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Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

Identifying Youth Needs and Resources by Mapping Your Community
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Speakers:

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Judith Kahn, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, Minneapolis, Minn.

Martha McCormick, Youth Development Field Specialist at the Iowa State University Extension of Polk County, Des Moines, Iowa

JOHNSON: This is Cliff Johnson. I'm the Executive Director of the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. Delighted that all of you can be with us this afternoon for what I'm sure will be a great program on youth mapping strategies at the community level. As many of you probably know, this is part of a monthly series of audioconferences that we've sponsored here at the National League of Cities through our Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. I think we've done 35-plus of these at this point, and it has proved to be a great way to generate conversation and to get interesting ideas out to city leaders across the country. So I very much appreciate your joining this call. If this is one of your first audioconferences, I would encourage you to go to our website, which is www.nlc.org/iyef and look for the audioconference information on the website because we have a whole series of audioconferences now scheduled from January through June of 2006. And we'll look forward to having you be part of those calls as well when they line up with your particular areas of interest.

Today we're very fortunate to have three great people with us on this call. It's first, Eric Kilbride, a Senior Program Officer at the Academy for Educational Development, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research here in Washington, D.C. Eric is an expert on community youth mapping, a specific data collection strategy that draws heavily on youth development theories and youth engagement. Welcome, Eric.

KILBRIDE: Hello, thank you.

JOHNSON: Second, Judith Kahn is with us. Judith is the Executive Director of the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, an intergovernmental organization focused on comprehensive development of children and youth. Judith has a Masters in Social Work and has

been focused for more than 25 years on improving the systems that respond to and serve the needs of children, youth and families. Hi, Judith from Minneapolis.

KAHN: Good afternoon.

JOHNSON: And lastly, we have with us Martha McCormick, who is a youth development field specialist at the Iowa State University Extension of Polk County in Des Moines, Iowa, directing their work on youth mapping for the past six years. Martha collaborates with a number of organizations throughout Polk County, including public school systems, youth serving organizations and other departments of the Iowa State University Extension of Polk County. So glad you could be with us, Martha.

MCCORMICK: Yes, my pleasure, thank you.

JOHNSON: Right. Topic today is youth mapping. Youth mapping typically involves training young people to survey the resources in their community and thus document what resources are already present and what strengths come from those resources, and also what gaps there are in those resources. Young people usually canvass a defined neighborhood to map what they find, both from careful observations of what they see as well as from conducting interviews to gather information on what programs and other services are offered by the organizations in the neighborhood. And then from analyzing the results of a mapping project, young people and the adults who are working with them can consider what gaps there may be in the resources and programs available for young people and recommend action steps to make the community's offerings for youth more robust. In addition, mapping engages young people in a dynamic learning process about their community and contributes to their involvement in civic affairs. So it's a very interesting and multi-faceted way of thinking about how to move a set of issues forward at the community level.

So let's jump in. And let me start with Eric and ask from your perspective why you think most communities get started going down this road of launching a youth mapping project.

KILBRIDE: Well, to be honest, it usually happens from a couple different ways, a couple different reasons. One, a community or a set of organizations have received some sort of grant or are trying to satisfy a grant that has a mapping component to it. And a lot of times, generically the term "resource mapping" or "environmental scan" or sometimes people will even interpret "needs assessment" to mean some sort of mapping effort. And so sometimes folks will literally just have a component of a grant that they need to fulfill.

The other way that folks come toward a youth mapping process is usually out of some crisis, unfortunately, either in reality or perceived. An example of this might be, for example, communities now that are struggling to find ways to deal with the emerging childhood obesity and physical activity issue that might be deemed as a crisis, and they're looking for a very specific activity to engage young people in that issue. But those are generally the two ways in which folks come at, at least initially, thinking about a youth mapping project.

JOHNSON: So if they're trying to respond to a grant requirement or whatever, the crux here is that they're looking for a needs assessment strategy typically?

KILBRIDE: Typically it would be that they need some sort of comprehensive data collection. And sometimes it might be couched as a “needs assessment.” Sometimes it might be just a gap analysis or a baseline set of data that’s needed in order to move a project forward.

JOHNSON: Yeah. And we all know at the community level, there are plenty of crises of the day that we often run around and respond to as well. So I’m sure that’s often a trigger. Judith, in Minneapolis, how did the community start down this path?

KAHN: Well, it was really a convergence of two things. And you might call one of them a crisis. But I started with the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board about a year and a half ago. And one of the first projects that I was asked to take charge of was to create a children and youth agenda in the City of Minneapolis. I felt like I was in a crisis because I understood how hard that is. But I was very clear with my board that if we were going to do this, then we needed to hear the voices of young people. Otherwise it’s simply an agenda for children and youth. So to make it a true children/youth agenda, I wanted to understand how young people saw their city, what they were looking for from the city and from the adults in their community, as well as -- we also had some other interest in understanding what resources were available for young people. Were they taking advantage of them? If not, why not?

At the same time, we had funding that was being made available to us to do some youth-related capacity building. It was very broadly defined. And so we brought those two efforts together, to do youth resource mapping with the dollars to meet the mandate of those dollars. To do youth resource mapping, which we did in 15 neighborhoods in Minneapolis. Which also gave us the opportunity to talk to young people about what their vision was for a healthy Minneapolis, a great city to live in.

So in addition to what Eric talked about in terms of doing -- actually, maybe it was you, Cliff -- who talked about the various things you would do in a youth mapping project, we had very specific interviews with young people. It was young people to young people interviews. So we had a strong interest in engaging young people in their own community, in community capacity building as well as being able to understand what young people were looking for so we could respond.

