that empower young people to become competent contributors to community well-being is the youth group itself. In addition to allowing program participants to advance individually on numerous fronts, the kind of youth program we are envisioning would have a pronounced collective dimension. In this context, it would be meaningful to speak of the progress and development of the youth group as a whole—greater than the sum of the progress and development of its individual members.

Much has been written about the kind of environment that should prevail in youth programs

and the nature of the relationships that should distinguish the members of a youth group. Shirley Brice Heath, a well-known scholar in this field, compares community organizations to close-knit families (Heath and McLaughlin 1991). She explains that the most successful organizations "envelop teens firmly in a socializing community that holds them responsible for their own actions" (p. 625). Membership is tied to expectations, and there is a mutual responsibility to monitor one another's behaviour. Pearce and Larson (2006) explain that the existing members of a youth group can contribute to creating a welcoming and warm environment for new members. The group's animator also plays an important role in this respect.

With regard to the relationships between the members of a youth group, Anderson-Butcher (2005) argues that all young people seek to relate to their peers, as well as to caring adults. In this connection, opportunities to socialize meaningfully with one's peers have been highlighted as an important element of a positive environment for young people (Weiss et al. 2005). Such an environment is also conducive to the engagement of youth in program activities (Shernoff and Vandell 2007). While there is not a great deal of literature that describes the dynamics of the evolving relationships between program participants, it is clear that young people within a youth group need to learn to trust to one another and become increasingly united as a group if programs such as the ones in which we are interested are to achieve their objectives (Shodjaee-Zrudlo 2014).

Examples of Canadian Youth Programs

In Canada, youth development is both a provincial and national concern. At the provincial level, both government and nonprofit entities have made considerable investments in youth services and the youth-led sector. There are innumerable organizations whose mandate focuses on young people and who offer programs to youth both within school and community settings. Generally

speaking, the priorities set by these organizations fall into a number of categories, including recreation and sport, employment, civic engagement, volunteering, and religious activity, some of which may overlap significantly.

For the purposes of this chapter, we are interested in programs offered by Canadian organizations that exhibit several of the characteristics described in the previous section; most importantly, these programs should engage youth as volunteers in the promotion of community well-being. Two examples of such programs are described below. The first is an initiative that operates at the provincial level, a program called C-Vert, and the second is a well-known national organization, called Katimavik, that offers a number of programs.

C-Vert, a youth program with an environmental focus carried out in three major cities in Quebec, incorporates several of the elements explored in the previous section. The program, which was initiated in 2005, offers young people both an educational experience, including nature expeditions, and an opportunity for them to be involved in concrete action aimed at benefitting the wider community. In the context of this program, groups of young people between the ages of 14 and 16 are assisted by their animators to plan and carry out environmental projects in their own neighbourhoods. The planning process involves consulting relevant experts and discussing ideas with community members. Projects carried out by C-Vert groups have included planting trees, taking samples of local river water to test its level of pollution, organizing a local conference on the theme of the environment, and community clean-ups. The organization offering the program talks about itself explicitly as contributing to the process of sustainable community development (c-vert.org). An evaluation of C-Vert carried out by a research group at the University of Montreal states that youth who have participated in the program reported that their desire to become involved in community action and environmental projects increased (Bordeleau et al. 2013). Some even shared that their involvement with the program influenced their career decisions, and that they would like to

work in the area of the defence of the environment. At the level of community change, the evaluation mentions that the program influenced the perception of young people on the part of many community members, including municipal authorities. Of course, the projects the youth carried out, particularly the ones involving concrete changes to the physical environment, were the most visible outcome (Bordeleau et al. 2013).

Katimavik is another example of an initiative that embodies a mutually reinforcing relationship between community and youth development. It is a national youth volunteer program that promotes youth development through residential volunteerism. The organization strives to create a positive impact in the lives of young people through volunteering in the community. Katimavik has offered a range of programs over their 35-year history, engaging more than 35,000 young Canadians in educational programs aimed at promoting community development (Katimavik 2015a, b, c). In each program, small groups of youth from across Canada travel to different regions, live together in a Katimavik house, and volunteer full-time. Partnerships are created with other organizations to offer a variety of work projects in a number of areas, such as social services, the environment, poverty reduction, arts, and culture.

