

## ABSTRACT

HICKS, ANGELA ANN. Institutions and Civic Participation: The Case of Community Involvement in Program Decision-making at a Community Center. (Under direction of Dr. John Pettitt.)

The purpose of the study was to determine if, how, and to what degree the Niger Community Center and its Inter-organizational Relationships (IORs) elicited community participation in program decision-making. The research uses the qualitative methodology, specifically interviews, documentation, and participation-observation. This examination used as a tool the community-based programming (CBP) process developed by Boone (1997). Using CBP processual tasks 1-9 (see Appendix A), as a check-list, the following research questions were framed, described, and analyzed:

1. How did the organization define and use community-based programming?
2. How did the organization network, link, and involve its community to identify issues?
3. How was consensus achieved in defining the selected issues formulated and utilized for programming?

The themes, which emerged from the data, included organizational and personal mission: compatibility and conflict, understanding community through social networks,

and citizen involvement versus citizen action. Within these three themes, the findings are presented and discussed from an examination of the Niger Community Center (NCC), the inter-organizational relationships (IORs), and the community.

The research revealed citizen participation in program decision-making at the NCC. However, citizen participation varies by the emphasis placed on objectives of participation, service delivery and social action. Whereas participation that elicits citizen involvement solicits responsible suggestions from grassroots people and suggestions are meant to improve services, insofar as they do not jeopardize organizational viability. On the other hand, participation that elicits citizen action promotes the needs and wishes of grassroots people, promotes social action, subordinating organizational viability. The research revealed the practice of citizen involvement was overwhelming on the part of the NCC and its IORs. Implication for practice implies service delivery and social action must go hand and hand.

**INSTITUTIONS AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION:  
THE CASE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN  
PROGRAM DECISION-MAKING AT A COMMUNITY CENTER**

by

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DEDICATION

to

*my daughter,*

*Fanika,*

*for her unwavering faith in me and her support.*

## BIOGRAPHY

Angela A. Hicks was born on January 4, 1959 in Baltimore, Maryland. The first of two children, she and her brother Rodney were raised by her grandparents, Elizabeth and Abraham Hebron, and her mother, Ida Elizabeth Hutton. Surrounded by love and affection, they encouraged her to be the best that she could be. She attended public schools in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel County until her junior year. Her senior year was spent at a private school, named Glaydin, in Leesburg Virginia. She graduated high school in 1976 and immediately enrolled in Anne Arundel Community College. She later transferred to the University of Maryland at College Park and in 1984 graduated from UMCP with a Bachelor's of Art degree in Liberal Studies. Professional experience as a community social service worker and grant writer proceeded her graduate work at Bowie State University where she completed her Master's of Art degree in Human Resource Development in 1991. Mentored by her cousin, Randy Rowel, she spent a couple of years writing federal, state, and local grants to develop programs for inner city and Caribbean communities. In 1992, she left her home in Forestville, Maryland to pursue full time studies as a doctoral student in the department of Adult and Community College Education at North Carolina State University.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Throughout the history of citizen participation and community organizing, different emphases have been placed on the objectives of participation, making it a source of friction and turmoil among agencies and citizens. In times of great social change experiments, such as the implementation of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 requiring federally supported agencies to assure "maximum feasible participation" of the poor in community action, community issues have been fueled by citizen action (Fisher, 1994; Warren et al., 1974). In that example, struggles over resources and participation objectives were so intense that fights between community people and local leaders dominated the program for years (Fisher, 1994). On the other hand, during periods of heightened professional planning in community organizing, where agencies and community organizers sought to implement changes compatible with their goals and abilities, community issues have been led by agencies, organizers, and government, relegating citizens to a peripheral role, token citizen involvement role, or both (Betten & Austin, 1990). This involvement of

differing groups was as evident in the early years (1900s) of the neighborhood organization movement, as in later years (1970s), with the development of statutory programs that expanded bureaucracy and led to the retrenchment in grassroots organizing efforts.

Warren, Rose, and Bergunder (1974) explained that citizen participation varies by the emphasis placed on objectives of participation. For example, successful participation that elicits citizen action promotes the needs and wishes of low-income and grassroots people, subordinating organizational rationale, viability, and personal goals as is seen in times of great social change experiments. Successful participation that elicits citizen involvement solicits responsible suggestions from low-income and grassroots people. The suggestions are meant to help improve services that meet the people's needs, insofar as they do not jeopardize technical, administrative, and institutional rationale and viability as is seen in periods of heightened professional planning in community organizing. Both citizen action and citizen involvement are successful depending on the emphasis placed on different objectives.

Since the 1970s, with the development of statutory programs that expanded bureaucracy and led to the

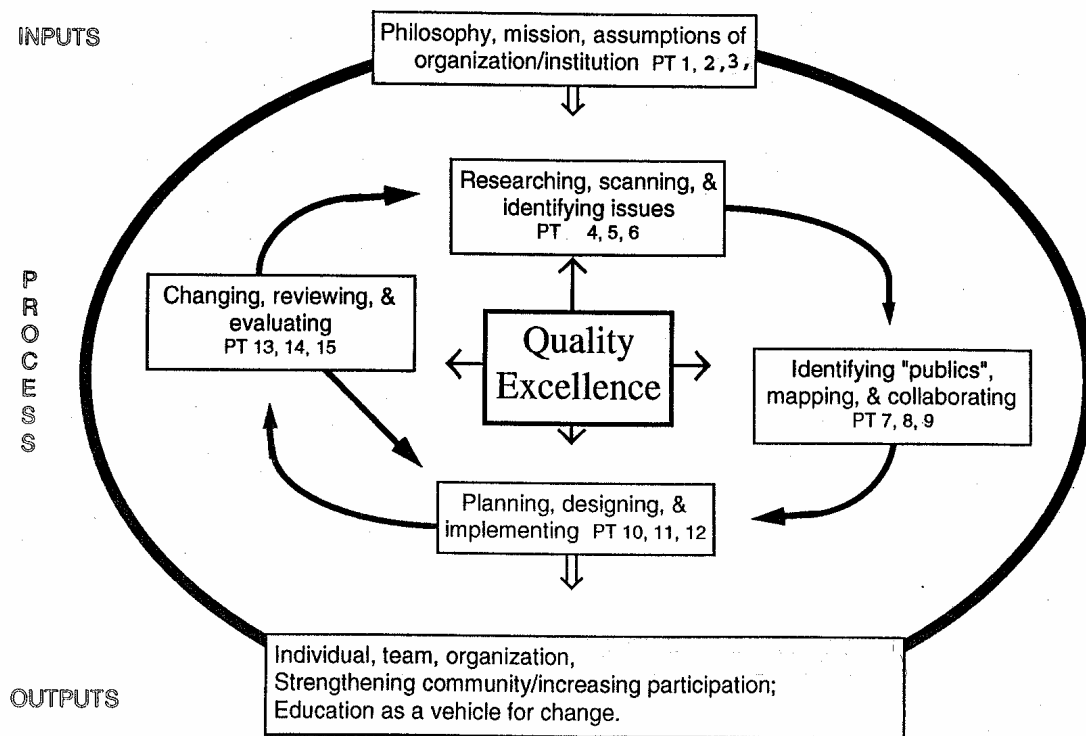
retrenchment in grassroots organizing efforts, meaningful citizen action has been replaced with token citizen involvement, and a pervasiveness of apathy in low-income communities and especially low-income African American communities.

In this study, I examined the processes an urban community-based organization engaged to elicit community participation in program decisions that affected the community's well being. To frame this study, I used as a tool the community-based programming (CBP) process (see Figure 1) espoused by Boone (1997):

Community-based programming (CBP) is defined as a systematic and rational process in which the community college [community-based organizations are emphasized in this study] functions as a leader and catalyst in effecting collaboration among the people, their leaders, and community-based agencies and organizations in identifying, confronting, and resolving critical community issues that are adversely affecting—or have the potential to adversely affect—the community, its people, and their quality of life (p. vii).

Figure 1

# Community-Based Programming



Community participation is a critical facet of the collaborative effort needed in CBP if leaders, community agencies, organizations, and stakeholders are to work together as a team in resolving community issues.

Because of the historical linkages to community organizing through the community-based organization, Niger Community Center, in Northeast Central Niger, a predominately African American urban community in the heart of the city's surrounding pocket of poverty, was chosen to represent this study. Like the River Niger in West Africa, this urban community in a southern city was once part of a thriving center of commerce central to the well being of many people of African descent. Since the 1970s, this urban community has suffered from severe deterioration and blight, having the most substandard residential conditions in the entire city. Over the years, a booming commerce of cotton mills, a hosiery mill, tobacco plants, and black owned businesses has stagnated into inactivity and a deep economic depression.

In contrast to impoverish conditions of the Northeast Central Niger community, where the percentage of persons below the poverty level more than doubled the 14% city-wide estimate, the surrounding city and county estimated population and income growth indicated a stable and growth-

oriented economic base. Niger city/county population projections for 2000 were 216,800. This is up from 1998 estimated city population of 172,004, and estimated county population of 211,708. The estimated per capita income for the county in 1999 was \$32,100 and \$30,600 for surrounding areas. The 2001 projected average household income for the county was \$68,700. This is up from 1996 estimated average household income of \$49,800. Whereas the inner city urban communities have been hit especially hard with the decline in factories, the surrounding areas have experienced booms in technology.

Throughout this study, pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity and to protect the identities of the participants. The community was referred to as Niger, and the agencies, groups, and individuals working on behalf of the Niger community through the Niger Community Center (NCC), were called NCC's Inter-organizational relationships.

#### Statement of the Problem

The study was born out of my personal experience working with an agency of diverse professionals in a southeastern U.S. city who were concerned with quality of life issues, mainly eradicating hunger in the city and its surrounding counties. Fresh out of a graduate program in

Human Resource Development, I eagerly joined the team to take on the enormous task of educating low-income women to become self-sufficient.

One year later, after exhausting all efforts unsuccessfully, I found myself wondering what went wrong. Why were the women in the training program no closer to self-sufficiency than they were when we started a year earlier? As community organizers, we followed proven organizing strategies, such as working with intact community groups. We conducted intensive leadership and assertiveness training several times a month through workshops, seminars, conferences, and retreats, and offered practical training, such as assisting them in managing community pantries. Nonetheless, evidence of sustained initiative on the part of these women was lacking.

At a bimonthly-planning meeting, the large group of 20 staff members was dumbfounded over the lack of progressive development with the low-income women despite intense training efforts. I remembered reluctantly asking two logical yet seemingly textbook questions. The first two-part question was, "Would it be helpful if we invited the targeted local community to the table with us so that we could engage in the decision-making process together? Do you think this would be helpful since the programs affect

them and they know a lot about what is needed in their community?" Later in the meeting, I asked, "Would it be helpful if we invited stakeholders to collaborate with the community and with our effort?" Unfortunately, my questions were overlooked, probably because of my junior status. I believed their intention was to empower people to become self-sufficient because that message was conveyed throughout their programs, using language such as grassroots, community leadership, and economic self-sufficiency. However, their reluctance to invite the community to the table or to share their innovative program with other agencies or stakeholders revealed their unwillingness to put aside their own interests for the sake of a bigger cause. Putting aside their interests would have meant stepping back, compromising with others, taking risks, and involving the community at the point where decisions were made. In fact, the program's evaluation raised these issues. The organization weighed the risks and felt it better to scrap the entire project, which they did.

After 8 years and having worked for several more agencies, I have come to realize that community-based organizations that promote citizen participation in the program decision-making process may hold the greatest potential for effective issues resolution in communities.



## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze how and to what degree the Niger Community Center and its Inter-organizational Relationships (IORs) elicited citizen participation in the program decision-making process. This examination used as a tool the community-based programming process developed by Boone (1997). Using CBP processual tasks 1-9 (see Appendix A), as a checklist, I framed, described, and analyzed the following questions:

1. The Niger Community Center and its Inter-organizational Relationship's approach to programming; Examining the organization's approach to programming helped me determine the leadership's approach to embedding organizational values (vision) into culture and the strategies that achieved objectives, which determined organizational commitment to community through the espoused community-based mission.

2. How the organization networked, linked, and involved its community to identify issues of concern to everyone; Examining this area of the organization helped me reveal the type of inter-organizational relationships (IOR) that existed at the Niger Community Center and the organization's or individual's commitment to and knowledge of the community's needs.

3. How consensus in program decision-making and issue resolution was achieved; Examining achievement of consensus and issue resolution helped me determine the type of leadership in the community, the programs and services that the leadership effected, and the formation of community, community groups, and stakeholders.

#### Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework in this study was based on research of (a) programming (Boone, 1997; Boyle, 1981), (b) organizational development (OD) (Cummings & Worley, 1997; Yukl, 1998), (c) inter-organizational relationships (IORs) (Alter & Hage, 1993; Chisholm, 1998; Rogers & Whetten, 1982; Warren et al., 1974), (d) community-based organization (Hall 1992; Milofsky, 1988; Smith & Lipsky, 1993), and (e) community organizing (Cox, Erlich, Rothman, & Tropman, 1987; Fisher, 1994; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) (see Table 1).

Table 1

#### Conceptual Framework of Study

<u>Body of Literature</u>	<u>Concepts</u>	<u>Goal</u>
Programming	Adult Learners Planned Change Collaboration	To integrate parts of organization systems so they function together;

Table 1 Continued

<u>Body of Literature</u>	<u>Concepts</u>	<u>Goal</u>
Organization Development	Leadership strategies Planned Change	To improve an organization's ability to assess and to solve its own problems;
Inter-organizational Relationships (IORs)	Exchange relationships	To help organizations adapt to environmental pressures and accomplish organizational objectives;
Community Organizing	Approaches -Social Work -Political Activist -Neighborhood Maintenance	To espouse the process of a community organizing approach to achieve objectives.
Community Organization	Non-profit Volunteer community organization Institutions Agencies	To make clear the role of institutions in providing services to the community.

Programming and OD were essential components in the study's conceptual framework and provided key insights into how organizations operate and why. IORs, exchange relationships, help organizations adapt to environmental pressures and accomplish organizational objectives. Community organizations provide the impetus for community organizing and citizen participation in varying degrees. Other concepts these researchers used were collaboration, or inter-organizational relationships, decision-making, leadership, needs, organization, participation, community, planned change, and vision.

Programming literature tends to emphasize a systematic, proactive approach to facilitating behavioral change in adult learners and their environment through planned change and collaborative efforts with leaders, their followers, stakeholders, and other community-based organizations (Boone, 1997). Organizational development literature tends to emphasize leadership strategies (Yukl, 1998) and planned change strategies, which improves an organization's ability to assess and to solve its own problems (Cummings & Worley, 1997). The inter-organizational relationships literature emphasizes the necessity of sharing resources among organizations and the non-hierarchical, self-regulating, horizontal structure of

decision-making among many IORs (Alter & Hage, 1993; Chisholm, 1998; Roger & Whetten, 1982). Community organization literature elucidates the nature of nonprofit and voluntary community organizations as institutions and their role in providing services to the community (Hall, 1992; Milofsky, 1988; Smith & Lipsky, 1993). The community organizing literature refers to the process in which community organizers, advocates, and organizations engage to achieve their objectives. The three dominant organizing approaches are social work, political activist, and neighborhood maintenance (Cox et al., 1987; Fisher, 1994).

#### Research Questions

I used three research questions to guide me in making observations and developing questionnaires for interviews.

1. How did the organization define and use community-based programming?
2. How did the organization network, link, and involve its community to identify issues?
3. How was consensus formulated and utilized for programming?

#### Definition of Terms

Ad hoc - structures for interaction around specific goals (Warren et al., 1974) and often representing the

embryonic stage of inter-organizational relationships (Van de Ven & Walker, 1984).

Change - Any planned or unplanned alteration of the status quo in an organism, situation, or process (Lippitt, 1969).

Citizen action - Canvassing and lobbying that give priority to the needs of low-income and grassroots people (Fisher, 1994; Warren et al., 1974).

Citizen involvement - Orderly and channeled input into agency decision-making by low-income people (Warren et al., 1974).

Community - A group of people who reside in a specific locality and who often have a common cultural and historical heritage (Blackwell, 1991).

Community-based programming - The primary mission of community-based programming is for agencies/organizations to serve as leaders and catalysts in effecting collaboration among people, their leaders, and other community-based organizations and agencies in the identification and resolution of major issues of critical concern to the community (Boone, 1997).

Consensus decision - "Occurs when all members of the group agree that a particular alternative is acceptable,

even though it is not necessarily the first choice of every member" (Yukl, 1998).

Cooperation - "Deliberate relations between otherwise autonomous organizations for the joint accomplishments of individual operating goals" (Schermerhorn, 1975).

Decision-making - Always referred to as a process, decision-making is "an orderly cycle of events in which a consistent quality or direction can be discerned (Boone, 1997).

Inter-organizational coordination (IOC) - A subset of IORs, IOC is "a structure or process of concerted decision making or action wherein the decisions or action of two or more organizations are made simultaneously in part or in whole in some deliberate degree of adjustment to each other" (Warren et al., 1974).

Inter-organizational relationships (IORs) - Broader defined relationships among organizations, including inter-organizational networks, dyadic linkages, inter-organizational coordination, and cooperation (Rogers & Whetten, 1982).

Leader - A person who guides or directs another or others toward the achievement of objectives. Persons who exercise their influence because of their mastery of either

content or process but who may also be chosen because of their personality or status (Houle, 1996; Yukl, 1998).

Organizational development (OD) - A system-wide effort applying behavioral science knowledge to the planned creation and reinforcement of organizational strategies, structures, and processes for improving an organization's effectiveness (Cummings & Worley, 1993).

Partnership - Tending to be formal, long-term, and goal oriented, partnerships are groups that work together collaboratively as units and whose goal structure transcends goals of individual participating agencies and groups (Charuhas, 1993; Kerns & Stanley, 1982).

Processual tasks - An orderly set of actions that adult educators execute in applying a concept to a particular situation and, when fully implemented, the task or outcome is predictable (Boone, 1997).

Programming - A systematic and proactive process designed to promote desirable changes in the behavior of adult learners and their environment (Boyle, 1981).

Stakeholder - A person or group having a vested interest in the organization's functioning and objectives (Cummings & Worley, 1993).

Strategy - A plan or action defining how an organization will use its resources to gain a competitive



advantage in the larger environment (Cummings & Worley, 1993).

Target population - A particular group, organization, community, or society toward which an innovation is directed (Rothman, Erlich, & Teresa, 1976).

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions appertained to this study:

(a) the guided focus interviews provided the necessary data to describe and analyze community participation in program decision-making processes and (b) research participants responded truthfully to interview questions and other inquiries.

#### Significance of the Study

The nature of qualitative research is it provides experiences and interpretations for others in similar types of experiences so they may examine and describe for themselves the meanings it provides. The findings may contribute to the literature by giving community-based organizations insights on (a) tailoring the process of establishing citizen participation strategies compatible to the goals and objectives of their community, and (b) combining service delivery and social action strategies

such as political activism to empower and effect change in communities.

As can be seen in the limitations of the study, participation is disproportionately low in low-income communities like Niger that face social problems that involve crime, drug traffic, and excessive levels of low educational attainment among members of its community. Studies of citizen participation in low-income African American communities and the process community-based organizations use to engage citizens in such communities have been limited. Studies on citizen participation and community-based organizations have been almost non-existent since the retrenchment in grassroots organizing efforts in the 1970s. In order to understand and impact the lack of participation and apathy that has a strong hold in low-income African American communities such as Niger, the literature must explore and examine the problems of participation experienced by the people in these communities.

#### Limitations of the Study

The sample was small and should be viewed as an intensive case study investigation. Limitations arise from the parameters in which the study was conducted. For example, although the study was approached looking at the

Northeast Central Niger community which covered roughly a 96-block area with an estimated total population of 6,185, participants were selected on whether they were involved with the Niger Community Center. Generally involvement with the NCC was within the context of the 240 households within the housing complex where the NCC was located and not the boarder Northeast Central community. Therefore, the context was an urban community of 240 households. Furthermore, participation averaged 3% in any given community activity. Thus, the participation level was not representative of the 240 households. Thus, a significant section of the community was not reached.

This urban community, in abject poverty, was predominately African American and had high unemployment, crime, drug trafficking, and limited educational achievements among its residents. Generalizability of findings is limited in such studies. Replication of qualitative studies is difficult to achieve because two situations are rarely the same.

The use of the CBP model was limited in this study because implicit to the CBP model are communities with intact groups, high educational attainment, and a willingness to participate and engage partnerships efforts. Transient housing populations prevented consistency in

intact group, educational attainment was low, and participation levels were low.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review was to provide a framework for citizen participation in community-based organizations. The framework also provided a historical foundation for the evolution of citizen participation in community-based organizations. This foundation put into context the role of citizen participation in community-based organizations.

Citizen participation lies at the very root of community-based organizations (Hillman & Seever, 1970). Through community-based organizations, "people who identify themselves as part of a [community] promote shared interests based primarily on their living or working" together. The process in which citizens engage to achieve their objectives is referred to as community organizing or community organization" (Fisher, 1994, p. xxii-xxiii).

Historically, community organizing efforts have fallen into three dominant approaches (see Table 2): social work, political activist, and neighborhood maintenance (Fisher, 1994). Each neighborhood organizing approach carries with it definite views of citizens and their participation. In the social work perspective, citizens are recipients of

Table 2

History of Neighborhood Organizing: Three Dominant Approaches

	<u>Social Work</u>	<u>Political Activist</u>	<u>Neighborhood Maintenance</u>
Concept of community	Social organism	Political unit Power base	Neighborhood residence
Problem condition	Social dis-organization Social conflict	Powerlessness Exploitation Neighborhood destruction	Threats to property values or neighborhood homogeneity Insufficient services
Organized group	Working and lower class	Working and lower class	Upper and middle class
Role of organizer	Professional social worker Enabler & advocate Coordinator & planner	Political activist Mobilizer Educator	Elected spokesperson Civic leader Interest-group broker
Role of neighborhood residents	Partners with professional Recipients of benefits	Fellow activists Indigenous leaders Mass support	Dues-paying members
Strategy	Seek consensus Pursue gradualist tactics Work with power structure Promote social reform	Engage in conflict Mediate Challenge power structure	Seek consensus Apply peer pressure Political lobbying Engage in legal action

Goals	Form group Achieve social integration Deliver services Bring about social justice	Obtain, maintain, or restructure power Develop alternative institutions	Improve property value Maintain neighborhood Deliver services
Examples	Social settlements Community centers Cincinnati Social Unit Plan Community chest United Community Defense Services Community Action Program United Way	Unemployed Councils Tenant organizations Alinsky programs Student Non- Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)	Neighborhood preservation associations Neighborhood civic clubs Property owners' association

Fisher, 1994.

benefits, therefore delivery of services is a high priority.

In the political activist perspective, citizens are potential indigenous leaders who need to obtain, maintain, or restructure power. Finally, in the neighborhood maintenance perspective, citizens are dues paying members whose priorities are improving property values and

maintaining the neighborhood. The direction and tactic of a community organizing approach depends on the type of neighborhood, the conditions it faces, its class and racial composition, the motives and politics of the organizers, and the national political-economic situation at the time (Fisher, 1994).