JOHNSON: So then it becomes a vehicle for youth voice, for listening to youth voice.

KAHN: Yes.

JOHNSON: And Martha, do you hear things similar to your experience there in Des Moines?

MCCORMICK: Well, I would say that our proceeding with youth mapping came out of a collaboration that we started in the late 90s with a whole bunch of youth serving organizations, as diverse as Campfire, our Empowerment Board, extension schools. Looking at kind of a desire to get youth more involved in making decisions that affect the programs that work with them. And I would say we’ve had kind of mixed results in seeing that. But that was our motivation originally. The first project that we worked with was a community youth mapping, and that was funded through some various sources. And our projects have evolved over the years with kind of a patchwork of funding. And we’ve taken some different attacks at things. I think we’re still

struggling with that question of how do we really get the voices of youth into the planning process. I think in collaborations. And I would say we come close to having true collaboration here where partners are changing all the time and kids are growing up fortunately, but unfortunately. But I would say we're not there yet. But that has been the motivation throughout the different projects that we've done in the area of mapping.

JOHNSON: And at the beginning or as you've gone along, have there been any particular -- has there been a triggering event? Something that you can point to and say, yeah, that was the thing that got us going down this path?

MCCORMICK: It was a group of organizations that did summer programs came together. We were feeling like we were tripping over one another, and yet there were still lots of gaps in the kinds of programs that were offered, especially for older kids and just kind of wanting things to be better. And that group was real dynamic for several years. And there was a major component of that group that really wanted to see youth input.

Another thing that happened kind of within the first couple years of when we started that process was the National 4H Council sponsored National Conversations with Youth. And we got some input that way. We had different organizations that brought youth out to our office. And we had conversations about some different things. And kids really want to have a voice. They want to have a say over budgets and that sort of thing. That came out very clearly in the National Conversation.

JOHNSON: Sure. That's interesting. So there's also some mix here around community conversations about how well resources are being targeted, overlaps in some cases, gaps in others, and trying to use the mapping strategy partly as a way of responding to those concerns.

MCCORMICK: Yes, and connecting youth with adults. I think we kind of live in different worlds. And trying to get those conversations going is still a challenge.

KILBRIDE: Cliff, let me just say that what Martha described - at least back in the late '90s -- was kind of the old school way in which mapping used to come about. And frankly, I'd like to get back more into that, where it's really about a coalition of folks that come together because they want to engage young people in a meaningful way in their communities. That transcends, frankly, what I described, which was a satisfaction of a grant, which might be some sort of short-term kind of stopgap.

JOHNSON: That's right. It's partly interesting to focus on this as both an outcome-oriented exercise, but also the process has intrinsic value as well.

KAHN: Cliff, that was certainly a very strategic part of our mapping. But I know we have city officials on the phone. I know the tension, if you will, that we have felt with that is, are the folks in youth development, whether they're in the parks or the libraries or whatever, doing this work with us and understanding really what is involved in engaging young people to do this mapping. And really to take the time to do it really well and to build those relationships and to help young people see what their contributions are. And many of us are just waiting for the end product and looking for the end product and the data and what did we learn. So it's a matter of

helping our city officials understand that you're getting -- this process is so rich, that if you're concerned about local efforts, this is a phenomenal way to get really interesting and good data, but to really build capacity at a neighborhood level to help adults in a neighborhood see the contributions that young people can make, to have young people feel that they can actually make a difference in their own neighborhood. It's such a rich process that I know our city at this point -- Minneapolis -- is convinced. They want to map all 81 neighborhoods. But it takes time for people to see the benefits.

JOHNSON: Sure. So let's talk nuts and bolts for a few minutes here. And starting with Eric, because Eric, I know over at the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, you have a very specific set of ideas and strategy around what you call "community youth mapping." And can you talk for a minute about how that differs from other mapping efforts?

KILBRIDE: Sure. When you say "How does it differ?" what we've learned over -- gosh, almost 11 years now doing this community youth mapping strategy is that the term "mapping" has become, like I mentioned before, a generic use. And sometimes we find ourselves really needing to define the difference between mapping and community youth mapping.

And for us, community youth mapping has young people at its primary front and center -- with adults, but really, they're the primary data collectors. They're the analyzers, the disseminators and they're the advocates -- again, depending on the reasons why in which you're doing the project.

The other part in that I think community youth mapping is different is that there is a certain set of technology that is inherent in the process. Frankly, over the last ten years, we've had the ability to map in 100-plus places around the United States, and that ranges from very small rural communities all the way up to the New York Citys and the Chicagos of this country. And so we've had a vast amount of experience, so we believe that we're always infusing those learnings that we have and those experiences to further evolve, not only the process, but a lot of the tools that come with that process. And so we continue to learn and bring those together for future communities. So that's an important part.

And I think that finally the other part that sets community youth mapping differently is its ability to adapt. More and more over the last several years -- because of funding, frankly -- the community youth mapping is being used as an issue-specific strategy, while back, for example, when Martha in Des Moines did community youth mapping, it was a broad asset approach in the community. Now we find that there is more and more of an effort to get at workforce or employment data or youth with disability data or data around health issues. And so community youth mapping has been able to adapt and be flexible, not only in the tools that are there, but with the technology that's there to support that. It's one thing to collect the data and have the young people go through a process. It's another thing to really create a system of updating and maintaining that data and making that data accessible. And so those are some of the things -- fundamental tenets -- that we believe about community youth mapping.

