

Resilient Young Designers

Promoting nonviolent attitudes through collaboration
with environmental designers



Emily Johnson | June 2014

Abstract

One of the most severe health issues facing young people in the U.S. is violence. Violence unequally impacts young minority populations. This injustice is preventable and environmental designers are the right people with the right skills to do it.

An analysis of literature on child development, youth empowerment, and crime prevention suggests that resilience is the best alternative to violence and that environmental designers can foster this attitude among young people. A young person develops resilience from supportive, trusting relationships with family, peers, and adults. This includes adults who represent institutions like law enforcement, school, public planning, and environmental design, whose power directly affects the lives of young people. By sharing decision-making and building relationships with young people, environmental designers will support their resilience.

The same analysis suggests that the product of environmental design (improved places) is also a mechanism for preventing crime when young people are involved in the design. With their design input, neighborhoods will be better equipped to offer young people opportunities and resources, safe places, and places that celebrate youth culture. These qualities will decrease violence and reduce the stress on young people in the community.

Young people and their communities will benefit from reduced violence if environmental designers genuinely align their goals with those of young people.

Signatures

Emily Johnson

June 2014

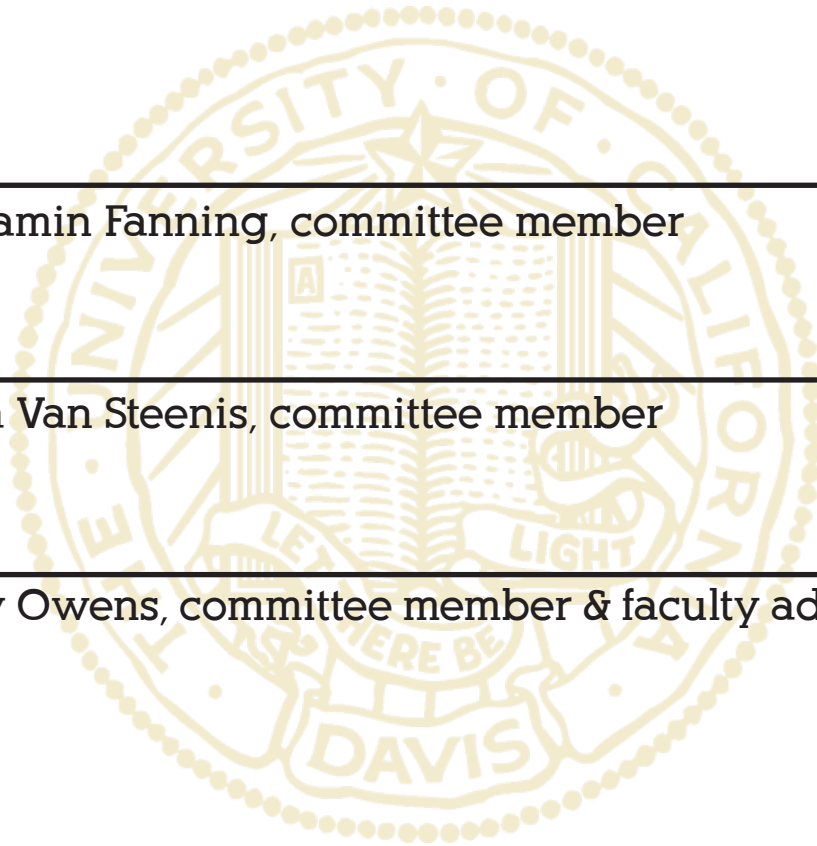
Presented to the faculty of the Landscape Architecture Department of the University of California, Davis, fulfilling the necessary requirements for a Degree of Bachelors of Science in Landscape Architecture.

Accepted and approved by:

Benjamin Fanning, committee member

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Dedication

To my dad, for that late-night debate last New Year's Eve on how to keep kids out of gangs.
Who would have thought it would go this far?

Forward

This project began with my frustration as a Landscape Architecture student, wondering who *really* has the power to create change. Is it the landscape architect? Is it the politician? Is it the community member? In my career, I want the power to “make things better,” but I also want to live in a society where other people have the power to “make things better” even if they cannot afford to hire a professional or persuade a politician.

This issue of power becomes more important as I look to the needs of young people, especially our nation’s disadvantaged young people who inherit a life of poverty, crime, and violence.

In part, this document is about power. Some people have power and others do not. Some people concentrate their power and others share it with those in need. I hope that environmental design professionals will read this document not thinking about “giving up” their power to young people, but instead considering the mutual benefits of sharing the experience of design with upcoming generations of potential designers and community leaders.

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A dark, blurry photograph of an interior room. In the background, a white door is visible, slightly out of focus. The floor appears to be a dark, textured surface. The overall lighting is very low, creating a moody and somewhat mysterious atmosphere.

Introduction

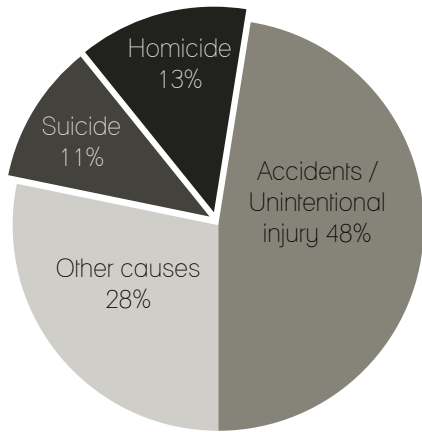


Young People and Violence

Young people are typically healthy. Morbidity and mortality for young people in the United States is often caused by violence in some form (see figure 1.1).

“ Teenage mortality [ages 12-19] is an important public health issue because the majority of deaths among teenagers are caused by external causes of injury such as accidents, homicide, and suicide. These causes of death are, by definition, preventable. (Center for Disease Control) ”

Figure 1.1: Percent distribution of all deaths to teenagers 12-19, by cause of death: U.S., 1999-2008 (CDC)

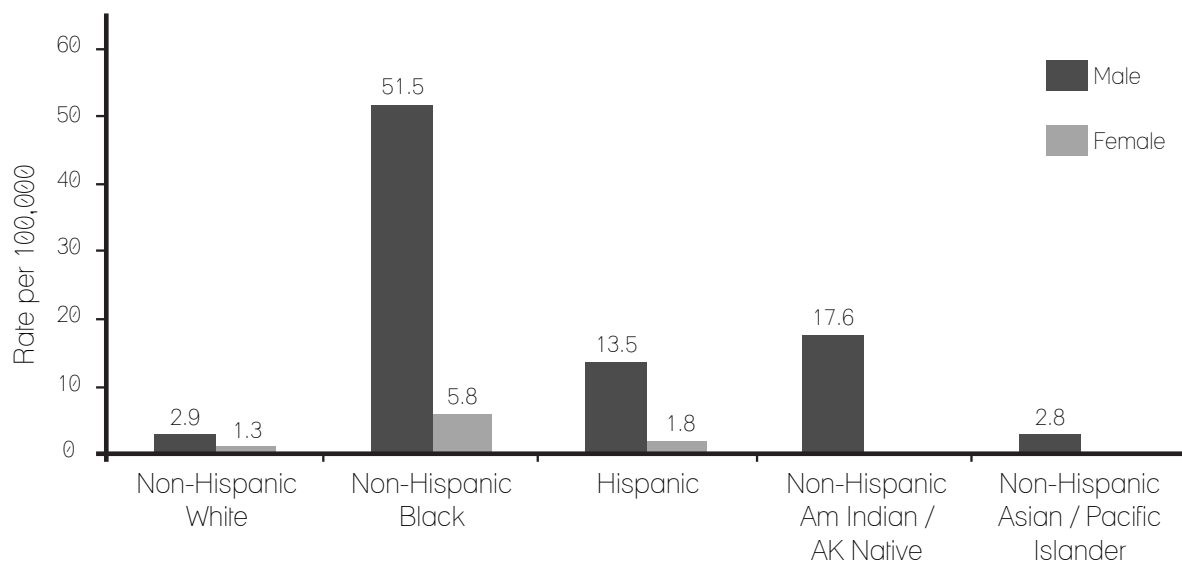


Unlike motor vehicle accidents - the leading cause of death among teenagers - homicide disproportionately affects young people and people of color (see figure 1.2). Homicide is the leading cause of death for non-Hispanic black male teenagers ages 10-24 (Center for Disease Control).

The disparity of violence across age and race indicates a social injustice.

Violence is by definition a preventable problem. These young people should not be suffering.

Figure 1.2: U.S. Homicide Rates Ages 10-24 by Race and Sex in 2010 (CDC, 2010)



The epidemic of youth violence reached its peak in the early 1990's and in response activists, academics, and government agencies developed a multitude of programs that aim to end violence or promote nonviolence. Effectiveness of programs vary. Many are shut down because they fail to prove successful results, others continue despite high social and economic costs. Yet promising strategies thrive today where youth learn nonviolent behavior from adults who care.

