

CREATING POSITIVE
OUTCOMES FOR FOSTER
YOUTH ...

One Agency at a Time

Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINING PROJECT



May 2008



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Lisa Korwin of Korwin Consulting is the principal evaluator of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project. Robin Horner is the primary author of this report.

Special thanks go to the staff and youth trainers at the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project as well as the Project's organizational partners that generously contributed their insights and time to this evaluation effort.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction	6
Findings.....	9
Recommendations.....	26
Conclusion.....	27
Appendix	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

When the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project launched in 2000 its primary purpose was to empower current and former foster youth to educate child welfare workers on the needs, desires and cultural experience of transition age foster youth. Since its inception, the Project has trained, employed, and supported more than 72 current and former foster youth. It has conducted trainings for more than 5,000 child welfare workers, supervisors and managers. And the Project has expanded its educational reach through speaking engagements, dissemination of digital stories, curated museums of foster youth culture, and ongoing technical assistance to other organizations working with and on behalf of foster youth.

What is the cumulative impact of these offerings? Does the Project's investment in positive foster youth leadership development result in broader and longer term gains beyond the immediate training of the youth and child welfare workers? Do organizational partners benefit from the Project's offerings? In what ways? This study conducted on behalf of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project is designed to answer these questions.

"The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project provides transition age foster youth with a tremendous professional opportunity to cultivate quality leadership skills in an incredibly supportive, structured, and specialized environment for this particular population. It has yet to be offered, to my knowledge, by any other organization or project, statewide or nationally."

—Partner organization

EVALUATION METHODS

Using a combination of key informant interviews and surveys, Korwin Consulting conducted an organizational impact assessment of the Y.O.U.T.H Training Project. This assessment measures the impact that the Project has on child welfare advocacy and service organizations through the eyes of the Project's youth trainers and administrative staff, and perhaps most telling, from advocacy and service organizations themselves.

A total of 69 individuals participated in this study—44 youth trainers, 3 Project staff members, and 22 staff members from child welfare advocacy and service organizations.

FINDINGS

The Y.O.U.T.H Training Project impacts the field through multiple strategies, some of which were intentional in their design, while others have evolved as the Project's offerings and strengths have become known and relied upon in the field.

POSITIVE FOSTER YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Emancipated foster youth as a population are highly likely to be homeless,

unemployed, incarcerated, and lacking a high school (let alone college) education.¹ At the heart of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project's work is the impact it has on transition age foster youth, beginning with those it employs as youth trainers. Using a positive youth development approach in its work—this process supports youth to strengthen their skills, positive behaviors, and beliefs, and focuses on emphasizing those strengths in all interactions.

Once hired by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, youth receive intensive training on leadership, presentation skills, team-building, community building and other professional skills building. The Project serves as a bridge for youth to gain professional experience from and transferable skills to other organizations.

Staff at partner organizations note that the Project has an impact on the youth trainers because it provides:

- ▶ Youth development,
- ▶ Skill-building,
- ▶ Employment,
- ▶ A unique opportunity for them to cultivate leadership skills, and
- ▶ An arena for translating their experiences into powerful advocacy.

As their self-assessments illustrate, the youth trainers develop a sense of self-efficacy and power for positive influence that is rare in their population. They see themselves becoming agents of change as

¹ Several sources, including: M. Choca (2007) "Help Foster Youth Make the Grade," *The Sacramento Bee* January 26, 2007.

they build relationships through their work at other organizations.

What is the impact of this positive youth leadership development? Do the youth bring their newly developed talents and strength to other settings? If so, what benefits result from this transfer of leadership?

Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINERS' POSITIVELY IMPACT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

One of the first indicators that the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project's reach extends beyond its training is the number of trainers who become affiliated with other child welfare advocacy and service organizations.

All of the youth surveyed indicate that they are affiliated with a number of child welfare-related advocacy and service organizations, and hold a variety of positions. Most commonly, they serve as paid consultants, trainers, CYC chapter members, advisory board members, board members, and peer mentors. More than three-quarters (77 percent) of these relationships consist of monthly or more frequent contact.

Feedback from each of three sources — youth, administrative Project staff, and partner organizations — indicates that youth trainers have a positive impact on other child welfare advocacy and service organizations.

Youth trainers report having a positive impact in the vast majority (89 percent) of relationships they have built with these organizations. They attribute their greatest impacts to:

- ▶ Bringing a foster youth perspective,

- ▶ Developing materials for and leading trainings,
- ▶ Providing leadership and initiation on new and existing projects,
- ▶ Serving as a role model for youth being assisted by the organizations, and
- ▶ Educating peers and professionals about foster youth.

IMPACTING THE CHILD WELFARE FIELD

Besides fostering skills and self-confidence in transition age foster youth and connecting individual organizations with competent youth trainers and future staff members, the Project reaches many organizations and training entities through digital stories, its Museum, well-developed curricula, and staff activities.

Digital stories are short video autobiographies created by current and former foster youth used to educate and train child welfare workers about the experience and needs of foster youth. Available for viewing at the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project website (www.youthtrainingproject.org), these stories are disseminated by staff to organizations with which the Project works and also are accessed by organizations and individuals with no other involvement to the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project.

“They make a difference through their courage, in recognizing their voice, and then deciding to use that voice to advocate for a better way of living for a population. Because they are doing it in a respectful manner, they set a precedent and represent youth in a way that makes it attractive for us to further youth involvement in the future.”

—Partner organization staff

Nearly all (87 percent) of staff surveyed at partner organizations are familiar with the digital stories produced and disseminated by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project. They are enthusiastic about their usefulness for training professionals and bringing new insights and knowledge to the field as a whole. The Project’s staff are aware of numerous organizations and training entities in California, other states, and even outside the U.S. that are using digital stories to train professionals in the child welfare field. At the same time, partner

organizations and Project staff also appreciate the power the digital story-making process has in the lives of former foster youth, saying they allow youth to be creative, to heal from past trauma, to share their feelings, and to feel empowered.

In a more general sense, many staff members of partner organizations identify *perspective, compelling*

curricula, and high-quality preparation of child welfare workers, as three particular strengths of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project’s work. The knowledge and insights they and their colleagues gain from interactions with the Project are likely to stay with them and contribute to change, wherever they work in the child welfare field.