JOHNSON: Sounds like you've been through a very interesting learning curve around this in terms of doing this in multiple places and over time and sort of refining specific aspects of the work.

KILBRIDE: Well, and the last thing is that more and more, we're thinking about scale. And

not scale for scale's sake, but scale in a cost-effective way to involve as many young people and as many communities simultaneously. We're doing state efforts in the state of Minnesota, the state of Alaska, the state of Massachusetts, for example -- some state efforts. And they might be specific around a particular kind of data. But the infrastructure is there in order to do some massive data collection that has an opportunity for lots of young people to be involved in a process like this. And so that's another kind of evolution over the last few years.

JOHNSON: Sure. Let me turn back to Judith and Martha with a few specific questions, just to see if we can start to paint a portrait here of how these look. In your communities, what's the age range that you have typically focused on for engaging youth in these projects? And how many youth are typically involved in a project?

KAHN: I can begin. In Minneapolis, one of the first things we did is engage the services of a youth leadership, youth membership organization called "YO! The Movement." And they have had experience in training other young people to do resource mapping. And the staff themselves are young people. So that was one piece of it.

We tapped into existing youth-serving organizations in key neighborhoods. And we identified the neighborhoods because there were certain issues that we wanted to focus on. And as Eric pointed out, we were one of the ones who came in with some specific questions as well as general assessment. So we left it up to those community organizations to identify young people -- often the young people who were involved in their program, whether it was a park or a community program or a church, in a neighborhood. We suggested that they identify at least ten young people per neighborhood to work with and that we would train, because we knew there would be attrition. And I would say at the end of it, each neighborhood had a cohort of maybe six to eight young people doing the resource mapping.

They tended to be -- many of them were sort of at the upper edge of middle school or in tenth grade. So they were the 14, 15, 16-year olds. They received a stipend for their work, so it was a job for them, and there were job expectations and they got the training and all of that good stuff.

JOHNSON: And so when you aggregate across neighborhoods, the total number of young people --?

KAHN: I think that we -- in the end, there were 100 young people trained and out there doing the resource mapping.

JOHNSON: Got it. Martha, what does that look like in Des Moines in terms of age range and numbers of kids?

MCCORMICK: Over the different projects that we've done, we have worked with youth as young as 12. But it really works best with kids that are 14 and over. We've had anywhere from 20 kids involved in one whole group, or even 30 that kind of went out in shifts, to this last project that we worked with. We worked with youth groups that were already established, like several of our communities have Mayor's Youth Advisory Councils. We've had three of those involved. We've also -- Oak Ridge Neighborhood Services, which is a low-income housing development, used this project as part of their summer work program. We had a mock trial

group that did it, and we had a couple of drug abuse prevention groups that were organized around community action go and do youth mappings in communities of their choosing.

And we used a group stipend in this latest project and in several -- some of the kids were actually paid as jobs in earlier years. But lately we've used a group stipend where the groups are given money. Now they're free to divide that up among their members if they want. But they also make a presentation to an advisory group as part of their involvement.

JOHNSON: And Eric, when you listen to Judith and Martha, your sense of how this compares to other communities you've been involved in? Are the age ranges similar and the scale similar?

KILBRIDE: Absolutely. Again, Martha mentioned that while they've gone as low as 12 years old, it really is an activity that's best suited for somebody that's 14 and up. And you've heard both sites mention that at times, they have used this model as an employment piece. A lot of folks are able to access summer work dollars through the Workforce Investment Act or other means. There is a resource mapping component that is associated with that legislation. A lot of the folks on the phone probably are familiar with that. And so a lot of communities have used this as an employment process to engage young people in that way.

But I will say that there are a fair amount of communities that have used community youth mapping or a mapping strategy as a volunteer exercise or a service learning exercise or academic school credit or community service hour credit toward graduation. So there are other models out there. So when you're thinking about, is this process right for me? -- if you're going to pay young people, that's a big size of what your budget could be for a project like this. So there are other ways to do it if you don't have a budget that would allow you to pay young people.

JOHNSON: Yes, and we'll come back to this cost issue in a minute. But as you point out, there is this whole strand on the youth service side, and also on the service learning, in terms of using community as text -- community-based learning strategies that tie the learning opportunities directly to what's going on in the community and young people's analysis of what exists and doesn't exist in their community. So that's an important strand of this opportunity as well.

Let's talk about recruitment for a minute. You know, in every community, I assume, there are challenges about figuring out how to engage young people in this, how to reach out, what the outreach strategy is, what the recruitment strategy is. Martha, do you want to take a run at that in terms of what you've figured out in Des Moines in terms of how to effectively recruit young people to be engaged in these mapping efforts?

MCCORMICK: I think probably the most successful effort that we've had has been with working with groups that are already existing -- you know, with the Mayor's Youth Advisory Groups, and we've had a church group that was involved. And that way, the groups are already established. They have a feeling of a team consciousness already and we're not having to build that. So that also creates or helps to foster that collaborative where it's not just one organization's project. It kind of spreads out -- ideally, it spreads out the responsibility and the investment throughout the community. So I would say that we've tried various things, as I've said earlier, but I think that's been the most successful.

KAHN: Yeah, it's really hard to say any more than what Martha said. Absolutely -- all of those reasons. Minneapolis has a wonderful park system and park centers and libraries and a very rich non-profit community, all of whom work to engage youth. So to re-create the wheel just seemed a little silly, and plus you get the benefit that many of the young people know each other and the staff know them, so you don't have to work at building those relationships.