Nonviolent Role Models



Figure 1.3: G.R.E.A.T. mentor (<http://www.great-online.org/news/Articles/PhotoContestWinners1.aspx>)

Police officers

D.A.R.E. and G.R.E.A.T. (figure 1.3) are two examples of in-school programs where young people develop better relationships with police officers who teach nonviolent skills,



Figure 1.4: Community mentors (<http://www.arborplace.org/img/spot/Arborplace-Gei-Involved-Lancaster-PA.jpg>)

Community members

There are many community service programs where young people build life-changing relationships with adult mentors (figure 1.4).



Figure 1.5: Environmental designers (http://www.cals.msstate.edu/depts/img/landscape_big.jpg)

Environmental designers

Here is a profession populated by compassionate, proactive adults. Yet it is unclear what environmental designers are doing to promote nonviolence for young people (figure 1.5).

Environmental Designers

At a first glance, environmental designers are already well-equipped to improve the lives and communities of disadvantaged young people. Environmental designers already address many of the social justice issues facing minority communities. See the following examples.

Social Justice Example #1 Cleaning pollution

When a factory or toxic site is shut down, environmental designers have the knowledge and tools to clean the soil, filter the air, and transform it into a safe public venue (figure 1.6). This healthy space will benefit a community that originally suffered worse health because of the site.



Figure 1.6: Safe public venue (http://ihais.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/473804956_ed9867258f.jpg?w=450)

Social Justice Example #2 Urban agriculture

Environmental designers & planners do ongoing work identifying which neighborhoods lack access to healthy, affordable food. When they find a neighborhood that can only access low-quality food from fast-food or liquor stores, they take measures to introduce better food options. These include community gardens (figure 1.7) that offer both food, education, and quality public space.



Figure 1.7: Community garden (http://static.dezeen.com/uploads/2013/06/dezeen_Farming-Kindergarten-by-Vo-Trong-Nghia-Architects_0sq.jpg)

Environmental designers are compassionate people with tools and knowledge to create powerful change. Both the process of design (involving people) and the physical results of design (involving places) suggest opportunities for promoting nonviolent behavior among young people.

People

People are inseparable from environmental design. Designing is a process that happens through collaboration. These collaborations involve people and institutions who have knowledge and tools that youth from disadvantaged communities often do not have. Here lies an untapped opportunity for youth to grow socially and intellectually by sharing the experience of design with professionals.

Place

Place is the reason why environmental designers (more than other professionals) should look deeper into promoting nonviolence through their work. This is especially relevant for disadvantaged communities. Environmental design can make places safer for young people. This idea is akin to the previous two social justice examples.

With these ideas in mind, I suggest that environmental designers consider more seriously their capacity to promote nonviolence by using both people *and* places.

Action

I will develop a set of actions that environmental designers can put to use, including strategies for organizing a group of Young Designers. Upon evaluation, this program will measure how effectively violence is prevented in the long-term when young people collaborate with environmental designers in the design process.

Research Goals

How might participation
in environmental design
promote nonviolent behavior
for young people?

Hypotheses

#1 People

The act of collaborating in environmental design can offer youth positive social experiences and institutional knowledge that promote nonviolent behavior.

#2 Place

Youth participation can result in community spaces that are better designed to deter violence and promote nonviolent activities.

#3 Action

Environmental designers can take action to support nonviolence, including involvement with Young Designers.

Research Methods

Literature & Theory of People

Review relevant literature to identify with whom young people should collaborate when designing and how those people should be involved so as to best encourage long-term nonviolent behavior among young participants.

Literature & Theory of Place

Review relevant literature to identify how environmental design affects violence and what young people are capable of when addressing places of violence.

Program Case Studies

Review case studies of programs for young people that (1) promote nonviolent behavior for young people, (2) engage young people in environmental design, or (3) both.

Suggested Actions

Drawing from the literature, theory, and case studies I will suggest actions for environmental designers, including a framework for a Young Designers program, that promote nonviolent behavior for young people. This framework will provide enough detail on implementing and running the program so that it may be tested.



People and Place



Methods

Identify how young people conceptualize nonviolence

Identify how people influence young people's attitudes

Identify how place affects violence and how young people can affect place

A Resilient Attitude

As a first step, I want young people to articulate their ideas about nonviolence. Since they are effectively my “clients” I want their perspectives to guide my research. Young people can describe which attitudes substitute for violence and what nonviolent alternatives look and feel like.

If there are already young people out there practicing strategies for overcoming the stresses of violent situations and responding to violence with nonviolence, then those strategies should translate to the goals of Young Designers. The goals will be nonviolence the way that young people perceive nonviolence.

What does youth violence look like from the eyes of a youth? And how do youth conceptualize nonviolence? To answer this, I will refer to excerpts written by middle-school students in Flint County, Michigan, who wrote essays and creative literature responding to these questions, posed by Namia Wong for her research on youth empowerment (2008):

- (1) How has youth violence affected my life?
- (2) What are the causes of youth violence?
- (3) What can I do about youth violence?

I will represent this small sample of excerpts categorized in the same way that Wong categorized them after reading and analyzing all 391 of the essays. Among other themes (discussed later) Wong identified three overarching themes that characterize how young people respond to violence in their lives: internalizing, power posturing, and resilience.

Response to youth violence #1

Internalizing

“

“Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night listening to guns being shot, windows being broken, people vomiting so loud you can hear them or even people yelling at the top of their lungs for someone to give them drugs”

“Violence makes me feel like I have to watch my back constantly”

“If we could stop violence, it would be a miracle, but it's not going to happen. There will always be violence no matter what”

”

(Wong 2008)



These young people see violence through a lens of hopelessness and fear (figure 2.1). To them nothing can be done about violence. Or if something could be done, it would involve putting one's own life at risk.

Because of this outlook, these young people consider themselves both powerless in society and powerless among their peers (Wong 2008). With no perceived power, they fall short on coming up with solutions.

This response to violence corresponds to victimization, which is not a desired outcome. This is especially true when many former victims become aggressors themselves.

Figure 2.1: Internalizing (http://truevisiontv.com/uploads/web-sites/39/wysiwyg/pkusa_foundation/boy-03.jpg)

Response to youth violence #2

Power posturing

“People kill to see bodies lay at their feet. To stand out or be known. To feel the success of popularity for others to fear”

“The person who loses the fight often wants to come back for a rematch... then they just keep going back and forth starting stuff until someone gets killed”

(Wong 2008)



These young people often see violence as a necessity (figure 2.2). If one does not become fluent in violence, they will fall victim to it. Whether to feel accepted among their peers or to feel safe from harm, many young people identify with violence as a means of getting by or getting ahead in society. According to Wong's analysis, incentives for power posturing include: coolness, reputation, peer pressure, materialism, gangs, retaliation, and self-defense (2008).

These young people do not generally experience power in society (Wong 2008). More often they live in opposition with many of society's institutions, such as school and law enforcement. These young people experience power over their peers through their reputation and/or direct acts of violence. Unfortunately, this outlook makes it challenging to understand the viewpoints of others, make compromises, and collaborate in creative problem solving exercises (Singer, 2005).

For these reasons, power posturing is not a desired outcome.

Figure 2.2: Power posturing (http://www.youthmentoring.org.au/assets/pages/pdf/Factsheet7_AngerManagement.pdf)

Response to youth violence #3

Resiliency

“My life could have been taken, but my God has watched me”

*“They try to take away the little rights we're entitled to
But if you take too much away from a person they give up
Giving up as in suicide, drugs, and that thing called violence
Until adults listen, there will be no cure for that thing called violence”*

(Wong 2008)



These young people see hope despite violence in their lives (figure 2.3). The two individuals quoted above feel resilience through God and through being heard. Replicating Wong's survey in other places with different youth may reveal additional sources of resiliency.