In this study, the organized groups were the working poor and welfare recipients. The problem condition in communities is almost always social disorganization, powerlessness, or both. If the organizer's role is social work, advocate, coordinator, or planner, then he or she will seek consensus and encourage residents to partner with professions and be a recipient of benefit. If the organizer's role is political activist and educator, then he or she will seek to challenge the power structure and to engage in conflict.

#### Evolution of Citizen Participation

Early community-based organizations were known as neighborhood organizations, which were an ongoing voluntary association in a territory, organized by residents, businesses, or both to act upon a variety of issues germane to the well-being of the local community (Miller, 1981). Settlement houses represent the best-known facet of the first neighborhood organization movement (Miller, 1981).



### The First Neighborhood Organization Movements

Invented in England, settlements came to the United States during the 1880s and 1890s, appearing in virtually every major American city by 1910 (Miller, 1990). The settlements strived to stimulate block-level grassroots participation to monitor the delivery of municipal services and to raise money to conduct a variety of economic, educational, and recreational activities (Dillick, 1953; Miller, 1981). Settlements from Toynbee Hall in England to Neighborhood Guilds and Hull Houses throughout the United States played positive roles in delivering needed services, raising public consciousness about slum conditions, and calling for collective action to ameliorate selected problems (Fisher, 1994). Although leaders in the settlements were committed to social reform, and they professed to work with, not for, the people, they were often criticized for being elitist and for being part of the problem, not the solution, for working-class people (Fisher, 1994). A community leader noted, "they are like the rest . . . a bunch of people planning for us and deciding what is good for us without consulting us or taking us into their confidence (as cited in Fisher, 1994, p. 12)." One African American commentator stated: "The influence of the settlements in our life is negligible. If they were to disappear overnight, the life, the growth, and development

of my people and their assimilation into American life would go on just the same" (as cited in Fisher, 1994, p.11).

Daniels, author of a 1920 book on neighborhood organizing and advocate of neighborhood democracy, explained:

The reason why most schemes of community organization are not accomplishing much is that they are attempts from without, and usually from above, in which the neighborhood itself has little or no part and to which therefore it fails to make any substantial response.

(as cited in Fisher, 1994, p. 12)

Despite criticism, other movements borrowed the settlement movement's technique of neighborhood organization and its method of education and integration of community forces (Dillick, 1953). Throughout the Depression, beginning in 1907, a number of movements arose to ameliorate the effects of unemployment, poverty, and homelessness (Dillick, 1953). In an effort to give their work greater legitimacy, in the years preceding World War I, movement leaders began to transform their vocation into the profession of "community organization." The coordination of activities within the various agencies together with the recognition of the "community" as an entity combined to create the community organization movement (Dillick, 1953; Fisher, 1994). In the process, the focus of neighborhood work shifted from social reform to the coordination of social

welfare agencies and activities. This shift led to programs not only devoid of citizen involvement but also without any interest in democratic participation (Fisher, 1994). The more community organizations emphasized "expertise," the more neighborhood residents were seen as passive "recipients" and "clients" of social services (Fisher, 1994, p. 15).

#### Community Center Movement

The effects of professionalization on social welfare neighborhood organization are especially vivid in the early history of the community center movement (Fisher, 1994). From 1907 to 1930, the community center movement went from grassroots organizing to community service (Fisher, 1990). This early community organization effort experienced four types of practice during this period: community development, professional planning, community mobilization, and community service. From 1907-1914, the first stage of the community center movement focused on community development. The stated goal of community centers in the initial phase was to assist community self-expression, which many times manifested into recreational activities. Rothman et al. (1976) and others referred to the goal of community self-expression as a "process goal," which seeks to foster collaboration, cooperation, and citizen participation in self-help neighborhood projects (p. 8). A process goal differs from a

"task goal," which seeks to complete a concrete task or to solve a community problem predetermined by community organizers and pertaining to the functioning of a community social system (Rothman et al, 1976). The espousal of process goals is evident in a written account by Childs as cited in Quandt (1970), the community organizer of the first social center (social center is a term used interchangeably with community centers) in Manhattan:

A community clubhouse and Acropolis in one; this is the Social Center. A community organized about some center for its own political and social welfare and expression; to peer into its own mind and life, to discover its own social needs and then to meet them, whether they concern the political field, the field of health, of recreation, of education, or of industry; such community organization is necessary if democratic society is to succeed and endure. There must be a unifying social bond of feeling, tradition, experience, belief and knowledge, a common meeting ground, spiritually and concretely speaking. But there must also be a community expression through activity, self-government and self-support. (p. 49)

Ideally, social centers were to be governed from the bottom up, combining dues from local residents and donations from upper-class financed groups to cover expenses. But, as

in the settlements, although organizers voiced process goals, they never adopted the neutral role Childs suggested. The initial ideal of having professionals serve as advisors to residents degenerated into an elitist relationship where social welfare professionals made all important decisions without the benefit of community people (Fisher, 1994). Thus, from the outset, citizen involvement was limited to membership in clubs and participation in center activities, and their role remained largely advisory and token (Fisher, 1994).

Strong proponents of the neighborhood ideal and of decentralization, community center organizers felt their goal of promoting community solidarity could be achieved most simply at the neighborhood level. Thus, after 1910, the public school became the natural site for establishing community organization in a neighborhood (Betten & Austin, 1990). Administratively and physically decentralized, each community center administered its own programs, and all activities were based in a local public school and oriented to its surrounding neighbors (Betten & Austin, 1990). The idea of school centers weaned after some groups voiced strong opposition to extending the educational system and political parties felt threatened by the civic activity in the community center (Dillick, 1953).

From 1915-1917, the second stage in the community center movement focused on professional planning. The shift to professional planning occurred largely because the initial effort of organizers could not or did not seek to attract citizen participation at the decision-making level (Betten & Austin, 1990). "They shifted from seeking to work *with* to working *for* the neighborhood residents" (Betten & Austin, 1990, p. 85). Community centers and community work became increasingly professionalized after 1915. With the formation in 1916 of the National Community Center Association (NCCA), and with the multifaceted efforts of the People's Institute in the Gramercy district of Manhattan, organizers emphasized the need to coordinate social service resources, improve communication between existing services and potential consumers, and train professional community workers (Betten & Austin, 1990). The earlier objective of neighborhood self-expression was superseded by concern for community planning and professionalization. Task goals became more important than did process goals. Citizen participation remained an ideal. The importance of service delivery and professional coordination of activities is illustrated in the description of the Community Clearing House, which is an effort designed by the People's Institute to support community center activities in the Gramercy neighborhood:

Through this "neighborhood gateway to all the city's resources of helpfulness" any man, woman, or child, rich or poor, American or alien, can be placed in immediate touch with the service which he needs. He can discuss his trouble, register his complaints at the effective point, and enlist himself as a non-paid civil servant, helping his nearby or remote neighbors. (as cited in Betten & Austin, 1990, p. 81)

During this period, conflict was growing between advocates of privately initiated and funded community centers and between those who demanded activities be controlled by the local government. Many "felt that more public supervision of community was necessary in view of the rapidly increasing number of centers" (Fisher, 1990, p. 83). Despite the decision in favor of public support at the NCCA conference and the expanding role of local governments, centers remained largely the product of voluntary organizations. By 1917, no longer referred to as social centers, community centers existed throughout the nation (Fisher, 1990).

From 1918-1919, the third stage in the community center movement focused on community mobilization. The entry of the United States into World War I introduced external factors into the community center movement that legitimized certain trends begun in 1915 and altered the direction of others. In

late 1917, in support of domestic mobilization efforts, the Federal Council of National Defense and local subsidiaries at the state and local levels organized a highly bureaucratic and centralized program to "nationalize neighborhoods" (Betten & Austin, 1990, p. 85). The community center movement supported this program, viewing it as an official endorsement of the community center idea. Neighborhood issues were de-emphasized as the more pressing national problem of war mobilization became paramount. Process goals, although designed to serve predetermined task goals, gained importance as the war mobilization efforts sought to unite citizens and get them involved (Betten & Austin, 1990). Recreation became less important, and patriotic propaganda dominated all activities. Community centers became the sites for coordinating war-related activities, such as Americanization, Red Cross relief, Liberty Loan drives, soldiers' aid work, and food and nutrition programs (Fisher, 1981). National, state, and city councils of defense provided personnel, direction, and supervision of neighborhood community center activities, aiding in the move to public supervision of centers during the war. Although self-support was encouraged, public funding for community centers achieved wider acceptance and government control increased. Steiner, author of the first major study of community organization, recalled, "the whole



'community movement' achieved widespread recognition and prestige during the war" (as cited in Fisher, 1981, p. 45).

From 1920-1930, the fourth and final shift in the community center movement focused on community service. Voluntary organizations returned to more private and charitable activities after the war. The Council of National Defense bureaucracy was dismantled. Although agencies faced declining funds, the community center movement continued to expand, and the operation of centers in cities more than doubled (Fisher, 1981). Organizers now viewed "urban disorganization" as the central problem in communities, as opposed to the prevention of pauperism (Dillick, 1953, p. 93). Urban disorganization was a catchall term for the negative social products of urban-industrial growth. Most notable problems were rapid mobility, unassimilated immigrants, superficiality of personal contacts, the decline in importance of neighborhood-based activities and population growth (Fisher, 1981). Although organizers entered the community with specific goals in mind, they inevitably returned to process goals, "not to encourage self-help but actually to integrate, coordinate, and adjust groups of people 'in the interest of efficiency and unity of action'" (Fisher, 1981, pp. 46-49). In the public's mind, program offerings of community centers became synonymous with recreational programs (Fisher, 1994). Other adult

educational activities also existed, including community libraries, vocational bureaus, and neighborhood forums (Dillick, 1953). Eventually, in the 1920s, local officials came to accept community centers as part of city government's responsibility to supply social and recreational services. A highly centralized and bureaucratic structure run by professionals appointed by city politicians was implemented. Notably, the role of private groups declined as local governments expanded their control and support of centers. According to Fisher (1994), "Neighborhood service programs devoid of citizen participation and administered by professionals became the accepted norm" (p. 22). As the community center movement began to decline, "the move toward coordination of social agencies continued through 1929 . . ." (Dillick, 1953, p. 91) and into the period of the Great Depression.

#### Social Problems and Growth of the United Way

The growth of councils and United Fund agencies signaled a need by neighborhood organizations to coordinate the problem conditions of unemployment and family breakdown brought on by the Great Depression in 1929 (Dillick, 1953). Juvenile delinquency was an outgrowth of unemployment and family breakdown and led to an urgent social problem. Publicity of the juvenile delinquency problems led to the organization of many new councils (a coordination of

agencies), with a major emphasis on delinquency prevention. Virtually all the councils actively engaged in measures to improve recreational facilities, and eventually their emphasis shifted from delinquency prevention to an interest in all children. Some, with the help of volunteer leadership, were successful in getting a community center for the neighborhood through the utilization of an existing building or through the construction of a new building (Dillick, 1953).

In the years 1935-1936, after the relief crisis of the Great Depression, councils devoted much less attention to offering direct services but rather sought to stimulate existing agencies to offer the direct services the councils felt were needed. During this period, councils were instrumental in organizing the Community Chest or United Fund. Today, this powerful federation of agencies is known as the United Way. A fund was established to relieve donors of the difficult task of dividing up their gifts among charities and to perform auditing and monitoring functions to assure donors their money supported reputable organizations (Milofsky, 1988). Established in earlier decades, accelerating urbanization and America's entrance into World War II increased the pace of the United Fund as "some three hundred American communities organized war

chests to cope with the mounting flood of appeals for help from national and local agencies" (Lubove, 1965, p. 89).

Community-based Organization Partnership

World War II stimulated the need for social planning, "brought many individuals into community activity[,] and led many organizations for the first time to work together for the common welfare" (Dillick, 1953, p. 124). During wartime, with large-scale shifts of populations to industrial cities and new war production centers to undertake the thousands of new jobs that had to be done, "citizen participation to meet [those] needs reached a new high" (Dillick, 1953, p. 124). Special services, such as child care for working mothers, recreational opportunities, emergency housing, vocational counseling, and job training, were needed to help individuals and families through those dislocations. Both civic and community organizations for education, health, welfare, and recreation were challenged to serve as conduits for services and citizen participation.

The high degree of citizen participation in social planning led to the sentiment that "health and welfare planning was becoming more of a citizens' movement and less a mere federation of operating agencies" (Dillick, 1953, p. 125). War efforts spurred the growth of community work efforts and encouraged public-private partnerships between the government and the nonprofit sector. This trend became

increasingly evident as the government emerged as "the largest source of financial support for charitable tax-exempt organizations in the fields of culture, education, health, and social welfare agencies" (P. D. Hall, 1992, pp. 64-65). As federal funding of charitable tax-exempt institutions grew in the 1960s, through the development of federal programs, the growth of the American welfare state encouraged the development of a private infrastructure to deliver cultural, educational, health, and social services. Closer ties between the government and the nonprofit sector ensued. As the government gained acceptance from the business community, it repositioned to increase its central role in the planning of national economic, social, and political stabilization, planning functions previous assumed by a coalition of private groups (P. D. Hall, 1992).

#### Governmental Programs and Grassroots Political Action

Although major federal programs in housing, redevelopment, urban renewal, poverty, and civil rights during the 1950s and early 1960s signaled the broadening of community work efforts, evidence of social problems persisted (Brager, Specht, & Terezyner, 1987; Fisher, 1994). In the 1950s, evidence mounted that major federal programs, such as the redevelopment and urban renewal programs begun in the late 1940s, created newer and greater social problems. The programs of the New Deal (War on Poverty)

aided the stable working class but failed to deal with major social problems, such as poverty, dependency, racial discrimination, and unemployment. Many blamed the electoral system of government for the use of exclusionary practices that promoted elitism and authority increasingly centralized in the hands of a few.

In the decades to follow, the 1960s and 1970s, a heightened emphasis was placed on self-help and citizen participation through grassroots organizing in response to the civil rights movement (which became a congeries of movements in the 1970s). Beginning in the early 1960s, neighborhood organizing efforts from groups, such as the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee and Students for a Democratic Society, created a new style of community organizing (Fisher, 1994). "Each emphasized the value of radical, community-based organizing and each focused its attention on developing new forms of grassroots political action based on the concept of participatory democracy." The widespread belief in participatory democracy that bloomed in the late 1960s, prospered in the 1970s, and continues today, owes a good deal, directly and indirectly, to the community organizing efforts of student radicals in the years 1961-65 (Fisher, 1994).

### Social Change Experiments at the Grassroots Level

As the tide of social disorder in cities intensified through social protest, private nonprofit foundations and the federal government willingly initiated "social change experiments that rejected traditional methods and encouraged grassroots citizen action" (Fisher, 1994, p. 120). This development spurred radical new ideas in the 1960s about organizing low-income people (Brager, 1987).

In 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act introduced an advanced notion requiring federally supported agencies to assure maximum feasible participation of the poor in community action (Brager, 1987; Rothman, 1974). Through this legislation, the Community Action Program (CAP) "established Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to sponsor neighborhood self-help projects, promote social action, mobilize local resources, and coordinate local programs" (Fisher, 1994, p. 120). Radical claims arose from professional reformers and political officials "that the CAP was not intended to forestall social protest but rather to give it direction and organization" (Fisher, 1994, p. 120). African American and other activists viewed "CAP as a grassroots organizing device that could be used to organize and advance the poor . . . far beyond what the federal government planned" (Fisher, 1994, p. 123). Fights for citizen participation and neighborhood organizing among local agency officials,

political leaders, and local citizens dominated the first years of the program. CAA funding, personnel, public housing, service delivery, or all four became areas of great contention between local citizens and the local establishment.

Before the Economic Opportunity Act had an opportunity to implement fully the involvement of the poor, the Model Cities Program was adopted in the 1966 Demonstration Cities Metropolitan Redevelopment Act, which introduced newer concepts of citizen participation (Brager, 1987). The Model Neighborhood Area Scheme, which required sharing of power among city hall, residents, and agencies was challenged by even newer ideas about community control, such as "Black Capitalism," Community Development Corporations, and "alternative institutions" (Brager, 1987, p. 10).

The expanded participation of African Americans and the poor in CAAs, the program that most emphasized the ideals of maximum feasible participation, "pushed the more politicized CAAs beyond an emphasis on child and social welfare programs to neighborhood advocacy, organizing and development" (Fisher, 1994, p. 125). Most threatening to local officials were the advocacy and social action projects. "Furor between local officials and neighborhood representatives . . . between 1964 and 1967 obscured a widespread inability of the CAP to organize poor neighborhoods effectively" (Fisher,



1994, p. 126). Between 1966 and 1968, at the peak of protest activity, national and local officials allied to defuse CAP. The Green Amendment passed by Congress in 1967 cut the heart out of CAA militancy and rerouted all grants-in-aid through local officials, instead of directly allocating funds to local community organizations.

#### Retrenchment in Grassroots Organizing Efforts

The struggles of grassroots citizen action programs throughout the 1960s set the stage for the development of the statutory programs of the 1970s, leading to a retrenchment in grassroots organizing efforts. New Federalism pushed the government out of the grant-in-aid business and into giving cities and states block grants. The program was referred to as revenue sharing and continued under the pretext of citizen participation, but the participatory component was always token, ad hoc, and purely advisory (Fisher, 1994, p. 129). These developments manifested into various pieces of social legislation in the 1970s that set legal requirements for citizen participation in planning and implementation, with programs such as the Title XX Amendments to the Social Security Act, 1975, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973, and the Amendments to the Older Americans Act, 1973. Three characteristics of community organization practice became important to the government: (a) revenue sharing programs

that focused on certain population groups; (b) relationships among governmental units arising from legal and political complexities of interactions when governmental and voluntary agencies involved themselves in program planning and implementation; and (c) technical facets of practice involving money, organization size, personnel, and clients (Brager, 1987).

The statutory programs of the 1970s gave primacy to the values of citizen participation, which were developed in an institutional context, and program coordination in services for the aged, community mental health, education, housing, and medical care. The rise in statutory programs led to expanded bureaucracy and a retrenchment in grassroots organizing efforts. Statutory programs increased "the delivery of publicly sponsored services to large numbers of people along with the . . . complexity of all service provision" (Brager, 1987, p. 26). Barriers associated with faceless organizational hierarchy and inflexible procedures posed serious difficulty for persons in need of assistance with problems of living. Personal responses were minimized, and services were often routinized. The retrenchment in grassroots organizing in the 1970s motivated many practitioners to seek out ways by which they could influence social agencies from within and in concert with client groups (Brager, 1987). This development precipitated the

rise in interest among practitioners in organizational change strategies and techniques, as they relate to programs and policies.

#### Reemergence of Citizen Action and Community Organization

In the 1980s, although neo-conservative policies put community organizing in an ambiguous situation, volunteer citizen action and community organizations took on new meaning and reemerged as dominant strategies for addressing social problems (Fisher, 1994). Reagonomics ushered in social legislation focused on anti-welfarism. With large cutbacks in federal financial support, social service programs were combined into block grants given to states (Brager, 1987). The private nonprofit sector's increased social responsibility was to offset the federal government's move to reduce significantly the social welfare spending. The Reagan administration became the embodiment of the conservative belief that "government is best which governs least" (Brager, 1987, pp. 12-14).

With attempts to dismantle the public sector through privatization, "load shedding" of public responsibility, the almost all-public activity of citizen action became more difficult. Starr (1987), in a critique of privatization, stated that "the removal of decisions from the public arena diminishes the individual incentive for community participation" (p. 11). Henig (1986) noted privatization

shifts "key decisions to an arena in which market power is the dominant currency, and the poor are well aware that this is an arena in which their victories come very hard indeed" (p. 233). The voluntary sector expanded as public social services accompanying the policies of privatization decreased. Community organizations, such as neighborhood community centers, housing and community development projects, social service agencies, health care institutions, and cultural and art societies, were increasingly assuming functions previously shouldered by the government. Wolch (1990) noted, "policies designed to shift responsibilities to voluntary groups led to an explosion in the aggregate size of the voluntary sector" (p. 209). Not only did the numbers increase but also, in the absence of social programs and policies, communities with few resources were burdened. Simultaneously, citizen initiatives, some from those who had been involved since the 1960s and before, took center stage to address massive problems and, in many cases, with scant resources (Fisher, 1994).

With increased numbers of nonprofits, broader public participation, and scarcity of resources, the volunteer sector faces vast changes in how it functions as an entity (P. D. Hall, 1992). Management, leadership, and governance rank high on the list of concerns (Young, Hollister, Hodgkinson, & Associates, 1993). Many community-based

nonprofit organizations have yet to take "the implementation of sophisticated management and governance practices completely to heart" (p. 7).

### Summary

Citizen participation in community-based organizations has moved back and forth from a central role to a peripheral role. When citizen participation has been at the center of organizational activities, it has followed in the tradition of political activist, where citizens are potential indigenous leaders who need to obtain, maintain, or restructure power. When citizen participation is at the peripheral edges of an organization's activities, it has followed in the tradition of social work, where citizens are recipients of benefits, they partner with professionals, and service delivery is a high priority. In the neighborhood maintenance tradition, citizens are dues paying members. Their priority is to improve property values and maintain their neighborhood.

World War II spurred the growth of citizen participation and community work efforts. Major federal programs in housing, redevelopment, urban renewal, poverty, and civil rights during the 1950s and early 1960s signaled a further broadening of community work efforts. In the decades to follow, the 1960s and 1970s, a heightened emphasis was placed on self-help and citizen participation through

grassroots organizing in response to the civil rights movement. The value of radical, community-based organizing efforts was a focus. As the tide of social disorder intensified through social protest, both nonprofit and federal agencies willingly initiated and encouraged grassroots citizen action. Grassroots citizen action through ideas, such as the Economic Opportunity Act, assuring maximum feasible participation of the poor in community action, caused great contention among local agency officials, political leaders, and local citizens because grant-in aid was routed through local citizens. In 1967, national and local officials allied to defuse the program. The Green Amendment passed by Congress cut the heart out of the program and rerouted all grants-in-aid through local officials.

The struggles of grassroots citizen action programs throughout the 1960s set the stage for the development of the statutory programs of the 1970s, leading to a retrenchment in grassroots organizing efforts. Grant-in-aid ended and the cities and states received block grants from the government. Programs continued under the pretext of citizen participation, but the participatory component was always token, ad hoc, and purely advisory.

## Introduction to Community-based Programming

A historical perspective to the changing role of citizen participation in community-based organizations has been provided. In this study, the concepts, principles, and methods of Boone's (1997) community-based programming process was used as a framework for describing and analyzing how a community-based organization involves citizens in the program decision-making process. Boone's conceptual approach is based on systems thinking, which is concerned with integrating the parts of the organizational system so that they function together. To understand the practice of citizen participation in the program decision-making process from this perspective, one must first understand the organization's sub-systems. The five organizational sub-systems are (a) the organization's mission and environment, (b) environmental scanning, (c) identification of target publics and stakeholders, (d) development and implementation of the plan of action, and (e) evaluation and accountability.

### CBP Model

Rapid growth in our society, economy, and workforce pose significant challenges to communities in pinpointing answers to problems. As already discussed, early scholars in the community organizing movement emphasized the role of

community-based organizations as a resource for citizen participation.