JOHNSON: What's the expectation for young people, in terms of, how big an investment of time and energy is this for them? Are they putting in several hours a week or several hours a month?

KAHN: For Minneapolis, I think it ranged. And really, we did this in the middle of winter. Talk about kids just sticking it out. They were doing this block by block, up and down, talking to kids on the street and visiting with resources in January, February and March in Minnesota. And it was several hours -- I would say it was at least four hours a week. And there were rules about participation. And we didn't hand the rules to the organizations who did the coordinating of their own young people. But all of them came up with similar kinds of rules, such as you've got to be in school. If you want to come and map, you have to be in school. You get kicked out of school, you're in trouble, you get suspended, you can't come. So it was a great investment for kids to stay in school because the mapping process, the camaraderie, the connection with that adult, doing real work that can make a real difference ended up being the major incentive for participating in the mapping. So each group set their own rules, but that was clearly at the top.

KILBRIDE: Cliff, what we found is that it varies, depending on the model that you're using. Again, if you're in a volunteer or an afterschool model, the length of time for a particular day is a couple hours. If it in fact is a summer job, then you have a typical six to eight-hour workday for four to six weeks during the summer. So it varies. We have our folks in Minnesota, for example, with the C3MN project that are working just a couple days a week volunteer, versus our folks in Wilmington this past summer -- Wilmington, Delaware -- that had young people working 30 hours a week. So it varies -- depends on the model that you set up from the beginning.

JOHNSON: And how extensive typically is the front-end training? I mean, what are you doing with young people in terms of trying to train them to go out into their neighborhoods?

KILBRIDE: For the mapping training that we provide from AED, we do two and a half days of training. And those are full days. Two days of that two and a half days is for the young people specifically, and then there is an additional half day training that is for the adults that work directly with the young people and the organization or group of organizations that are help driving this process in their community -- questions around data, questions around how do you manage, update and maintain your data as well as how you work with young people.

KAHN: I know we used the AED curriculum -- that model. We combined with some of the work that YO! The Movement does with its youth leadership development activities. I don't think our training was that long. I know they ended up doing half days just because kids were -- the young people were in school and it was school time. So we were aware of that. And we also

used the training as an opportunity to both pilot and then get a lot of feedback on the survey instruments that the young people were going to be using when they went out and talked to other young people. So that we could put it in the voice of young people. It wasn't some research voice language that when a young person would get out there and try to read the question, it wouldn't make sense to them. So we really used that as an opportunity to help craft those questions and to make them real for young people.

MCCORMICK: And we were involved with AED in our very first mapping. So certainly they came and trained kids. And we've kind of built on that. One time we did a weekend retreat where kids came in the night before and talked about what they wanted to see in their communities. And then we did the training on how to do the mapping. And then we've done as short as -- with the groups that I've done this latest series, we've used handheld computers. And so the training has been as short as a couple hours because we're relying on their leaders to have done that kind of basic team-building stuff.

JOHNSON: So let me remind the audience that within another five minutes or so, we're going to try and open for questions from the audience. But I know that if we don't cover two questions before we go to questions, the first two questions we'll get. One will be about cost and the second will be about benefits/outcomes, what kinds of differences you've seen this make in your communities and communities that you've worked. So let's talk first for a minute about cost. Eric, you were saying earlier the costs can vary quite considerably, based on whether you're paying young people for the time they spend in a youth employment model or frame, if you will, versus if you're relying on a youth service strategy, where young people are donating their time. What else would you say about cost, Eric?

KILBRIDE: Yeah, we talk about it with the communities we work with that there are three areas of cost. One, first and foremost, which is the biggest potential cost, is your local costs -- the costs associated with either hiring young people, hiring adults to work with those young people, whether or not you have transportation with young people, determining the size and the geography scope that you're going to entail. Do you need 50 young people, or do you just need 10? How many days of the week? How long is this process going to go, so you get a sense of intensity from that? You also consider, are we giving them t-shirts and supplies? So those are all local costs. So that's one big set of costs that need to be considered.

And then the two areas of cost that we talk about are those, one, that is associated with technology. How are you going to update and maintain that data? How are you going to disseminate that data? So how are you going to use technology in that way? And then the third area of costs, again, specifically in working with us, has to do with training. What are the costs associated with training, at least the way we described at two and a half days? So those are the areas of costs that we talk about.

JOHNSON: And do you have a ballpark sense of a "typical community" -- what a typical community spends to do this?

KILBRIDE: Sure. Well, again, if you're going to -- let's say you're going to hire young people, young people have been paid anywhere from a \$500 stipend up through an hourly wage. And so you just kind of factor in how much you're paying young people for that regard.

As for the costs associated with technology, it depends. Is there already a system in place that's available and accessible for young people in the community to not only enter data and analyze data, but then disseminate that data. So you have to look inward whether that exists or not. If it doesn't, AED has the ability to provide that to you for a fee, and that fee is on a scale based on the population of the community. So that ranges anywhere from \$5,000 to \$20,000 -- \$20,000 being New York City, \$5,000 being the smaller counties or communities that are out there.

The other areas of cost -- then finally the training. We just do based on time and travel, so that's a simple kind of formula for us to do.

JOHNSON: Of course. So let's pin down a couple of specifics in Des Moines and Minneapolis in terms of what kind of money have you spent doing the work that you're doing on this? Do you have a ballpark estimate of what the investment has been locally?