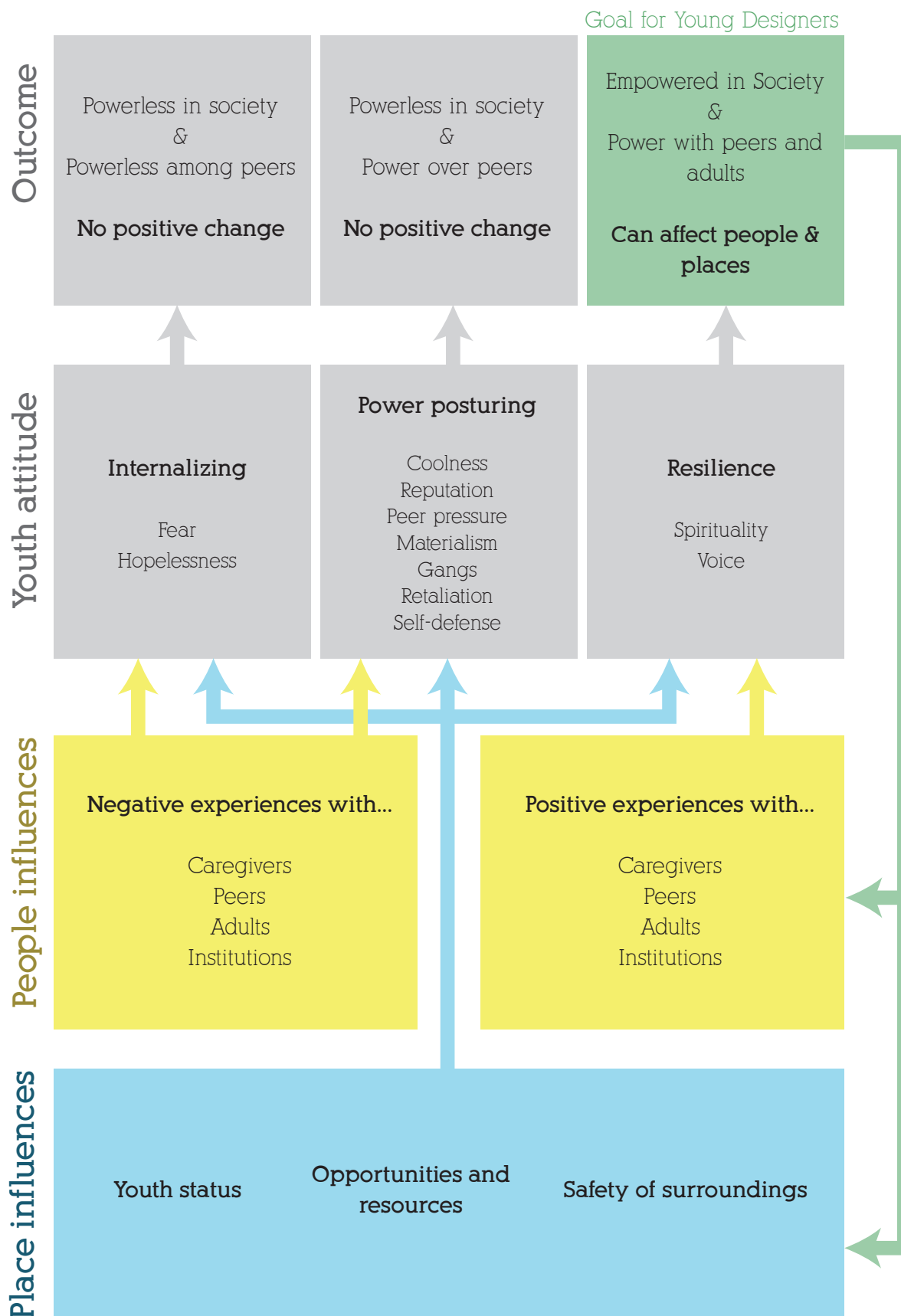
Based on what young people have written, a resilient attitude is how they achieve power in society and power with (not over) their peers. Their collaboration gives them ideas to promote nonviolence and the strength to influence their communities.

A nonviolent attitude requires a resilient attitude. Because of this, I suggest that a Young Designers program should foster the development of a resilient attitude in its participants.

On the following page, figure 2.4 conceptualizes how these outcomes relate to the influences of people and place. The table also outlines the influence of people and place, providing a preview of the next two sections.

Figure 2.3: Resiliency (<http://foxweekly.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/mateo-viral-video-3-year-old-cupcake-debate.jpg>)

Figure 2.4: Influences and Outcomes



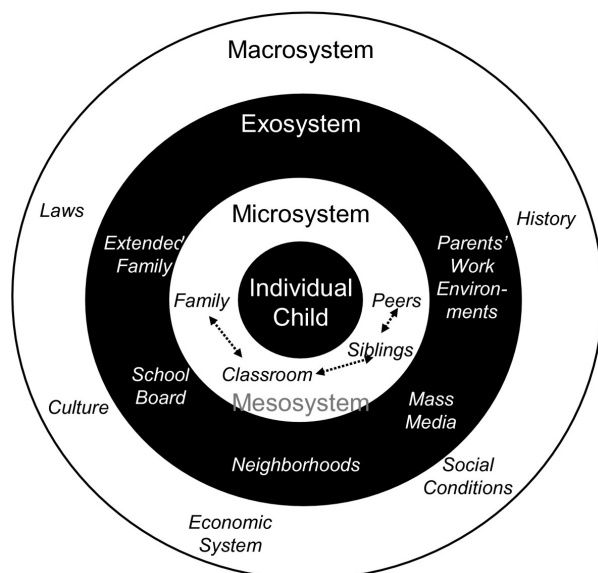
Influence of People

Do environmental designers have the power to promote resiliency in young people? Although it does not seem like a typical role for a designer, I want to explore the possibility. To identify the link between a child's resiliency and the different people in the child's life, I turn to literature on gang prevention, cognitive development, and youth empowerment. These authors all comment on the causes of youth violence and the people who play a role. I will interpret their findings in terms of which interactions with whom will promote resilient, nonviolent attitudes.

Based on this literature, there appears to be some general agreement on which early-life factors most strongly correlate to youth violence. These include (1) individual status, (2) neighborhood or family disadvantage, (3) exposure to crime context (Heimer, 2006; DeCoster, 2006; Wong, 2008; NIJ, 2013). Figure 2.5 articulates youth violence as a public health issue with multiple scales of influence. The microsystem has the most direct effect on the child's development, but the child and the child's close relationships are all under the influence of the exosystem and the macrosystem, making society's institutions just as influential, if somewhat less direct.

The literature also points towards different people being more influential at different points in a young person's development. Figure 2.6 on the following page depicts two possible scenarios

Figure 2.5: Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory



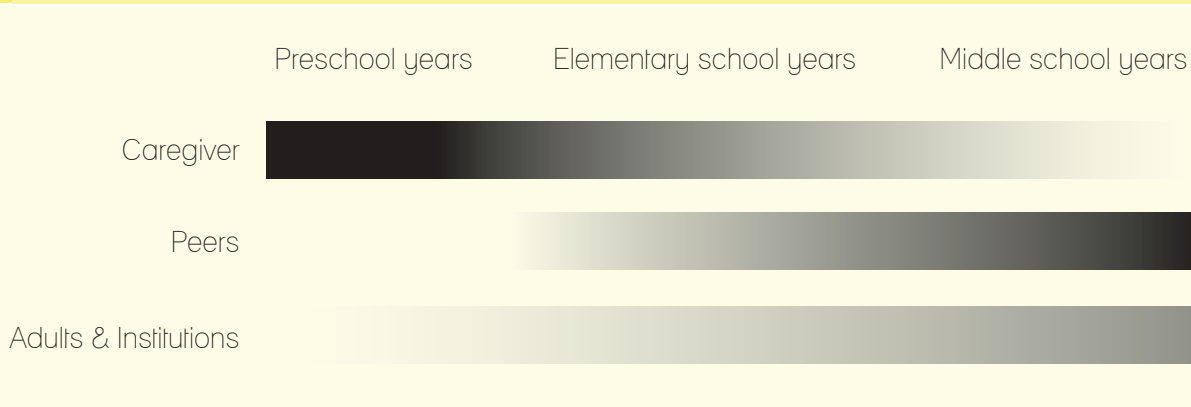
of how people's influences change over a child's life. In general, caregiver relationships are the first influences on a child, followed by peer relationships, often followed then by adult-driven social and cultural institutions like school, law enforcement, and businesses (NIJ, 2013; Singer 2005; Wong 2008). An environmental designer should keep in mind that these relationships with manifest in real places, whether at home, in school, or in the neighborhood. The later section on place will focus on how these contexts can also foster nonviolence.

For now, however, I will focus on the people who influence a child's resiliency. Environmental designers must consider these role of these people in order to best promote nonviolent attitudes for young people.