With regard to content, programs offered by Katimavik have a training component which include formal workshops on subjects such as interpersonal communication and problem solving as a way of helping the volunteers learn to interact with others, especially in preparation for their interactions in the workplace, the community, and their host families with whom they stay. During their time together, volunteers explore and gain insight into concepts such as solidarity, democracy, active citizenship, and pacifism (Katimavik 2015a, b, c).

One of the programs currently being offered by Katimavik is the "Eco-Internship" program. Youth are given a 3-month internship in an environmental program in Quebec in the context of which they develop community projects that meet the environmental needs of the community. These projects are developed with the help of various community members, therefore increasing local participation in promoting community well-being. In addition to the implementation of a collective community project, the program fosters environmental stewardship. Another program similar in structure is the "Canadian Youth Leadership Program", a 5-month program where youth live in a Katimavik home and carry out various projects in collaboration with community organizations and municipal governments (Katimavik 2015c).

C-Vert and the two programs offered by Katimavik that have been described above demonstrate in practice how youth and community development can be linked and strengthen one another. In terms of content, they ensure the youth are exposed to relevant knowledge and assisted to develop skills that increase their competence as community builders. In the case of these three programs, this seems to largely take place through specially designed workshops and experiential learning opportunities. The youth are also supported directly by animators, who usually facilitate the workshops and accompany the program participants in their volunteering activities. Finally, the idea of a youth group is also central to each program. The structure of the programs ensures that groups of youth are given the opportunity to develop the kinds of relationships that will allow them to advance as a group and work together to promote community well-being. While C-Vert and Katimavik clearly still have much to learn about how their programs can contribute effectively to the twofold process of youth and community development, their explicit dedication to this aim seems to have already generated certain positive results.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the role of youth in promoting community well-being. To do so, we articulated a broad vision of community well-being which emphasized the need to achieve higher levels of participation on the part of the community in its own development. In this context, it was clear that an increasing number of volunteers

would be needed. Viewing youth as potential volunteers, as opposed to consumers or bundles of problems, significantly broadens the number of human resources a community can rely on to increase its level of well-being. Of course, young people need to be supported in order to develop the capacity to contribute to community well-being. Programs that explicitly aim to advance this two-fold process of youth and community development do exist—such as C-Vert and some of the programs offered by Katimavik—and provide a channel for youth to play a decisive role in promoting community well-being.

At least two recommendations emerge from our chapter. First, additional resources should be made available to programs that promote youth and community development. By advancing these two mutually reinforcing aims, these programs achieve multiple social objectives. They also are preventative in approach, and therefore complement funding that is provided to programs that focus on intervention. Policy-makers can also assist in unifying priorities around the twin areas of youth and community development.

Our second recommendation is addressed to the organizations that implement the kinds of programs we have been discussing. We propose that these agencies initiate processes of learning around the three main program elements that were mentioned in section "Building capacity in youth to contribute to community development": content, program delivery, and the youth group. With regard to content, while a variety of workshops are currently being carried out with youth, developing curriculum with the explicit purpose of raising the capacity of young people to contribute to community development would no doubt reinforce the effectiveness of these programs. Among the themes the curriculum could address could be, for example, human nature and identity—and they could be explored in such a way as to assist youth to reflect upon and begin to assume the identity of a competent community volunteer.

In relation to program delivery, much needs to be learned about the kind of support animators require in order to accompany the youth groups. One aspect of this process of learning could be strengthening spaces of reflection among groups of animators and developing and refining the content of professional development courses. Learning about the dynamics of the youth groups themselves will also require a great deal of attention. Relevant questions in this regard include, for example, how to help the members of a youth group to develop the kinds of relationships that further the aims of youth and community development, and how to ensure that the group as a whole is able to take ownership of their projects aimed at promoting community well-being.

In many cases, partnerships could be formed with academic institutions or research groups to learn about some of these questions, which would lend rigour and continuity to the learning processes and ensure that best practices can be disseminated. Networks of organizations are also a natural space within which the latter could take place. Insights that are gained along the way could then gradually help organizations refine and modify program design, content, and professional development courses for animators.

References

Anderson-Butcher, D. (2005). Recruitment and retention in youth development programming. *The Prevention Researcher, 12*(2), 3–6.

Astroth, K. A., Garza, P., & Taylor, B. (2004). Getting down to business: Defining competencies for entry-level youth workers. *New Directions for Youth Development, 104*, 25–37.

Barnett, R. V., & Brennan, M. A. (2006). Integrating youth into community development: Implications for policy planning and program evaluation. *Journal of Youth Development, 1*(2), 2–16.