Overall, staff members at the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project report being aware that they are held in high regard in the field and

that their philosophy and curriculum materials are being integrated, even into organizations and entities with which they have never had direct contact. They are regularly approached by organizations seeking information and advice on integrating empowered youth into their training activities. Perhaps most importantly, the Project sees a profound effect of its work on workers in the field who become inspired and “undergo an attitudinal shift in thinking about the youth and the job they’re doing.”

CHALLENGES TO INCREASING IMPACT

While the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project remains committed to building upon their successes and broadening their impact in the child welfare field, staff acknowledge that they face numerous internal and external challenges to this quest including devising strategies to:

- ▶ Increase capacity,
- ▶ Expand funding,
- ▶ Increase exposure,
- ▶ Find committed staff, and
- ▶ Nurture trainers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered for consideration by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project as it continues to extend and deepen its impact on the child welfare field.

Increase the Project’s exposure: While the Project has trained child welfare staff in many counties throughout California, their reach can probably extend even further. Staff are encouraged to consider other important key stakeholders that directly impact the lives of foster youth who might

benefit from the Project’s training. Consideration should be given to whether and how they might extend their training to group home staff, foster parents, and birth parents to name but a few.

Establish a coalition of foster youth leadership development organizations.

This study’s findings show that the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project directly and indirectly partners with and supports numerous organizations in their work with transition age foster youth. The Project should explore, in concert with these partner organizations, the value of forming a coalition aimed at increasing awareness of, and innovative approaches, toward further developing foster youth leadership.

Expand the Reach of Digital Stories

Digital stories are both powerful and easily accessible to an almost limitless number of organizations and training entities. Consider implementing partner agency and Project staff suggestions including:

- ▶ Provide accompanying, complementary discussion packets or curriculum materials for each digital story an organization purchases.
- ▶ Track information about the ways digital stories are used to build a case for greater funding so that more stories touching on more issues can be made and so that they can be made available to organizations that cannot afford them at the current price.

CONCLUSION

The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project is known for its professionally trained and capable youth trainers, powerful digital stories, and helpful training curricula. The transition age foster youth it directly engages gain a sense of their own capacity to transform organizations, the lives of other youth, and those serving current and former foster youth. While the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project is having a noteworthy impact on several key partner organizations, there are opportunities for it to expand its reach and increase its impact even further throughout the field. Taking certain recommended actions will put the organization in a position to continue to grow its potential for impact on the child welfare field.

INTRODUCTION

When the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project launched in 2000 its primary purpose was to empower current and former foster youth to educate child welfare workers on the needs, desires and cultural experience of transition age foster youth. Since its inception, the Project has trained, employed, and supported more than 72 current and former foster youth. It has conducted trainings for more than 5,000 child welfare workers, supervisors and managers. And the Project has expanded its educational reach through speaking engagements, dissemination of digital stories, and ongoing technical assistance to other organizations working with and on behalf of foster youth.

What is the cumulative impact of these offerings? Does the Project's investment in foster youth leadership development result in broader and longer term gains beyond the immediate training of the youth and child welfare workers? Do organizational partners benefit from the Project's offerings? In what ways? This study conducted on behalf of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project is designed to answer these questions.

EVALUATION METHODS

The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project has utilized a variety of evaluation methods including interviews, surveys, journals, and observation over the past eight years to understand whether and how it is achieving its organizational objectives. These evaluation studies have measured:

CHILD WELFARE WORKERS, SUPERVISORS, AND MANAGERS

- ▶ Training satisfaction,
- ▶ Changes in knowledge and attitudes, and
- ▶ Changes in practice with transition age foster youth

Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINERS'

- ▶ Satisfaction with leadership training and ongoing support, as well as
- ▶ Short-term and intermediate changes in knowledge, skills, and personal efficacy

PROJECT STAFF'S

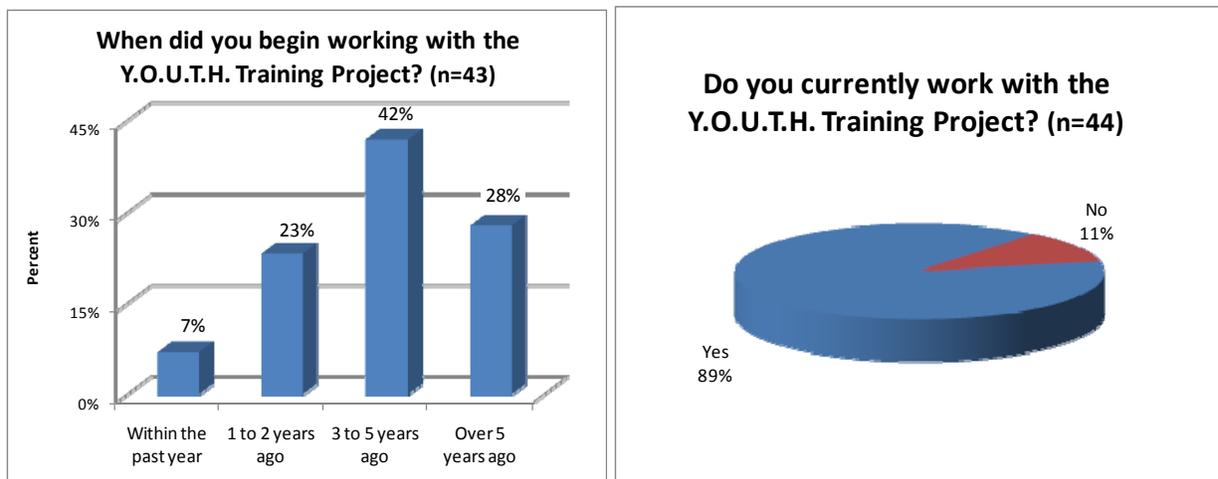
- ▶ Documentation of process outputs (including curriculum design, training and support of youth trainers, the making of digital stories, the Museums, technical assistance, and speaking engagements), and
- ▶ Project outcomes

Inevitably, these evaluations have given rise to a recurring question, "Does the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project's efforts extend beyond the actual trainers and trainees?" This evaluation is designed to further the Project's understanding of its reach.