KAHN: Yes, as a city, we cobbled together several funding sources in Minneapolis. And we also included in those dollars a follow-up so that we would make funding available to any group that wanted to then take action on an issue. So I'm trying to separate those two out really quickly. So I would say we worked in 15 neighborhoods, and I would say that we spent in the ballpark of a total of \$75,000. Now included in that was --

JOHNSON: -- Over a year or a couple years?

KAHN: No, no, actually. We did this -- well, first we contracted with an organization to do the training and really to do the work, because my organization is not set up to do this. So there was that expense of contracting with an organization, and then they did the work. So I would say from the door-to-door contracting with them to finishing it, it was about a nine-month process. We went on fast track. And then we had some funding we set aside to do follow-up, which was the following four or five months. But \$75,000, and included in that was our contract with YO! The Movement to do the training and that kind of work. So that's 15 neighborhoods.

JOHNSON: And Martha, how has this played in Des Moines? Do you have a sense of what the investment has been out there?

MCCORMICK: Oh, man, much of our work has been done during summers. And I would say aside from the in-kind commitment, the time it has taken from staff, diverting from other jobs, I would say we've done summer mapping projects for from as little as \$20,000 to as much as -- this wouldn't have been just a summer project, but I think the biggest budget we've had is about \$56,000. And those may or may not include -- stipends we would pay to youth groups would be included, but if we paid individual kids, that wouldn't come close.

KAHN: And ours in Minneapolis included stipends or hourly rate to individual young people.

JOHNSON: I see. How about benefits? Stories about how this has made a difference -- short stories about how this has made a difference? What would you point to? If someone says, "All right, this all sounds great, well and good. What do you have to show for it?" Where has it

made a difference.

KILBRIDE: Because of time, let me just say one thing here, Cliff, and that is hearing Des Moines in particular today, we worked with them back in '98-'99. And the fact that they're still doing some element of mapping today, that they're still involving young people in a meaningful way to get at and be involved around information collection and analysis, that is success. That's all we could hope for.

Now she said more than one time that it doesn't maybe look the same way. And that is outstanding. If at its core young people were engaged with adults, looking at data, having an opportunity to have their voice be involved in their community, that's success for us.

MCCORMICK: Cool. I'm glad to hear somebody tell us we're having success. It's been a hard road.

KILBRIDE: Absolutely.

KAHN: Well, I have a lovely success story. We actually have several, but I'm going to pick one that we haven't given a lot of air time to. And that's the group -- particularly four young men in a neighborhood of North Minneapolis in an area that is very poverty-stricken and just really struggling to right itself. And these were four remarkable young men. They did the mapping. And they worked out of a church. And the church was going to move, but keep the building and turn their church building into a gym. Well, through the resource mapping, the young people identified ten other gyms right in their neighborhood. And so the young people lobbied the church to not turn it into a gym, but to create a youth performance space. And so a week ago, I went to the opening of "Teen Café." There was spoken word, there was rap. The young people had decorated it. They had written a mission statement and a set of goals they wanted to achieve. They ran the evening. And it was just a delight to be there.

And we also had a youth town hall forum last summer to celebrate the mapping. And these young men were there. And they talked about how important it was for them to be able to talk to city officials and to get the help from the city. And now here they are -- they've created this wonderful resource in their neighborhood.

JOHNSON: Great story.

MCCORMICK: I don't think we ever expected to see, and it's just different from what you would expect to see -- we started using technology -- handheld computers and digital cameras. Girls got really excited about doing youth mapping and about the technology. And that is an area -- I mean, it wasn't really intentional. But it's really hard to get young women involved with technology and excited about it. So we really saw that as a success.

JOHNSON: Yes. Well, let me turn and see what, if any, questions we have from our audience. We've received several questions via e-mail as well.

FACILITATOR: Your first question comes from Susan McCawley from Dallas.

JOHNSON: Hi, Susan. Go ahead.

QUESTIONER: Hi, thanks very much. How does this youth mapping project interface with the White House Youth Conference this fall, that produced a community guide so that communities could go ahead, develop collaborations and work with youth in needs assessment?

KILBRIDE: Well, it's quite complementary to the community youth mapping process. If I was being truthful, I would say a lot of those materials were somewhat based on our curriculum, which we were happy to provide to the White House. And so it's meant to be a very complementary first step, as a way to really just engage and be a catalyst for bringing groups of young people and adults with those young people together. And then there's maybe some mapping 202 that can evolve that might be more of a community mobilization process, that may be more along what you all are hearing today. So I see it as really kind of an initial, good, grassroots first community step.

JOHNSON: And Eric, could you briefly summarize what the White House has made available or pointed people to on the website?

KILBRIDE: It's just some fundamental tools that communities can use, whether it be in a faith-based institution or a Girl Scout troop. And it's simple tools. They use some needs assessment, but it's really a way for young people to look critically and optimistically at their community and begin to get a sense of what's there. And it's really an excellent kind of first step in that regard.

JOHNSON: And do you happen to recall that website, Eric?

KILBRIDE: I don't know specifically, but if you go to whitehouse.gov, and then you click in the First Lady's Initiatives, you will then find it.

JOHNSON: It will take you right there. So www.whitehouse.gov.

QUESTIONER: Also you can go to www.helpingamericasyouth.org.

JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Susan. I appreciate you offering that. Let me ask a question that we've gotten via e-mail. Surveys and outreach that's done -- what do you do in non-English speaking communities or communities with a large proportion of limited English-speaking young people? Have you had experience in reaching out into those diverse populations, as opposed to relying just on English-speaking youth?