Bartsch, J. (2008). Youth as resources in revitalizing communities. In D. A. Gruenewald & G. A. Smith (Eds.), *Place-based education in the global age: Local diversity* (pp. 64–84). New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Bordeleau, I., Hamel, P., & Rodriguez, S. (2013, October). *Rapport d'évaluation C-Vert: Un projet par et pour les jeunes 2005–2013.* Retrieved from http://c-vert.org/intranet/files/C_VERT%20Rapport%20final2013_corrigé_81_V21janv2014.pdf

Borden, L. M., Schlomer, G. L., & Wiggs, C. B. (2011). The evolving role of youth workers. *Journal of Youth Development, 6*(3), 126–138.

Brennan, M. A., Barnett, R. V., & Lesmeister, M. K. (2008). Enhancing local capacity and youth involve-

ment in the community development process. *Community Development, 38*(4), 13–27.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Christens, B. D., & Dolan, T. (2011). Interweaving youth development, community development, and social change through youth organizing. *Youth & Society, 43*(2), 528–548.

Cnaan, R. A., Handy, F., & Wadsworth, M. (1996). Defining who is a volunteer: Conceptual and empirical considerations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 25*(3), 364–383.

Damon, W. (2008). *The path to purpose: Helping children find their calling in life*. New York: Free Press.

DeFilippis, J., & Saerget, S. (2012). Communities develop: The question is, how? In J. DeFilippis & S. Saerget (Eds.), *The community development reader* (2nd ed., pp. 1–7). New York: Routledge.

Denault, A.-S., & Poulin, F. (2008). La participation à des loisirs organisés à l'adolescence: État des connaissances sur les déterminants, les effets et les processus associés. *Revue de Psychoéducation, 37*(2), 211–226.

Downie, J., Clark, K., & Clementson, K. (2005). Volunteerism: 'Community mothers' in action. *Contemporary Nurse, 18*, 188–198.

Erbstein, N. (2013). Engaging underrepresented youth populations in community youth development: Tapping social capital as a critical resource. *New Directions for Youth Development, 138*, 109–124.

Eyler, J. (2002). Reflection: Linking service and learning—Linking students and communities. *Journal of Social Issues, 58*(3), 517–534.

Finn, J. L., & Checkoway, B. (1998). Young people as competent community builders: A challenge to social work. *Social Work, 43*(4), 335–345.

Ford, D. H., & Lerner, R. M. (1992). *Developmental systems theory: An integrative approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Giroux, H. A. (2009). *Youth in a suspect society: Democracy or disposability*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Giroux, H. A. (2012). *Disposable youth*. New York: Routledge.

Hall, M., Lasby, D., Ayer, S., & Gibbons, W. D. (2009). *Caring Canadians, involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2007 Canada survey of giving, volunteering and participating*. Ottawa: Ministry of Industry. Retrieved from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/71-542-x/71-542-x2009001-eng.pdf

Heath, S. B., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1991). Community organizations as family: Endeavors that engage and support adolescents. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 72*(8), 623–627.

Jones, J. N., & Deutsch, N. L. (2011). Relational strategies in after-school settings: How staff-youth relationships support positive development. *Youth & Society, 43*(4), 1381–1406.

Karlberg, M. (2005a). Elevating the service in service-learning. *Journal of the Northwestern Communication Association, 34*, 16–36.

Karlberg, M. (2005b). The power of discourse and the discourse of power: Pursuing peace through discourse intervention. *International Journal of Peace Studies, 10*(1), 1–25.

Katimavik. (2015a). Main page. Retrieved from http://www.katimavik.org

Katimavik. (2015b). FAQ. Retrieved from http://www.katimavik.org/faq

Katimavik. (2015c). Programs. Retrieved from http://www.katimavik.org/programs

Krasny, M. E., Tidball, K. G., & Sriskandarajah, N. (2009). Education and resilience: Social and situated learning among university and secondary students. *Ecology and Society, 14*(2), 38–56.

Kurth-Schai, R. (1988). The role of youth in society: A reconceptualization. *Educational Forum, 53*, 113–132.

Lakin, R., & Mahoney, A. (2006). Empowering youth to change their world: Identifying key components of a community service program to promote positive development. *Journal of School Psychology, 44*, 513–531.

Larson, R. (2006). Positive youth development, willful adolescents, and mentoring. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*(6), 677–689.