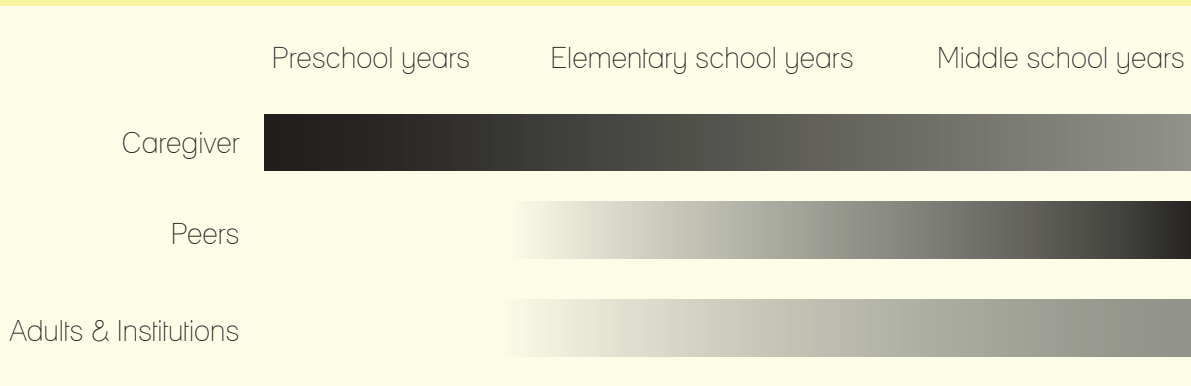
<http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/figures/1471-2458-8-223-1-l.jpg>

Figure 2.6: Weight of Influence over Time

Example in Disadvantaged Neighborhood



Example in Privileged Neighborhood



Caregiver relationships

Even before a child is born, prenatal care affects his or her future health. Good early nutrition, for example, promotes cognitive development and better school performance later in life (NIJ, 2013).

The caretaker's influence (figure 2.7) is greatest in the first five years of a child's life, waning slightly when school begins, and waning significantly more when the child enters adolescence. Social development begins in those years: "social smiles are present at about two months [of age], and genuine laughter at twelve months" (Singer, 2005). The baby's social smile is a response to

Figure 2.7: Caregiver (<http://clappinghandsfarm.com/gilbero%20and%20kid%20on%20shoulders.jpg>)

seeing the caregiver's face when the caregiver plays games or partakes in social exchanges, unfortunately "when there is no smile or vocalization from the mother, the baby becomes passive and withdraws. In severe cases, this is known as anaclitic depression" (Singer, 2005). Highlighting the importance early intervention, the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect concluded that "no other single intervention has the promise of home visitation" from nurses during pregnancy and a child's first two years of life. Home visitations have provided some of the strongest evidence of success and have been included in recent health-care reform legislation (NIJ, 2013). This particular service lies beyond the scope of an environmental designer, but suggests that involving younger children will offer more benefits than high school children, for example.

According to NIJ, "low-income parents, less educated parents, and parents with more children tend to display less warmth and harsher discipline than parents without these stresses" (2013). Sub-optimal parenting, especially that which constitutes abuse or neglect, can deteriorate the parent-child relationship over time, decreasing levels of parental monitoring and increasing the likelihood of childhood aggression (NIJ, 2013). This indicates that caregivers in disadvantaged communities may require extra support to monitor their children and provide positive role-modeling. It also indicates that caregivers need more opportunities to bond with their children.

Based on this research, I suggest that environmental designers support caregivers by seeking their design input on what resources (i.e. prenatal care) and places (i.e. family-friendly parks) they need in their community to reduce stress and have more quality time with their children.

I also suggest that mentors in the Young Designers program (or any program for disadvantaged young people) reduce the stress of caregivers by offering the following support:

- Safe, stable relationships with young people
- Consistency in supervision and role-modeling
- Opportunities for caregivers to support their child's accomplishments



Peer relationships

Peers (figure 2.8) begin their influence often when a child enters school, and they become more influential when children have the independence to roam their communities. Poor relationships with teachers or guardians will often result in stronger influence from peers.

Time with peers benefits a child's development. Pretend play with friends improves awareness of others' thoughts, teaches sharing, taking turns, and cooperation in concert with general social skills (Singer, 2005). Make-believe play also provides opportunities for children

Figure 2.8: Peers (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a5/Children_marbles.jpg)

to act out negative emotions and learn self-regulation (Singer, 2005). Aggressive children who are quick to fight, and slow to negotiate and solve problems, are more likely to be rejected by peers (NIJ, 2013). Play is how children learn social skills and bond with friends, and is thus necessary for a resilient, nonviolent attitude. Environmental designers who engage young people should consider the benefits of play-based group activities.

Peer influence is a key component to healthy development, however unmonitored children may befriend peers who demonstrate aggressive or antisocial behavior. Aggressive peers are the strongest indicator of future aggressive behavior, “however, the strongest predictor of kids associating with antisocial or delinquent peers in the first place is family” (NIJ, 2013). This reinforces the importance of role-modeling, monitoring, and caregiver involvement in developing resilient attitudes.

Based on these findings, I suggest that environmental designers engage young people with:

- Group play and bonding
- A supportive setting free of rejection
- Facilitation/monitoring by positive role models



Figure 2.9: Community member (http://paigemax-well.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/100_1674.jpg)

Adult & Institutional Relationships

The first institution children encounter is usually school. School begins at approximately age five for most children, by which time many are already ahead or behind on social and academic skills. Teachers will have a weaker influence on children who are less successful and attached to school. Low attachment reinforces low achievement, which in turn reinforces low attachment. This vicious cycle often leads to early dropping-out. These young drop-outs are uninfluenced by the school system once they remove themselves from it. Environmental designers working through school settings should engage young people before truancy emerges.

Young people encounter other institutions as they reach adolescence and grow more independent from their caregivers. As young people transition into adulthood they are expected to behave differently and develop meaningful identities, yet they are restrained as minors (Wong 2008). Violence fulfills a young person's unmet needs of mastering control, building self-esteem, and expressing power (Wong, 2008). Likewise, violence is cited as a “flagrant manifestation of impotence” (Wong, 2008). As with school, attachment is linked with achievement. Teachers, business owners, law enforcement, and members of the community may see minors as problems or liabilities (figure 2.9), but these adults must entrust young people with responsibilities so they can develop meaningful identities as young community members.

Wong theorizes that resiliency stems from both empowerment and positive youth development (2008). She suggests that these are achieved through shared decision-making between adults

and young-people and “critical consciousness” - or a greater awareness of how institutions that affect one’s life. Environmental design in and of itself is an institution that makes up part of a young person’s critical consciousness. Besides offering their own institutional knowledge, designers should try to include adults from other institutions (including school) when engaging young people in design projects. This will improve their connectedness and achievement in school and the community

Additionally, disadvantaged communities must combat the prevalent culture of drugs, delinquency, and violence. These young people need support from a strong social fabric of adult role models (including environmental designers) who promote:

- Shared power & decision-making
- Prosocial conflict resolution
- Cooperation

Figure 2.11 summarizes how people can support a child’s resiliency.

Figure 2.11: Summary of Positive Influences from People		
Caregiver	Peers	Adults & Institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate prenatal care • Healthy behaviors during pregnancy • Early parenting support • Safe, stable and nurturing relationships without maltreatment • Consistency in discipline and supervision • Positive role modeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonding with prosocial peers • Support from friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectedness & achievement in school and community • High collective efficacy within community • Value for prosocial conflict resolution • A morality of cooperation • Supervision & role modeling

Influence of Place

Influenced by positive relationships and empowered by institutional knowledge, resilient youth are eager to change their communities. What can they do and what good will it do?

Next I present relevant literature to identify how environmental design affects violence and what young people are capable of if they collaborate with professional environmental designers. My hypothesis is that youth participation can result in community spaces that are better designed to deter violence and promote nonviolent activities.

To demonstrate what young people are capable of, I re-examine Wong's analysis of youth essays. Her analysis resulted in three categories of youth-identified environmental influences that relate to youth violence. These include safety of surroundings, opportunities & resources, and youth status. The influences that young people identified are both cultural and physical, but I will highlight the physical aspects of each category, putting them in terms of tentative projects that young people might identify and partake in.

I will also examine how these designs will prevent violence in the community in the long-term. The literature I examine will elaborate on how each of the three environmental influences invites violence or reinforces violent attitudes and how redesigning spaces can replace stress with something positive.

Environmental Influence #1 Safety of Surroundings



Figure 2.12: Unsafe (<https://coolsandiegosights.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/homeless-and-graffiti-beneath-highway-163-in-mission-valley-e1387719460427.jpg?w=604>)



Figure 2.13: Safe (<http://sacfoodies.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/one.bmp>)

“Sometimes the youth violence gets so bad that I just stay inside because I don't want to hear or see it”

“Violence affects my life by not knowing where it is safe... you can't hide from it”

(Wong 2008)

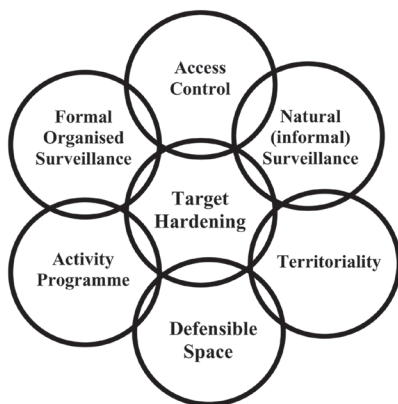
Many youth wrote about being afraid to go to places that should have been safe, such as school, stores, parks, and their own homes (Wong 2008). These youth are living with a fearful, internalized attitude towards life - not resilient attitudes that enable them. They express a need for places that are safe.