KILBRIDE: Here at AED, we've had the pleasure of being able to develop not only Spanish materials, but also Arabic, French, and Creole materials. We've been doing a fair amount of community youth mapping internationally, and so there's been the ability for us to create some multi-language materials. And so the Spanish from the technology side only exists right now in the data entry. But we're closely moving in on the disseminating side in Spanish.

JOHNSON: Judith or Martha, any experience in this area?

MCCORMICK: We don't. And I would say that we have had some young people who have English as their second language involved, but we haven't addressed that issue.

KAHN: I would say the same here in Minneapolis. Although from what I understand, in some of the neighborhoods, there were Spanish-speaking young people who could interpret, if that was necessary. But we know that this was an area in which we identified a need to reach out to the community organizations who were serving various communities of color. We have a fairly large Somali population as well as Hispanic. So that's next on our list.

JOHNSON: Great. Do you have another questioner for us?

FACILITATOR: Yes, your next question comes from Akosua Albritton from Brooklyn.

QUESTIONER: Hi, my name is Akosua Albritton. I came in a little late, and then I was pulled out. There was an initial -- AED. What does that stand for?

KILBRIDE: The Academy for Educational Development.

QUESTIONER: I have another question --

KILBRIDE: Yeah, it's www.aed.org for the website.

QUESTIONER: Great. And then I'm noticing that people refer to receiving funds. But there's no specific funding source stated. Is there a reason for not stating the funding sources?

KAHN: This is Judith in Minneapolis. No, the only reason I didn't mention it is because it is more of a local Minneapolis source. We have an organization called the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. They receive money from the city and from federal sources. It's sort of the conduit of funds that go back out to neighborhoods for community development purposes. They have started in the past two years a stronger push to have communities look at youth issues. And so they set aside some money and contracted with my organization, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, to facilitate some program or activity in the neighborhood to build capacity. And so we used that money, which I would say was the majority of that money, to do the mapping.

The other pot of money was City of Minneapolis money that comes to the Youth Coordinating Board for services and programming or leadership development for youth ages 13 to 16. So we used that money. Then we cobbled together pieces from other sources.

QUESTIONER: Okay.

JOHNSON: Martha, Eric, any other comments on funding sources that are typical, promising?

MCCORMICK: We've used everything from United Way to Office of Juvenile Justice, Delinquency Prevention, Annie E. Casey --

JOHNSON: -- That's foundation dollars.

MCCORMICK: Foundation, yes. I would say those are our typical sources.

JOHNSON: And Eric?

KILBRIDE: They've run the gamut. There's a lot of federal dollars now that speak very specifically to this concept of mapping. And so being savvy and helping collaborate and even leverage some of those dollars could be very helpful. And then United Ways and local community foundations, national foundations, others traditionally have been supportive of this kind of process. And the way in which you can really help, persuade, and convince folks to invest in this is really to be thinking about what you can provide back to them. For a lot of folks, it's the data. It's access to good data. A lot of folks want to see young people involved in meaningful ways, but at the end of the day, some funders frankly are very interested in the data and would be willing to pay to have access to that.

JOHNSON: And in your communities, once you have the data, what are you doing with the data? How are you or how are folks locally analyzing or how are they working with it? Are they geo-coding it -- putting it on maps in ways that allow either young people or adults in the community to pull it back out?

KAHN: This is Judith in Minneapolis. We're taking a multi-pronged approach to this. There is the information that the young people collected on youth resources and programs. And that is being fed into the database that YO! The Movement has as part of an initiative they call "What's Up?" It's a youth information line that young people or families can call in and ask for resources. So that information is going there. And they're in charge of updating it. So they're taking care of that piece.

We are using the data about what's happening at a neighborhood level as well as the aggregate data as part of this strategic planning. This children and youth agenda, I think I mentioned, is now under our purview. So it's informing some of our work groups that want to focus on increasing participation in positive activities. So we're using that.

I'm hoping to be presenting to foundations and other organizations who want to get a sense of what's available and how are young people perceiving it. And so we'll be using it that way. And in at least one neighborhood, they did -- they actually connected it to census data and are creating a marketing tool -- literally a map. They're connecting it to census data to do a deeper analysis. And we'll see what that looks like in the next month or so. So a variety of purposes.

KILBRIDE: All the communities that we work with doing this strategy, their data is geo-coded and GIS spatial analysis is certainly part of what it is that they can use the data for. Again, that might be for more of a policy maker or a city planner type -- maybe a higher-end data analysis person. But young people are the ones that are very much involved in that process. And in fact, we've had some incredible outcomes with young people getting careers in GIS, in map making, and being able to do that kind of layering analysis for other entities.

MCCORMICK: The groups of youth have presented to everything from neighborhood associations to city councils. And we have a group -- a youth development partnership that's just

been started in the last year in Polk County that has a data analysis group that kids from different areas have reported their findings.

Another one of our goals with the current project is to give those kids the understanding that if you want to do a community project, the first step often is fact-finding. What is already out there? Make sure that you know what the needs are and what services are already there so that you're not duplicating those and so that you fill some really unique needs. And hopefully that is happening with them. A lot of the groups we've worked with have been groups of youth who already want to do a community project. So they might go out with an idea of what they want to do and find out that it's already out there.

JOHNSON: That makes a lot of sense, Martha. Let me check with my three panelists for a second. We've got so much interest in this topic, my inclination is to run about ten minutes long on this call.

JOHNSON: Great. Let's see if we have another question.

FACILITATOR: Your next question comes from Sally Roth from San Luis Obispo, Calif.

JOHNSON: Hi, Sally. And your question?