Larson, R., & Verma, S. (1999). How children and adolescents spend time across the world: Work, play, and developmental opportunities. *Psychological Bulletin, 125*(6), 701–736.

Larson, R., & Walker, K. C. (2010). Dilemmas of practice: Challenges to program quality encountered by youth program leaders. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 45*, 338–349.

Larson, R., Rickman, A. N., Gibbons, C. M., & Walker, K. C. (2009). Practitioner expertise: Creating quality within the daily tumble of events in youth settings. *New Directions for Youth Development, 121*, 71–88.

Lauver, S. C., & Little, P. M. D. (2005). Recruitment and retention strategies for out-of-school-time programs. *New Directions for Youth Development, 105*, 71–89.

Lee, S. J., Kim, Y., & Phillips, R. (2015). Exploring the intersection of community well-being and community development. In S. J. Lee, Y. Kim, & R. Phillips (Eds.), *Community well-being and community development* (pp. 1–7). Dordrecht: Springer.

Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., … von Eye, A. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of positive youth development. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 25*(1), 17–71.

Lesko, N. (1996). Past, present, and future conceptions of adolescence. *Educational Theory, 46*(4), 453–472.

Matarrita-Cascante, D., & Brennan, M. A. (2012). Conceptualizing community development in the twenty-first century. *Community Development, 43*(3), 293–305.

Nitzberg, J. (2005). The meshing of youth development and community building. *New Directions for Youth Development, 106*, 7–16.

Omoto, A. M., & Snyder, M. (2002). Considerations of community. *American Behavioral Scientist, 45*(5), 846–867.

Pearce, N. J., & Larson, R. (2006). How teens become engaged in youth development programs: The process of motivational change in a civic activism organization. *Applied Developmental Science, 10*(3), 121–131.

Phillips, R. (2003). *Community indicators*. Chicago: American Planning Association: Planning Advisory Service Report no. 517.

Phillips, R., & Pittman, R. H. (2009). A framework for community and economic development. In R. Phillips & R. H. Pittman (Eds.), *An introduction to community development* (pp. 3–19). New York: Routledge.

Prilleltensky, I., & Prilleltensky, O. (2006). *Promoting well-being: Linking personal, organizational, and community change*. Hoboken: Wiley.

Quinn, J. (2004). Professional development in the youth development field: Issues, trends, opportunities, and challenges. *New Directions for Youth Development, 104*, 13–24.

Roth, J. L. (2004). Youth development programs. *The Prevention Researcher, 11*(2), 3–7.

Seider, S. (2008). "Bad things could happen": How fear impedes social responsibility in privileged adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 23*, 647–666.

Shernoff, D. J., & Vandell, D. L. (2007). Engagement in after-school program activities: Quality of experience from the perspective of participants. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 36*, 891–903.

Shodjaee-Zrudlo, I. (2014). *Insights from youth workers regarding young people's engagement in out-of-school-time youth development programs*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Montreal, Canada.

Simpson, K. (2004). 'Doing development': The gap year, volunteer-tourists and a popular practice of development. *Journal of International Development, 16*, 681–692.

Spencer, R. (2006). Understanding the mentoring process between adolescents and adults. *Youth & Society, 37*(3), 287–315.

Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2011). A social capital framework for the study of institutional agents and their role in the empowerment of low-status students and youth. *Youth & Society, 43*(3), 1066–1109.

Statistics Canada. (2013). *General social survey on giving, volunteering and participating*. Retrieved from http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a03?lang=eng&pattern=119-0001..119-0016&p2=31

Stetsenko, A. (2008). From relational ontology to transformative activist stance on development and learning: Expanding Vygotsky's (CHAT) project. *Cultural Studies of Science Education, 3*(2), 471–491.

Sutton, S. E. (2007). A social justice perspective on youth and community development: Theorizing the processes and outcomes of participation. *Children, Youth and Environments, 17*(2), 616–645.

Walker, K. C. (2011). The multiple roles that youth development program leaders adopt with youth. *Youth & Society, 43*(2), 635–655.

Weiss, H. B., Little, P. M. D., & Bouffard, S. M. (2005). More than just being there: Balancing the participation equation. *New Directions for Youth Development, 105*, 15–31.

Wilson, N., Minkler, M., Dasho, S., Wallerstein, N., & Martin, A. C. (2008). Getting to social action: The Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!) project. *Health Promotion Practice, 9*(4), 395–403.