CURRENT EVALUATION

Working in collaboration with the Y.O.U.T.H Training Project, Korwin Consulting used the following evaluation methods in conducting this current evaluation:

YOUTH TRAINER IMPACT SURVEY: The Y.O.U.T.H Training Project contacted 22 current and former youth trainers in January 2007 and another 50 in October 2007 — for a total of 72 youth trainers — inviting them to participate in an online survey about their work and impact in the child welfare field. The survey was completed by 44 individuals, or 61 percent of those invited. As the charts below illustrate, the trainers began working with the Y.O.U.T.H Training Project as recently as within the past year to others with an affiliation extending beyond five years. * Most respondents (89 percent, or 39 trainers) still work with the Y.O.U.T.H Training Project.



Some youth have held staff positions within the Project in addition to that of trainer, including project assistant, curriculum developer, and project field coordinator. The practice of promoting youth trainers to positions of greater authority within the organization is in keeping with the Project's commitment to positive youth development.

PARTNER ORGANIZATION STAFF SURVEY: In the above described survey, youth trainers indicated organizations with whom they had worked in some capacity (i.e., as trainer, staff member, or consultant) and listed the names and contact information for individuals at those organizations whom they felt would be best able to describe the impact of the Project and its trainers. These organizational affiliates and others added by Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project

* In these and all other charts, "n" equals the number of respondents or individuals counted.

staff — 54 in all — were invited to fill out the Partner Organization Staff Survey.* The online survey was completed by 22 individuals (or 41 percent of those invited), representing 18 organizations. (A list of these organizations is in the Appendix.)

Notes about limitations and implications of the data:

- ▶ Because the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project recruits almost all of its youth trainers from California Youth Connection (CYC), the two organizations have a very close collaborative relationship. Nine individuals completing the Partner Survey are staff members of CYC (and another is a volunteer adult supporter there). This means that a great deal of data on the impact of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project reported in the Partner Survey refers to impact on one organization (CYC).
- ▶ Partner agencies' experience high staff turnover rates typical of the nonprofit sector. We were unable to contact many individuals identified by youth trainers because they had moved on to other jobs. Moreover, two that we did hear from had little to no recollection of involvement with anyone from the Project and responded to few questions on the survey. As a result of receiving twice the number of responses from youth trainers as we did from staff familiar with the Project, we are unable to cross-reference youth and staff impressions of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project's impact at specific organizations, although we are able to do so based on both populations' impressions as a whole.

STAFF INTERVIEWS: Interviews were conducted with the Y.O.U.T.H Training Project Director and two other staff members. The interviews explored staff perceptions about the nature of their collaborations with other organizations (or agencies) and their impact on the transition age foster youth they train, other organizations, and the broader child welfare field.

* One staff member at a partner agency also is employed by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project. This person was instructed to fill out the survey from the point of view of working at the partner agency.

FINDINGS

POSITIVE FOSTER YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Emancipated foster youth as a population are highly likely to be homeless, unemployed, incarcerated, and lacking a high school (let alone college) education.² At the heart of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project's work is the impact it has on transition age foster youth, beginning with those it employs as youth trainers. Using a positive youth development approach in its work—this process supports youth to strengthen their skills, positive behaviors, and beliefs, and focuses on emphasizing those strengths in all interactions.

According to Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project materials:

The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project understands that in child welfare everyone who interacts with youth in the system must incorporate a strength-based perspective and positive youth development as a foundation in his or her work with youth. Youth report that without this perspective, youth continue to be mistrustful, disinterested and under-enthusiastic about child welfare recommendations and services. By design, The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project was infused with positive youth development concepts from the start. The Project provides a socializing force where youth learn what it means and feels like to be a teacher and trainer. Throughout this capacity building process, youth are empowered and actually given the opportunity to be influential. They interact in an environment that is both high in expectation and full of nurturance and caregiving by the coordinators, as well as peer co-trainers. The youth build community with other foster youth who regularly challenge themselves, learn to be expressive and articulate, and are also going through the developmental process of emancipating or managing post-emancipation. They are given the tools, skills, structure and support to be teachers, facilitators, analysts, and spokespersons.

Interviews with Project Staff members provide further understanding into this positive youth development approach. They explain that once hired by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, youth undergo an intensive training on leadership, presentation skills, team-building, and continuing education. A Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project staff member states, "There are more subtle things to the training, too. There's a lot of development of other skills and intelligences, like how to travel with a group, how to travel in a professional way, and how to present themselves professionally when they are in front of an audience. The biggest thing we do—that is also the least tangible—is the way we do team building in casual ways: For

² Several sources, including: M. Choca (2007) "Help Foster Youth Make the Grade," *The Sacramento Bee* January 26, 2007.

example, we all eat dinner together the night before a training. It's really crucial to building the sense of well-being, community, and love for these youth."

Another staff member describes how the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project serves as a bridge for youth to gain professional experience and transferable skills in other organizations: "Most places that want to have youth voice interjected into a conference training don't realize at first what positive youth development is and what it means to not re-traumatize the youth or ask them questions they are not prepared for. We believe in giving youth meaningful and helpful opportunities. We talk about not tokenizing youth. We feel strongly about giving them real supervision, and we want others to understand that it takes time and money to understand the needs and build the job skills of the youth they would like to bring in."

The Project Director goes on to explain that "Our staff prioritizes employing current and former foster youth. We recognize that this decision also has an impact on our organization. We take a strengths-based approach to their skills. We understand what their expertise is and where they will need support. When we hire youth we are providing them with an untraditional situation. We're not just concerned with how productive they are but are also committed to supporting that young person. The implications in the field is that *by employing former foster youth we show other employers you can utilize former foster youth*. By providing mentoring and training we provide youth opportunities to grow as well as show the field the potential of foster youth. Our group environment creates a sense of family among the youth, including peer mentorship, awareness of and access to important resources such as housing scholarships, and mentoring and referrals to one another."

What is the impact of this positive youth leadership development? Do the youth bring their newly developed talents and strength to other settings? If so, what benefits result this transfer of leadership?