So what makes a place safe? Some young people are aware that the appearance of a place reflects its safety (compare figure 2.12 & 2.13). One of Wong's subjects suggests that certain markers in the environment, like boarded up houses, are indicators of community violence (Wong 2008). Youth Voices for Change in West Sacramento demonstrated their collective knowledge of safe versus unsafe spaces by photographing places that had speeding traffic, poor bike and pedestrian routes, signs of homelessness, graffiti, and trash (Owens, 2010). Young people are in-tune with how they feel about safety and they understand why they feel that way.

Environmental designers are also in-tune with this idea. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a series of principles that, when used in a design, show reduced crime in that place (see figure 2.14). Increased vegetation, for instance, correlated to reduced crime in a Chicago public housing facility (Kuo & Sullivan). Figure 2.15 depicts the results of the study.

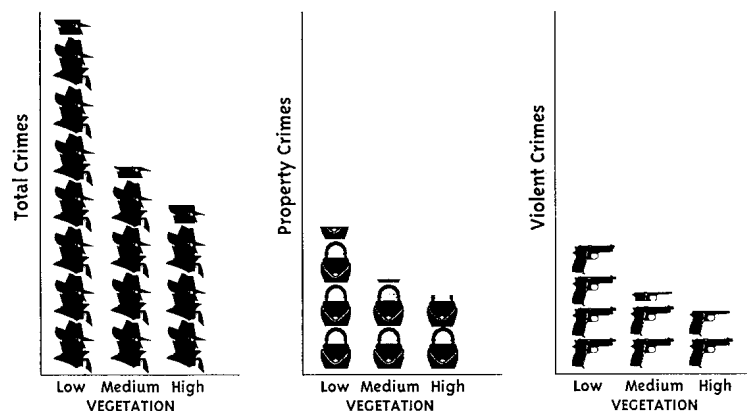
When put to the task, young people learn about places their observations. Guidance from adults (such as an intro to CPTED) may improve youth capacity to design fixes for violent spaces that they identify in their communities.

Figure 2.14: Principles of CPTED



http://www.emeraldinsight.com/content_images/fig/1130190203002.png

Figure 2.15: Mean number of crimes reported per building for apartment buildings with different amounts of vegetation (each icon represents one reported crime) (Kuo, 2001)



Environmental Influence #2 Opportunities & Resources



Figure 2.16: Nothing to do (<http://southbrooklynpost.com/wp-content/uploads/suburban-kids.jpg>)



Figure 2.17: Something to do (<http://www.village.rantoul.il.us/images/pages/N293/Youth%20Center%20Climbing%20Wall.jpg>)

“If they had jobs they wouldn't have to rob stores and people's homes”

(Wong 2008)

Young people need things to do (compare figure 2.16 & 2.17), “youth suggested that providing them with opportunities to participate in sports, after-school or extracurricular activities and teen clubs was a way to prevent violence” (Wong 2008). Likewise, a study by Ginsburg found that youth prioritized educational and occupational opportunities over strategies that focused specifically on reducing risk factors (Wong 2008). Youth-led designs may be similarly prioritized, putting more emphasis on designing recreational spaces and job opportunities.

In addition, environmental design can incorporate preventive resources (to reduce “risk factors”) into the community. Examples of these include family planning centers, community gardens, tutoring centers, and health clinics. Youth Voices for Change, for example, recommended better transportation options for young people (Owens, 2010).

Youth culture “can evolve so rapidly that by the time older age groups begin to understand it, young people have already moved on to the next thing” (Wong 2008). Whether it is preventive care or just something for to do in their free time, youth are in the best position to determine the relevance of programs geared towards youth (Wong 2008). A Young Designers program should diligently seek input from a diversity of young people so that all needs are met. Most importantly, their dreams need to become a reality so they have alternatives to violence in their neighborhoods. An unrealized planning document will not provide long-term benefits to the community.

Environmental Influence #3

Youth Status



Figure 2.18: Youth stigma (http://cdtbc.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/sun_c21vwpb.jpeg)



Figure 2.19: Celebrating youth culture (<http://static.squarespace.com/static/50305c7684ae7fae2e65756a/5220048ee4b053b3578fc2ed/52200492e4b053b3578fe231/1377830071783/GraffitiWall1.jpg>)

“Going through the metal detectors makes me feel like a convict”

“Going to school is like going to jail... sometimes I wonder what did I do?”

(Wong 2008)

Many youth in violent communities are treated like second-class citizens, “the act of constantly being monitored by security measures conveys a message that those who are being watched are untrustworthy” (Wong 2008). The young people quoted above are not resilient, but oppressed by youth stigma and lacking in resources to do anything about it.

Stigma about youth, especially youth of color, is visible in how schools and adult-run businesses are built (figure 2.18). Racism and neglect for the poor is something that manifests at the city planning level. Planning-scale design and institutional-level design is more significant to the well-being of young people and will benefit them and their communities the most, in addition to giving youth critical knowledge about institutions, as discussed in the People section (Wong 2008).

Young people in the program should be involved in the largest-scale projects to ensure that those places speak positively of youth culture (figure 2.19). By designing spaces that visibly, tangibly express trust and appreciation for youth, it may mend the cultural clash between youth and institutions and prevent antisocial beliefs that youth often feel towards institutions.

These findings suggest that some resilient youth are already in tune with the possibilities for reducing youth violence through design. Even more youth have the capacity to observe and critique their neighborhoods. And of course, almost every single youth is aware of what he or she wants to see in the neighborhood. Environmental designers can use young people's expertise through collaboration.

Figure 2.20 summarizes the results of my research on how young people might promote resiliency in their communities through design. The lessons here will be employed when developing the program's framework.



Conclusion

Figure 2.21: A Vision for Success

Young Designers

Participants are empowered in society and share power with their peers. They forge healthy relationships with professionals to help design better places in the community.

Youth Attitude

Young participants are resilient when they think of problems in the community.

People

Caregivers have input on the program's activities and designs; they frequently celebrate their child's achievements.

Peers are supportive of one another; they bond and solve problems through playful activities.

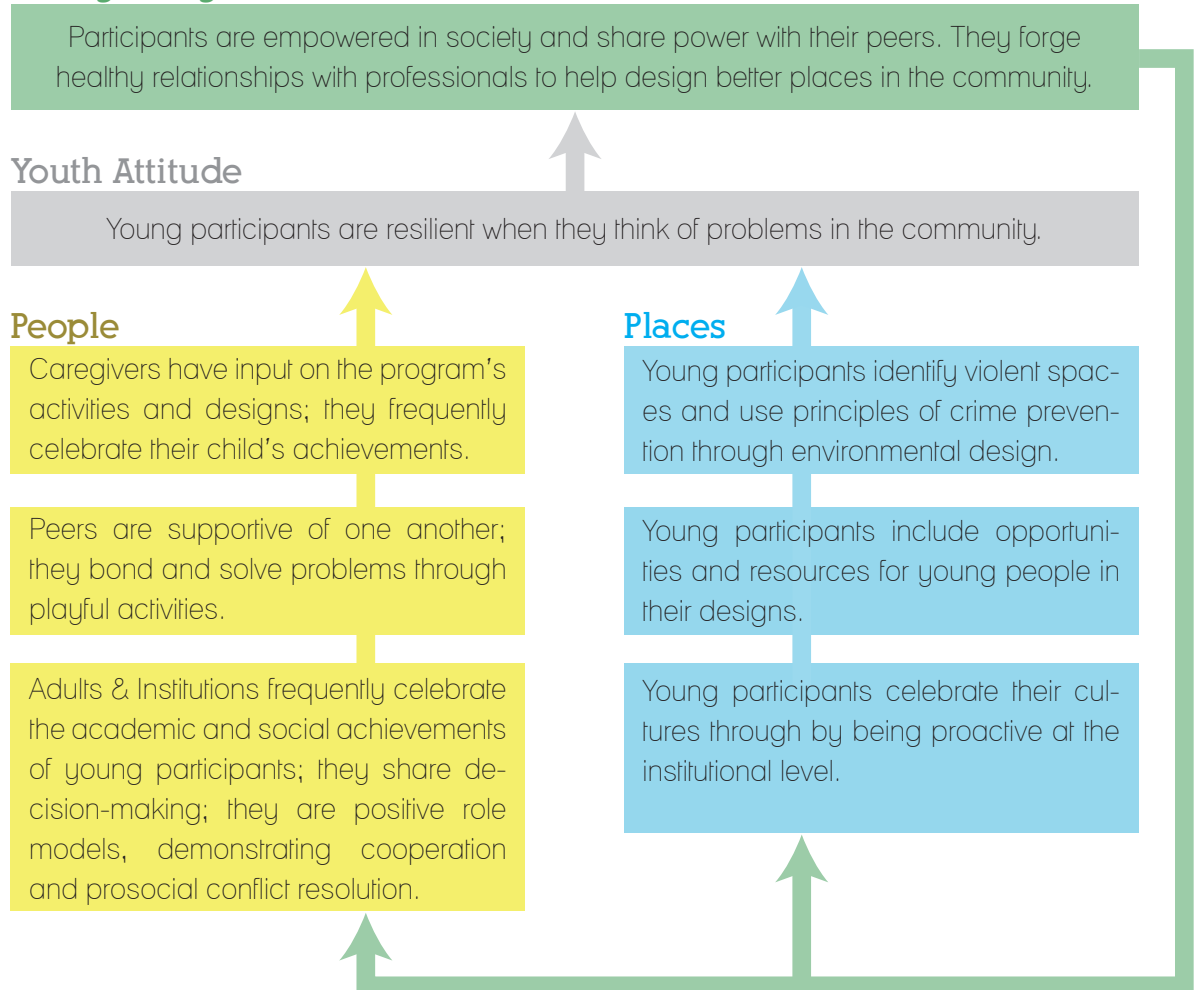
Adults & Institutions frequently celebrate the academic and social achievements of young participants; they share decision-making; they are positive role models, demonstrating cooperation and prosocial conflict resolution.