According to Boone (1997), community-based programming (CBP) is defined as

a systematic and rational process in which the . . . [community-based organization] functions as a leader and catalyst in effecting collaboration among the people, their leaders, and community-based agencies and organizations in identifying, confronting, and resolving critical community issues that are adversely affecting—or have the potential to adversely affect—the community, its people, and their quality of life.

(p. vii)

The unique feature of community-based programming is its extension of the organization outward to become an active participant in its community. Community-based programming extends the democratic and educational mission of the organization to those publics most in need of its aid and activates the concept of self-help and cooperation among community agencies and organizations around identified common needs.

A series of 15 interconnected processual tasks (see Appendix A) give form to the community-based programming process and, when fully implemented, result in the following outcomes:



1. the identification of and movement toward the resolution of major issues that are important to the community and its people;

2. the creation of a unified force that transcends the forces of fragmentation in the community and cultivates a spirit of teamwork, resolution, and optimism within the people, their leaders, and stakeholder groups and organization;

3. the acceptance of high community expectations by all parties as a result of working together and developing a broad-based, community system to deal with current and future issues of wide public concern; and

4. the emergence and development of broadly representative leaders.

The community-based programming process encompasses five stages (Boone, Pettitt, & Weiseman, 1998):

*Stage one* - preparing and positioning the organization for community-based programming: processual tasks 1, 2, and 3;

*Stage two* - environmental scanning: processual task 4, 5, and 6;

*Stage three* - studying, analyzing, and mapping the service area publics and forming the coalition: processual task 7, 8, 9, and 10;

*Stage four* - developing and implementing the plan of action: processual tasks 11 and 12;

*Stage five* - assessing and reporting outcomes: processual task 13, 14, and 15.

In processual tasks 1, 2 and 3, the organization reaches agreement on its unique functional definition of community-based programming, taking into consideration the social, economic, technological, and political forces that shape the institution and its community. The organization examines and, if necessary, reinterprets its mission, philosophy, goals, organizational structure, and mode of operation to emphasize community-based programming and repositions itself to fulfill its potential as a leader and catalyst in its community. The involvement, understanding, and commitment of the governing board, staff, community leaders, and stakeholders and the guidance and facilitation of the process through a management team are crucial to the effective implementation of the community-based programming process.

In processual tasks 4, 5, and 6, the organization engages in environmental scanning to stay informed on current and anticipated community issues that impact the quality of life of the people in the organization's service area. Ideally, with a permanent and active team of 12-15 community leaders willing to commit to and work with the

organization, they must scan the social, cultural, economic, technological, and political environments to produce regular reports for the organization and the community. The chief executive officer plays the leading role in creating a climate of guidance and support for the team to become well informed about the state of affairs in the community. Once the committee has identified the major issues affecting the community, a consensus on the importance of the issues should follow and, then, a ranked issue becomes the community's public agenda. Throughout the process, traditional sources of influence, such as the governing board, should be kept informed and viewed as sources of verification and legitimization.

In processual tasks 7, 8, 9, and 10, the organization studies, analyzes, and maps both the targeted population affected by the identified issues and the stakeholder groups that have a vested interest in the issue so that it may satisfy the need to use appropriate conceptual tools and strategies for developing effective programs. Using effective processes or techniques, such as a leadership identification approach (e. g., reputational, positional, and the like), the organization identifies the formal and informal leaders of both the target group and the stakeholder groups. To gain consensus between the leaders of the targeted population and the stakeholder groups on the

importance of an issue, the organization initiates dialogue to develop an awareness and understanding of the issue and how it affects the quality of life for the targeted population. The outcome of this process is a commitment from the leaders to engage collaboratively in a coalition effort to confront and resolve the issue. With guidance from the organization, the coalition's first task is to study, analyze, and refine the issue further so that it can turn its attention to the strategies needed for a resolution.

In processual tasks 11 and 12, the coalition translates goals and strategies into a plan of action that then describes the actions the coalition will take to resolve the issues. The plan of action serves as a blueprint to guide the coalition's present and future efforts. The organization is responsible for guiding the coalition's efforts and for providing consultation and technical assistance, but the coalition is responsible for implementing the actual plan of action. Because feedback obtained from monitoring ongoing implementation activities helps the coalition make informed modifications to the plan of action, the organization must help the coalition develop and implement a plan for monitoring its actions. Equally important is for the organization to assist the coalition in developing and implementing a plan to keep the target public, stakeholders, and others fully informed about the coalition's efforts.

In processual tasks 13, 14, and 15, providing leadership, the organization helps the coalition determine standards by which outcomes will be assessed to provide an objective measure of the progress made toward resolving the issue and the cost-effectiveness of the plan of action. Opportunities for learners and providers in the program to be informed about results achieved are essential at this stage. The interactive nature of the community-based programming process encourages an ongoing exchange of information for inspiration, fact-finding, problem solving, and decision-making by the organization, targeted population, and stakeholder groups. Outcomes and lessons learned provide valuable information for the coalition in developing new strategies for any issue that remains unresolved.

Boone (1997) contended that the community-based programming process aids the organization in accomplishing its mission. Although the scope of research of Boone's CBP process has focused primarily on its use as a process for community colleges, "the concepts, principles, and methods presented are applicable to all adult education organizations and community-based institutions that have an interest in, and commitment to, resolving issues and empowering people" (Boone, 1997, p. vii). In this dissertation, I have used organization in place of community

college because the focus of this research was community organizations.

The Niger Community Center's philosophy was that of being a community-based organization, interested in and committed to resolving issues in the community and empowering people. The focus of this study was on the processes the Niger Community Center used to elicit community participation in its program decision-making processes that affected the community's well being.

#### Community-based Organization and the CBP Process

As I did preliminary work in the community to help frame and design the research study, I found that I needed to examine some facets of the CBP process from a broader perspective, although the study did not replicate the CBP process exactly. Recurring ideas, such as mission, networks, and citizen participation, were areas that I needed to understand in greater depth, as they related to the CBP process and community-based organizations.

#### Characteristics of CBOs and Mission

Pappas (1996) set the stage for understanding the structure of the community-based organization in his discussion of reengineering the nonprofit organization. Many community-based organizations are synonymous with nonprofit organizations. Understanding the structure of community-based organizations is important to understanding their

mission and purpose. Community-based organizations and nonprofit organizations are used interchangeably in this research study, and they have the following distinguishable characteristics:

1. They are legally constituted entities with their own IRS classification and bylaws, typically a 501(c)3 organization.

2. They are private, as opposed to governmental.

3. They must put profit back into the organization to support its fundamental mission.

4. They are self-governing, with a board of directors or trustees who have fiduciary and legal responsibility for the entity.

5. They are distinguished by their dependence on the goodwill and contributed services provided by volunteers.

6. They encourage individual initiative for the public good, as opposed to individual and collective action for the private good or profit motive (Pappas, 1996).

The board of directors sets policy, identifies priorities, and establishes policy directives so that the core staff can manage the daily activities of the organization (Smith et al., 1994). The board is an important source of confirmation and legitimization for the organization. Daily policy execution resides with the CEO (Burgess Soltz, 1997). Equally important, through leadership

and attention to culture, the CEO brings forth the vision, but, more concretely, the mission.

The mission of the community-based organization is the core of the vision and "describes the purpose of the organization in terms of the type of activities to be performed for constituents" (Yukl, 1998, p. 443). The mission centers around the concept of public service, in that it identifies "the problem or condition to be changed . . . the beneficiaries of change . . . the nature of the change to be sought . . . and the means or methods of change" (Howe, 1997, p. 56). Also, the mission provides the essential context for major decisions in answer to certain questions. Why should this organization exist? What is our vision for its mission? What are the most cherished beliefs and principles (values) that guide this organization? (Howe, 1997; Stoesz, 1994).

The mission is "the core understanding around which can be built a clear, unambiguous articulation of purposes, programs, and priorities" (Howe, 1991, p. 12). A well-defined mission gives objectives with clear-cut implications for the work of all members (Drucker, 1998), providing a path for everyone to contribute to and own the mission. The objectives specify what to do, when to do it, and who does it.



Strategies are the plans or blueprints that carry out the mission and accomplish the objectives (Yukl, 1998). Strategies spell out how the organization will achieve its purpose. "Knowing where the organization wants to go, the strategy asks: What is the best way to get there from here? How fast shall we try to go? How much are we willing to risk?" (Mason, 1996, p. 170).

Building commitment to the organization's objectives and empowering followers to accomplish these objectives by appealing to ideals and moral values through direct leader influence is the process of transformational leadership. "Leaders directly influence subordinates by inspiring them to be more committed, building their self-confidence, and empowering them to take more initiative in carrying out the work" (Yukl, 1998, pp. 328-329). The followers' feelings of trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader are closely related to the effectiveness of the leader's influence. Professionals and community workers, often the key people in nonprofits, "usually derive their primary values and expectations from their commitment to a cause or to their profession rather than to their organization" (Mason, 1996, p. 35). They "often rank expressive satisfaction above their employer's instrumental goals" (p. 35). Transformational leaders can influence professionals to make self-sacrifices and put the organization's needs above

their self-interest. According to Bass (1985), leaders transform and motivate followers by (a) making them more aware of the importance of task outcomes; (b) inducing them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization or team; and (c) activating their higher-order needs; that is, need for esteem, achievement, affiliation, and the like.

Transformational leaders indirectly influence the followers' motivation and behavior by changing or strengthening the organization's culture. Organizational culture "is patterns of basic assumptions, values, norms, and artifacts shared by organization members" (Cummings & Worley, 1997, p. 479), which gives the organization meaning. These shared meanings give members organizational behavioral rules, signaling them how work is to be done and evaluated and how staff are to relate to each other and to significant others, such as clients, stakeholders, and supporters. "Culture is to an organization of people what personality is to one person" (Mason, 1996, p. 103). Although it can be changed, culture is no easier to change than a person's personality.

Understanding culture and influencing it requires a leader's considerable insight and skill. Leaders influence and shape culture by their decisions and actions. According to Schein (1992), the five primary mechanisms that offer the

greatest potential for leaders to embed and reinforce aspects of culture are (a) what things are attended to by the leader, (b) ways of reacting to crises, (c) role modeling, (d) criteria for allocating rewards, and (e) criteria for selection and dismissal. Schein's secondary mechanisms of organizational structure and management processes reinforce the primary mechanisms of values and objectives. These five secondary mechanisms are (a) design of management systems and procedures; (b) design of organization structure; (c) design of facilities; (d) stories, legends, and myths; and (e) formal statements.

#### Networks

According to Pappas (1996), systems theory provides powerful insight into understanding the interrelationships that exist among and between people within an organization. Systems theory also provides insight into the multiple interrelationships one organization has with others within society as a whole. As the organization tries to adapt to its environment to achieve its organizational objectives and to maximize goal attainment, varying degrees of inter-organizational relationships may form among individuals, groups, organizations, or all three. The organizational objectives of a nonprofit community-based organization are generally aimed at some issue in a community. Working in a community requires staff and stakeholders to identify and

delineate groups to be served through a process of mapping and requires knowledge of the community's environments.

Organizations form inter-organizational relationships as they adapt to their environment to achieve organizational objectives and to maximize goal attainment. IORs range from ad hoc and exchanges to formalized and mandated relationships (R. H. Hall, 1996). IORs take the form of ad hoc relationships, where activities are set into motion by a single organization that galvanizes support from other organizations around its own objectives (Warren et al., 1974).

IORs often involve an exchange relationship, which is "any voluntary activity between two organizations which has consequences, actual or anticipated, for the realization of their respective goals or objectives" (Levine & White, 1961, p. 583). Monetary transactions and client referrals may result from this form of bargaining among organizations. If resource exchange continues, formalization is likely to occur, which is the degree to which the interdependency among the organizations is given official sanction by those involved through a written agreement or a legally binding contract (Van de Ven & Walker, 1984). "While many inter-organizational relationships consist of formal structured arrangements for coordination, an even larger amount of coordination occurs in the form of short-term ad hoc efforts

at coordination between pairs of organizations" (Van de Ven & Walker, 1984, p. 598).

The formal structure of inter-organizational networks is more inclusive than short-term ad hoc efforts at coordination among organizations. Formal structures represent "the total pattern of interrelationships among a cluster of organizations that are meshed together in a social system to attain collective and self-interest goals or to resolve specific problems in a target population" (Van de Ven & Ferry, 1980, p. 299).

On the other hand, short-term ad hoc coordination efforts take two forms: "one is the widely recognized coalition, where organizations pool a share of their resources to bring about some mutually desired outcome," such as a new program (Van de Ven & Walker, 1984, p.598). The other is not as widely recognized but, according to Van de Ven & Walker (1984), is important because of not only its pervasiveness but also its representation of the embryonic stage of IORs. This form focuses on the activities set in motion by a single organization that has a particular objective for which it must gain support, cooperation, or resources from a number of other organizations. Here, the agent of an organization mobilizes other pertinent organizations, or parts of them, around its own objectives. In other words, the organizational agent is an entrepreneur

who gathers together the resources and forges the ad hoc relationships needed to enable his or her organization to pursue its own objectives (Van de Ven & Walker, 1984, p. 598). This form of IOR has frequently been overlooked because of an implicit equating of coordination with structure coordination alone (Warren et al., 1974). Coordination of this type in organizations occurs much of the time. An inter-organizational network represents the key type of system to meet complex environmental requirements that defy straightforward analysis, solutions, or both (Chishom, 1998).

Mapping is a process used for the purpose of identifying and delineating social groupings to be served by an organization. There are various conceptual approaches to mapping an organization's target group. One approach that may be useful in mapping a community to learn about its networks is social stratification. Bertrand (1967) identified and defined seven social phenomena that collectively lead to the grouping of people in a larger social context:

1. Income level: per capita annual income.
2. Occupation: an individual's means of livelihood as well as the identification of occupational groupings.

3. Education: various levels of education represented in the system, the average level of education, the level most represented, and the type of education represented.

4. Genealogy: familial linkage.

5. Reputation: system members' prestige, power, leadership, and friendliness among others as perceived by the system.

6. Aspiration: system members' self-concept, self-motivation, and goals.

7. Historical development: ascertaining the origin of some of the system's knowledge and beliefs and better understanding the system's culture.

To respond to the needs of the community, both staff and stakeholders must study their community to increase knowledge of sociocultural, economic, technological, and political environments (Boone, 1997).

#### Citizen Participation

Ideally, when undertaking major planning in a community-based organization, "the first requirement is to stipulate the players and their respective roles, as well as the degree to which the parties will get involved in actual decision making as opposed to providing insight/input, serving in an advisory capacity" (Pappas, 1997, p.20). People need to be able to participate appropriately, as defined by the process. Planning that brings all of the

players (see Table 3) to the table does not happen nearly enough and is especially needed in low-income communities where people are challenged to overcome adversities, such as drug trafficking, crime, and poverty.

Table 3

Community-based Organizations

<b>Players</b>	<b>Roles</b>
Board of directors	Trustees: approve major recommendations
Executive director	Chief Executive and Planning Officer
Senior staff	Guardians of strategic plans, supporters of organizational efforts
Inter-organizational relationships, volunteers, community/ residents, civic organizations, other stakeholders	Participate appropriately, as defined by organization & interested parties

Note. Adapted from Papas, 1996.

Community provides the context whereby citizens and groups can "give expression to . . . values through the development of informal and formal organizations to solve common problems" (Smith & Lipsky, 1993, p. 23). Community is the place in which organizing occurs and, in this sense, refers to social integration: "the issues and bonds that link people together" (Rubin & Rubin, 1992, p. 82). Social integration may be easier for an affluent community to achieve because its integration is based on common life



circumstances, as defined by income and ownership of property, or it may be easier for people who share a common heritage, whether ethnic, national, cultural, or religious, to achieve. A low-income community adversely affected by drugs and crime may have common problems and shared interests but is not yet linked together because of the lack of awareness.

Poor communities, especially urban cities where social problems have worsened, must be encouraged by organizers and advocates to develop social networks of shared relationships to increase community involvement and participation (Rubin & Rubin, 1992). In poor communities and urban cities, some social problems are new: crack cocaine drug use and escalated violence that evokes fear in residents, restricts their free movement, and creates tighter controls and authoritarian tactics on the community by local officials (Fisher, 1994). Other conditions are old and have expanded in scope and magnitude, such as poverty and ethnic and racial tension (Fisher, 1994). These conditions pose serious challenges to organizers and advocates. Networks of shared relationships through which help and information flow on a specific issue provide support to the aged, children, and adults of all socioeconomic backgrounds for a wide array of concerns.

Economically marginal communities adversely affected by problems, such as drug trafficking, crime, and poverty, are "communities most in need of collective actions to combat shared problems" (Rubin & Rubin, 1992, p. 90) and are the most difficult but not impossible to organize. These individuals must be made aware of the commonalties that exist among them and be encouraged to develop social networks where people integrate based on shared interests and are stronger for doing so. Individuals who face daily poverty, violence, crime, and drugs and are cut off from the society outside their communities often find their problems are complex and require knowledge they generally lack. Against whom do you take action when you see guns and drugs saturating your community and destroying entire families at an alarming rate? Developing social networks is a way to combat helplessness and dis-empowerment.

Social networks resemble cliques in transitory neighborhoods where "the population turnover is so great or the institutional fabric so divided that there is very little collective effort" (Warren & Warren, 1977, p. 106). The term transitory neighborhood implies a situation in-between. In this type of community, small clusters of people who have been in the community for a long time belong to the same group and leave little room, if any, for newcomers. In the transitory neighborhood, no institutions exist for

dealing with the turnover. Newcomers have a low degree of participation, and old timers have a high degree of participation. "The result is a great deal of dissensus and lack of cohesion in the neighborhood" (Warren & Warren, 1977, p. 106). Cliques and small groups may claim to represent the total community. In reality, little pockets of intense interaction are likely to emerge from cliques but, on the whole, the level of interaction is not significant.

The expression of values through the development of social networks and other community action can be more effective through organizations, whether an informal neighborhood association, or a formal nonprofit community center. Organizations strengthen social networks and community action because they can create power through resources, provide continuity through sustained action over a period of time, garner expertise, and react quickly to a problem in a neighborhood that would otherwise be ignored without an existing organization (Rubin & Rubin, 1992).

"Neighborhood organizations have as much potential to heighten awareness and promote change as they do to maintain the status quo" (Fisher, 1994, p. xxii). Much depends on the type of neighborhood, the conditions it faces, the class and racial composition, the motives of political organizers, and the national political-economic situation at the time.

Poor people facing problems of unemployment, job discrimination, substandard housing, high crime rates, and only slight hope of improvement stand to gain little, if any, from using the neighborhood as a vehicle to maintain status quo. . . . Their class position demands social change, and while they might seek to conserve, restore, and improve aspects of their community, their fundamental goal in neighborhood organizing is to change the conditions that keep them poor and powerless (Fisher, 1994, p. xxii).

Progressive professionals and community organizers have long faced the dilemma of tension between empowerment and service delivery. How does one continue to give people more capacity to solve their problems and simultaneously provide services? The solution becomes a matter of emphasis related to resources and tactical choices. Warren et al. (1974) characterized it as the difference between citizen action and citizen involvement, describing it in terms of characteristics, as summarized in the following:

*Citizen action* is the effort of low-income people to influence organizations to act in ways that give first priority to the needs and wishes of low-income people—as defined by low-income people—and to consider as secondary such constraints as organizational viability and rationale. *Citizen involvement* is the orderly,

channeled input into agency decision making by low-income people, through appropriate structures set up for this purpose (the discussion on community action agencies provides an example of this). The decisions arrived at and the actions taken as a result of such channeled input from low-income people are constrained by the viability needs of the organization and by the nature of its technical, administrative, and institutional rationale (p. 112).

Poor people are smart enough to recognize when their participation is tokenism, even when agencies promote terms like empowerment and self-sufficiency. "Service delivery alone (social work tradition) does not address the cause of social problems" (Fisher, 1994, p. 204), which has been one of three dominant approaches to neighborhood and community organizing (see Figure 1). Progressive "social work community organizing seeks to mobilize and empower people through the services delivered . . . good service work includes progressive political activity" (p. 204). Service delivery and social action go hand and hand. A community center in an impoverished, primarily African-American community in Houston provides a powerful example.

SHAPE Community Center. SHAPE offers a wide array of services with the overall intent of building community through self-help strategies and challenging the causes of

economic poverty. Cultural programs for kids and adult build personal and community pride. Social programs that focus on prevention of drug abuse, teen counseling, community safety, parenting education, school reform, and health care help meet desperate community needs. The founders and primary activist at SHAPE, people like Deloyd Parker and social worker Theola Petteway, come out of the civil rights and black power movements. So the programs at SHAPE have a great deal of political content. Parker's nationally recognized, community-based work on drug problems in the community, for example, emphasizes developing community responses without more police intervention, improving social service resources for drug users, and empowering community residents to help them address community problems. The waiting room at SHAPE is filled with political pictures, leaflets, and newspapers. When Nelson Mandela came to Houston in 1992, he spoke at SHAPE. Despite the fact that Houston is more hostile to social action than most cities, at SHAPE services and social action go hand in hand (Shape Community Center, Inc., 2001).

SHAPE is an example of a community self-help organization, as opposed to the more formal, service providing community organization (Milofsky, 1988).

"Community self-help organizations represent such attempts to solve social problems through local participation, social action, resource mobilization, and building a sense of

community and of geographic identification" (Milofsky, 1988, p. 187). Community self-help

organizations usually have as one of their primary goals the building of feelings of mutual responsibility among local residents . . . while the theme of self-help is important . . . they emphasize the primacy of demanding a fair share of the local government pie. They focus on battles over indivisible public resources, and they sponsor actions or events, sometimes conflict oriented, which increase geographic identification and social integration among residents of an area. (Milofsky, 1988, p. 188).

#### Summary

Community-based organizations are nonprofit, private entities governed by a special set of laws (Pappas, 1996). Their boards of directors have a fiduciary and legal responsibility to the organization. Their mission centers around the concept of public service, in that it identifies the problem or condition that needs to be changed, who benefits from change, the nature of the change sought, and finally, the means or methods of effectuating change (Howe, 1997). Mission is the core of the vision, describing the organization's purpose. To carry forth the mission, the CEO must pay attention to strategies. Transformational leaders

influence and motivate followers, staff, or both by attending to organizational culture.

Establishing IORs helps the organization fulfill its mission and objectives. Identifying and delineating social patterns and integration of groups helps staff and organizers to serve and work better with the community's needs. An important asset in working with the community and its networks is having an understanding of the community's environments and its impact. Knowing and involving key players in planning that affects the organization and the community is vital to any program's success because involving key players promotes citizen action, as opposed to citizen involvement where people give or get input and serve in a purely advisory role after major decisions are already made. Economically marginal communities are most in need of "collective actions to combat shared problems" (Rubin & Rubin, 1992, p. 90) and are the most difficult but not impossible to organize.