Y.O.U.T.H. staff members see youth trainers continue to make progress after leaving the Project. For instance, former trainers have gone on to:

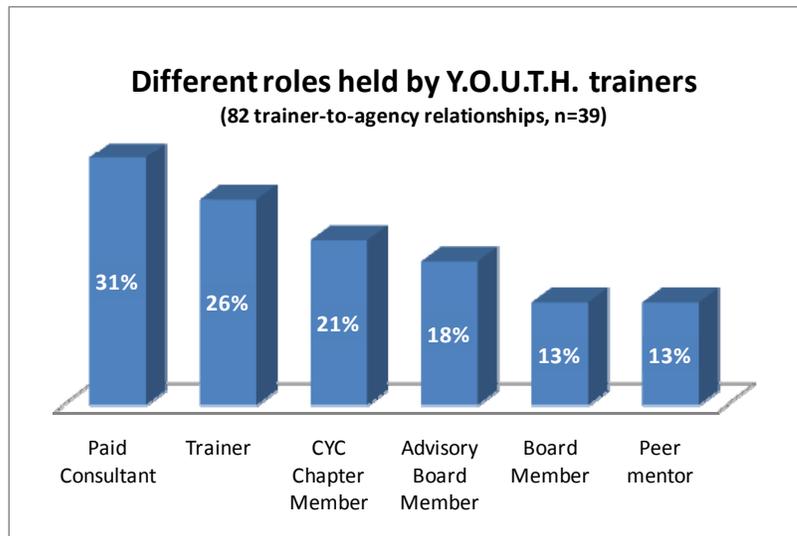
- ▶ Work as a consultant at a major philanthropic foundation
- ▶ Serve on the state's Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care
- ▶ Win awards and media recognition for their leadership and involvement in the field
- ▶ Receive a university scholarship
- ▶ Become involved with foster youth organizations in other states

Extending the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project's Reach...

Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINERS' INVOLVEMENT WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

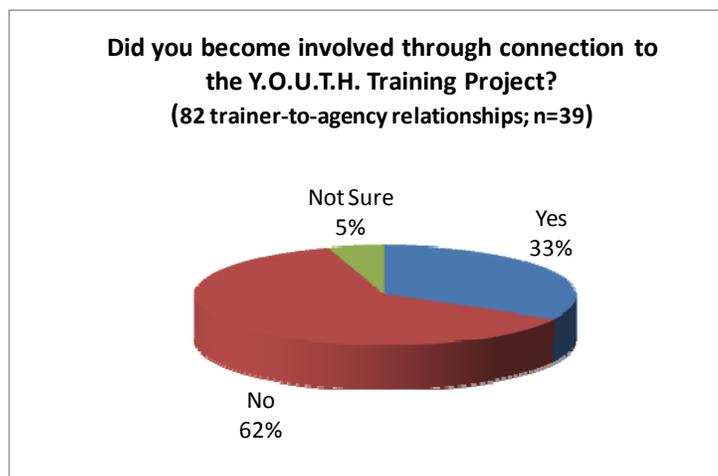
One of the first indicators that the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project has an extended reach beyond its training is the number of Y.O.U.T.H. trainers who become affiliated with other child welfare advocacy and service organizations.

Since beginning their work with the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, 39 of the trainers surveyed report establishing as many as 82 different organizational affiliations, including employment, board membership, and other leadership roles. This represents involvement with 28 different organizations, agencies, and/or commissions.³ (A table listing these organizations is in the Appendix.)



While approximately one-third (27 youth, or 33 percent) of these youth trainers first became involved with these organizations as a result of their connection to the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, the majority (62 percent) had prior organizational affiliations. This is not surprising: The foster youth care community is relatively small, the Project recruits almost all of its trainers through CYC, and many youth come to CYC by way of other programs and agencies.

Most of the youth trainers (24 youth, or 83 percent) have been involved with more than one organization since joining the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project and more than three-quarters (77 percent) of these relationships consisted of monthly or more frequent contact.



³ Most youth report more than one organizational affiliation outside of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project accounting for the 82 affiliations. Additionally, in a review of these data, Project staff members indicate that these figures are most likely an underreporting of the actual number of affiliations held by current and former Project trainers.

Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINERS POSITIVELY IMPACT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

For the most part, the trainers believe that their involvement has been beneficial to the organizations with which they worked. In fact, as a group, they report having a positive impact in 89 percent of the relationships they have built with other organizations. In describing this impact, they most frequently cite the value of bringing their *perspective and awareness* of foster youth to the organizations. They also frequently cite developing materials for and leading *trainings*, providing *leadership* and initiation on new and existing projects, and serving as a *role model* for youth being assisted by the organization.

The youth describe their impact in the following ways:

- ▶ “I have been able to assist and to advocate for many newly emancipated youth to get into post-secondary educational programs as well as find stable and temporary employment.”
- ▶ “Once a month, I create a curriculum based on the chosen topic. I organize and facilitate this three-hour meeting. The goal is to educate the youth about topics ranging from permanency and resiliency to youth rights and self-advocacy.”
- ▶ “I think that my organizational and leadership skills helped aid the CYC chapter in completing its project goals.”
- ▶ “I have been part of the program for five years and have taught foster youth many emancipation skills that will help them become better prepared for adulthood.”
- ▶ “I have had the opportunity to see some youth who were going the wrong direction in life do a 360° change. I believe I have been an important piece in the struggle to empower the youth.”
- ▶ “I’ve brought my experience in care and educated many professionals.”



“I have been able to assist and to advocate for many newly emancipated youth to get into post-secondary educational programs as well as find stable and temporary employment.”

— A youth trainer

“I have impacted the program by assisting other residents to become successful by mentoring, counseling, and role modeling.”

— A youth trainer

“Through speaking at various events, I have helped prospective foster parents better understand what it means to have a foster child and some of the implications their actions could have on our lives.”

— A youth trainer

“I started a youth leadership board, with values similar to the ones we taught in the Y.O.U.T.H. trainings.”

— A youth trainer

- ▶ “I think that during my time participating in the program I helped them see some of the flaws in their conferences and they made changes.”
- ▶ “I completed a housing toolkit as well as brought a youth perspective/youth voice to the work that they were doing.”
- ▶ “I am bringing an articulate youth voice to the table on racial disparity in America and how positive youth development begins to work on the issues of structural racism as well.”
- ▶ “Through speaking at various events, I have helped prospective foster parents better understand what it means to have a foster child and some of the implications their actions could have on our lives.”
- ▶ “CASA workers are now aware of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project and actually seek out our trainings for themselves.”
- ▶ “I encouraged many foster parents to take teenagers and broaden their perspective on the life of a foster youth.”
- ▶ “I have been a mentor for seven years and have been a constant role model for the youth.”
- ▶ “I have impacted the program by assisting other residents to become successful by mentoring, counseling, and role modeling.”