Places

Young participants identify violent spaces and use principles of crime prevention through environmental design.

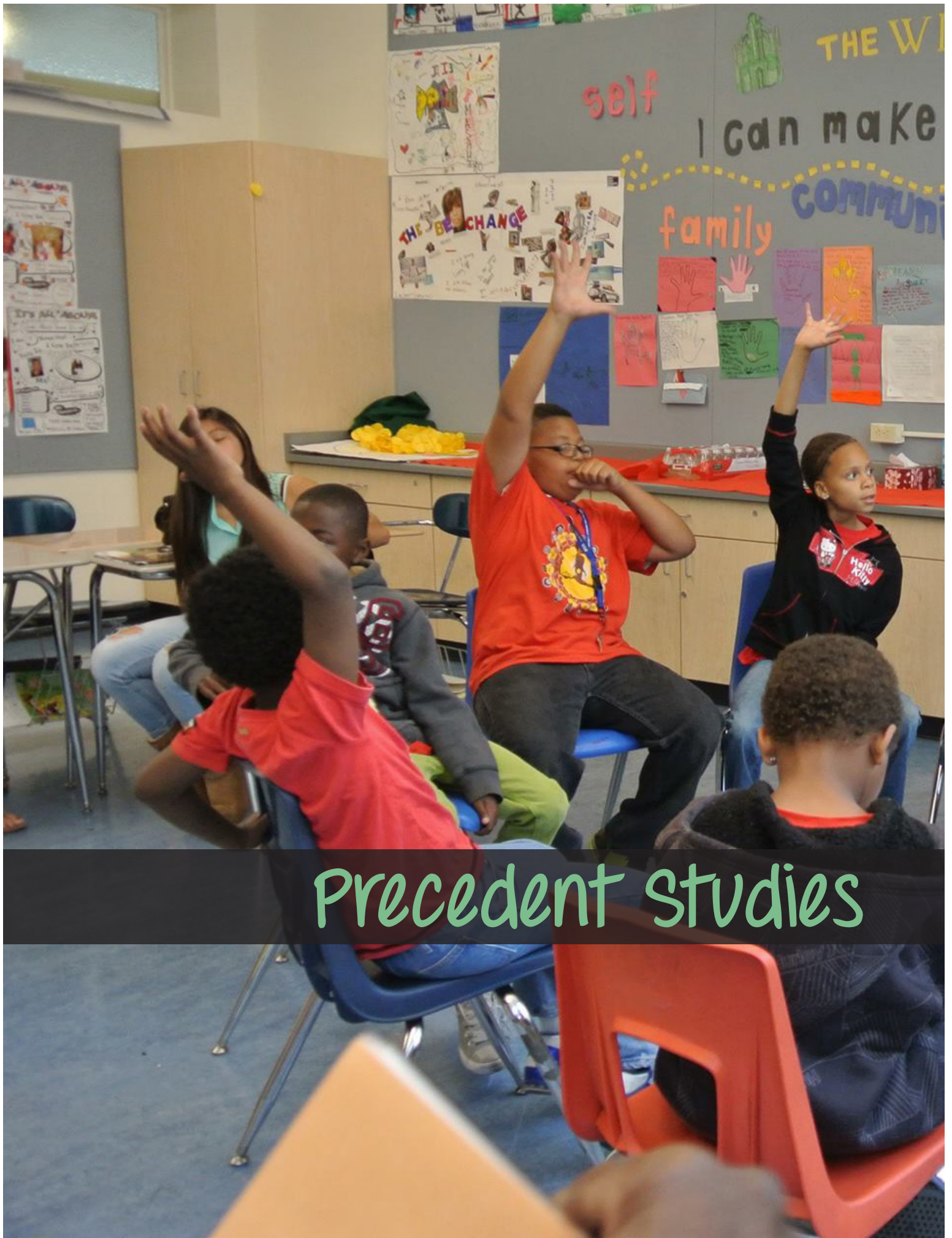
Young participants include opportunities and resources for young people in their designs.

Young participants celebrate their cultures through by being proactive at the institutional level.



The principles depicted in figure 2.21 can guide the actions of environmental designers. A more complete vision will include the details of facilitating the Young Designers program. Several questions that still remain and call for further research:

- Which ages should participate in the program?
- Which activities best promote resilience and successfully implement designs?
- When should the program take place?
- How are programs sustained over time?



Precedent Studies



Methods

Review precedent studies of programs for young people that promote nonviolent behavior and/or engage them in environmental design. Within the literature, seek best practices for:

- Ages of participants
- Topics and activities that promote resilience
- Timing or longevity of the program
- Successes in funding and sustaining the program

Preventive Intervention Programme

This program began as a research project on preventing violence. Kindergarten teachers filled out Social Behavior Questionnaires to identify boys with increased aggression, oppositional behavior, and hyperactivity. These boys were considered to be at higher risk of antisocial behavior and dropping out of school. They were randomly split into a control group and an intervention group. Boys in the intervention group participated in the Preventive Intervention Programme for two years (from ages 7-9) (Tremblay, 2007).

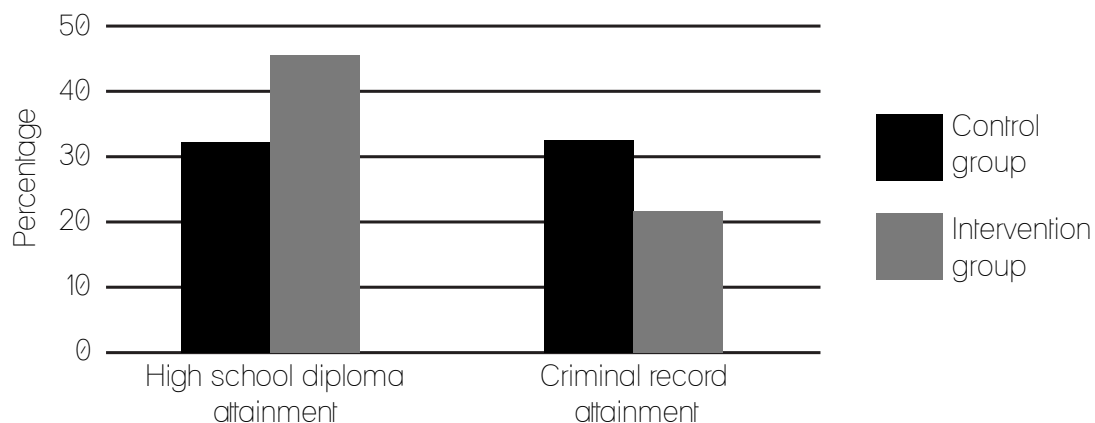
Activities were two-fold. First, groups of four to seven children would meet during lunch time. For every one disruptive child, there were three prosocial children. During meetings, researchers taught children about social skills. Some children also received lessons on media literacy or playing less aggressively. The program's success was measured in the form of increased attainment of a high school diploma and reduced attainment of a criminal record. Figure 3.1 depicts the results of the study (Tremblay, 2007).

The two-year program met once a week during lunchtime or after school (Tremblay, 2007).

Although the program did not continue, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention highly recommends this program's model as one of the most measurably successful methods of preventing violent behavior (Howell, 2010).

Preventive Intervention's strengths are its young age range and its quantitative post-evaluation.

Figure 3.1: Results from a 15-Year Follow-Up of the Preventive Intervention Programme (Tremblay, 2007)



Oakland Freedom School

Oakland Freedom School (OFS) (figure 3.2) is a summer literacy program designed for Black children K-8 (ages 5-13), who often fall behind their peers during the summer.