QUESTIONER: What kind of problems did the various groups that are speaking encounter with the youth canvassing the neighborhoods? What kinds of procedures did you have in place for safety? And just what problems did you encounter? What did you find that was most difficult?

JOHNSON: Great question. What are the pitfalls here?

KAHN: I'll tell you that the problem that our young people encountered most often was adults who didn't want to talk to them. And either they were afraid or the young people -- of course, it was winter, so they had their coats on. But they had clipboards. The adults were close by, but stayed a couple of feet back because they didn't want to interfere. They could hear, but they didn't want to interfere with the young people. But it was the adults in the community. There is one young man who told a lot of stories just about how difficult it was, but he persisted because he believed that what he was doing would make a difference.

We tried -- we mentioned observation as one strategy for doing mapping. And the young people were a little distressed by that. So that was one of the biggest challenges.

KILBRIDE: Yes, part of the training is really how young people can bounce back and how they're resilient in those situations and how to stay professional and how to realize that while somebody might perceptually be disrespecting them, that it isn't personal and they have to stay above that. And it's an incredible skill that all of us continually utilize and put into practice. So young people in a process like this occasionally will come across adults that aren't used to having conversations with them, and this provides an opportunity to really test that skill and really grow with that opportunity.

JOHNSON: Any other big stumbling blocks you've come across?

KILBRIDE: Well, transportation is a big consideration, especially the more rural your community might be or the less that you have a system of transportation that might exist. When I did this as a coordinator back in Indianapolis, I didn't have a good way to think about transportation. And so I was silly enough to put 55 young people on school buses all summer. And boy, wasn't that stupid? And they really, really didn't like that. But at the time, I had very limited options. How was I going to get young people all around Marion County -- 400 square miles? And so that was a real consideration you have to think about from the very beginning in your planning process. Who are the partners you can bring in? What are the considerations? What geographic scope are you going to try to cover? And really think about transportation, not only from a sheer logistical side, but from a safety side.

I also wanted to say that in terms of safety, young people with the community youth mapping work in pairs. And that really helps young people have the confidence to deal in those situations that might become a little bit more challenging. So they're always in pairs.

KAHN: Absolutely.

MCCORMICK: Working in pairs, making sure there are adults on the scene that can back them up and defuse situations. We've actually had encounters with dogs, but no injuries. I agree about transportation. And another challenge I think just logistically is the only time we really have ever had behavior problems is when we've told the young people where they need to map. When they decide what area they want to map and how long they can work at a time and have that control over what they're doing and how they're doing it to as much as extent as you can give them, it goes much better.

KAHN: If I can add just one more thing. The other challenge is -- I think this goes to who are the adults working with the young people. The community agencies and the programs we went after, we looked intentionally for fairly experienced youth workers because we wanted to really reach out to those youth who are relatively disengaged. Maybe they come in for programs or for basketball or for whatever it is. But these are not the superstar, doing everything young people. These are kids who have a lot of challenges going on in their lives. And many -- several of the neighborhood groups found that before they went out mapping, the group came together. Before they went out mapping, they took some time to transition out of whatever happened in school, or they just got picked on or they had trouble on a test -- whatever it was -- to transition from the chaos of their life into a place where they could now go out and be professional. Although one of the absolutely right things that Eric was talking about was how one conducts oneself in the community.

So you need either well-trained volunteers or skilled youth workers. The training helps, but if you're going after kids who are really disengaged, you need to build in some of those pieces into the process.

JOHNSON: We're a little after five. I'm going to take one more question from our listeners, and then I'm going to come back to each of you panelists to see if you have closing words of advice for city people who are listening in.

QUESTIONER: Just a quick question -- beyond the basic GIS software that you use, is there any other software that would be beneficial in your projects?

KILBRIDE: Well, to be honest, with the AED community youth mapping piece, you don't even need the GIS software. It's all web-based, so all you need is connectivity. If you want to do a different kind of GIS analysis that goes beyond the scope of what we provide, then you might need your own GIS software or Access or any other sort of database software that you might choose to manipulate. But there isn't any additional software that's needed for our process.

JOHNSON: Judith, Martha, have you used specific things?

MCCORMICK: Yeah, well, we did community youth mapping for a while, and we found it very difficult to get from the -- at that time, we were collecting data on a paper survey. And then getting that put into the web-based database was a challenge, and getting that updated on a regular basis was also a challenge.

We have worked with CPEC, which is Connecticut Policy and Economic Council. They have some software that is called City Scan. And we had a project "Making Connections" of the Annie E. Casey Foundation here in Polk County that identified some communities that they wanted youth to map. And we found this CPEC software. And the kids looked at more physical characteristics of their communities -- sidewalk cracks, abandoned buildings, abandoned lots, trash and litter and things like that. They identified six things to look at. And the kids were actually really invested in that. And they developed some community improvement projects as a result. That was two or three summers ago.

And then we decided that we wanted the kids to be able to look at some resources that were more directly related to them. So CPEC worked with us to kind of change that software so that we could collect things on community centers, parks, schools, different programs -- whether they're handicapped accessible, whether they have Spanish-speaking staff and that kind of stuff. So we have used that software, and the kids go out with IPAQs and then come back and just synchronize it with a computer. So it cuts out that middle data entry part, which is really labor intensive and expensive. And we can print out reports for them. They can put together a PowerPoint presentation from the data that they put in as they're going through the mapping process.

KAHN: I'm envious. We did the paper thing this time, but boy, I could certainly see the value of going to technology definitely.