Some youth trainers refer to the skills they brought to new positions and organizations that they developed specifically through their experience and training at the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project:

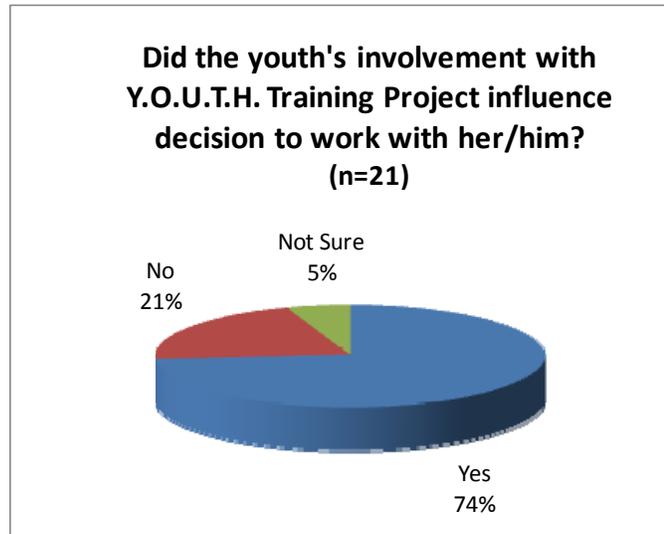
- ▶ “I started a youth leadership board, with values similar to the ones we taught in the Y.O.U.T.H. trainings.”
- ▶ “I gave a training to them on positive youth development. If I hadn’t had the positive experience in the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, I would not have learned so deeply the power of positive youth development.”
- ▶ “I also advocated for many of the youth within the Project, using the connections and understanding that I gained working with CYC and the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project. I was able to be a positive force in many people’s lives.”

Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINING PROJECT'S REPUTATION INFLUENCES ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS' DECISION TO ENGAGE YOUTH

The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project has developed a strong reputation for cultivating “quality leadership skills in an incredibly supportive, structured, and specialized environment” among participating foster youth. In fact, almost three-quarters (74 percent) of the organizational partners surveyed indicate that they were influenced to work with the youth trainer — either just as a trainer or in further work as a consultant or regular staff — by the knowledge that the youth had been trained by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project.⁴

In their comments, organizational partners say...

- ▶ “The Project provides transition age foster youth with a tremendous professional opportunity to cultivate quality leadership skills in an incredibly supportive, structured, and specialized environment for this particular population. It has yet to be offered, to my knowledge, by any other organization or project, statewide or nationally.”
- ▶ “The organization gives a lot of value for youth, in terms of youth development, skill-building, and employment opportunity.”
- ▶ “The Project offers an arena for current and former foster youth to be expertly trained to translate their experiences within the child welfare system into powerful advocacy tools so that they may be able to train social workers and social work supervisors in how to best address foster youth needs.”



“The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project provides transition age foster youth with a tremendous professional opportunity to cultivate quality leadership skills in an incredibly supportive, structured, and specialized environment for this particular population. It has yet to be offered, to my knowledge, by any other organization or project, statewide or nationally.”

–Partner organization staff

⁴ For this chart, responses from Youth in Mind were excluded, since that organization hires *only* Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project youth trainers at this time.

WHAT DO ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS SAY ABOUT THE Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINERS' IMPACT?

Once hired, the youth must earn their own reputation as a 'leader within affiliate organizations.' Staff at partner organizations offer many examples of this positive impact. These observations are echoed by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project's administrative staff as well. Together, they describe youth impacts to include *perspective, competent training, leadership, educating peers and other professionals, and advocacy.*

BRINGING THE FOSTER YOUTH PERSPECTIVE...

Partner organizations report:

- ▶ “They helped to identify needs of LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] youth in care, which informed strategic planning. They helped other adults understand the importance of youth involvement and how much youth can contribute.”
- ▶ “As a result of their ability to share their personal journeys and experiences within the system, our staff gains a renewed commitment to continue and improve our support and services to the youth and the families/adults who work with and support these youth.”

“The Y.O.U.T.H. trainers I have hired are always enthusiastic about transferring their skills to other youth — It's a beautiful thing to witness.”

— partner organization staff

TRAINING...

Partner organizations report:

- ▶ “We manage to have great workshops at our conferences, especially when we have some Y.O.U.T.H. trainers on board. The Y.O.U.T.H. trainers also work well with other trainers at our conferences.”
- ▶ “Our conference participants always walk away from the presentations by these youth being personally touched and with a renewed commitment to their chosen field of making life better for foster youth.”

Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project staff note:

- ▶ “We recruit a lot of our youth trainers out of one organization. As employees of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, they get trained in professional development and speaking skills, and then they go back to their chapters and are asked to do speaking engagements in their counties.”

- ▶ “An organization focusing on the needs of emancipated youth actively recruits youth from the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project. The skills those trainers gained here impacted that organization. They used some of our curriculum to design leadership projects there for trainings they were conducting at other organizations.”
- ▶ “We have impacted a statewide organization supporting foster youth in court matters. They’ve recognized that the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project really prepares youth to speak. Our youth will go to their statewide conferences, speak on panels, and give keynote addresses. The most recent was on the mental health needs of foster youth.”
- ▶ “Youth who have been trainers with the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project know our curriculum and recommend it when they go to work with other organizations.”

LEADERSHIP...

Partner organizations report:

- ▶ “Each youth I have hired and who is a current or former trainer has brought significant contributions to the work. The skills around facilitation have made productive meetings possible.”
- ▶ “Y.O.U.T.H. trainers are frequently leaders within our organization. They take their roles seriously and perform responsibilities professionally.”
- ▶ “The youth from the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project make up a huge portion of [an organization addressing mental health needs of foster youth] and are making it what it is today and will become.”
- ▶ “Youth who work with the Project have strong facilitation skills, speak and dress professionally, can articulate their ideas well, and are able to actively participate in meetings and groups that are mostly made up of adults.”

Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINERS ARE APPRECIATED FOR...