As a mechanism for improving literacy, one of OFS's primary objectives is providing a space where young people can develop their specific consciousnesses, focusing on their African-American culture and history. Young participants in the program are called scholars. The curriculum features "child and youth development activities, a comprehensive reading curriculum, and academic support services to build study skills and abilities in reading, writing, and science" (Leadership Excellence, 2014). Watson also highlights the sense of energy, love, and community that she experienced when she visited OFS (2012). The program fosters a sense of identity as both Black young people and as scholars.

OFS runs for six weeks every summer. Many of the scholars return year after year and continue in the teen program, which has a similar focus on African-American culture.

Enrollment fees seem to fund most of the program, but enrollment scholarships are available too. These are likely grant-funded. The city's evaluation of the program found that "97% of parents said that OFS contributed to their children's success in school" and "88% of youth reported that OFS helped them to 'stay out of trouble'" (Leadership Excellence, 2014)

Oakland Freedom School's strengths lie mainly in its identity-building, both cultural and academic. Additionally, offering the course during the summer, it occupies children who may not have anything to do otherwise.



Figure 3.2: http://cdbk.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/sun_c21wvwb.jpeg

United Playaz

United Playaz (UP) (figure 3.3) began as a high school program to end violence through youth leadership. It has evolved into a rich, multi-generational group supported by family members and program alumni.

Youth culture is celebrated in the program, not suppressed. The UP slogan says “it takes the hood to save the hood” (Watson 2012). Rudy Corpuz Jr. leads the group with “ear hustlin” and unconditional “tough love,” but ultimately the young participants run the show. The activities aim to improve the unity among students, teachers, and community. Some examples of activities include a cookout for mothers whose children have died, a teachers versus students basketball game, fundraising to help families in need, and an anti-violence performance for middle and elementary schools. Alongside trips to prisons and colleges, they take time to “kick it as a family” by going camping and ice-skating; “every UP event... is fun and strategically celebrates life” (Watson, 2012).

UP is a year-round program, meeting every week or more. During the school year they meet at lunch time, but they still meet during summer (Watson, 2012).

UP was originally funded by the school to end its rampant racial violence, but it is now better funded with grant money. All evidence of success is qualitative and anecdotal, but has clearly gained the support of community members, school staff, and even law enforcement (Watson, 2012).

UP's strengths lie in its sense of family, keeping young people committed to each other and bringing alumni back to provide support. It also benefits from the adult-youth relationship, where adults facilitate and young people take the lead.



Figure 3.3: http://cdtbc.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/sun_c21wvp.jpeg

Bronx Youth Force

The Bronx Youth Force (BYF) was an activist coalition of young people ages 8-24 (mostly 14-24) who lived, worked, or went to school in the Bronx (Checkoway, 2003).

BYF Was initiated by young people and gained popularity through newsletters distributed throughout Bronx. Part of creating BYF was establishing a youth center. Their refurbished building was branded colorfully by young people and provided knowledge, inspiration, and a space for informed dialogue (Checkoway, 2003). The members organized their process for change in six steps (1) begin dialogue (2) participate in education and volunteering (3) challenge power (4) recruit youth (5) ally with others and "make noise" (6) pressure policy makers. Their recruitment was innovative, often in the form of community services. Their other environmental design activities include art & murals for awareness, cleanups, and a critical documentary on the disparity of a nearby major street. They established tenant associations, conducted surveys, and prepared renovation plans for public housing (Checkoway, 2003). Their activities seemed limited only by the creativity of their members.

The youth center and activities were presumably available year-round, although the literature does not discuss this in detail.

When BYF was active, the youth organization and campaigning was funded by grants. Much of the success came from have a full-time youth organizer who was well-connected to local institutions. When the organizer left, the program slowly fell apart, attesting to the benefits of a great leader and the risks of concentrating too much power (Checkoway, 2003).

Strengths of BYF included its institutional-scale approach, which was achieved through precise social networking between young people, adults, and institutions. Because of this, BYF successfully implemented meaningful environmental design projects.

Community Garden Patch

Before closing, the community garden patch (figure 3.4) ran under the larger organization, Berkeley Youth Alternatives (BYA). The garden patch provided short-term paid internships for teens (two at a time), who had already successfully participated in BYA's landscape internship (Lawson, 1995).

Young people helped build the garden along with other organization members (i.e. Ameri-corps), although it is unclear who designed the space and how much influence young people had in decision-making. While interning at the garden, young people connected to local businesses through field trips and produce sales. Gardening and selling produce at the farmers market gave young people job skills while earning an income (Lawson, 1995).

The internships were limited to six months each.

The garden was supported by government funding, but the garden patch had innovative ideas for products and services that would push them closer to economic self-sufficiency (Lawson, 1995). The garden closed after 18 years when the government stopped providing financial support and no grants were secured.

The Community Garden Patch's strengths lie in meaningful employment and skill-building for youth.



Figure 3.4: http://www.berkeleyside.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/berkeley.youth_alternatives.allen_.jpg

Y-PLAN

Y-PLAN Is an in-class program for high school students. It has been tested successfully in remedial 9th grade and honors 12th grade alike (McKoy, 2007).

Y-PLAN (figure 3.5) Began as a graduate student class at University of California, Berkeley. It pairs these graduate mentors with a high school students from disadvantaged communities and works closely with the teacher and the classroom curriculum. Students work on client projects in the civic sector, and the projects must be seeking youth-relevant information, have educational value, and be interesting to the students (McKoy, 2007). Students are asked to identify issues of personal importance. They use photos, sketches, surveys, and interviews to gather data. They analyze and debate collective issues, and learn about collective goods and civic institutions (McKoy, 2010). Mentors facilitate with their own design expertise, but the design is a genuine product of the students.

The flexible five-step program (see figure 3.6) will typically generate enough activities for a classroom for one term.

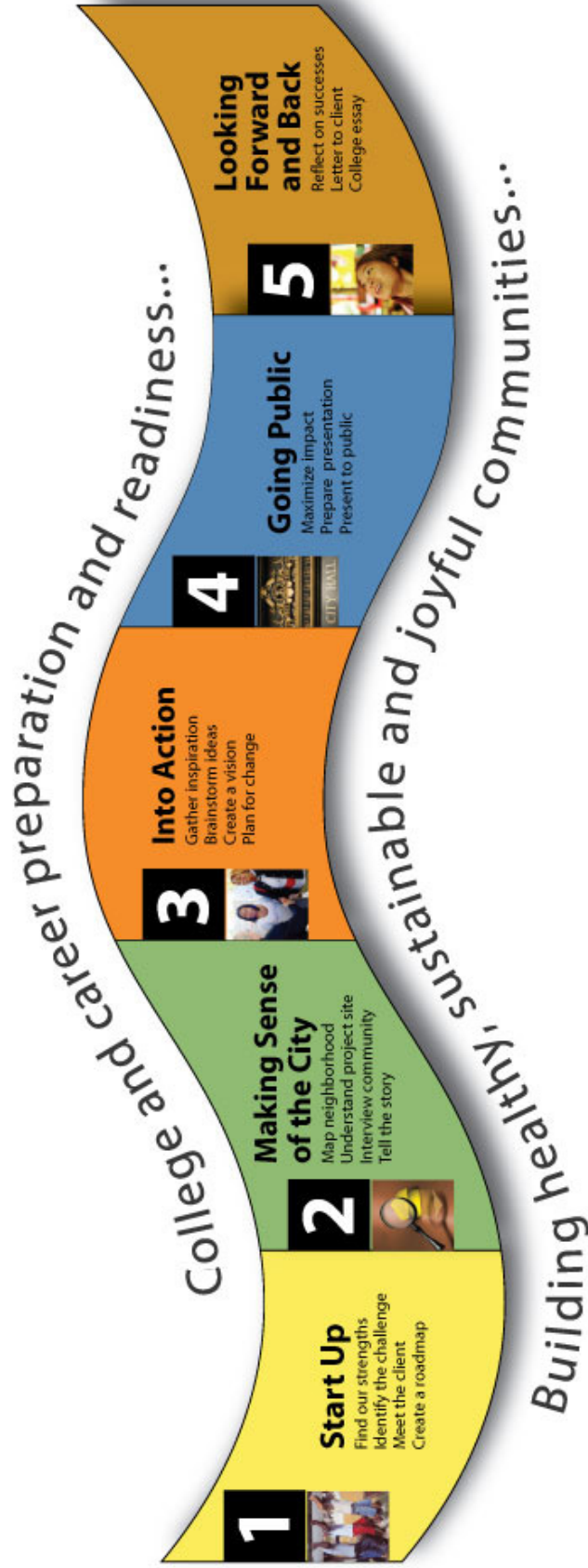
Y-PLAN demonstrates its success as a model over time by engaging more authentic participation from clients who use and implement young people's ideas in real projects. These design projects are generally government or grant-funded (sometimes commercially funded) and thus put no pressure on the participants of Y-PLAN (McKoy, 2011)

One of Y-PLAN's strengths is its direct connection to school curriculum, which may help the youth-school relationship. The program also results in real neighborhood changes through collaboration with government institutions.