The discussion thus far has focused on developing the ideas of mission, networks, and citizen participation, as they pertain to community-based organizations. These ideas are important because they frame the basis of this study. Three sets of perspectives emerged during this study as I engaged in observations: the Niger Community Center, IORs, and Niger's residents. Each perspective cut across the ideas



of mission, networks, and citizen participation, and the findings are presented and discussed later in a way that determines if, how, and to what extent the community was involved in the program decision-making process.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study was based on research of (a) programming (Boone, 1997; Boyle, 1981), (b) organizational development (OD) (Cummings & Worley, 1997; Yukl, 1998), (c) inter-organizational relationships (IORs) (Alter & Hage, 1993; Chisholm, 1998; Rogers & Whetten, 1982; Warren et al., 1974), (d) community-based organization (Hall 1992; Milofsky, 1988; Smith & Lipsky, 1993), and (e) community organizing (Cox, Erlich, Rothman, & Tropman, 1987; Fisher, 1994; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) (see Table 1). The first half of chapter 2 discusses and set the stage for the historical progression and impact of Community-based organizations and community organizing on citizen participation. The second half of chapter 2 culminates the chapter's discussion with an in depth look at the community-based programming process and the structure of community-based organizations. It examines facets of organizational development and inter-organizational relationships, and the role of neighborhood types and citizen participation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Overview

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology used to describe and analyze how and to what degree the Niger Community Center and its Inter-organizational Relationships elicited citizen participation in program decision-making. The following questions guided the study:

1. How did the organization define and use community-based programming?
2. How did the organization network, link, and involve its community to identify issues?
3. How was consensus achieved in defining the selected issues formulated and utilized for programming?

In this study, I used a case study design. To collect data from all participants, I created and used a semi-focused interview guide, and I devoted time to the accurate and systematic description of the research by utilizing guided interviews, field notes, observations, and documentation analysis. Each unit of analysis was reduced to smaller analytic units in the study through pattern coding.

#### Research Design

A qualitative methodology was used to describe and analyze community participation in program decision-making.

This method allowed for extensive data collection and the opportunity to use multiple sources of evidence (i. e., interviews, documentation, participant-observation) (Guba, 1978; Yin, 1984). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) noted that qualitative methods are suitable for exploring phenomena about which little is known. Scant research exists on organizing efforts that elicit community participation in low-income communities plagued with a multiplicity of social problems, such as unemployment, drugs, alcohol, and crime. According to Whitt (1991), as information emerges and is discovered about phenomena, it guides what further information is sought.

A case study was the investigative model approach used for the study. Merriam (1988) defined case study research as "a paradigm focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied" (p. 3). The case study involved a sociocultural analysis of the units under study, which factors, such as the community's history, socioeconomic conditions, and racial and ethnic make-up, and the attitudes of residents and organizations toward community programs, were considered (Merriam, 1988).

#### Population Description of the Niger Community

An inner-city urban community roughly a 96 block area, adjacent to the central downtown area, the total population was estimated at 6,185, of which 86% was black, accounting

for 46% of the city's population. With several of the city's public housing complexes, 68% of the households had one or more persons under age 18. An estimated 69% of households with children were female-headed. Sixty-nine percent of households reported annual incomes of less than \$18,000, and 47% of households reported annual incomes of less than \$9,900. The percentage of persons below the poverty level was 35%, a rate more than double the 14% citywide estimate. Unemployment rates were reported as more than triple the citywide averages. Thirty-five percent of people' aged 16-19 were not enrolled in school, 26% were unemployed, and 25% were not high school graduates. Fifty-eight percent of persons over age 25 had attained less than a high school education, as compared to 21% of the city's total.

#### Participants

Selection of the Niger Community Center was based on its historical commitment to community organizing efforts with low-income people since 1941. Although the northeast central community covered roughly a 96-block area with an estimated total population of 6,185, participants were selected on whether they were involved with the NCC. Although there were exceptions, generally involvement with the NCC was within the context of the 240 households within the Drew Gardens housing complex where the NCC was located. I interviewed 7 core staff and 2 temporary staff from the

NCC, 14 IORs involved with the NCC, and 7 residents of Drew Gardens, some involved in both staff-initiated and community-initiated groups (see Table 4). I investigated a wide range of people from agencies and from the community so I would obtain a macro picture of any partnership initiatives and community involvement.

Table 4

Profiles of Interviews by Category & Theme

	NCC Staff	IORs	Community	Theme
Executive Director	x			Gen. Administration/ Adolescent
Events Coordinator	x			Adolescent/Teens
CBA counselor	x			Adolescent/Teens
Arts Coordinator	x			Adolescent/Teens
Childcare Director	x			Preschool
Senior Citizen Coordinator	x			Senior Citizens
Secretary	x			Adults classes
Artist	x			Adolescent/Teen boys
Camp counselor	x			Adolescent/Teen boys
School X		x		Adolescent/Teens
School Y		x		Adolescent/Teens
Saturday Read		x		Adolescent/Teens
Teen Health		x		Teens
Housing Authority		x		Adults (Women) & Children
Project HIV		x		Adult intervention
Daycare Reader		x		Preschool
Neighborhood Watch		x		Adults
Parks &		x		Adolescent/Teens

Recreation				
Community Police Dept		x		Adolescent/Teens
River Camp Project		x		Adolescent/Teens
Neighborhood Advocacy Center		x		Adult/Women
Business Park		x		Adolescent/Teens
High School Z		x		Teens
Staff-initiated group members				
Mr. Johnny			x	Senior Citizens
Nikki			x	Teens
Nina			x	Teens
Staff- & community-initiated group members				
Dwayne			x	Adults/Children
Lisa			x	Adults/Children
Ann			x	Adults/Children
Leiter			x	Adults/Children
Total	9 Staff	14 IORs	7 Residents	29 Interviews

The partnership initiative (as it was titled) consisted of the NCC's inter-organizational relationships (IORs) among community-based organizations, local residents, business, schools, government, church, social services, and colleges. I grouped them as follows:

1. The staff of the NCC was comprised of the executive director, activity/special events coordinator, community-based alternative counselor, arts coordinator, community outreach worker and senior citizen coordinator, director of childcare center, secretary and artist.

2. Four of the 14 IORs investigated were included in this research: two middle schools, the Teen Health, and the Saturday Read Program. These four IORs were important because they represented opportunities of gauging partnership successes. They shared a similar mission with the NCC, which was developing programs that focused on youth.

3. The residents were organized in staff-initiated groups and community-initiated groups. The three staff-initiated groups were: the Golden Challengers for senior citizens, Women Ordained to Achieve (WOA) for single mothers, and the Teen Association for teenagers. The two community-initiated groups consisted of single mothers from WOA (staff-initiated group) and a male janitor of the NCC. Together, this group constituted the community-initiated groups, ARGO and the resident council.

#### Data Collection

In a qualitative case study, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis because the major data-gathering technique is participant-observation and the subjects are the people interviewed in the research setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1988). The methods I used to collect data were interviews through the use of semi-structured interview guides (see Appendix B), participant-observations, field notes, and documentation

analysis. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), "the fundamental methods relied on by qualitative researchers for gathering information are (a) in-depth interviewing, (b) participation in the setting, (c) direct observation, and (d) document review. These methods form the core, the staples of the diet" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 78). These methods were integral parts of my monthly activities.

Interviews serve to "access the perspective of the persons being interviewed" (Patton, 1989, p. 196). Taylor and Bogdan (1984) listed at least three issues that should be addressed at the outset of every interview:

1. The investigator's motives and intentions and the inquiry's purpose. Because I was a single mother stuck on the system of welfare for at least 2 years, and working with agencies to get off of welfare was not in vogue at the time, I had a great need to learn why social service organizations never asked clients what was best for them. Instead, clients were viewed as ignorant and unable to make decisions about their lives because of the position to which many of them were born, namely poverty. The decision-making process existed solely for the people in control, and they did not believe that the people for whom they were planning programs could help. This research helped me better understand what motivates some social service organizations to help people maintain their position in life, as opposed to giving people



the tools needed to overcome their positions and grow.

2. The protection of respondents through the use of pseudonyms (see Appendices D & E). The identity of each respondent has been kept confidential. Data was coded. Fictitious names and locations have been assigned to participants and locations in this study; and

3. The logistics with regard to time, place, and number of interviews to be scheduled (see Appendix E). After each of these issues was addressed, a semi-structured interview design (see Appendix B) of guiding questions was used with each group of participants. "With semi-structured interviews you are confident of getting comparable data across subjects" (Bodgen & Biklen, 1992, p. 97).

The first nine processual tasks from Boone's (1997) CBP process guided my development of the semi-structured interview guide. These guiding questions included focused opinion-and-value questions to find out what people thought about a specific program and background, demographic, or both questions to locate the respondent in relation to other people (Patton, 1989) (see Appendix C). Semi-structured opinion-and-value questions helped me discern staff members' deeply held organizational values, such as the value of instilling choice in residents as espoused throughout all programming. Background demographic information revealed a large number of middle-aged white women and to a lesser

degree black women in nonprofit and public leadership roles. Black women occupied more middle management and staff roles in these agencies than did white women. The commonality among the black women was that most of them had served in some capacity in the 1960s civil rights or black power movement, and they had found nonprofit and public service as avenues for helping the black community.

I conducted four, 1-hour-long, in-depth interviews with the executive director over the course of data collection: one at the onset, two during the active data collection phase, and one upon the completion of data collection. Individually, staff members of the NCC were part of a 90-minute interview session. Group interviews averaging 90 minutes were conducted with members of the three staff-initiated groups and the two resident-initiated groups. Individually, a 60-minute interview was conducted with the four individuals who had established IORs with the Niger Community Center. To ensure maximal preservation of participant interviews, I utilized the following three methods of recording information:

1. Participants were audio-taped and transcription was made within 2 weeks of each interview session.

2. Inscriptions, quick jottings of key words and symbols, were made in the midst of interaction and participation.

3. Descriptive post-interview notes enabled me to write reflections of each interview and to monitor the process of data collection (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Merriam, 1988; Whyte, 1984). In addition to these preservation efforts, each participant was given a copy of their typed transcript to validate its accuracy (see Appendix D). "Data are improved by an accurate record of the exact responses of the interviewee" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 142).

"In participant-observation-like studies, the researcher usually knows the subjects beforehand, so the interview is often like a conversation between friends" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 96). To establish a participant-type of relationship with the subject beforehand, I engaged in intensive case study examination as a participant-observer for 6 months prior to conducting individual interviews. Participant-observer opportunities manifested in the form of group meetings among various members of the staff of the NCC and with many of their IORs. Through participant-observation opportunities, I became part of the community, a familiar face to be trusted. For example, through months of Bible study, the senior citizens learned firsthand of my Christian upbringing and values. Making ceramics with the mothers of WOA revealed my low aptitude in art, as I tried unsuccessfully to create ceramics. Helping

teens with homework revealed to them some of my shortcomings in math and my strength in English.

"Fieldwork, as participant observation is often called" (Merriam, 1988, p. 102), and field notes, go hand in hand. "Participant observation is a major means of collecting data in case study research" (Merriam, 1988, p. 102), providing "a firsthand account of the situation under study" (p. 102). Participant observation was relied upon as a means of gaining firsthand knowledge and of understanding fully the inter-functioning of the study. In conjunction, field notes, written accounts made on the spot or as soon as possible after their occurrence, represent the interactions and activities of the researcher and the people studied (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Descriptive field notes were kept to describe the data found through observations, meetings, and informal conversations. They "occurred out of the flow of activity" and helped to form a comprehensible account of what was observed (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 224). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), the descriptive aspect of the field notes may encompass

1. portraits of the subjects,
2. reconstruction of dialogue,
3. description of physical setting,
4. accounts of particular events,

5. depiction of activities, and
6. the observer's behavior. (pp. 120-121)

Descriptive aspects of my field notes bloomed because I enjoyed informal conversations with the senior citizens. For example, the following sentence is from my notes:

As we sat in the brightly lit community room on soft chairs at oblong tables, they muttered comments under their breath of their displeasure about occupying token decision-making roles, noting they knew important decisions were already made before their opinions were solicited (Fieldnotes, 1999).

Nonetheless, page after page of my written journal accounts outlined their absolute joy in being part of the senior citizen group. Each week when I left the senior citizens, I read my notes, matching jottings in the margins with ongoing field notes and completing thoughts. As I wrote characteristics of each subject, "Melton and his wife are always flirting with each other, Elizabeth carries an African staff as her cane, and Robert is tall, gray and stunning," I recalled the good times, laughter, the use of pet names among them, love stories about them that made my heart glow, and their joy when they talked about dying and going home to see sweet Jesus. I also recalled the bad times, arguments about the "war", complaints of joint aches,

and tears when fellow senior citizens were robbed, scammed of their life savings, or killed from a mugging.

My field notes revealed many of the mothers of WOA came to the group with stories of abuse. The most common story of abuse was about how their male partners treated them so poorly. Each woman had two or more children in female-headed households. Many of them came to the group with tattered clothes and uncombed hair. They complained about the difficulty in getting to the group but comment after comment revealed how they loved the opportunity to get together and talk with others whom they shared so much in common. One account revealed "I'm married and still sometimes I feel so lonely. It's nice when I see someone in the group knocking on my door, coming to see if I'm alright. Then I have someone to talk to that knows what I going through" (Fieldnotes, 1999). I learned of their multiple agency involvement in their attempts to help themselves and their children. Like the senior citizens, a couple of women gave remarks of their token roles at the center and their perception of organizational boundaries, such as having to go along with planned programs. Nonetheless, they all made it clear they cherished the camaraderie that the group gave to them.

My fieldwork and written journal accounts revealed quite a different story of the teens. The teens shared

accounts of participation in plays and leadership conferences that they had never thought possible for them. My field notes gave an account of one teen's comments as "they work with us. They ask our opinions and we tell it like it is and then the next thing you know we're making a play or something. The things we role-play are just like real life. They are just like what we are going through" (Fieldnotes, 1999).

"Rich data are filled with pieces of evidence, with the clues that you begin to put together to make analytical sense out of what you study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 121). For example, the senior citizens mentioned how they felt about their token role with NCC in the real decision-making process and the women of WOA mentioned similar feelings and experiences. Investigator diaries, the field note method I used, were maintained to help "keep a running record of inferences, hunches, and ideas to be pursued in data collection" and to record the "personal and private accounts of . . . positive and negative reaction to people, places, and events encountered (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, pp. 225-226).

The final method I used to collect data were records of board meeting minutes, documents from past events, and newspaper articles. Rich sources of information, "they [were] contextually relevant and grounded in the contexts

they represent[ed]" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They served as unobtrusive methods for portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). They were unobtrusive because an analysis could be conducted without disturbing the setting in any way. They were useful for triangulation and, as supplements to interviews, "non-reactive research provided another perspective on the phenomenon, elaborating its complexity" (Marshall & Rosssman, 1995, p. 86). For example, oral accounts of high crime and drug dealers were reinforced through newspaper accounts and pictures of community candlelight vigils sending messages to drug dealers to get out of their community.

#### Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 153).

I was engaged in ongoing analysis during data collection. "Some analysis must take place during data collection. Without it, the data collection has no direction: thus the data you collect may not be substantial enough to accomplish analysis later (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 154). In my study,



some ongoing analysis involved the following:

1. decisions that narrowed down the research so that the data would not be too diffused;
2. decisions concerning the type of study to guide the work;
3. a set of analytic questions that assisted in giving focus and organization to data collection (these questions were assessed and reformulated as factors became clearer);
4. planned data-collection sessions in light of previous observations, which meant specific leads were pursued after reviewing field notes and questions, such as What is it that I do not yet know?;
5. written observer's comments about ideas generated while in the field;
6. written memos about the learning process after I had spent approximately 1 month in the field;
7. testing ideas and themes on subjects whom I felt were unusually perceptive and articulate;
8. exploring literature while in the field, which was where I began to look at other substantive literature in the area, particularly as it pertained to defining community-based organizations, partnerships, and work between organizations and communities;
9. correlation among metaphors, analogies, and concepts where I played with old African American

spirituals, hymns, and Biblical passages to try to raise concrete relations and happenings to a higher level of abstraction; and,

10. the use of visual devices merely through drawing perceived versus actual relationships in the form of diagrams on scrap pieces of paper.

I used these ongoing analytical procedures at varying stages during the data collection phase to help me focus the study. Marshall and Rossman (1995) observed that "generating categories of data to collect, or cells in a matrix, can be an important focusing device for the study" (p. 111).

These activities represented my deep involvement in "the cognitive process of discovering or manipulating abstract categories and the relationships among those categories" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 167). Theorizing, as the process is called, "is the fundamental tool of any researcher and is used to develop or confirm explanations for how and why things happen as they do" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Kaplan 1964). "The formal tasks of theorizing are perceiving; comparing, contrasting, aggregating, and ordering; establishing linkages and relationship; and speculating" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 167). Each task was subsumed in the next and was used in varying degrees throughout the process of collecting data.

Interviews, field notes, and documentary material were

the three units of analysis in the study. Interviews, although used in conjunction with participant observation and document analysis, were the primary units of analysis in the study. With the assistance of Microsoft Word, I managed the tasks of data preparation and storage; segmenting, coding, and collating; establishing linkages; and transferal and display of the interview transcripts.

Pattern coding reduces large amounts of data into smaller analytic units and help to focus and build the researcher's cognitive map (Huberman & Miles, 1984). "Pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, pattern or explanation that the site suggest to the analyst" (Huberman & Miles, 1984, p. 67). Pattern coding was used to accomplished the task of developing emerging themes and patterns because "they act to pull a lot of material together into more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis" (Huberman & Miles, 1984, pp. 67-68). I used the data to make notes and categories and to list themes. According to Berelson (1971), themes are defined as "a single assertion about some subject. In its more compact form, the theme is a simple sentence, ie. subject and predicate. Moreover, it is a sentence or sentence compound usually a summary or abstract sentence" (p. 131).

Coding is often used to manage field notes and

observations. "Codes are categories," and they are "an abbreviation or symbol applied to a segment of words—most often a sentence or paragraph of transcribed field notes—in order to classify the words" (Huberman & Miles, 1984, p. 56). Codes are generally produced from research questions, hypotheses, important themes, or key concepts (p. 56). After the essential component of coding, categorizing, or both is accomplished, pattern coding helps the researcher move to a more explanatory level by assisting in identifying the patterns, recurrences, and the why. Memoing, "the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding . . . tie[s] different pieces of data together in a cluster" (Huberman & Miles, 1984, p. 69).

I used content analysis of document materials as an analytical strategy. Content analysis "consists of a division of the text into units of meaning and a quantification of these units according to certain rules" (Rosengren, 1981, p. 34). Berelson (1952) defined content analysis as "a method for objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of a text" (p. 18).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### Overview

Findings from this research allowed me to tell the story of how the Niger Community Center (NCC) and its inter-organizational relationships (IORs) elicited citizens participation in program decision-making. To get a full understanding of the partnership initiative from those involved in providing programs and from those receiving the benefits of programming, I examined the staff of the Niger Community Center, their IORs, and residents of the community. After a description of the Niger community, the Niger Community Center, and its people, I present and discuss the findings. I use three themes that emerged from data analysis, which were Organizational and personal missions: compatibility and conflict, understanding community through social networks, and citizen involvement versus citizen action, to organize the three parts of the findings. Within these three themes, I present and discuss the findings from my examination of the Niger Community Center, the inter-organizational relationships (IORs), and the community.

As a guide for presentation, I use the first three of five stages of the community-based programming (CBP) process, described earlier in Chapter Two: (a) the organization's mission and milieu, (b) environmental scanning, (c) identifying target publics and stakeholders, (d) developing and implementing the plan of action, and (e) evaluation and accountability. Each stage of the CBP process is sequenced with a set of processual tasks (see Appendix A), a conceptual approach that gives form to the CBP process. The first 9 of 15 processual tasks are used as a checklist to themes discerned from interviews, document analysis, and on-site observations. The definition of themes framed the data so that I could analyze the findings of citizen participation in program decision-making. Presentation of findings indicate factors relevant to program planning and citizen participation in program decision-making.

The findings from the study of the Niger Community Center and its IORs answered the following research questions and related interview guide questions (see Appendix B):

1. How did the organization define and use community-based programming?

2. How did the organization network, link, and involve its community to identify issues?

3. How was consensus achieved in defining the selected issues formulated and utilized for programming?

Throughout the presentation of findings, the community organizations and participants are referred to by pseudonyms. The community chosen for this research had a history of community organizing efforts dating back to 1941 and displayed more characteristics of a community-based institution than did the others I had considered. The community also offered what I considered an entry at the grassroots level.

#### Niger Community

##### Entry

I first gained entry into the Niger community through a friend, whom I felt was community minded and down to earth. Having had past experiences in low-income communities plagued by poverty, drugs, crime, and unemployment, I knew utilizing sources similar to people in mind, body, and spirit would yield a far better chance of gaining its members' confidence and trust. My first few months at Niger were spent in the role of participant-observer, as I eagerly sat through a series of professional and community meetings. The meetings focused on programming

issues in planning, design, and implementation. What are the needs? How do we address the needs? Who is defined as the target population? What helping professional(s) should be involved? How do we implement programs?

#### Driving Force

The NCC's funding was driven by the United Way, a federation of agencies established in the early 1900s to relieve donors of the task of dividing up their gifts among charities. The United Way also performs the auditing and monitoring functions to assure donors their money supports reputable organizations (Milofsky, 1988). As a member agency, the NCC was driven to adhere to the strict policies and guidelines of the United Way in order to receive the annual funding that sustains their agency. The executive director of the NCC stated:

We have enough operational funds to sustain us. We have funds but they are restricted funds that must be used for the purpose they were intended. They can't be used for unforeseen program needs that inevitably arise in low-income communities.

The NCC's unrestricted funds came from individual and corporate donations and small grants of \$10,000 or less written by the executive director. The NCC faced fierce competition for funds, being in a corridor of the country



with an overabundance of nonprofit organizations and few resources.

According to Pappas (1996), the nonprofit sector (which is used interchangeably with community-based organizations in this discussion) is clustered into five basic groups: health care, education, social and legal services, civic and social, and arts and culture (p. 2). Social service agencies, such as the NCC, constitute the most numerous of nonprofit organizations, with close to 40% in this category, yet they account for only 12% of total expenditures (Pappas, 1996). The competition for funds is keen. Civic and social organizations, such as the community-initiated groups, ARGO, and the resident council, are the next largest group, with 25% of nonprofit organizations, yet they account for only 4% of total expenditures (Pappas, 1996).

Youth were the driving force behind the NCC's vision. The Niger Community Center was established in 1941 to meet the recreational needs of children and adolescents. Five decades later, programs and activities had expanded to include the family, but children were still at the core. The staff at Niger had deeply held beliefs that childhood was the place to break the cycle of poverty, when perhaps the "ways of thinking and behaving ha[d] not yet settled

into the traditional mold prescribed by their parents or by the conditions" of their surrounding environment (Liebow, 1967, p. 6).

### Site Description

#### The NCC's Surrounding Area

Located just a few blocks from the once celebrated Hayti district and a few blocks east of the revitalized downtown were the neighborhood, Niger. The popular route leading to the community was three city blocks that were a corridor of trouble. At the corner, groups of middle-aged and older men and women drank beer and wine while relaxing on makeshift wooden and tin chairs. Cars cruised for drive-by drug deals and sex. House after house (some condemned and boarded-up) served as havens for crack addicts, both male and female, in search of a place to enjoy their 2-minute high and for street prostitutes looking to score a quick dollar. An artist in the community described the drug crack and drug dealers as "a demon. It's a plaque. It's like the Ku Klux Klan wallet size. You get your own, very own lynch squad if you're a drug dealer, executing those on your own" (homeboy). Violence was commonplace in the North east central area of the Niger community. In 1994, "a 2-year-old was shot and killed while playing in the Drew

Gardens community, when bullets from a drug-related dispute ripped through the courtyard" (David).