MCCORMICK: And it's not as -- it's certainly not as detailed. You don't have the detail of information that you have with the community youth mapping piece. I think that's certainly a loss. But when you have very tight budgets as we've had and limited numbers of kids to do the project, it's just been a more viable way for us to continue to work.

JOHNSON: Sure. Eric, any last thoughts on this topic?

KILBRIDE: Again, it depends on what it is that you're after. And some communities are after data and they have to be very respectful of their budgets and all of that. And some communities really use this as an opportunity to train young people in a lot of exposure to technology, whether it be using handhelds or doing good old data entry. So it always depends on what it is that a

community is interested in, and you go about it in a way that makes the most sense for you.

JOHNSON: Makes sense. So let me come back to you three panelists and see what closing words of advice you have for our city leaders, who have so patiently let us go past the one-hour mark here, as we have so much to talk about. Would someone like to start?

MCCORMICK: I'll start. I just want to say that this process can be, and has been for us, somewhat frustrating, building those relationships between youth and decision makers and the community. I think it takes a lot of work and a lot of patience. And it's hard sometimes not to give up on it. But --

JOHNSON: But has it been worth it, Martha?

MCCORMICK: Oh, I think it's worth it when you look at the big picture and when you think about how long it takes to make progress in doing this kind of thing. You know, sometimes I want things to happen really quickly, and this kind of a thing isn't going to happen really quickly. So I just am saying, be patient. Know what you want to see done. And you know, we've patchworked things together a lot. And I'm not sure -- but I don't know how you could get the long-term money. If you can get the long-term money and people say, yeah, we want this to be a part of the process of community planning and stuff, that would be awesome. And then you can kind of relax and get out of the "Well, we can do it this way one time and another way another." So I think the more long-term planning you can do and be really purposeful is the better.

JOHNSON: Yes. Judith?

KHAN: Yes, I absolutely agree with Martha about the tension of how long this process really does take if you're going to do it well. And I felt that we did it very fast, doing it in nine months. But I'm responding to policy makers as part of my job. And they have a different sense of time. But to do it well, you've got to put the time in.

At the end of the day, though, it's absolutely worth it. And what I've learned to do is to create celebrations along the way with tangible pieces that policy makers can see that there is activity or that there is progress being made. So for me, seeing the look on the young people's faces at the opening of this teen center or seeing them engaged in conversation with a chief of police and the mayor at a youth town hall forum, and making sure that at least three times a year or twice a year, there is some event, some marker for policy makers to see the progress and for young people to see how much they are making a difference.

JOHNSON: And you know, part of this is remembering that while you're gathering data and having findings that can move specific issues forward in your community, you're also building an infrastructure. You're building an infrastructure around youth engagement and youth voice. And you're building an infrastructure around needs assessment that can be with you over the long term -- both of those vitally important. Eric, your last thought?

KILBRIDE: Just a couple things -- what you heard the other two presenters talk about is that what's happened in their communities or continues to happen is that there is a real value placed

on young people's participation, whether it be around data collection, which is great, but a real opportunity for young people to participate. And it can be difficult on an ongoing way, as leaders change and get elected, and as things happen and agendas change, to keep young people still to be a viable presence and that opportunity to participate is well worth it every time. That's my soapbox.

Two things -- I encourage folks to -- at least you could take a look at www.communityyouthmapping.org. On there is a local perspective video. It was done about a year ago in Richmond, Virginia. It's a good local example, but it gives anybody a sense of this kind of thing we've been talking about for an hour.

And then if I could encourage you to take a look at another website, because it's a complete diversion for us. It represents a lot of our evolution over the last ten years. And that would be www.c3mn.org. And that is a complete issue-specific representation of how the State of Minnesota, for example, is making youth with disability and employment data available to a very specific constituency. So I think it's another kind of representation of how the work and how this process can evolve.

JOHNSON: Thank you, Eric. It's a great segue to a couple last announcements I'd like to make based on our work here at the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families at the National League of Cities.

You will receive early next week from us here at the Institute from Rebecca Makar, who is our program associate, leading our youth participation work -- an e-mail with links to a couple online resources. One, an action kit for municipal leaders on promoting youth participation, which is a broader take than the youth mapping strategies we've been talking about today, but may be of interest to many of you, and it's posted online at our website.

Also a link to a brand new Youth as City Leaders website that we've just launched at the National League of Cities annual Congress of Cities last week, which is intended to allow young people to be engaged directly with each other across communities in their experiences and opportunities and strategies around youth participation and youth voice in municipal government. So both of those online resources you may be interested in.

And then finally, you'll receive in this e-mail from Becky some information about how you can sign up for the National League of Cities' Youth Participation Advisors Network, which is a peer network that we have established for city-based staff who are focused on youth participation and youth development issues. And so we hope those of you who are within city government will think about how you might participate in that peer network as well.

We have a January audioconference scheduled. It is scheduled for January 26, and it is on the topic -- it's entitled "Rising to the Challenge: a Platform for City Leadership on Behalf of Children, Youth and Families." The focus of this audioconference, which will be at 12:30 p.m. EST -- the audioconference will focus on a brand new city platform for action that has been developed by NLC's Council on Youth, Education, and Families, to challenge every city and town to take concrete steps on behalf of the children, youth and families in their communities. So we will be talking about that.

I want to thank our panelists again for a great session. Apologies for going so long, but I think we've had great conversations. Eric, Judith, Martha, thank you so much for being with us. And to all of you listeners, thanks for staying with us and we look forward to having you join us on a future call. Take care, and good holidays.