Figure 3.5: <http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/nationalyplan/wp-content/gallery/module-3/module3-1.jpg>

Figure 3.6: Y-PLAN roadmap



<http://y-plan.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/roadmap.jpg>

Conclusion

Figure 3.7 offers a summary of the precedent programs focusing on age of participants, the topics and activities, the timing of the program, and how the program is sustained.

Figure 3.7: Summary of Precedent Studies						
	Preventive Intervention Programme	Oakland Freedom School	United Playaz	Bronx Youth Force	Community Garden Patch	Y-PLAN
PROGRAM DETAILS						
Age range	7-9	5-14	14-18	12-24	14-18	14-18
Cultural focus		X	X	X		
Academic & job skills focus		X			X	X
Year-round program			X	X		
Seasonal/limited-term program	X	X			X	X
Grant funding	X	X	X	X	X	X
Other funding methods		X	X		X	
Monitoring of youth violence	X					
PEOPLE INVOLVED						
Caregivers			X			
Peers	X	X	X	X	X	X
Adult mentors		X	X	X	X	X
Institutions			X	X		X
PLACES DESIGNED						
Nonviolent spaces						X
Opportunities and resources				X	X	X
Celebration of youth culture				X		X

Age of participants

Preventive Intervention and Oakland Freedom school both involved early elementary-aged youth, while other programs targeted high school youth. The younger children will benefit more from early development of prosocial, resilient attitudes. According to Nobel-Prize winning economist James Heckman, programs that target high-risk children before they start kindergarten will provide taxpayers with more benefits than costs (NIJ, 2013). Although teens proved themselves capable of design, many of them are past the ideal age for intervention.

As I found no precedent of younger children participating in environmental design, I suggest that further research explores this possibility. Until then, I will recommend that a Young Designers program involves young people all ages. While some activities remain separated by age (like Oakland Freedom School), there should be ample opportunities to combine the skills of older children with the benefits of younger participation.

Topics and activities

Oakland Freedom School, the Youth Force, and United Playaz all put time and energy towards celebrating their respective cultures. This gave the youth a stronger sense of identity and a stronger bond to their peers in the program. This bond meant that youth stayed involved longer and even returned as alumni, having a sense of greater responsibility. It also meant that families got excited about the activities and were more likely to be involved (especially true for United Playaz, who most strongly pushed for family values). I recommend that a Young Designers program celebrates cultural identities and acts as a supportive family.

Oakland Freedom School and Y-PLAN aim to directly improve their participants' academic performance by using a curriculum that explicitly involves math, humanities, science, etc. Other programs, however, aim to improve youth engagement in school through social/cultural means, as mentioned in the previous paragraph. There are benefits to both approaches and Oakland Freedom School Captures gets the best of both by being explicit about learning and about responsibility to one's community and culture. I recommend that a Young Designers program likewise celebrates the link between education and culture.

As for implementing environmental design, Bronx Youth Force was the only program where youth stayed involved past the design phase and created real changes. Some Y-PLAN participants stayed involved until designs were implemented, but did not participate in construction. These two programs demonstrated the most success with implementation because of their institutional connections. I recommend strong institutional connections so that young people can reap the benefits of their hard work.

Timing of program

The Youth Force and United Playaz stood out as being year-round resources that youth could consistently rely on. Oakland Freedom School came close; young people looked forward to it every summer. This links back to the idea of the program being a “family” - not just an event. The Oakland Freedom School and Community Garden Patch also occupy young people with safe, engaging activities outside of regular school time. This addresses the issue of insufficient opportunities for young people outside of school. I recommend that a Young Designers program is year-round and focuses on engaging young people after school hours and during the summer. When applicable, overlap with classroom curriculum may add additional benefits.

Sustaining the program

When the Youth Force and Community Garden Patch ended their programs, it was because of funding. While the focus of my research is not to deduce why some programs successfully maintain funding and others do not, it is worth observing that funding is a component. All of the programs I examined attempt to fund themselves in different ways: Preventive Intervention through a research grant, Oakland Freedom School through tuition fees, United Playaz through fundraising (i.e. bake sales), Youth Force worked exclusively from grants, the Community Garden Patch contracts with the city and profits from produce sales, and Y-PLAN receives university funds. Further research could explore the most effective means of stabilizing funding.

Preventive Intervention is the only program of the six I looked at to measure the long-term effects of the program on youth violence. Along with a strong theoretical background (demonstrated by Y-PLAN) this quantitative approach is key to gaining legitimacy as a program and I recommend that any program, once it is running smoothly, undergoes such an evaluation.

Figure 3.8: Recommended Program Details

Age of participants

- All ages welcome until further research or experience specifies otherwise.
- Use of both separate activities and collaboration between age groups.

Topics & Activities

- Celebrate culture, community, and academia.
- Focus on institutional connections to ensure designs are built.

Timing

- Available year-round.
- Opportunities for after school and summer time.

Program Sustainability

- Further research should examine best techniques for funding.
- Long-term quantitative evaluation will increase support for the program.



Final recommendations



Analysis

Product

Methods

Based on the research presented in this document, this chapter recommends actions for environmental design professionals, including strategies for facilitating groups of Young Designers.

Based on the research presented in this document, the following recommendations will assist environmental design professionals improve their ability to support long-term nonviolence through better-informed design. It will also outline how professionals can unlock their potential to empower young people and foster a new generation of Resilient Young Designers.

Private Environmental Design Professionals

Get to know the young people

- Identify if the project site is relevant or accessible to young people
- If so, reach out to local Young Designers, or other organized groups of young people interested in community change, expressing genuine interest in their input

Use their expertise

- Ask personally relevant questions, such as...
 - “What opportunities and resources do you want in your community?”
 - “How can this project site celebrate the youth culture in this community?”
- Alternately, if Young Designers already have design recommendations published, use that as a resource to guide the project’s design

Offer long-term support & involvement

- Follow up with Young Designers to show them how their ideas were put to use
- Show appreciation for their input and/or resources, invite them to tour the firm, or invite them to the ground-breaking or ribbon-cutting ceremony for the project
- Offer ongoing support as an environmental design resource

Public Environmental Design Professionals

Get to know the young people

- Identify neighborhoods with the most violence and push for revitalization there
- Develop a forum focused on hearing from young people and select a public liaison
- Reach out to local Young Designers, or other organized groups of young people interested in community change, expressing genuine interest in their input

Use their expertise

- Ask personally relevant questions, such as...
 - “What opportunities and resources do you want in your community?”
 - “How can places in this community better celebrate young people?”
 - “Which places in the community most urgently need to change?”
- Request long-term, community-wide recommendations and incorporate Young Designers’ ideas into city planning documents

Offer long-term support & involvement

- Show appreciation for their input and/or resources and offer long-term support
- Offer ongoing support as an environmental design resource
- Support the long-term evaluation of the program

To support Young Designers, I suggest that more individuals with environmental design knowledge consider working directly with young people. This framework is based on the research in this document and is designed to empower environmental designers and show them how they can use their skills as mentors for Young Designers. Some mentors may be volunteers, but others may be grant-funded, employed by local governments, supported through academic institutions or professional organizations like the American Society for Landscape Architects.

Facilitating Young Designers

Get started

- Recruit a group of young people interested in community change, or get involved with an existing group
- Meet family members (and teachers, when applicable) & encourage participation

Lead by example

- Young Designers support one another like family
- Young Designers value cooperation, listening, and prosocial conflict resolution
- Young Designers have fun and their participation is voluntary

Facilitate conversations

- Quality of the neighborhood (safety, opportunities, resources, culture)
- The link between physical and cultural environment
- Influences on self-image (including age, heritage, etc.)
- Goals for the neighborhood

Facilitate action

- Collaborate with Young Designers on their desired projects, plans, or activities. These may include documenting existing conditions, building art projects or installations, or producing recommendations for environmental designers
- Help with permits, materials, organization, networking, etc. when applicable
- Facilitate publicity and documentation

Keep going, keep growing

- Use publicity to recruit more Young Designers
- Facilitate the growth of the Young Designers' network to include public, private, and community resources
- Push for more ambitious projects as the group's capacity grows

As Young Designers gain experience, they may initiate their own projects and reach out to institutions pushing for the change they envision. I believe these young activists represent the future of the environmental design profession. Advocates of environmental design must also be advocates of Young Designers. Do not wait until young people are in high school or college to build that relationship. Young people, their families, community members, mentors, and professionals can all work together today with the mutual goal of improving the community.

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