At the end of the three-block stretch, bordered by a tall black iron fence and large yellow curbs that kept cars parked on one side of the street so police could move people through quickly in the event of a disturbance, was the entrance to the Drew housing complex, also leading to the Niger Community Center. The closeness of the units to the street forced one to look away from curious onlookers, fearing invasion of their personal living space or sending some unintended message through body language.

#### Location of the Niger Community Center & Its Service-Area

One block down, a few yards to the left, and across the street stood the one-story brown brick building that housed the Niger Community Center at one end, the community's housing authority at the other end, and the city's parks and recreation program on the back end. Like a warehouse, the building was large and had few windows. A dusty playground on the back end of the building, with basketball hoops in need of nets at each end of the court. The community's alcohol and drug center was housed in a building diagonally across the street.

With the exception of the NCC, each of the agencies referenced above served the immediate Drew housing

community. In 1974, in search of program space, the NCC successfully negotiated with the housing authority to secure operational facilities in the Drew housing complex. Unlike the other agencies in the Drew housing complex, the NCC's service-area was the 240 households in the Drew housing complex and the 498 households surrounding the Drew housing complex, totaling approximately 738 households. Location of the NCC within the Drew housing complex while servicing the entire Northeast Central Niger community has been followed by years of misunderstandings from residents, affiliated and nonaffiliated people, and organizations, as to why the NCC service people outside of the community's Drew housing complex. The problem of location exasperated with low levels of participation in community programs. With location misperceptions and low level of vehicles owned by residents, the NCC's service-area defaulted to the residents of the Drew housing complex. The executive director of the NCC said, "location is a real issue that's why we really need to get out of here and move to a neutral site. We have addressed this issue in our strategic planning."

#### Inside of the Niger Community Center

Oftentimes, a knock to identify oneself was necessary to get someone to unlatch the gray steel door, but, once

inside, brightness and creativity grabbed one's attention. The Niger Community Center was small but creatively arranged to optimize space. One wall greeted visitors with magazines (both national and African American oriented), notes on upcoming activities, and articles of newsworthy events. Geared to youth, another wall was lined with posters accompanied by stories of African American legends, including the hair tycoon Madame Walker and acclaimed athletes, such as basketball's Michael Jordan, baseball's Jackie Robinson, and golf's phenomenon Tiger Woods. The after-school rules, boldly printed, read: "Enter building quietly; pull out homework, no eating, respect, etc. etc." At the midpoint of the room, five computer stations lined the wall. Chalkboards and bookshelves filled with encyclopedias and other books lined the remaining wall space. Portable room dividers, with folding chairs and 8-foot tables, were sectioned off for as many as four classrooms if needed. Within this undersized space, pictures, books, stories, prodding, encouragement, and even a popular song by R. Kelly, "I Believe I Can Fly," spoke to mankind's ability to reach for the sky.

Like the community center's activity space, office space was cramped and crowded. At least four or more staff members shared two offices. Although staff shared desks and

phones and lacked privacy, they accommodated one another when needed.

The staff at the Niger Community Center set a lofty goal. Their mission statement read:

To enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Niger neighborhood, which includes the Dew Gardens public housing community, by providing services and programs for the youth and adults that foster the development of self-esteem, self-reliance and a sense of responsibility for constructive participation in society(the NCC Handbook, 1995).

#### Stresses on the Community

Some stresses on this neighborhood were reflected in elements of its transient populations and its physical and environmental conditions.

The tenant turnover rate in the Drew housing complex is 50% or more each year, according to the city's housing authority tenant occupancy office. The turnover rate had a negative impact on the stability of community groups and participation. All community participants in this study had lived in the Drew housing complex for at least two years and for some it had been as long as ten years. But the largest transient and new tenant population of Drew public housing was young mothers between the ages of 18 and 25

with an average of two children. A member of the resident council explained the stress on the neighborhood from too many young mothers as, "these mothers don't have a clue about keeping a household. They are easy prey for the drug man. The drug man just moves in on them and set up his shop. That's just an open door to bring more drugs and illegal activities into the community" (Lisa). Many tenants at Drew public housing became revolving door statistics with housing violations such as habitual late rent payments, drug trafficking, handgun possession, and unauthorized occupancy.

It was estimated that around 50% of the housing units surrounding the Drew housing complex were substandard. Of the substandard housing units, thirty-three percent of residential units surrounding low-income public housing were marginal, 13% were seriously deteriorated, and 2% were dilapidated (Census, 1990). The median value of owner occupied housing was \$44,460. Eighteen percent of housing units were owner-occupied and not affordable to 69% of the households (household incomes were less than \$18,000). Eighty-two percent of the housing units were renter occupied (p. 10). The median contract rent was \$232 and was not affordable to 47% of the households (renter household incomes were less than 9,900) (Census, 1990). The 12%

vacancy rate for residential was three times greater than the city's average (Census, 1990).

Zoning within the area included light industrial, heavy commercial, and general residential. With more than 25 industrial companies in the general area using chemicals and other hazardous materials, the area has seen its share of accidents over the years (Niger City-County Planning Department, 1991). Since 1983, the Emergency Management and Fire Department staff has recorded more than 12 accidents involving hazardous materials (NCCPD, 1991, p. 25). The worst incident was a chemical fire in 1986, forcing the evacuation of more than 600 families in the east central area and surrounding neighborhoods (NCCPD, 1991, p. 25).

#### People Associated with the Niger Community & the NCC

In 1941, during a period when cities across the United States were concerned about juvenile delinquency, the concept of the Niger Community Center was developed through the Department of Juvenile Delinquency for the purpose of developing programs for youth to curve delinquency. The founders, expressing their religious values, felt it a moral obligation to intervene on behalf of the community and society. The idea of helping the Niger community has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The findings in this study reflected the story of my interaction with 20 people



working and helping the community. They represented the 7 core staff members of the NCC and a temporary staff person who was an artist, the voice of the housing manager, four IOR staff, three members of the staff-initiated group, and four members of the community-initiated groups. Two members of the community-initiated group were also members of the staff-initiated group for women.

#### The NCC Staff

Everlyn, the executive director, was a 55-year-old black female, an ordained minister, and a civil rights activist from the 60s, and she held a Ph.D. in higher education. Everlyn felt that community is where one should give one's time and energy.

Tia, the activity special events coordinator, was a 32-year-old black female, with an MA in physical/sports education and an allegiance to the black family, especially youth. The community affectionately knew her as "Ms. T".

David, the community-based alternative counselor, was a 40-year-old white male. He had varied interests in helping people.

Candy, the arts coordinator, was 35-year-old black female and artist. She had dreadlocked hair and frequently wore African attire.

Connie, the director of childcare, was a 33-year-old white female and a teacher by trade who was new to the South. Children in abject poverty disturbed her greatly.

Dee, the senior citizen coordinator, was a 30-year-old black female, with experience as a nursing assistant. She suffered from obesity-related health problems.

Geraldine, the secretary, was a 55-year-old black female who held a master's degree. She was a great listener and most content to work and give her service to the black community.

#### Temporary Staff

Homeboy, the artist, was a 32-year old black male who held a bachelor's degree in theater communication. Homeboy, was the artistic link for the youth in the community.

#### Housing Community Staff

India, the Drew housing manager, was a 40-year old black female, with a background as a behavior specialist for delinquent populations. Street smart and aggressive, India was capable of understanding people's behavioral patterns, a talent that served her well as manager.

#### Community Advocate

Africa, a top-level manager of a nonprofit organization, was a community advocate.

IOR Staff

Faye, the parental involvement coordinator at middle school X, was a 49-year-old black female who had been an activist in the late 1960s. She was dedicated to working through issues in the black community.

Iyana, the assistant principal at middle school Y, was 28-year-old black female who held a degree in education. She was dedicated to issues affecting youth.

Terry, volunteer for the Saturday Read Program, a 25-year-old white female, was an ex-news reporter, and graduate student in a social work. She was deeply religious and interested in helping low-income people in communities.

Angel, the program coordinator of Teen Health, was a 27-year-old, college educated black female. She was Iyana's sister and was concerned with the health education of black youth.

Staff-initiated Group Volunteers

Mr. Johnny, a senior citizen and community member of the NCC board of directors, was a 68-year old black male who had witnessed the Hayti experience in its heyday. Mr. Johnny was a community activist and newlywed of three years. He and his wife lived in a single family home in the senior citizen section of the Niger community, which was

viewing distance from the cotton mill he remembered as a young man.

Nikki, a member of the teen association group, was a 10<sup>th</sup> grader at the local high school. She explained her grades were not good in school, especially in math. She loved the adventures of the teen association group and felt they really cared for her. Her mother worked in fast food and was unable to be involved in her daughter's education due to her lack of transportation and odd work hours.

Nina, a member of the teen association group, was a ninth grader at the local high school. She had two younger siblings whom she often cared for because of her mother's drug addiction problem. She was smart and motivated and wanted to be a social worker.

#### Community-initiated Group Volunteers

Dwayne, leader of ARGO and the resident council, was a 30-year-old black male and single dad. He was an articulate, college educated ex-convict and sometimes ex-drug addict who was deeply committed to poverty issues. He lived in the Niger public housing community for two years.

Lisa, assistant to Dwayne, was a 38-year-old single mother of five. She served as acting vice president of both ARGO and the resident council. Lisa is a third generation public housing dweller and she had a five-year plan to buy

a home for her children so she could break the public housing cycle in her family.

Ann, a member of both ARGO and the resident council, was a 42-year-old black female and single mother of three. She was also homeless, jobless, and working on a trade. However, she was an on-again, off-again drug addict. When Ann had shelter, money, or food stamps, she shared them with community persons in need.

Leiter, a member of both ARGO and the resident council, was a 45-year old black female with two adult children. Leiter was going to a computer trade school when she was hired at a computer technology company. She lived in public housing for three years.

#### Inter-organizational Relationships

The relationships forged with several organizations and their programs were a significant part of helping the NCC achieve its goals and objectives. Although the NCC engaged in what they termed a partnership initiative with several organizations, the relationships appeared to be short-term ad hoc efforts at coordination between pairs of organizations: an informal structure of inter-organizational relationships (IORs). Successful IORs established with the NCC were organizations that focused on children. These IORs worked through the NCC's objectives on

mission, social networks, and idea of citizen participation versus citizen action.

Four of the 14 IORs investigated at the NCC were included in this research: two middle schools, the Teenage Links, and the Saturday Read Program. These organizations were chosen because they represented opportunities for gauging partnership successes since they shared similar missions, developing programs that focused on children and adolescents. The middle schools covered grades 7, 8, and 9. At middle school X, the parental involvement coordinator was the link to the NCC. At middle school Y, the assistant principal was the contact and advocate for the families of the Niger community. The teen public health program was an adolescent preventive healthcare program. The program coordinator was the contact and advocate for the Niger community. The contact person for the Saturday Read Program, a community reading program for children, was a former news reporter who began the program and volunteered her time to develop it.

#### Community

The Niger community was the motivating factor for all activity at the NCC and among its IORs. An important aspect of involvement with the community for the NCC was through staff-initiated groups. Like IORs, staff-initiated groups

worked through the NCC's mission, social networks, and ideas of citizen involvement versus citizen action.

Staff-initiated groups were the Golden Challengers for senior citizens, Women Ordained to Achieve (WOA) for single mothers, and the Teen Association for teenagers. The Golden Challengers had an average of 10-12 senior citizens from the community in their group. Women Ordained to Achieve averaged 6-8 single mothers in their group. The Teen Association had a range of 6 to 15 teens in its group or more, depending on the program.

Community-initiated groups did not work through the NCC's objectives. As will be seen in the findings, they were in opposition to the NCC because they felt the NCC was more interested in furthering its organizational goals, as opposed to listening to the idea and proposed goals of the community. Community-initiated groups were the resident council and the non-profit organization ARGO. The resident council was at least a decade old, with an oral tradition that generally passed down to new members through the housing authority. Dwayne, who was the janitor at the NCC, newly developed ARGO in 1995. Both community-initiated groups consisted of 3 single mothers from the staff-initiated group WOA, the janitor at the NCC who was their

leader, and three residents from the community who were not involved with the NCC.

#### Organizational and Personal Missions:

##### Compatibility and Conflict

The theme organizational and personal mission: compatibility and conflict emerged as a result of the commitment of the NCC, IORs, and the community-initiated groups, ARGO and the resident council to organizational and personal missions. This theme explored how participants realized their organization's mission in relation to the basic principles and concepts that guided their mode of operation. I examined the participant's organizational and personal relationship to mission, the basic belief system that helped the organization function as a community-based organization, the organizational culture, and the participant's knowledge and consideration given to socio-cultural, political, technological, and economic environments when working with community members. I asked:

1. What was the organization's philosophy?
2. What was the organization's mission?
3. How did personal mission affect organizational mission?
4. What was the organization's structure?



5. Was the organization's philosophy in concert with the mission?

6. How did the organization's definition of a community-based mission apply to its planning process?

The following sections describe how members of the NCC, IORs, and community interpreted, operationalized, and viewed each other's missions in relation to their own. The NCC's mission was to provide services to the community to enhance its members' quality of life. IORs, solicited by the NCC, worked willingly with the NCC to fulfill the NCC's mission because it helped them to fulfill their own mission. Whereas the NCC and IORs worked together, members of the community were critical that the mission of the NCC and IORs were not meeting the needs of Niger's community members. Members of the community chose to focus on their own mission by developing community-initiated groups. They felt it to be in their best interest because they perceived the NCC to be focused more on its organizational objectives and personal missions as well.

#### Niger Community Center

The NCC's foundation was predicated on programming for youth. The founders' guiding beliefs were interventions targeted at youth had a chance of reaching their goals before the negative affects of environment dictated their

future. They valued the idea of giving service for children.

Today at the NCC, the founders' philosophy continues to impact the staff's beliefs. Although the mission does not make a distinction between the NCC's interest in youth programs over adult programs, the NCC's focus on youth-centered activities and programs does. The NCC's mission was "to enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Niger neighborhood, which included the Drew Gardens public housing community, by providing services and programs for youth and adults that fostered the development of self-esteem, self-reliance and a sense of responsibility for constructive participation in society" (the NCC Handbook, 1995). The mission, which centered on the concept of public service, identified quality of life as low for the Niger community and identified self-esteem, self-reliance, and a sense of responsibility as areas that needed change. The method of change was through providing services and programs. Staff roles were inherit in the mission through the provision of services and programs. Monthly goals and objectives were based on developing and implementing services and programs for the Niger community.

The NCC's board of directors reflected influential people and members of the business and local Niger

community. Influential members included a judge, retired business leaders, community advocates, and two senior citizens from the local Niger community. The presence of the senior citizens from the local community was recognized, but their ability to influence and be effective was impeded by their ages, income, and failing health. The senior citizens' described their role on the board as tokenism: "They don't really listen to what we have to say and then they have these big events that they know my wife and I can't afford and they don't offer to pay" (Mr. Johnny). The executive director said, "the board can't pay for them. We're all responsible to contribute to our own expenses" (Everlyn).

In depth board information was unavailable for this research study. An informant explained "significant change will be very slow, if any, at the NCC because, although well intentioned, the board of directors have too many senior citizens and too many folk who have served over a decade on the board" (Africa).

The organizational structure at the NCC was relatively flat, enabling interactive communication. Given the organizational structure, major decisions flowed from the board of directors to the executive director, then to the staff. Generally, the executive director vested authority,

responsibility, and accountability to members and employees at all levels. They made staff and volunteers part of the internal decision-making process.

The NCC's organizational culture promoted independent thinking from staff members. For example, the executive director rewarded one staff member with a salary increase for taking initiative to develop and promote programs ideas with junior staff members. On the other hand, the executive director terminated a staff member for his lack of initiative, stating that

his problem is he always wants someone to tell him exactly what to do and how to do it. Whereas, my senior staff member takes initiative and I don't have to tell her what to do at all. I admire that in her. My thing is you know what your responsibility is from janitor on up. If you know you have to mop the floor, I shouldn't have to tell you how to do it (Everlyn).

The NCC engaged in two types of planning: short-term operational planning from month to month and long-term strategic planning to execute specific projects that would eventually lead to the actualization of its mission and vision. The executive director was the initiator of planning. Most planning initiatives were in the form of informal agendas that were refined and expanded over time.

Agendas were used as guides in helping staff make efficient use of interactions with community members, and people in their network. Using agendas appeared to be a useful method for the staff because the open and interactive environment at Niger accommodated daily drop-ins from community members, the NCC's network, and the general public.

Niger's planning process involved monthly staff meetings that were internal to the NCC's staff. Short-term plans were specific and detailed, outlining monthly goals and objectives. Long-term plans, much more loosely connected to the mission, were constantly being shaped and refined over time. The executive director frequently met with the board of directors to discuss her ideas of planning and to get board approval.

The NCC had a sizable budget to enable it to plan and implement programs. Most of the monies were restrictive United Way funds that had to be used within United Way member guidelines, or support would be terminated. Restricted resources led the NCC to inter-organizational relationships with dozens of organizations, an arrangement that allowed the NCC more flexibility in programming.

#### Inter-organizational Relationships

School X, school Y, and the Saturday Read program worked through the NCC's mission to accomplish their

outreach efforts of getting both students and parents of hard to reach populations involved. The Teen Health program worked through the NCC's mission to educate teens on teen-related health issues.

#### School X

School X's contact with the NCC was through the parental involvement coordinator, Faye. Her position was new, in existence for less than 1 year. As parental involvement coordinator, Faye's mission was to get traditionally non-active parents actively involved in their child's school community. Statistically, these children were more likely to be lower academic performers and associated with risky behaviors, such as drug use, suspensions, dropouts, and truancy. The Niger community, which included Drew Gardens and other public housing communities, was identified in the program grant as a major area for Faye's focus.

An important part of Faye's planning was focused on learning about the Niger community and gaining the residents' trust. At school X, Faye met with children from the Niger community in her office. Encountering many families at Drew Gardens who lacked phones or transportation, Faye worked through the NCC to plan interactions with parents.

In Faye's first attempts to learn about the community and to gain its members' trust, Faye became involved in a joint program with the NCC and the teen health program. "The NCC, the teen health program, and our school came together for our first joint program, the Oprah TV talk show. The discussions were on teen sexuality" (Faye). During the planning of the panel discussion on teen sexuality, Tia (senior staff member at the NCC) and Faye went door to door to get teens involved. "This kind of partnership effort helped establish trust and rapport, especially because everyone in the community knew and respected Tia" (Faye).

Faye worked weekly with the NCC on student and parent issues regarding transportation, such as the lack of access to a city bus line to get both students and parents to the school if a student missed the bus or if a parent needed to attend a conference. Working with Faye, the NCC helped by providing transportation for parents and students in need.

The school climate was not supportive of Faye's job. When I arrived at school X for an interview with Faye, the climate was tense and unfriendly. I later learned that school integration had been difficult. A few years earlier, city schools merged with county schools, black and Hispanic students were bused in. In opposition, the principal left the school, taking several teachers with him.

Faye was personable and easy to talk with. I witnessed the staff push her around, making simple tasks, such as copying, difficult for her to complete. Even when Faye and I went in to greet the principal to share the purpose of my visit, after we had spoken briefly, in my presence he went on to discuss in detail some issues surrounding a problem student. As Faye walked me to my car, she said, "I know the behavior here isn't normal. I'm not crazy, but when I complained to the board of education, they told me to give it time. But I know these people need cultural diversity training."

#### School Y

School Y's contact with the NCC was Iyana, who had been one of the school's three assistant principals for 2 years. She was 7th-grade administrator, and her objective was to assist teachers with classroom issues and to be available to troubleshoot issues for seventh graders.

Each year, Iyana made it her goal to become familiar with the students and families from the Niger community. Iyana's interaction with Drew Gardens involved weekly follow-up on students and weekly communication with the NCC. She planned visits to Drew Gardens and other public housing complexes and worked with her two sisters to coordinate recreational ball games in the community. One



sister, a police officer, had a consistent basketball league with youth in the Niger community, and the other sister was the coordinator of the teen public health facility.

The school's climate was supportive of Iyana's position within the Niger community. Iyana planned activities for the Niger community based on her intimate involvement with its residents. The school staff relied on her as an important information source and advocate for the Niger community. When I arrived at School Y for an interview with Iyana, I observed the staff was busy but accommodating to me as a visitor. As I walked down the school hallway with Iyana, I could hear students making reference to her presence, straightening up their language and body movements as we passed them in the hallway. I observed her talking with students. Iyana's communication with students in the crowded hallways reflected that she felt each child was important and worthy of respect. "Yes, excuse me Mr. or Ms. . . ." Learning was expected, "learning is not allowed to be pushed aside when a child's labeled learning disabled" (Iyana). Iyana modeled behavior of respect and priority for learning.

### Saturday Read Program

A news reporter, Terry, called the NCC to see if she could volunteer. She knew of the Niger community from the many crime stories she had covered as a news reporter. Terry quit her job as a news reporter to devote full attention to outreach efforts. Once Terry learned of the need for a community reading program from the NCC's senior staff person, Tia, she devoted attention to planning efforts for a Saturday Read Program. In an interview with Tia, she explained, "We have several children in our after-school program who are slow readers and who fail assignments because they don't comprehend well. They need one-on-one help in reading."

Working through the NCC's mission, Terry's targeted audience were children between the ages of 7 and 12. Terry envisioned a community full of readers, believing that "you develop a community of readers one reader at a time and by working with families." So her goal was to reach the families of Drew Gardens by helping the children to read. With full support from the NCC with supplies and space, Terry organized the Saturday Read Program at the NCC.

An important part of Terry's planning was to get to know the residents of Drew Gardens and the environments that affected them. Terry knew the Drew Gardens and the

surrounding Niger community socio-culturally and economically from the mostly negative news stories she had covered. She wanted to learn more about the community's residents on a personal level. As a white female in a black community, Terry took extra steps to humble herself whenever she met or worked with anyone from the community. Terry was deeply religious. She felt that

you have to spend enough time out here for people to grow accustomed to you and to be comfortable with the fact that you don't want anything from them. You're just out here to try and understand the way they live and offer assistance when you can. It doesn't come over 3 or 4 weeks, it comes over many months (Terry).

### Teen Health

Teen Health's contact with the NCC was through the program coordinator, Angel. Angel had been with the Teen Health program for 3 years. Her position was part of a larger healthcare facility, with an extensive team of doctors and nurses who specialized in children and adult medicine. She focused attention on preventive methods of health care for teens. The goal was to help teens avoid pregnancy, AIDS, and other teen-related health problems.

A major part of Angel's focus was middle schools, high schools, and low-income housing communities, which in part

included the Niger community. Angel worked through the NCC's mission because they both focused on issues concerning children. Angel made personal school visits and community visits, especially to the NCC. She communicated weekly with the NCC's staff, coordinating and planning follow-up care, appointments, and information sessions for the Drew Garden community teens.