- *Bringing a foster youth perspective to their organizations*
- *Motivating staff to renew their “commitment to their chosen field of making life better for foster youth”*
- *Bringing leadership skills such as facilitation, professionalism, and follow-through to their organizations*
- *Being enthusiastic, committed, and competent educators of their peers and other professionals*
- *Making a difference through their courage advocating for a ‘better way of life for foster youth’*
- *Providing a positive example of youth engagement—making it attractive for organizations to further youth involvement in the future*

Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project staff note:

- ▶ “A lot of our youth become peer mentors at [a drop-in center for current and emancipated foster youth]. The organization values our leadership training. In fact, it allows its youth employees to participate in the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project trainings as a paid leadership and development opportunity.”
- ▶ “A Y.O.U.T.H. trainer was hired as a coordinator at an organization. A number of Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project youth are populating this organization’s leadership on the steering committee.”
- ▶ “We provide advocates with a deeper level of leadership training — a wider toolkit of tools — at an organization that doesn’t have the resources to train youth in facilitation skills. The youth have a voice, sit on panels....They move out of the self-advocacy realm and into the educational and public speaking realms.”

EDUCATING PEERS AND PROFESSIONALS...

Partner organizations report:

- ▶ “The Y.O.U.T.H. trainers I have hired are always enthusiastic about transferring their skills to other youth — It’s a beautiful thing to witness.”
- ▶ “They are committed to developing the leadership potential in other participants and frequently can be seen coaching other youth through tasks.”
- ▶ “I know that my former employees are better informed by those youth, as are the various organizations they have been working with over time.”
- ▶ “They have made a significant difference both for the agencies we work with and for our team of consultants who are much more aware and skilled now with this work, themselves.”

“I know that my former employees are better informed by those youth, as are the various organizations they have been working with over time.”

—partner organization staff

Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project staff note:

- ▶ “There’s a collaborative organization that is trying to improve services for LGBTQ foster youth and enforce their rights. Our youth worked for them leading workshops in trainings around the state and nation and used pieces of our curriculum. That had an impact on the way the Collaborative decided to do its work.”

ADVOCACY...

Partner organizations report:

- ▶ “They make a difference through their courage, in recognizing their voice, and then deciding to use that voice to advocate for a better way of living for a population. Because they are doing it in a respectful manner, they set a precedent and represent youth in a way that makes it attractive for us to further youth involvement in the future.”
- ▶ “As facilitators, they are helping more than 100 youth create child welfare policy recommendations and ultimately impacting California's foster care system, improving the lives of 80,000 youth. They're making a huge difference!”

Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project staff note:

- ▶ “The membership of an organization teaching advocacy skills for addressing mental health needs of foster youth includes a lot of youth trained by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project. The youth trainers there have a really strong philosophy of youth leadership and development. Without that philosophy, it would be a completely different organization. I see other organizations led by adults that are very different. They don't have enough balance between youth participation and adult support and structure, and they are not as effective.”

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINING PROJECT ON THE FIELD?

The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project seeks to impact organizations serving current and former foster youth and those who train other professionals in the field. Besides fostering skills and self-confidence in transition age foster youth and connecting individual organizations with competent youth trainers and future staff members, the Project reaches many organizations and training entities through digital stories, curated museums on foster youth culture, well-developed curricula, technical assistance, and other staff activities.

Digital Stories

The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project uses digital stories to educate and train child welfare workers about the experience and needs of foster youth. They are an innovative way to bring the experiences, insights, and voices of current and former foster youth to the broader child welfare community. Most digital stories—which are short video autobiographies—are created by youth trainers (or other current and former foster youth referred to the Project by the trainers). The youth spend four days crafting their scripts, learning how to use the computer software editing programs, recording their own narration, selecting their own pictures, and are able to create or choose their own soundtrack. As the Project staff describes it, “Making a digital story is an empowering and healing experience for youth;

using those stories to empower social workers is the exponential magic of positive youth development.”

Available for viewing at the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project website, (www.youthtrainingproject.org) digital stories are disseminated by staff to organizations with whom the Project works and also are accessed by organizations and individuals with no other involvement with the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project. Nearly all (87 percent) of staff surveyed at partner organizations are familiar with the digital stories produced and disseminated by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project. They see the impact of these first-person accounts in terms of:

BUILDING AWARENESS AND EMPATHY...

- ▶ “I find them very useful in building empathy. It helps those of us who have not lived in the system hear what the youth are saying and gives us clues as to how our work should be carried out.”
- ▶ “I think it relays a youth's feelings, perspective and general experience in a way that is easily accessible, that touches many people, and that can be seen again and again. Movies are a great means to deliver messages.”
- ▶ “Using this medium for raising awareness and as a training tool is brilliant!!! The positive impact is broad and unprecedented. [Our organization] has purchased 30 copies of each to provide to our chapters in our new organizing toolkits.”
- ▶ “They seem to be an incredible teaching tool for helping people understand some of the experiences of foster youth.”
- ▶ “They help viewers understand how youth feel by hearing it directly from them.”
- ▶ “The digital stories are great. They are very powerful and really affect those who see them.”
- ▶ “They never fail to elicit a meaningful and sometimes emotional response from the viewer and a commitment to right the wrongs that exist in the system.”
- ▶ “There is *no* more powerful tool to present the youth perspective/experience to the adult population.”
- ▶ “They bring the work to life and touch the hearts and souls of participants, laying the groundwork for then better understanding the details of the work that needs to be done.”

“I find them very useful in building empathy. It helps those of us who have not lived in the system hear what the youth are saying and gives us clues as to how our work should be carried out.”

—partner organization staff

EDUCATING AND INCREASING UNDERSTANDING...

- ▶ “I have always wished for stories from youth telling about the road blocks they faced in getting their education and the positive education experiences they had.”
- ▶ “The stories are great! We use them at every supporter training, have shown them at community dinners, and at times use them at other trainings.”
- ▶ “I think they are beneficial and help to shed light on the internal effects of being in the system.”
- ▶ “They are amazing tools, especially when used within the trainings to creatively present youth voices and important points to learn from.”

ADVOCACY...

- ▶ “I feel that the digital stories are powerful media and advocacy tools because they convey visually the experiences of youth in the child welfare system about many issues that foster youth find most important.”

BROADENING THE REACH OF FORMER FOSTER YOUTH...

