



YDI

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

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Making a Difference in the Lives of Young People

Who We Are

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The Youth Development Institute

WHAT IS YDI?

YDI works with a broad range of educational and community organizations to support the growth and development of young people and help them to transition successfully to adulthood. In collaboration with youth practitioners, funders, and policy makers, we apply the most promising research and practices that create powerful, sustained, and joyful experiences for young people.

Our work includes providing technical assistance, disseminating information, developing policy, and conducting research to strengthen the quality and increase the availability of positive opportunities and support for young people. In partnership with government agencies, funders, schools, community organizations, and colleges, YDI creates programs and systems that enhance the professional growth of those who work with youth.

OUR VISION

We believe, and research demonstrates, that all young people should experience close relationships with caring adults, high expectations, engaging activities, opportunities to make a difference in their world, and continuity of support in every setting in which they live, work, and study. This youth development approach has shaped the work of the Youth Development Institute since it was established in 1991.



WHAT WE DO

YDI:

- Promotes youth development, a strength-based approach to working with young people, their families, schools, and communities.
- Builds collaborative relationships with individuals, community organizations, schools, colleges, and families to support the growth of young people.
- Helps those who work with youth to strengthen their practice and integrate their experience with theory and research.
- Concentrates its activities in areas of high-need and opportunity.
- Reaches across all the youth sectors—education, community organizations, government, and philanthropy—to identify and build common approaches in education, out-of-school programs, and other youth-serving fields.
- Applies multiple strategies and engages at multiple levels to build capacity for high quality youth services in organizations and communities. These strategies include:
 - ✓ Data collection and assessment
 - ✓ Staff training
 - ✓ Program planning and development
 - ✓ Network development and support
 - ✓ Structured site visits
 - ✓ Organizational and leadership development
 - ✓ Creation and dissemination of tools and materials
 - ✓ Partnership development and support
 - ✓ Support for policy improvements



CURRENT PROGRAMS

Out-of-School Time

Beacons Technical Assistance: YDI works with Beacon Centers and other programs in New York and beyond to provide stimulating and engaging activities to school-age youth during non-school hours. These programs are conducted by community organizations working in partnership with public schools. Through *The Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative*, YDI assists local community organizations and citywide intermediaries to improve participation levels and strengthen social, career, and developmental outcomes for young people ages nine to 14.

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Secondary and Post-Secondary Support

Community Education Pathways for Success (CEPS) enables young adults who have left school without a diploma to return to school, complete their GEDs and prepare for and enter college and the workforce. In partnership with America's Choice, Inc., a leading national education organization, YDI is fashioning a youth development approach for the education, social support, and career development of this population and the community-based organizations that serve them. CEPS also enables young adults who have successfully completed their GEDs or a multiple pathways school or program to enter college with support from a partnership between a community-based organization and a college.

Supported by the Altman, The Clark, the W. K. Kellogg, The Lumina and The Pinkerton foundations.

YDI's *Education Unit* helps strengthen student performance and improve graduation rates by working with schools that serve mainstream students, as well as multiple pathways schools that provide alternatives to traditional schools. YDI trains instructors and staff members and builds partnerships with community-based organizations to create more personalized and engaging environments. As part of this work, YDI is conducting a multi-year study of the New York City school-community organization partnership strategy in New Visions for Public Schools' New Century High Schools Initiative.

Supported by New Visions for Public Schools, the Kellogg and Mott foundations, and the New York City Department of Education. The Partnership Study is supported by Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Career Internships

Through its *Career Internship Network (CIN)*, YDI works to improve the quality of internship programs for adolescents at leading New York City institutions, including museums, libraries, science centers, parks, and hospitals. CIN also offers training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to the internship staffs of more than 30 institutions.

Supported by the Altman, The Clark and The Pinkerton foundations.



HOW OTHERS SEE US:

“The Youth Development Institute has played an important role in conceptualizing and promoting high-quality youth development programming...those sites with staff most frequently attending YDI meetings and training activities had the highest rated quality.”¹

“YDI’s efforts have demonstrated that a strategy of small grants paired with continuous technical assistance can move programs in the right direction for additional funding and sustainability...At its core, [this project] is an innovative strategy of community-building.”²

“...one of the reasons there has been nearly uniform success among the ...Beacons, even though they differ greatly one from the other in every way, is that none was left to its own devices to start from scratch ...YDI became a continuing source of support, technical assistance, and documentation to the Beacons...”³

“YDI's Career Internship Network has impacted our Youth Leadership Program and practices in significant ways. We have begun to implement these principles into our program in various ways and now look through this lens...when revising and evaluating our programs”⁴

For more information about the Youth Development Institute and its programs and publications contact us at:

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1. Constancia Warren, C., Ph.D., in *A Place to Grow: Evaluation of the New York City Beacons*; Academy for Educational Development, 2002.
2. Vernay Mitchell McKnight, Ph.D., et al, *Young Adult Capacity Initiative: Cross-Site Analysis*; Academy for Educational Development 2006.
3. Lisabeth Schorr, *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America* Doubleday, 1997.
4. Comment by Participant