Teen Health, the NCC, and the middle school planned joint programs, of which one was the youth conference that involved dozens of teens from the Niger community. As mentioned earlier, both the coordinator of Teen Health and the assistant principal of middle school Y were sisters. They frequently worked together with the NCC. Another sister, who was a police officer, had established baseball and basketball leagues in the Niger community. The director of the Teen Health program and the assistant principal of middle school Y frequently worked with the NCC to plan and coordinate the recreational ball game activities for the purpose of reaching youth in the entire Niger community.

### Community

#### Community Organizations

Dwayne, a resident of the Drew Gardens housing complex, single-handedly brought his vision of self-sufficiency for poor people in Drew Gardens to the

forefront. Dwayne was a middle-aged, ex-convict, and ex-drug addict. However, Dwayne was an articulate self-proclaimed lawyer on a mission to use the legal skills he learned from a few political science courses earlier in his life. His mission was to fight for poor people in public housing and to fight against what he saw as the oppressive powers in private, public, and governmental agencies. His outspoken manner and his embracing of poor, grassroots folk brought him a following of people, mainly from Drew Gardens, who were unskilled but loyal to his vision.

If you have a vision and you have something positive to say, people will listen. I'm on fertile ground because people are tired of being abused. Bad housing, abject poverty, drug abuse, crime, no jobs, no skills, yea people are ready to listen to somebody like me. I have something to say and I can make things happen.

(Dwayne)

As a leader, Dwayne developed his mission, set his goals, and then shared them selectively with the rest of the group. Dissatisfied with being under the tutelage of the Housing Authority, Dwayne garnered the support of the few mothers in Drew Gardens who made up the resident council to develop his very own nonprofit organization, ARGO. According to Dwayne,

ARGO comes from the Greek mythology. It was the name of a ship that carried Jason across the sea in search of the Golden Fleece. The symbolism herein is that this corporation will be the vessel that carries the members out of poverty in search of the better life. ARGO was created in February 1994 to empower the residents of Drew Gardens and to lead its people to self-sufficiency. Dwayne had the idea and formulas for ARGO. He set up ARGO's structure as a nonprofit with a board. He developed the bylaws, incorporated ARGO, and appointed himself as a paid executive. He told the board that he would work for free until they were able to pay him. When board members explained their relationship with Dwayne, as it related to ARGO, they reiterated "we are lucky we have Dwayne working on our behalf. Without Dwayne, God knows we wouldn't have anything. He really cares about what happens in this community and that's much more than you can say for anyone else" (Lisa). The treasurer of the resident council, however, had a strained relationship with Dwayne over money issues. Dwayne applied for and received 501c3 nonprofit status for ARGO. He was elated that he had the power to fulfill his goal to solicit grants.

Dwayne explained he wanted to accomplish the following goals through ARGO:

1. to develop apprenticeship programs that would give people in the community skills that would transfer to the workplace; i. e., apprenticeship programs in community stores, laundries, and daycare center.

2. to buy the Drew Gardens housing community from the Housing Authority.

3. to take the Niger Community Center away from the executive director.

4. to run for political office so that there will be a voice for the poor to be heard.

When I first visited the Drew Gardens housing complex in summer 1997, I went to visit Dwayne in his office space inside of the Parks and Recreation side of the building that housed the NCC and the Housing Authority. Dwayne generally had uninterrupted access to the space because the recreational department used the space only part time.

ARGO was developed from the membership of the resident council. Dwayne never defined the separation between the organizations, ARGO and the resident council. The resident council's members were also ARGO members. Dwayne led both organizations simultaneously, working more closely with ARGO but choosing the organization that worked to fit his needs in any given situation. The members were confused about organizational structure and were vague when

questioned about it. When I asked a member of the two groups about the distinction between members in the resident council and members in ARGO, she stated, "we really can't comment on that. It'll be better if you ask Dwayne" (Ann). They depended on Dwayne to tell them what to do every step of the way. Dwayne had a difficult time getting board members and community members to attend monthly meetings and that was very disappointing to him, so he did most of the planning. The meetings were sporadic, taking place whenever he was literally able to corner the members in the community. One member of the groups said while laughing, "I must admit we run from Dwayne when we see him 'cause we know he's probably tryin to git us to come to some meeting or something" (Leiter).

#### Staff-initiated Community Groups

The staff-initiated groups represented the community's voice for the NCC. Staff-initiated groups worked directly with a staff member from the NCC. Working under the tutelage of the NCC, with the exception of the Teen Association, they answered questions posed by staff about the community, while staff planned and organized community programming. On the other hand, the Teen Association members were very vocal and interactive in planning with the NCC's staff.



Golden Challengers.

On the day I observed the senior citizens, my field notes gave the following account:

I began the day riding in a 15-passenger van with a staff member. We went door to door to pick up 11 senior citizens in all. The staff member and I helped each senior citizen off the bus and into the senior citizen building. Once we were inside and settled into our seats, the staff member asked the group of senior citizens, "What do you want to plan in the way of activities for next month?" She said, "I have a staff meeting coming up and I would like to let the director know what we will be doing." The reply from one senior citizen in the group was, "whatever you plan is all right with us—ceramics, Bible study, bingo." The staff member said, "What about some speakers? Have some ideas about topics?" She didn't get a response so she suggested having a police officer to discuss senior citizen safety and to inform the group on recent crime updates involving senior citizens (Fieldnotes, 1999).

Later that day, I interviewed one senior citizen as he worked on a ceramic project. Questions about programming brought a lowered voice from him. He revealed:

You know they just ask us what we want so it can make them feel better and so that it can look like they are working with us but what's really going on is they have already made up their minds what they want to do. We're not stupid. If we ask for something that's too far off from the norm, it would be a problem (Mr. Johnny).

Women Ordained to Achieve (WOA).

When I first observed the single mothers, they required I participate with them, so I did. As participant-observer, I observed that the seven members of the group had low self-esteem, daily survival issues, and serious disciplinary problems with their children. The group provided a soothing haven for the women to vent their frustrations with life. The staff members practically had to drag the group into active participation during events and activities.

During my interview with the group, I asked what were some of their programming ideas. One member of the group responded, "We leave that up to Ms. T. She generally does the planning and all. See what we do is talk amongst us and give her ideas of things like that. What we do in our group is support each other with problems" (Leiter). Staff members proudly listed the number of events, workshops, and

activities that WOA had put on as a group although the staff really did the major planning. Some of the events, workshops, and activities for the group were, mothers' night out on the town, information sessions on food and money management, workshops on how to handle adolescent disciplinary problems, and a career fair. Tia (Ms. T) explained the type of input the women gave to her and how their input helped to develop programming

If I have a problem or want more information on something, I go to the group and ask for their input. They know for instance if a child's mother is on crack or if a drug dealer moved into a mother's home to set up his drug shop, or if a family is out of money and food or the child is selling drugs and staying out all night. These are things these parents know and when they tell me, I can schedule workshops or call in the appropriate resources for help (Tia).

#### Teen Association.

When I observed the teenagers in action, I saw an eager and active group. On average, 12 teens would show up for their weekly meeting. On one evening when I observed them, they were planning for their first annual youth conference. They were practicing for a play and the leadership roles they were to assume in the youth

conference. As I observed them, teenagers and staff members were clearly interchanging ideas. Teenagers were actively involved, receiving input from staff, and giving feedback. One staff member said, "They keep you on your toes. You have to think and be real with these kids. They can see straight through hypocrisy and phoniness" (Tia).

#### Summary

The NCC's mission was an important part of the organization's overall function. The organizational structure and culture encouraged communication and individual ownership toward the mission. Staff-initiated groups were developed to help staff learn about problems existing in the community. After all, engaging the community was a large part of the NCC's mission. IORs with youth-centered missions that were similar to the NCC worked through the NCC's mission while fulfilling their organization's mission. Dwayne, the self-proclaimed leader of the community-initiated groups, ARGO and resident council, had a personal mission to move the community from dependence to independence. One such goal, although unrealistic to community members, was to have residents purchase the housing project from the Housing Authority.

### Understanding Community Through Social Networks

The theme understanding community through social networks emerged as a result of the effects gleaned from established alliances and exchanges from interactions among people and groups. This theme described the relationships that existed between the NCC, IORs, and the community. Particular attention was given to each group's knowledge of social patterns and social integration among community members in their service area. I examined organizations and individuals providing services to the community based on the following:

1. the type of inter-organizational relationship (IOR) established with the core organization, i.e. formal, informal, ad hoc;

2. their knowledge of how people in the community were integrated and their knowledge of the issues of concern to the community and who was affected by those issues in the community;

3. their knowledge of environments (social, political, economic, technical) that shaped issues in social networks in the community;

4. the mechanisms used to discern information about the target community; i. e., media, documents, published reports, community interviews;

5. the sources of legitimization used by the IORs and the core organization to prioritize issues in the community;

The NCC and IORs worked together to discern the social patterns and needs of the community through programs, services, daily crisis intervention, and other causal interactions with the residents. Conversely, the community-initiated groups, ARGO and the resident council, worked independently of the NCC and its IORs. Members of the two community-initiated groups worked together to meet the expressed needs of their leader's (Dwayne) vision for the community, which was entrepreneurial focused, as opposed to the service-focused vision of the NCC. Whereas the NCC used their understanding of social networks in the community to increase their knowledge of the perceived issues of concern to the community, IORs used their understanding of social networks in the community to strengthen their clientele-base and the relationships with their clients. The community-initiated groups used their understanding of social networks in the community to stimulate and initiate ideas of independence and entrepreneurial-ship among community members. Similarly, the NCC, IORs, and community-initiated groups used social networks to develop program in the community.

### Niger Community Center

Aware that a core staff of seven could not effectively service the estimated 738 households in the Niger service area, the board of directors and the executive director encouraged the NCC's staff to seek inter-organizational networks (IORs) to help accomplish the NCC's objectives of providing programs to the community. Several such relationships existed in varying degrees at the NCC. When seeking IORs' the NCC required two major goals: (a) the IOR must have had prior knowledge and interaction with the Niger community and (b) the goals of the IOR had to be similar to the NCC's goals.

When I spoke with the executive director about IORs, understanding the fierce competition for funding, one of her main concerns was weeding through deception from other organizations: "People want to work with you just so they can use your ideas and grant-writing skills. I'm sorry, I just can't do that. That happened to me once before and, when they got what they wanted, they didn't want anything to do with us after that."

Of the 14 IORs I examined at the NCC, none of them had formal agreements with the NCC. The relationships were ad hoc, sporadic, and as needed. The IORs with the most trusted and consistent relationships were established with

two middle schools, the teen public health facility, and the Saturday Read Program. Each of the IORs had a youth-centered mission similar to that of the NCC.

#### The NCC and Community Relationships

Through several years of interaction with the Niger community, the core staff of the NCC used several avenues to become knowledgeable of the Niger community and issues its residents faced. Two successful avenues NCC's staff used to gain knowledge of the community were (a) daily interactions with the people in the community through social service programs, and (b) staff-initiated community groups.

Daily interactions with people in the community through social service programs were extensive and provided an excellent way for the NCC's staff to learn about the needs of the residents. The NCC had a long list of programs and activities that were scheduled in the center nearly every hour of the day. Many required staff interaction either with residents directly or with program facilitators in reference to a resident's status.

Staff-initiated groups provided another avenue for the NCC staff to learn about the current issues affecting the community. In staff-initiated groups, the staff and resident discussed the resident's problems, and problems of



the residents' neighbors. For example, I was part of several conversations with the WOA group that focused on a single mother with three children. My field notes revealed a single mother was addicted to crack. The oldest boy was staying out all night long, the middle child was having behavioral problems in school, and the NCC wanted to intervene before the youngest child got into trouble (Fieldnotes, 1999).

The NCC's staff member involvement in personal crisis and community activities lead to their intimate knowledge of the community and the community's environments, and they shared this information at appropriate times with their IORs and other helping professionals to plan interventions. Information about the community's environments was varied. The senior staff member explained, "educationally and socially the people in the community have low language skills, low educational skills, and closed networks among themselves" (Tia). An observation from the volunteer of the Saturday Read Program revealed a social pattern:

It's frustrating when you go to look for a child's parent to involve them in his reading and can't find them, or go to a house and all these people are sitting around but no one is connected to the child.

It's challenging and takes a little getting use to but

it's also rewarding when you talk to a parent about a child's success and the family's joy (Terry).

The arts coordinator observed "economically over 90% of the residents are on some type of public financial assistance and the average income is \$4000 according to statistical reports we see" (Candy). The residents who worked were in low-skilled, low-paying jobs. According to the housing manager, "I've observed these residents lag far behind. Most have little to no computer experience and no phones to even run a computer line. But when it comes to TV, my residents most often will value cable television more because they can sit home and watch that all day. So well over 3/4 of the resident population here are without a phone (India).

Staff-initiated group participants were a good resource for staff because they knew the people in the community and they knew what was happening with them. A resident who was a former drug addict, shared her observations about the people in the community, "they spend large amounts of time drinking, smoking drugs, and sitting around each other's apartments" (Leiter). Another resident told the staff, "they are settled in their routines, staying home in bed all day and partying at night, so they

don't participate in community things unless food or something free is there" (Lisa).

Politically, with the exception of staff getting senior citizens together to talk with their legislative representative on senior citizen issues, the adult residents of Niger were not really involved with politics. I found they generally did not understand or cared to understand their basic civic rights unless it involved them directly. Some issues that involved them directly and did cause concern as well as fear was welfare-to-work reform for adults and social security cuts for senior citizens.

#### Inter-organizational Relationships

##### School X

School X's contact person for the NCC, the parental involvement coordinator, Faye, lacked extensive knowledge of the Niger community because her position was new and she was new to the state. However, Faye was committed to the community and was willing to put herself in a position to learn what was needed. Therefore, she frequently communicated with the NCC's senior staff via phone and made personal visits to the community. Some of her personal visits to the community coincided with Tia door-to-door community visits. Faye felt the visits were necessary "to gain firsthand knowledge of the people in that community in

a non-threatening manner." She gained knowledge of the Niger community from the NCC's staff and through statistical data presented to her by the grant writer of her parental involvement program. Faye worked on the community issue of busing students across town and how that affected students and parents without vehicles who lacked access to public transportation.

#### School Y

Iyana, the assistant principal, was very knowledgeable about the Niger community, having gained her knowledge and information through first-hand community information and statistical school data. With information on income and transportation, Iyana scheduled a special back-to-school PTA meeting within walking distance of the Drew Gardens community. The purpose was to get more parents involved from Drew Gardens and the surrounding community. Although only one family attended, Iyana continued to plan this yearly meeting close to the community.

Iyana interacted with students daily as she fulfilled her role as the assistant principal. Troubleshooting on behalf of students with the NCC was a major part of her job. Nonetheless, she felt very strongly that academics had to be balanced with extracurricular activities, so she worked with her sisters (director of Teen Health and a

local community police officer) and Tia at the NCC to arrange ball games in the Niger community. Iyana also worked to learn the slang language spoken by students. She felt "if you understand what they are referring to, you can communicate with them" (Iyana).

#### Saturday Read Program

Terry was knowledgeable about the Niger community through the numerous crime stories she had covered as a former news reporter. She learned of the need for a reading program through the staff's knowledge of students with low reading skills. Terry and several community children spent numerous hours going door to door to gain contacts from the children to recruit more children for the reading program.

Terry focused a lot of her time on getting to understand the social patterns of the families in Drew Gardens because her goal was to work with children and their families. One family pattern that she struggled to understand was the changing role of stepfathers:

It took me a little while, but I learned that if a father isn't around for a child then a boyfriend may take his place. It became even more complicated when a mother ended a relationship with a boyfriend and got a new boyfriend. I think it was harder for the child

because it was like starting over to establish a new relationship with everything (Terry).

### Teen Health

Angel, the program coordinator of the Teen Health program, worked closely with the community through middle schools, high schools, and the NCC. Angel was very concerned about high-risk behaviors, such as premature and unprotected sexual intercourse among teens and getting teens into the habit of routine gynecological examinations.

As part of the school's programs, and through the NCC's Teen Association meetings, Angel routinely scheduled information sessions with students from Drew Gardens and the broader Niger community. She gained statistical data on the Niger community from her program's larger healthcare facility and gained firsthand knowledge of health issues surrounding teens through her one-on-one contact with them in their communities.

### Community

The community-initiated groups, ARGO and the resident council, had several relationships with organizations outside of the NCC and its IORs. The relationships were mainly formal because financial arrangements and resources were involved. The primary formal relationship with ARGO was with a granting agency that, after appointing the

Housing Authority the responsibility of financial institution, gave ARGO \$40,000 to develop the community playground equipment. The primary formal relationship with the resident council was with the Housing Authority that annually made available \$1000 to the council for programming, along with space for the resident council to hold meetings. Dwayne's appointment as Housing Authority Commissioner in 1995 was an important formal relationship among the Housing Authority, ARGO, and the resident council.

The residents affiliated with the resident council and the nonprofit organization, ARGO, were knowledgeable about the Niger community, but they possessed varying degrees of knowledge. The women, who followed Dwayne's direction, were knowledgeable about the community's everyday life. In a group conversation with ARGO and resident council members one day as we waited to see who would show up for one of the monthly meetings, one member shared "people only come out if they know you have food. Then if you feed them too early they won't even stay for the end of your program" (Leiter). Another member responded to my question about available community training programs. "Housing Authority have all kinds of babysitting training and certificate programs. I goes to them but don't sees anybody from Drew

Gardens there" (Ann). "Peoples git stuck in them routines and seems like you can't get them to come out for nothin' 'cept those drugs at night. I sees them" (Lisa). I talked with the housing manager, and she said:

People don't come to the programs we offer. If I want them to come out to a community meeting, I have to threaten eviction and mandate them to come out. That's the only way. If I suspect suspicious behavior I can't send a message and most of these residents don't have phones. I have to go to their apartment and everyone knows when you see me coming something isn't right (India).

Members of ARGO and the resident council knew where the crack houses were, who used them, and who committed crimes to support crack habits. They knew who the drug dealers were and the women who allowed the drug dealers to live with them and deal drugs from their home. They also knew who worked everyday and who sent their children to school well fed and well dressed. Bright and early one morning as one member of the community-initiated group showed me around the community, my field notes gave the following account:

6:30 A.M.: We're parked at an angle across the street from an abandoned house near the Dew Gardens public housing



complex. One man, seemingly on a mission, knocks on the car window and ask "can you spot me a five". Unsuccessful, he heads to the back of the abandon house. It's 6:48 A.M. We're seen at least five men and one woman walking briskly towards the back of the same abandoned house. 7:15 A.M. One man staggers away from the abandoned house. A woman and a man walk away from the house with arms wrapped around one another, laughing and talking loud. My informant stated to me "this is the crack house this week". We drive a block over to drew gardens. What's left of someone's furniture is setting out in the street as a couple of people rummage through it. My informant said "she let that drug dealer set up shop in her house. The drug traffic got heavy. She got caught and now she's out in the street with her three kids and he's living in the next court with another girl". 7:40 A.M. Middle school children are waiting for the school bus. The informant points out two boys and one girl in a crowd of nine school-age children. They stand out because their hair isn't combed and their cloths were wrinkled and worn. The informant states "the mother's on crack and don't care about the children. She sells all of the children's food stamps every month for crack" (Fieldnotes, 1999).

On the other hand, although Dwayne's character was questionable, he knew the community on a different level.

He knew the daily life and routine of the community but worked hard to understand issues from the broader perspective of how they affected the community. For example, he knew politics was a weak area in the community so he strived to gain a political seat. He knew technology was weak so he strived to incorporate the use of a computer in his office. Economically, he knew how much money residents made and understood the concept of abject poverty because he made use of public records, documents, and statistical data provided through the Housing Authority and the housing commissioner's office. Socially, he was well versed because he lived in the community, frequented homes, and had one-on-one interactions with the residents, although his firsthand knowledge made him cynical of, according to him, "ignorant and low-class mentality of complacency."

In 1997, when I visited Dwayne's office, he was excited about a community project. He talked extensively about the open space and trail grant he had written with the housing authority's grant writer. As he shared his story with me, I could feel his excitement about his first pending success. "I'm on my way. We're going to take this community from the housing authority and we're going to take the NCC with it" (Dwayne). Dwayne's knowledge of the

community, coupled with the formal relationships he established, were about to lead to the procurement of a \$40,000 grant to build a playground for the community. Dwayne explained how it all came about as he showed me pertinent documents that appeared to be authentic:

Here's the grant application for the playground and my incorporation papers for ARGO's nonprofit status so I can write grants now. My friend, who was a community activist in Niger, he's deceased now, gave me all the information about the grant. Then I met Sam, in my relationship with the Smart Start program and Bill designed playgrounds. So I asked him if he would help me design a playground for Niger and he said yes, but he wanted to see more community involvement than just me. So I got 15 residents to be involved over a three-week period. Then I met the city council woman and she introduced me to one of Niger's county commissioners. They told me if I put the open space and trails grant application together and submit it that they would consider it. And they did. They agreed to give us \$40,000 but we had to come up with matching funds. So me being a genius, I came up with the creative idea to use the money that was put into the material for that little tiny iron structure housing authority just

erected as a playground for the children (laughs at structure). That accounted for about \$30,000. Then I added \$10,000 worth of labor from the community to satisfy the rest of the matching funds for the grant. So under the direction of a contractor, the community will build the playground themselves. This way we have a built in apprenticeship program and people can pick up a trade to increase their job skills. We're in the process of getting the money into our account now and securing the contractors (Dwayne).

The playground project was completed but, to everyone's disappointment, especially Dwayne's, 15 community people started the project but only one person completed the project and received a certificate.

#### Summary

The NCC interacted with and gained knowledge of the community through social services, crisis intervention, and staff-initiated groups and programs. The NCC sought IORs with knowledge of the community and with similar goals to help them work with and understand social patterns and community needs. Using various methods, IORs established extracurricular activities, and gained knowledge of the community through sports, established rapport, and statistical data on health and school indicators for the

community. Members of the community-initiated groups, ARGO and resident council, had intimate knowledge of the everyday life patterns of the community because they lived among the residents. Dwayne, the group's leader, had intimate knowledge of the community. Group member had difficulty articulating their knowledge of the community, Unlike group members, Dwayne strived to understand the broader issues that impacted the community as it related to their political, technological, environmental, and social needs. He used his networking skills and knowledge of the community to develop an innovative apprenticeship program for the community, in hopes that it would help to increase the job marketability skills of some of the people in the community.

#### Citizen Involvement Versus Citizen Action

The theme citizen involvement versus citizen action emerged as a result of the stark contrast between the ideas of citizen participation from the NCC and its IORs and the active residents of the community-initiated groups, ARGO and the resident council. This theme described the process and the level of citizen and stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process, as it related to programs and services that affected the community. The following questions were explored:

1. Were residents, IORs, and stakeholder groups of the targeted community involved in the decision-making process, which included defining selected issue(s) of concern, determining what must change, and how change will happen?

2. How does the core organization and its IORs identify formal and informal leadership in their targeted community?

3. How was dialogue initiated with leaders of the targeted community and stakeholders to encourage involvement in the decision-making process?