- ▶ “Digital stories are a powerful way for youth to share their experiences in care and to reach a larger audience than the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project trainers could probably do in-person.”

Organizations and professional groups throughout the country are learning about the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project’s digital stories and requesting them for use with staff members in increasing numbers. The Project’s staff members have much to say about the impact of digital stories on other organizations and the field, as a whole.

The Project’s Director explains, “The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project has produced 70 stories. The Center for Digital Storytelling, with whom we worked to create these, sees the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project as having

Staff at the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project report widespread use of the organization's digital stories, including....

Boise State University
California CASA
California Permanency for Youth Project
Casey Family Programs
Contra Costa County Office of Education
CSU Northridge
Department of Social Services, State of Hawaii
El Paso, TX County Social Services
Fresno County (and various other CA counties)
Oakland Unified School District
Orange County Probation
Seneca Center
Spectrum Youth and Family Services (VT)
University of Houston
Youth Focus (NC)
Youth Law Center

launched this educational approach. Other child welfare agencies have started making digital stories because they saw our digital stories. The digital stories are utilized nationwide. *So much has resulted from showing them.*” She goes on to tell of “a group in New York that raised money and began a digital stories lab,” several child welfare programs and organizations in California, and the University of Denver, all of which have purchased “a massive number” of stories.

The Project’s Field Coordinator says, “I think they bring the youth perspective into social work and, in particular, into teaching about how to be a social worker. We’ve had an impact in social work schools. They have an impact when we show them at the trainings, too. They’re pretty widely shown in the Bay Area and all over California and Texas. We offer them for sale at every event and conference we attend in the country. A foster youth organization in Hawaii now has several copies. Any time you give the youth the opportunity to tell their own stories and are able to share their stories around the country, that’s going to have an impact.”

The organization’s Project Assistant has several examples of the stories’ reach and, consequently, potential impact: “A lot of counties are using our digital stories to train youth. Some are in group homes and some in ILPs. Staff there use them to start discussions with young people. We just found out that the National Curriculum on Child Abuse and Trauma is using them. They’re being used by the California Social Work Education Curriculum, for making sure that workers are up-to-date and trained. We heard that a national group of social workers uses the digital stories to accompany a curriculum they developed. They’re used at national foster care conferences, although we don’t always hear about them. There was even an order from New Zealand.”

IMPACTING TRANSITION AGE FOSTER YOUTH DIRECTLY....

As with all of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project’s work, the digital stories are designed to fulfill a dual role: that of building the skills and inner resources of current and former foster youth and that of transforming the child welfare field. The Project Director explains, “The process of creating digital stories helps youth develop their skills and confidence. It’s a transformative experience. They are nurtured by that experience and are helped in healing trauma they have been through.”

Staff from partner organizations also appreciate the power the digital story-making process has in the lives of former foster youth:

- ▶ “Digital stories provide the opportunity for foster youth to examine closely a particular part of their life and communicate that to others.”
- ▶ “I had firsthand experience in recruiting youth for digital stories. The benefits are countless and I feel the stories have helped my students heal and transcend their foster care experience.”

- ▶ “The digital stories not only allow the youth to use their creativity to express their feelings on a specific topic, but also help viewers understand how youth feel by hearing it directly from them. The digital stories are a great way for the youth to express themselves, and I also believe that it helps them grow.”
- ▶ “It’s also a very empowering experience for the youth to make them.”
- ▶ “They further serve as healing opportunities to the youth who are bravely supported through the process of revealing their experiences!”

OVERALL IMPACT OF Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINING PROJECT ON THE CHILD WELFARE FIELD

What Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project Staff Members Hear:

Staff members of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project hear from partner organizations that what they do is “inspiring to them: They say it makes them want to do more.” One organization is showing signs of a new understanding of the “difference between utilizing youth in a training and doing it in a way that feels like positive youth development — not tokenizing or ‘adultist.’” Through its reputation with individual organizations, the Project is gaining widespread recognition and, with it, the potential for broader impact.

Project staff members report that they are aware of being held in high regard in the child welfare field and that their philosophy and curriculum materials are being integrated into organizations and entities with which they have never had direct contact. One explains that many other organizations “have seen our curriculum and have tried to incorporate it and the hand-outs we developed to go with it. These are best practices and youth recommendations. Hand-outs get distributed widely because people we train then duplicate them and hand them out at their own trainings.” Another staff member says, “In the training world, the Project is known as being the youth voice, the voice of youth empowerment.”

“Child welfare workers that actually see our training remember what they started their jobs off to do. It’s really refreshing to them and amazes them and encourages them to improve their practice. They undergo an attitudinal shift in thinking about the youth and the job they’re doing.”

—Project staff

This view is reinforced by the fact that out-of-state organizations come to the Project for training and advice. A staff member reports, “Someone from Texas came to our training. People talk about us in the training world in other states. And there was an organization from Washington that made a special trip to meet with us because they’re starting up and they knew we’re the premier group to talk to about training child welfare workers and impacting policy.”

Perhaps most importantly, the Project sees a profound effect of its efforts on workers in the field: “Child welfare workers that actually see our training remember what they started their jobs off to do. It’s really refreshing to them and amazes them and encourages them to improve their practice. They undergo an attitudinal shift in thinking about the youth and the job they’re doing.”

What Partner Organizations are Saying:

Many staff members of partner organizations identify *perspective*, *compelling curricula*, and *high-quality preparation* of child welfare workers, as three particular strengths of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project’s work. The knowledge and insights they and their colleagues gain from interactions with the Project are likely to stay with them and contribute to change, wherever they work in the general child welfare field.

Their comments about the Project’s impact include:

- ▶ “The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project brings value to the field of foster care and foster youth in many ways. It allows the youth to translate their personal experiences in care in a way that allows a constructive dialogue and interaction with social workers and social work supervisors that many of these professionals rarely get the opportunity to have.”
- ▶ “The Project’s training offers a very unique perspective that traditional social welfare trainings do not offer.”
- ▶ “The participants that engage themselves in the Project’s trainings are going back to work with an entirely new toolbox and deep insights that have the power to empower leaders to improve systems, support and resources offered to foster youth.”
- ▶ “Youth have developed training curricula they think represents what the field needs to know and can deliver it with an impact that no one else has.”
- ▶ “The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project provides an invaluable opportunity for both the youth and social workers to improve social work practice.”
- ▶ “The Project brings youth perspective, knowledge, and experience to those who may have the wrong impressions, in turn creating better services for foster youth. In doing so, it develops leaders, role models, and informed youth trainers.”