The NCC worked closely with the community residents and provided specific channels for the residents to give them feedback and input on programming. The NCC viewed this as giving the community choice and opportunities for involvement in program decision-making. Although the NCC worked closely with the community and provided channels for input, it was within the NCC's framework of receiving information and input from the community. Even if residents had other ideas, it wasn't likely to be accepted if outside of the NCC's framework. IORs assisted the NCC in developing programs. IORs' involvement extended the formal leadership of the NCC but not the grassroots decision-making aspect. However, residents of the community-initiated groups, with significant assistance from the leader Dwayne, sought

citizen action through a grant, developed solely for them and apart from the NCC, with an apprenticeship component for the residents. Residents followed Dwayne's leadership because of growth potential in citizen action opportunities.

#### Niger Community Center

In monthly staff meetings, the NCC's staff discussed issues based on their funding source and board of directors but also discussed issues based on their interactions with community, inter-organizational relationships (IORs), and staff-initiated groups of residents in the community (Golden Challengers, WOA, Teen Association). To learn about issues of concern in the community, the staff established rapport with community residents and worked closely with IORs. For example, the NCC established rapport with residents through their social programs that helped single mothers and children with issues of transportation to schools for families without vehicles and extending a family's food to the end of each month through the NCC's food pantry. Tia and other staff members worked with IORs to plan extracurricular ball games, teen information workshops, and reading programs. Sometimes getting people involved required knocking on the residents' doors or coaxing participants to bring a friend. Although the staff

admitted that they only reached about 10% of the community's residents, nonetheless they established rapport with this segment of the population. The results were the building of trust and the sharing of information and stories between staff and residents.

Issues were guided and selected by the executive director based on the funding and the importance of the situation as reported by the staff member. Thereafter, the deciding factors in selecting issues were guided by organizational goals and available funds. Based on organizational funding and goals, the objectives of the selected issues were discussed and defined among staff in monthly staff meetings and a plan of action was devised from the discussions. The plan of action was the determining factor for the type of program created.

Staff selected and devised plans of actions for issues that were deemed important once organizational funding and goals were met. They set up what they believed to be appropriate structures to include residents and IORs in their planning process once issues were selected and formulated in their staff meetings. For example, staff-initiated groups were set up as appropriate structures for residents to voice opinions and give input. Staff viewed this as an important avenue for resident involvement and



choice in program decision-making. Resident involvement and choice included minor input from resident on issues such as community participation, narrowing down the speaker from a couple of the staff chosen speakers, and other program aspects such as scheduling the specific time of a program.

On the other hand, choice was an interwoven theme of programs and workshops given by the NCC and given on behalf of the NCC. The staff of the NCC felt "with choices before you, your options are increased. So in everything we do around here, we teach the power of choice" (Candy). The senior staff member at the NCC said, "when I'm talking to my parents in workshops I tell them it's their choice to be in public housing. They look at me and say 'no it ain't Ms. T, it's how it is'. I tell them in a minute that it was their choice to accept the situation so it's their choice (Tia). On one of several occasions Tia spoke to the teens about choice and said, I tell my teens it's their choice to have children when they decide to have sex without protection. It's their choice to work in low-paying jobs when they decide to drop out of high school without at least getting a diploma. We also teach them that for every choice you make, if that one doesn't work out like you plan, then you should have a plan B and plan C to fall back

on" (Tia). IORs extended the NCC's message on choice when residents attended their programs and workshops.

Staff discussions and written reports were the appropriate avenues for IORs to voice input on programming. IOR involvement included making suggestions on content area, materials, format, location of programs, and the like.

#### Inter-organizational Relationships

Members of IORs worked informally with the NCC's staff to identify community issues and to provide programs concerning those issues. When programs were provided for the Drew Gardens and the broader Niger community, IORs either reported the results to staff through informal conversations or wrote brief reports. Oftentimes, the NCC and its IORs worked jointly on programs or established ongoing programs.

#### School X

Faye, the parental involvement coordinator, talked informally with Tia about transportation issues students encountered when they missed the bus. She also discussed the transportation issues parents encountered when they needed to attend school for a teacher's conference. Tia raised the issue in the staff meeting. The NCC accepted transportation as a major concern for the residents.

Measurable objectives were guided by the director and formulated through staff discussions. The NCC was able to purchase a new community van to meet the transportation needs of its residents. Daily, the NCC transported residents as needed to school, appointments, and trips. Tia and Faye worked together on helping students and parents get to school for scheduled class and meetings.

#### School Y

Iyana, the assistant principal, felt very strongly that extracurricular activities were important. "It's important to balance academics with extracurricular activities so that kids will see that learning can happen in all arenas." Iyana planned ball games with the NCC's staff, the children in the community who attended school Y, and her sister, who was a police officer. Both Tia and her sister loved sports and were eager to coach the teams, which they did in their spare time. Tia signed up children for the teams in the community, while Iyana signed up children for teams through the school.

Tia raised the issue of establishing leagues in the monthly staff meeting and explained it to be a healthy part of the children's lives in keeping them out of trouble and focused on positive activities. Establishing leagues was accepted as part of the NCC's goals. Tia guided the

development of measurable objectives because sports were her area of expertise and through discussion a plan of action was devised. Adopted as part of the NCC's programming for children, staff time was allocated and resources for equipment, such as balls, bats, basketballs, league fees, and uniforms, were implemented into the budget.

#### Saturday Read Program

Working with Tia, Terry established the Saturday Read program, which had long been identified by Tia and other staff members of the NCC as a need in the community. However, with all the other programs and activities at the NCC, it was difficult for staff to find the time to plan an individualized reading program specifically for children. After she recruited children from the community and learned of their specific needs, Terry recruited college students and business professionals to volunteer reading time with the children and to serve as their pin pals. Terry's enthusiasm help to develop the idea for the reading program. The NCC adopted the Saturday Read program, worked with Terry to devise objectives for the program, and implemented it as part of the NCC's budget.

## Teen Health

Angel and Tia worked together to identify high-risk behaviors of teens. Together, they planned and implemented a workshop and panel discussion on teen sexuality. Angel explained to Tia the format of the workshop and panel discussion. During the monthly staff meeting, Tia explained how the workshop and panel discussion would benefit the NCC and it was incorporated into the NCC's goals and objectives. The NCC decided to work as a partner, supporting the workshop's development. Therefore, the NCC provided recruitment efforts and transportation support for parents and students, Teen Health provided administrative support, and the middle school provided panelists. Each of them gave input on program design.

The partnership effort among the NCC, Teen Health, and the middle school made the workshop a success. At the workshop, discussions on teen sexuality were frank and open. A 33-year-old parent drew looks of disbelief after he told the group that he fathered two children at the age of twelve. A 17-year-old panelist, who gave birth to a child at 14, warned, "teen mothers have little free time to spend with friends" (Fieldnotes, 1999). The school taught an abstinence curriculum, which made "sex a forbidden topic during school hours" (Fieldnotes, 1999).

The media attended the workshop. The front page of the local newspaper's community section also featured an article on the workshop.

## Community

### Staff-initiated Groups

Staff solicited ideas about community concerns from members of staff-initiated community groups: Golden Challengers, Women Ordained to Achieve, and the Teen Association. The staff-initiated groups provided the appropriate channel for staff to solicit input from residents about community programs. Few residents gave input, and other residents complained their input was tokenism.

#### Golden Challengers.

The Golden Challengers were an active group of nearly 15 senior citizens that met daily to read the Bible, attend fieldtrips, and work on ceramics, arts, and crafts. Some of them would even get together on the weekend for activities. "Al and a few other buddies of mine are going fishing this weekend" Mr. Johnny said with a smile. My visits with them were pleasant and sometimes full of laughter, as they shared romantic stories about their love lives and reminisced about days long past. One love story went like this:

My wife is a sweetheart. She fixed me my favorite this morning, corn cakes with sweet milk. When I asked her to marry me a couple years ago, she slapped me on the face and told me don't play with her. When she seen I was serious about her, she hugged me and then wouldn't let go (loud laughter) (Mr. Johnny).

They were a talkative bunch. Some of their stories, dating back to 1934, confirmed written accounts of Hayti, a thriving African American business enterprise located just blocks away from the Niger community and the disasters of urban renewal, a governmental program designed to replace substandard housing. In attempts to replace substandard housing in urban cities across America, the program eventually displaced successful African American businesses and homes to make provision for highways and growth. Mr. Johnny remembers the following:

Yes, I remember in the 1930s when all the black businesses were right up the street there. Then the government came through with that program. They promised all those people with businesses that they would relocate them. Then they build tin-city right off of the main street were the cotton mill use to be and right over there were the Hayti building is right now. It was called tin city because the building were

made out of tin. Business just wasn't the same after that and most people just wasn't able to get reestablished again so they went out of business (Mr. Johnny).

The senior citizens told the staff that safety was a problem for most of them. The staff discussed the problem in the staff meetings and agreed to develop programs to help senior citizens learn how to be safe. As a result, the staff invited the community police officer to speak. During that talk, the residents and staff learned that purse snatchings were extremely high during the first of the month when social security checks were delivered.

Although the senior citizens were an actively involved group with staff members, they seemed to know where they stood in terms of voicing their opinion to the staff about programs. "They think we are stupid, but we're not. Everybody knows that they make all their decision before they even come out here and talk with us. They just ask our opinion to make themselves feel good" (Mr. Johnny).

Women Ordained to Achieve (WOA).

The women of WOA were weighed down with devastating social issues, such as drug abuse, domestic violence, poverty, low skills, unemployment, single parenthood, and much more. They literally pulled themselves and each other



out to the biweekly WOA sessions held at the NCC. Some came with uncombed hair and disheveled garments, but their efforts to get there were commendable, given their daily trials. Many women battled with low self-esteem as seen in the following passage:

Sometimes I'm so lonely. It's hard to get somewhere in this here world. Sometimes you feel like just giving up. [As tears flowed] I'm glad I have y'all. It was nice for someone to come knocking on my door, asking about me, is I'm dead or alive (Lisa).

The women told the NCC's staff about the problems of depression among women in the Drew Gardens community. They also shared the difficulties they faced with getting to school for teacher's conferences and the disciplinary problems they had with their children at home and at school. Through social programs and crisis interventions at the NCC, residents had presented their concerns to members of the staff months prior to the development of WOA. Eventually, through staff discussion of the problem in their monthly staff meetings, WOA was developed to give residents with similar problems the opportunity to work in a group with others. Now, workshops on self-esteem and parenting issues are a regular part of monthly activities with WOA.

I observed minimal input from the women. Although the staff asked the women of WOA to give input on program decisions, the women always defaulted back to staff, noting "do what you think is best. You always make good decisions." Although many women battled devastating social problems, such as domestic violence and personal and family drug abuse and didn't care to give their input, a few commented that their input did not matter because the NCC would proceed with its plans anyway. One of the members said, "they don't really want our opinions though they ask for them. It seems like we gots to go long with what they says" (Lisa). The women generally did not give much input into programming but worked on staying in touch and recruiting community people by word of mouth, a rewarding task for them.

#### Teen Association.

On "any given night 15 to 20 teens . . . come through" the NCC to get involved in trips to the mall, the bowling alley, the ball games that were played by the city's team, play rehearsal, or workshops (Tia). When I met the teens, they were in the early planning stages of developing their first annual youth conference. Earlier that year, the youth had worked with the artist on staff to plan an explosive play entitled "The Niger River". On the evening I went to

visit them, one youth said, "It's a real-life drama about children growing up in public housing and in single-parent homes and being around drugs and poverty and stuff like that" (Nina). The play invoked tremendous youth talent and went on to get rave reviews from the broader community. "We were very successful. A lot of rough moments, but nothing insurmountable. Our whole idea was to try and figure out ways to bring arts, resources, and access to communities who normally have little or no arts ...or cultural services" (Homeboy).

The idea of a youth conference developed out of discussions between the staff and the NCC's IORs as a way to tap into more of the community's youth talent. The staff and the youth enthusiastically supported the community's first annual youth conference. The purpose of the youth conference was to (a) motivate youth to improve their academic performance, (b) reduce school dropout rates, (c) encourage youth participation in service and community activities, and (d) recruit mentors for youth. Each evening, I observed the giggles and excitement that filled each rehearsal as the teens worked hand-in-hand with the staff. The teens and the staff gathered input from each other on how to plan role-playing sessions that would engage the young audience's attention. Role-playing

sessions focused on (a) conflict resolution, (b) communication, (c) decision making, and (d) goal setting. The teens also reenacted their play "The Niger River" at the conference. They invited the area Senator as the keynote speaker, bringing more validation to their conference.

The teens' hard work and active involvement brought them closer to the NCC's staff. "They really help us. They care about what's going on with us. This is a lot to do but I'm going to hang in there so I can see what's going on" (Nikki). The entire conference was presented and facilitated by youth. "I didn't even know I could talk in front of people like that" (Nina), recalled one teen as she talked about the success of the conference at the teen association's meeting following the conference.

#### Community-initiated Groups

In the community-initiated groups, ARGO and the resident council, the members were all aware of the monthly programs that the NCC designed for the community. In fact, a couple of members of the staff-initiated group WOA were members of the community-initiated groups. The NCC's janitor, Dwayne, who was the leader of the community-initiated groups, had for several months led group discussions with the community-initiated groups, voicing

his dissatisfaction with the disparities in programming at the NCC. He was annoyed about disparities in programs for males and what he saw as ineffective avenues for community input on program decision-making.

The lack of recognition and partnering from the NCC's staff in the only community-initiated group in Drew Gardens was particularly annoying for Dwayne. Dwayne explained, "I had given several open invitations, but they just don't take us serious enough to come to our meetings." Dwayne complained to whomever would listen, telling people that the NCC was a United Way agency and the United Way was not monitoring the use of its funds because clearly the NCC was not meeting the community's needs. Dwayne felt strongly about this because, according to him, the director never asked for his input on issues.

Dr. [Everlyn] has never come to our meetings. She knows us and she knows about our meetings. Ask anyone in the community if those programs in the community center pertain to them. They will tell you no. They don't know what the community wants because they never ask us. They just tell us what they are going to do (Dwayne).

I asked staff members about their views on involving community leadership, and in particular, I wanted to know

how they felt about involving Dwayne and his community group in the affairs and decision-making process of the NCC. One staff person stated: "When I think of leadership, I think of someone giving and not putting down others. Dwayne's mentality shows he always wants someone to give him something. We don't owe him anything" (Candy). Another staff member said, "Dwayne's not credible and he rather antagonistic" (Geraldine). All of the NCC staff agreed Dwayne wasn't a reliable source, so conflict would exist if he were invited to dialogue. The executive director said, "all I have to say is take everything that he says with a grain of salt" (Everlyn), indicating that Dwayne was less than forthcoming in his work with the community.

Dwayne's dissatisfaction with the NCC was his motivating force behind the development of ARGO, the nonprofit community organization. Dwayne convinced three women of the staff-initiated group WSA to join him in his crusade against the NCC and the Housing Authority. Together, Dwayne and a total of five women from the Drew Gardens community worked with ARGO and the resident council.

Dwayne's claims against the NCC of not representing and involving the community in programming materialized as a reverse situation in his leadership of ARGO and the

resident council. Dwayne's leadership represented a little pocket of intense interaction. His level of influence with the community was not significant, although his ideas and work were innovative. Even in his direct leadership of ARGO and the resident council, Dwayne did not have significant involvement of members, but his influence on the membership was significant. For instance, Dwayne didn't involve the membership in the decision-making processes. He gave information to the membership of ARGO and the resident council only when he felt it was necessary, and the information he gave was predicated upon his review and selection. Dwayne did not feel they were knowledgeable enough to handle complex information or to make important decisions. Therefore, he made all decisions that affected the group and asked their input on minor issues after major decisions were made. This was the same behavior he criticized the NCC of doing. Another example, Dwayne was interested in the office of housing commissioner and was appointed to represent the vacant resident position. His interaction with members on the board of commissioners gave him needed funding contacts to improve Niger's playground equipment. Dwayne wrote a grant with the Housing Authority's grant writer, gave them the idea of including an apprenticeship program in the grant for the residents,

and the grant program was funded. After everything was completed, Dwayne shared the program with the group members for the first time, asking for their input in spreading the word to the community by word of mouth. Dwayne often voiced his concern about group members' lack of civic knowledge and the need to educate them.

Dwayne had a significant influence on the members of ARGO and the resident council, although few. For example, members agreed with Dwayne's flat organizational structure, where everyone reported to him. The members often commented that "Dwayne has all of the experience so he knows exactly what is best for everyone" (Leiter). They trusted his judgment and depended on him to make sole decisions, which Dwayne did. Neither Dwayne nor members of ARGO or the resident council sought organizational training for group members, although opportunities to attend leadership conferences, housing, and political functions were presented by housing. Generally Dwayne received the information and he attended most of the opportunities for training.

Dwayne went to a conference one day and without notice didn't returned to the Drew Gardens community. His whereabouts was unknown to his job, associations, community people, and the like. After a few days, two community



members went to the housing authority manager to inquire on Dwayne's whereabouts. A day or two later the housing authority made a missing person report to the police department. A police officer went to each group member's home and questioned them about the events that lead up to Dwayne's disappearance. I later learned "when Dwayne disappeared, hundreds of dollars from the playground grant fund were missing too" (India). Two group members revealed "Dwayne had a little problem and he had to take care of that problem. That's my opinion. Ain't the first time one of us lapsed back to that stuff [drugs]" (Lisa). "Dwayne had us all fooled. We thought the drug man was afta him cause he joined with the establishment. Now we sees what's up, money and drugs" (Ann). Another member shared with great sadness "we just don't know what to do now that Dwayne is gone. We wish he was back so he could tell us what to do" (Lisa).

Dwayne resurfaced 2 years later, homeless and showing signs of overexposure to living on the streets, but he was still advocating for poor people. I saw him on the evening news one night. As the news reporter questioned him about housing and the poor of the Niger community, he had this to say, "I won't give up until every poor person has shelter

and is treated fairly. It's time for people to pay attention to us and our needs as human beings" (Dwayne).

#### Summary

The NCC's staff was the sole program decision-makers. Through programs, social services, crisis interventions, and staff-initiated groups, they interacted with residents and assessed community needs. During and after program decisions were made, they solicited limited input from residents through channels, such as the staff-initiated groups, Golden Challenger, WOA, and the Teen Association. For example, residents gave limited program input on issues about the best ways to get other residents involved. IORs identified community issues related to their areas of expertise, and oftentimes the NCC's staff would report the issue in staff meetings and have it adopted as part of the NCC's programming. Residents of staff-initiated groups felt their involvement in programming was tokenism, complaining all major decisions were made before they gave their input. Community-initiated groups, ARGO and the resident council, voiced great opposition to the NCC's policies on citizen involvement. Their dissatisfaction with the NCC's policies motivated the development of ARGO, the nonprofit group developed to empower the public housing community of Drew Gardens.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine if, how, and, to what extent the Niger Community Center and its Inter-organizational Relationships (IORs) elicited community participation in program decision-making. Three research questions were explored. Case study was the investigative model approach used for the study. The use of interviews, documentation, and participant-observation allowed for extensive data collection and the opportunity to use multiple sources of evidence. Interviews, field notes, and documentary material were the three units of analysis in the study.

In this chapter, I present conclusions and interpretations of the research findings. The chapter ends with a discussion of implications for practice and suggestions for further research.

#### Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The NCC and their IORs followed a service delivery approach to community organizing which keeps residents in the position of responding to the organization rather than enabling organizations to empower

communities for change. The service delivery approach works to maintain the status quo. For example, maintenance of the status quo would work well in a prominent neighborhood of homeowners wanting to maintain property values. In a low-income community, in need of change, service delivery alone wouldn't be enough. The fundamental goal in community organizing for poor people "is to change the condition that keeps them poor and powerless" (Fisher, 1994, p. xxii). "Service delivery alone does not address the cause of social problems". Progressive "community organizing seeks to mobilize and empower people through services delivered. Good service work includes progressive political activity" (Fisher, 1994, p.204).

Customary to the service delivery approach to community organizing, the organizational objectives of the NCC took precedence over the goals and objectives of grassroots people in the community (Warren et al, 1974). Major program decisions were made in closed staff meetings that enabled the staff of the NCC to shape programming to fit the needs of the NCC. Of course this didn't give residents the benefits of participation. Instead, residents were left to make token program decisions that were meaningless. The majority of Niger's residents responded to the NCC's service delivery approach to helping the Niger

community by not attending programs or by attending programs only if food or gifts were involved.

The programs at the NCC were a revolving door for the population they served. The condition of people in the Niger community tended to remain the same over long periods of time. For example, 3/4 of the community-initiated group members was second generation public housing tenants. All of them were in unskilled jobs. Only one resident had a realistic plan to gain skills for employment and she was working on that plan with the NCC through another agency. The other residents were in a constant and comfortable state of waiting for an agency or for someone to help them.

Conclusion 2: Operating under an organizational service delivery approach to neighborhood organizing as opposed to a community action approach to neighborhood organizing put the staff in the position of assuming the root cause of issues that keep the people in poverty. Many of the NCC's staff and the IORs staff members as well as the community-initiated group leader were experienced civil rights activist or community workers who worked and cared deeply for the black community. The organizational service delivery approach to neighborhood organizing had organizational boundaries that staff was obligated to follow. For example, the idea that residents were clients

and recipients, receiving benefits as opposed to the idea of residents as indigenous leaders and activist (Fisher, 1994). This example followed the assumption that the problem condition of poor people is social disorganization and poor people need service delivery to help them bring about social integration. It overlooks factors that create successful integration in communities such as "environments that encourage open discussion of group interest but refrain from manipulating people to follow the organizer's beliefs or imposing outcomes on people, even [if perceived] for their own good" (Rubin & Rubin, 1992).

In the Niger community, the service delivery approach contributed to the staff's lack of understanding of the lack of cohesiveness and apathy among the residents of Niger. Equally important was the danger of the service delivery approach permeating others in the environment. For example, Dwayne, the leader of the community-initiated groups, criticized the NCC and other social service agencies for their lack of having grassroots involvement in the program decision-making processes and other issues that affected the community. In Dwayne's leadership of the community-initiate groups, he perpetuated the same behavior he accused the NCC and other social service agencies. He made all of the major program decisions without involving

the members. Although the program decisions made by Dwayne were to benefit the community, the lack of community involvement in the process actually served to dis-empower members of the community because they were not allowed growth. Their lack of growth and their complete dependence on Dwayne was revealed when Dwayne disappeared from the community without notice. Both community-initiated groups, ARGO and the resident council, had to disband from the lack of member confidence and competent leadership.

Conclusion 3: Personal missions and personal interpretations of the NCC's mission were more associated with how people described actions rather than the written mission itself. Mission is the core of the vision and describes the organization's purpose according to the activities it performs for constituents" (Yukl, 1998). The NCC's philosophy supported the provision of recreational services to youth, which had been its vision for decades. Expanding the mission to include adults and families, however, had not yet permeated into the NCC's culture.

Transformational leaders influence followers' motivation and behavior by changing or strengthening the organization's culture. According to Schein (1992), leaders influence and shape culture through their decisions and actions. In the case of the NCC, the executive director

often exhibited her extreme displeasure with the adult residents of Niger, noting their lack of motivation for growth and their overwhelming desire to get everything for free. Attitudes among staff toward adults in the Niger community often reflected that of their leader.

The NCC's written mission and its organization's goals and objectives included adult and youth programming. Nonetheless, adult programming had poor attendance, was shorter in duration, lacked creative participation, and lacked significant input from the adult residents. On the other hand, youth programs were better attended by youth and were longer in duration. Youth programs were supportive of active involvement from youth and innovative projects that encouraged and supported their input, such as plays, conferences, and television projects.

This study's findings make manifest the difficulty of introducing change into a culture and the significant influence transformational leaders have on followers. "Culture is to an organization of people what personality is to one person" (Mason, 1996, p. 103). Although organizational culture can be changed, changing it is no easier than it is to change a person's personality.

Conclusion 4: Significant factors in establishing exchange relationships at the NCC were mutual trust,



similar missions, and realization of organizational goals and objectives. As the organization tries to adapt to its environment to achieve organizational objectives and to maximize goal attainment, varying degrees of exchange relationships may form among individuals, groups, organizations, or all three. Exchange relationships between the NCC and other organizations took the form of inter-organizational relationships (IORs), short-term ad hoc efforts at coordination among organizations. Levine and White (1961) noted that exchange relationships are "any volunteer activity between two organizations which has consequences, actual or anticipated, for the realization of their respective goals or objectives. In each IOR, the NCC was the single dominant organization, setting activities in motion to gain support, cooperation, and resources from other organizations. Van de Ven and Walker (1984) asserted in this form of IOR, the organizational agent acts as an entrepreneur who gathers together resources and forges ad hoc relationships needed to enable his or her organization to pursue its objectives.

The four organizations at the NCC with the strongest IORs represented IORs with mutual trust and sharing, although the NCC remained the dominant organization. Each of the four IORs had youth-focused missions similar to the

NCC, and these organizations shared their resources to achieve a mutually desired outcome (Van de Ven & Walker, 1984).

The exchange relationships between the NCC and the staff-initiated groups, Women Ordained to Achieve (WOA) and Golden Challengers, didn't represent relationships defined by mutual trust or similar missions. Whereas the NCC was interested in youth-focused missions to fulfill organizational objectives of service delivery, community members of the staff-initiated groups WOA and Golden Challengers were interested in developing programs that demanded more citizen action and participation. The conflict between the neighborhood organizing approach to change (citizen involvement versus citizen action), nullified any opportunities for mutual trust between the NCC and adult and senior citizen members of the community.

Conclusion 5: The formal leader of the NCC and the informal grassroots leader of the community-initiated groups yielded considerable influence over members of their staff and group. Everlyn, by virtue of her position as CEO, yielded positional power over the members of her group. Everlyn's spiritual strength in ministry gave her the status of an opinion-leader as well. According to Boone (1998) an opinion leader is someone who is respected or

whom persons seek advice. An opinion-leader is someone who affects the daily lives of people in the community.

Ministers are respected in the black community and are particularly gifted in speaking. Everlyn used themes of God and prayer, and cultural forms of expressions and language to evoke powerful feelings of commitment from her staff. Staff members were intrinsically committed to help people less fortunate than themselves. She communicated shared personal values among the staff and related them to organizational values to transcend self-interest for the sake of the organization.

On the other hand, Dwayne's paid job was janitor of the NCC. His boss was Everlyn. His outspoken manner penetrated single mothers in the community and some mothers of WOA. Dwayne was the opinion-leader of the community-initiated groups in the Niger community and he was in strong opposition to Everlyn and her style of programming for the NCC. He yielded considerable influence among his group because he was a grassroots person who was articulate, and who spoke on basic survival needs and workable solutions for poor people.

Everlyn was vocal about the fact she felt Dwayne to be an unreliable source of information. The more Everlyn ignored Dwayne's efforts of gaining respect for his

informal leadership in the community, the angrier he became. Although temporary, Dwayne was able to influence group members to terminate their relationship with the NCC and their programs. Although Dwayne had innovative ideas, some he implemented, his questionable background and credibility often overshadowed his innovation.

Conclusion 6: The assumption that dialogue between educators and leader/learner will resolve conflicts between perceptions of needs is more likely to occur in settings where several types of barriers to communication do not exist. The community-based programming process as espoused by Boone (1997) encourages collaboration between adult educators and leaders of potential learners in negotiating higher-order needs for learning. Cooperates and loosely formed networks were the norm in the Niger community as opposed to collaboration. Dialogue wasn't utilized as an option in many instances because several barriers to communication were prevalent between educators, leaders and learners. With educators and leaders in the community, one of the main barriers to communication was in the form of keen competition over scarce resources due to the socio-political climate and an overabundance of CBOs and nonprofits in the area. Given this type of climate, trust with other organizations was difficult to establish. With

educators, leaders and learners, barriers to communication were mainly centered around social problems such as the lack of basic high school education, drug abuse, and crime. In the Niger community too much communication was viewed as suspicion among residents because of the high rate of illegal activity.

According to Lagenbach (1988), the idea that dialogue will resolve any conflict between perception of needs is predicated on the assumption that the specific purpose of the activity is not counter to the leader/learner's purpose. For educators and leaders in the Niger community, due to economic needs, the primary purpose was to secure funds first and then promote programs. Thus, the competition for funds created a counter force for most agencies that kept them from collaborating. For educators, leaders and learners associated with the NCC, whereas the purpose of the NCC was service delivery to help community people, the purpose of the community groups were social action to help community people. Both goals were to help the people in the community, but the purposes (one to promote service delivery and one to promote social action) were different which were counter to each other.

### Implications for Practice

The study's findings suggest service delivery and social action go hand in hand. Service delivery alone does not address the cause of social problems" (Fisher, 1994, 204). Social action alone is also insufficient to address social problems. Good service work includes political activity that is progressive. Community organizing seeks to mobilize and empower people through services and community work that improves social conditions, redistributes influence and power, strengthens community participation, and advances the interest of oppressed groups. The dilemma between empowerment and service delivery is not new for community organizations. It is a matter of emphasis related to tactical choices and resources. There were a couple of examples of empowerment and service delivery, where programs were offered and residents were allowed the opportunity to take social action and make decisions, although small. Two examples of empowerment and service delivery working together in the Niger community where the NCC's work with the teen association and Dwayne's leadership of community-initiated groups ARGO and the resident council.

The NCC's work with the teens provides one of the best examples of empowerment among a population in the Niger

community. With plays depicting life in a housing project, youth conferences on issues affecting the youth, television projects, involvement in simulations of real life court involving teens, weekly activities such as shopping, civic duties, and ballgames, teen activities and involvement embodied examples of service delivery and social action successfully working together. Teen active involvement in their programs promoted increased and consistent attendance and creative expression and participation from the teens. Perhaps a similar model of involvement would benefit the adult groups in Niger.

Dwayne, the leader of the community-initiated groups, ARGO and the resident council, awakened a spirit of creativity and enthusiasm similar to what was seen with the teens. Of course his audience were the single mothers of the Niger community. A single dad, Dwayne brought a message of hope through hands on community projects and political influence/social action. Although the women didn't truly have power and they needed training in civic education, they felt empowered to make change because Dwayne attempted to involve them, and he gave them hope. He listened to them and made them feel their decisions counted although he made the final decisions.

The study's implications challenge practitioners who are trying to make a difference in organizations to examine the type of community organizing efforts that have the potential to serve their community. It challenges practitioners to not only make choices that preserve organizational goals, but to examine efforts, like the work with the teens and the tactics of Dwayne, that revive participation and awaken the spirit in people. This is particularly crucial in communities like Niger, where apathy has deeply encroached upon daily lives. Likewise, the study's findings challenge civic organizations and citizens to learn as much as possible about civic rights, to be informed, and to stay active as a way of promoting change in communities.

Since the beginning of this research project in 1995/96, the city of Niger has targeted the Niger community for economic development. For instance, boarded and condemned housing surrounding Drew public housing in the Niger community have been targeted for renovations and many have been renovated. Residents in public housing have been given the opportunity for home ownership through homeownership classes and financial planning. The police department has greatly improved its community policing efforts, partnering with neighborhood watch programs and



establishing foot and car patrols in the Niger community. The improvements have helped to decimate some of the feelings of apathy among residents because again they are able to get involve and make a difference in the things that affect their lives ie. homeownership, financial planning, community watch, etc.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

More research of organizations that engage service delivery and social action is needed. Of specific interest is how organizations find balance between empowerment and service delivery. Additional information on organizations that engage this approach in low-income communities is needed. The organization, SHAPE provides an example of how service delivery and social action work together successfully. The NCC's work with the teen association, Dwayne's leadership, and the city's economic development in Niger provide examples of how service delivery and social action work together to benefit people in communities.

Further investigation of grassroots organizing efforts to mobilize people would help organizations and communities alike understand issues of community cohesiveness and apathy. Investigations on these issues are key to learning

how to motivate people and to get them involved in the community and its decision-making processes.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A**  
**Community-based Programming Model**

**(Boone's 15 Processual Tasks)**

**Processual Task 1.** The [agency/organization] should develop and adopt a definition of community-based programming that encompasses those basic principles and concepts required to fulfill its mission as a community-based institution.

**Processual Task 2.** The [agency/organization] engages in a careful study of its community to increase its knowledge of its social-cultural, economic, technological, and political environment.

**Processual Task 3.** The [agency/organization] examines and, if needed, reinterprets or modifies its mission, philosophy, goals, organizational structure, and mode of operation to emphasize community-based programming as one of its major programmatic efforts.

**Processual Task 4.** The [lead agency/organization] establishes and employs an appropriate mechanism for scanning the [organization's] external environment for the purposes of identifying and ranking, in order of importance, issues that are of critical concern to the community and its people.

**Processual Task 5.** The environmental scanning committee conducts a study of the community under the leadership of the [lead agency/organization].

**Processual Task 6.** The [lead agency/organization] seeks further confirmation and legitimization of the ranked issues from the [agency/organization's] governing board and from other community leaders.

**Processual Task 7.** The [agency/organization] studies, analyzes, and maps the public in its service area that is affected by the issue selected for resolution.

**Processual Task 8.** The [agency/organization] selects and uses effective processes and techniques for identifying both the formal and the informal leaders within the target public and stakeholder groups.

**Processual Task 9.** The [agency/organization] initiates dialogue with leaders of the target public and stakeholders to encourage and assist these leaders in attaining consensus on the importance of the issue and in forming a coalition to address the issue.

**Processual Task 10.** The [agency/organization] engages the coalition in further studying and analyzing the issue, refining the definition of the issue, and deciding upon the strategies to be pursued in resolving it.

**Processual Task 11.** The [agency/organization] provides leadership for the coalition in translating its decisions into a unified plan of action.

**Processual Task 12.** The [agency/organization] aids the coalition in implementing the plan of action by providing consultation, technical assistance, and opportunities for coalition leaders and other community leaders to report on progress made, discuss obstacles encountered, and explore the use of alternative strategies not included in the initial plan of action.

**Processual Task 13.** The [agency/organization] provides leadership for the coalition in assessing the outcomes achieved toward resolving the issue and in determining the cost-effectiveness of the plan of action.

**Processual Task 14.** The agency/organization arranges for and helps coalition leaders to report to their respective constituencies, agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders on the progress made toward resolving the issue.

**Processual Task 15.** The coalition uses the results of the plan of action and lessons learned through its implementation to develop and implement new strategies for continued efforts toward resolving the issue.

(Boone, 1997)

**APPENDIX B**

**Semi-structured Interview Guide**



1. What is your organization's name?
  2. How old is your organization or division?
  3. What is your position and title?
- Are you considered
- (a) top level management?                      (b) mid level management?
  - (c) other?
4. How many people do you supervise?
  5. Are you (a) full time? (b) part time?
  6. Is your position considered (a) permanent? (b) temporary?
  7. How would you classify your work?  
(a) community development oriented (b) technical oriented
  8. How many years have you been involved in community development work?
  9. What is your education level?
  10. What is/was your area of study?

#### **Partnership Background**

11. Have you worked in collaborative partnership efforts before?  
If yes, when?    What year?
12. What motivated the initiation of the partnership?
13. Was the partnership's main purpose to resolve issues that impacted negatively on the community such as drug, crime, high school drop out rate, etc.?
14. If yes, was the community involved in helping to identify and resolve community problems in any way?  
  
(a) Explain?
15. What did you see as the three top benefits of the partnership effort?
16. Do you currently partner with others?  
  
(a) If yes, in what way is your partnership with others different than your partnership with Niger?
17. If you could quantify your partnership efforts, what percentage would you give the partnership efforts in your organization?

18. Do the partnership efforts that you have witnessed normally involve the decisions of the community that is being directly impacted upon?
19. How have they involved them?

#### **Niger Partnership**

1. How long have you partnered with Niger community center?
2. What was the original reason or motivating factor?
3. Do you believe that you are accomplishing your task through the partnership?
4. How has it enhanced your organization goals and objectives?
5. Do you have any additional information to add that may be helpful to the development of the study on partnerships?

#### **Opinion/value Questions**

##### **Organizational**

1. What is (are) your program mission? goal? objectives?
2. Do you see your organization as partners with Niger?
3. How would you explain the relationship in terms of joint mission, goals and objectives?
4. Does the partnership help you to realize your organization program goals and objectives?

If yes, how?

If no, discuss the barriers, if any?

5. Are the values, norms, and beliefs in the partnership a strength or weakness in terms of working together?

Explain how?

6. When there is a major change internally such as a change in the organization structure, how does the partnership respond to this type of change?
7. In your relationship/partnership with Niger, do you have knowledge of any of the following factors?
  - (a) economic      (b) political      (c) cultural
  - (a) If yes, what are the influences?
  - (b) How does the partnership respond to these influences?

##### **Scanning/examining**

8. How does the partnership identify its service area?

9. How does the partnership identify significant issues that impact upon the service area? ie. needs assessment, committees, and boards?
10. Who would you classify as the lead organization in the partnership?
11. Does the lead organization provide support in efforts of responding to issues that impact upon the service area?
12. Are there sources used to qualify or legitimize the partnership's choices of significant issues impacting upon the service area? ie. CEO, governing board

#### **Decision-making Processes**

13. Is there a process that the partnership use to identify how the community is organized and/or functions as a social group?
  - (a) Is this information important to your area of work with the community?
14. Are specific processes used to identify leaders of the community and/or other groups that may have a stake in the community?

Explain them?

15. If yes, what is the process used to initiate face-to-face communication with community leaders?
  - (a) Has the process help to develop trust in this segment of the community?
  - (b) Has this process helped in gaining program consensus among leaders and/or people in the community?
  - (c) Have task forces or special committees developed as a result of the interaction with leaders, stakeholders and/or community people?
16. Is community education a strategy used to assist the community in your identified service area?
  - (a) If yes, what type of community education is used? ie. leadership training, decision-making skills, community knowledge, mental health counseling etc.
17. How are community leaders and/or people with a stake in the community prepared to accept external information that they may not perceive as important to them?
18. What kinds of strategies do you use to get the community involved in taking ownership of their problems and making steps towards resolution? ie. shared decision-making, self-help approaches etc.
19. Do you have additional information that will help to give more insight to this study?

(Adopted from Boone's Community-Based Programming Model, 1997)

**APPENDIX C**  
**Demographic Profiles**

## ORGANIZATIONS

1. Sex  
(a) female \_\_\_\_\_ (b) male \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age range:  
25-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-44 \_\_\_\_\_ 45-54 \_\_\_\_\_ 55-64 \_\_\_\_\_ 65-74 \_\_\_\_\_ 75-84 \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the title of your position?
4. Is your position  
(a) permanent \_\_\_\_\_ (b) based on a grant from year to year \_\_\_\_\_ (c) volunteer \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) temporary \_\_\_\_\_ (e) other \_\_\_\_\_
5. Type of organization:  
(a) Civic/Community Group \_\_\_\_\_ (b) County \_\_\_\_\_ (c) Federal \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) For-profit \_\_\_\_\_ (e) Non-profit \_\_\_\_\_ (f) State \_\_\_\_\_ (g) other \_\_\_\_\_
6. How old is your organization?  
0-2 years \_\_\_\_\_ 2-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ years \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which of the following describes your organization?  
(a) community-based \_\_\_\_\_ (b) technology-based \_\_\_\_\_ (c) other \_\_\_\_\_
8. How long have you personally been involved in community work?  
0-2 years \_\_\_\_\_ 2-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_  
15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ years \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you a member of the community through any of the following?  
(a) church \_\_\_\_\_ (b) residence \_\_\_\_\_ (c) civic/volunteer \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) business \_\_\_\_\_
- 9a. If yes, for how long  
(a) church \_\_\_\_\_ 0-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) residence \_\_\_\_\_ 0-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ \_\_\_\_\_  
8 civic/volunteer 0-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) business \_\_\_\_\_ 0-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ \_\_\_\_\_
- 9b. If no, check here \_\_\_\_\_
10. What type of service (s) does your organization provide to the Niger community?  
(Check all that apply)  
(a) counseling \_\_\_\_\_ (b) prevention \_\_\_\_\_ (c) health care \_\_\_\_\_ (d) information \_\_\_\_\_  
(e) recreation \_\_\_\_\_ (f) nutrition \_\_\_\_\_ (g) child care \_\_\_\_\_ (h) mental health \_\_\_\_\_  
(i) life skills \_\_\_\_\_ (j) transportation \_\_\_\_\_ (k) housing \_\_\_\_\_ (l) education \_\_\_\_\_  
(m) arts & humanities (n) job skills \_\_\_\_\_ (o) other \_\_\_\_\_
11. Who is your target audience in the Niger community? (Check all that apply)  
(a) Children ages 0-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 5-11 \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Teens 12-18 \_\_\_\_\_ (c) Young Adults \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) Women \_\_\_\_\_ (e) Men \_\_\_\_\_ (f) Middle aged adults \_\_\_\_\_ (g) Seniors \_\_\_\_\_ (h) other \_\_\_\_\_
12. How did your organization get involved with the Niger Community Center?

- (a) met through another group/agency \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) was asked by Niger \_\_\_\_\_
  - © know someone who works at Niger \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) word of mouth \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) yellow pages \_\_\_\_\_
  - (f) church \_\_\_\_\_
  - (g) other \_\_\_\_\_
13. How long have you worked with the Niger Community Center?  
0-2 years \_\_\_\_\_ 3-5 year \_\_\_\_\_ 6-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10+years \_\_\_\_\_

### INDIVIDUALS

1. Sex  
(a) female \_\_\_\_\_ (b) male \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Age range:  
25-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-44 \_\_\_\_\_ 45-54 \_\_\_\_\_ 55-64 \_\_\_\_\_ 65-74 \_\_\_\_\_ 75-84 \_\_\_\_\_
  3. What is the title of your position?
  4. Is your position  
(a) volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ (b) based on a grant from year to year \_\_\_\_\_ (c) stipend \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) other \_\_\_\_\_
  5. How long have you been involved in community work?  
0-2 years \_\_\_\_\_ 2-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_  
15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ years \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Are you a member of the community through any of the following?  
(a) church \_\_\_\_\_ (b) residence \_\_\_\_\_ (c) civic/volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ (d) business \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6a. If yes, for how long  
(a) church \_\_\_\_\_ 0-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) residence \_\_\_\_\_ 0-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ \_\_\_\_\_  
© civic/volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ 0-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) business \_\_\_\_\_ 0-4 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14 years \_\_\_\_\_ 15-19 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ \_\_\_\_\_
- Niger Community Center**
7. What type of service (s) do you provide at Niger? (Check all that apply)  
(a) counseling \_\_\_\_\_ (b) reading skills \_\_\_\_\_ (c) math skills \_\_\_\_\_ (d) life skills \_\_\_\_\_  
  
(e) child care \_\_\_\_\_ (f) recreation \_\_\_\_\_ (g) arts & humanities \_\_\_\_\_ (h) music \_\_\_\_\_  
(I) storytelling \_\_\_\_\_ (j) other \_\_\_\_\_
  8. Who is your target audience at Niger? (Check all that apply)  
(a) children ages 0-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 5-11 \_\_\_\_\_ (b) teens 12-18 \_\_\_\_\_ (c) young adults \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) women \_\_\_\_\_ (e) men \_\_\_\_\_ (f) middle aged adults \_\_\_\_\_ (g) seniors \_\_\_\_\_
  9. How did you get involved with the Niger Community Center?  
(a) met through another group/agency \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) was asked by Niger \_\_\_\_\_  
© know someone who works at Niger \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) word of mouth \_\_\_\_\_  
(e) yellow pages \_\_\_\_\_  
(f) church \_\_\_\_\_  
(g) other \_\_\_\_\_
  10. How long have you worked with the Niger Community Center?  
1-2 years \_\_\_\_\_ 3-5 year \_\_\_\_\_ 6-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10+ years \_\_\_\_\_
  11. Is Niger the first community that you have worked with?  
(a) yes \_\_\_\_\_ (b) no \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D

Transcription Validation

For Organization, Community & Individuals



Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your participation in my research study. The information that you shared during your interview helps to provide a better understanding of the organization, community, and individual collaborative initiatives with Niger.

A transcription of our interview is attached. Please take a few moments to carefully read through the transcript to validate the accuracy. If you would like to clarify any points, please do so on your copy of the interview and initial beside your additions. After you have read the transcript, please sign at the bottom of this page and do one of the following two things: (a) give me a call at (919) 512-7162 or page me at (919) 871-9958 and I will come by and pick it up, or (b) mail it to me at:

Angela Hicks  
Post Office Box 5692  
Cary, North Carolina 27512

Please be reminded that this is a strictly confidential interview. Fictitious names and locations have been assigned to participants and locations in this study.

Thank you for your cooperation and your timely attention to this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact my advisory committee chair, Dr. John Pettitt, at (919) 515-6291 or me at (919) 512-7162.

Angela Hicks

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My signature on the above line verifies that I have read a copy of the transcription of my interview with Angela Hicks.

**APPENDIX E**

**Consent To Serve as a Subject in Research**

I consent to participate in the research study examining Niger partnership initiatives. This study is conducted under the leadership of John M. Pettitt, Ed.D. (919) 515-6291 and the Department of Adult and Community College Education, located at North Carolina State University, 300 Poe Hall, Raleigh NC. I understand that if I need additional information or have further questions, the director of this research study, Angela Hicks, can be reached at the following address and telephone number:

Post Office Box 5692  
Cary, North Carolina 27512  
(919) 512-7162 or paged at (919) 871-9958

I understand that this dissertation entitled "Institutions and Civic Participation: The Case of Community Involvement in Program Decision-making at a Community Center" will determine if, how and to what extent does the Niger partnership initiative involve the Niger community in programming decision-making processes as it relates to community development.

I understand that my participation will consist of an interview and a demographic profile of myself and/or my organization. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can terminate my participation at any time without penalty. I understand that my participation will expose me to no additional risk greater than those encountered in my daily life.

I understand that my identity will be kept confidential. Data will be coded such that my identity will not be compromised at any time nor will any key with subject names be available to anyone other than the research director.

I understand that the results of this study may be published or reported to educational databases to further community and organizational understanding of the issues being studied, but in no way will my identity be revealed in such a report.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_