HOW MIGHT THE Y.O.U.T.H. TRAINING PROJECT INCREASE ITS IMPACT?

Challenges Facing the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project

When considering how to build on their organization’s successes and broaden its impact in the child welfare field, staff at the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project identify challenges facing the organization at this point, seven years after its establishment. These include:

- ▶ **Capacity:** “We don’t have the capacity to do things that others want us to do. People want us to train foster parents and to reach more youth and teach them to find

leadership within themselves. We have the skills and experience but we don't have the reach and capacity or an office elsewhere in the state. We have four staff and our funding is specifically around making curriculum and going to counties and training with that curriculum.”

- ▶ **Funding:** “It takes a lot of time and energy and money to do youth development right. A challenge is that oftentimes, funders don't understand that.”
- ▶ **Exposure:** “A lot of service providers, like group homes elsewhere in the state, don't know who we are. (Since our office is in the San Francisco Bay Area, we're known more here.) I want more service providers to know about us, especially if they want to have youth involved in true leadership positions and contributing to trainings.”
- ▶ **Adulthood:** “Not a lot of people will take young people seriously. That's part of our challenge in collaborating with other organizations: making sure our young people don't get exploited or tokenized.”
- ▶ **Staffing:** “It's a challenge to find staff who respect the way that it takes time and energy to implement the concepts of positive youth development.”
- ▶ **Trainers:** “Since we only work with youth 16-24, by the time they become seasoned trainers, they age out. It's a challenge to get youth trained quickly enough. We want to keep it fresh and have all those memories at their fingertips. But it's a growing pain to bring new trainers on and old ones leave. Also, there's quite a bit of life instability in our trainer population — a number who are homeless, unemployed, or moving to another state. We try to work with it the best we can and try to offer opportunities to all trainers, regardless of what life situation they find themselves in. There's a challenge in terms of getting in touch with them and finding out whether they can work with us. It's the nature of working with former foster youth.”

Partner Organization Recommendations for Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project

Staff at partner organizations are overwhelmingly positive about the Project and offer the following suggestions for increasing its effectiveness and deepening its impact:

- ▶ Offer more materials geared toward education and preparation for employment for those entering the child welfare field.
- ▶ Conduct a longitudinal study of the youth trainers and how their relationship with the Project may have aided them in their development.
- ▶ Repeat past trainings for new social workers.
- ▶ Increase the number of trainers.
- ▶ Increase the number of digital stories and cover more areas of focus.

- ▶ Provide accompanying, complementary discussion packets or curriculum materials for each digital story an organization purchases.
- ▶ Consider making digital stories available to organizations that cannot afford them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on insights from the youth trainers, staff at the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, and partner agency staff, the following actions may help the Project to continue to extend and deepen its impact on the child welfare field:

INCREASE THE PROJECT'S EXPOSURE

While the Project has trained child welfare staff in many counties throughout California, their reach can probably extend even further. Staff are encouraged to consider other important key stakeholders that directly impact the lives of foster youth who could benefit from the Project's training. Consideration should be given to whether and how they might extend their training to group home staff, foster parents, and birth parents to name but a few.

FOLLOW UP WITH YOUTH

Ongoing feedback from youth trainers after they leave the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project would be invaluable, in terms of learning about the long-term impact of the organization on transition age foster youth and in terms of gaining unique insights into the state of the child welfare field and opportunities for impact.

- ▶ Set up a system of regular contact with former youth trainers, such as e-newsletters, or occasional invitations to meetings and reunions, so that changes in contact and job information are more likely to be tracked than they are now.
- ▶ Disseminate periodic follow-up surveys to gather information about current work, concerns, and ideas for expanding the Project's impact in whatever organizations former trainers are working.

EXPAND THE REACH OF DIGITAL STORIES

Digital stories are both powerful and easily accessible to an almost limitless number of organizations and training entities. Consider implementing partner agency and Project staff suggestions including:

- ▶ Provide accompanying, complementary discussion packets or curriculum materials for each digital story an organization purchases.
- ▶ Track information about the ways digital stories are used to build a case for greater funding so that more stories touching on more issues can be made and so that they can be made available to organizations that cannot afford them at the current price.

ESTABLISH A COALITION OF FOSTER YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

This study's findings show that the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project directly and indirectly partners with and supports many child welfare advocacy and service organizations in their work with transition age foster youth. The Project should explore, in concert with these partner organizations, the value of forming a coalition aimed at increasing awareness of, and innovative approaches, toward supporting transition age foster youth.

CONCLUSION

The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project is known for professionally trained and capable youth trainers, powerful digital stories, and helpful training curricula. The transition age foster youth it directly serves gain a sense of their own capacity to transform organizations, the lives of other youth, and those serving current and former foster youth. Because of the fairly small size of the foster care community, partner organization staff members and youth trainers often become involved with several of the same key agencies. The benefit of this is that a deep level of impact at those agencies may be possible, since each organization receives exposure to the Project's teachings from several sources. At the same time, there are opportunities for the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project to expand its reach and increase its impact even further throughout the field. Taking certain recommended actions will put the organization in a position to continue to grow its potential for impact on the child welfare field.

TABLES

- ▶ **Organizations Engaging Y.O.U.T.H. Trainers**
- ▶ **Partner Organizations Participating in Survey**
- ▶ **Organizations that Purchased/Used Project’s Digital Stories**
- ▶ **Youth Trainer Impact Survey Results**
- ▶ **Partner Organization Staff Survey Results**

**Organizations Employing or Otherwise Engaging Y.O.U.T.H. Trainers
(based on Y.O.U.T.H. trainer survey results)**

Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care	Family-To-Family Initiative	Orange County Children's Service Coordination Committee
Ca. Dept. of Social Services	Florence Crittendon Family services	Orangewood Children's Foundation
Ca. Mental Health Assoc. for Children & Youth (CMHACY)	Foster and Kinship Care Education Program	Out of Home Youth Advocacy Council (OHYAC)
Ca. Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP)	Gay Lesbian Adolescent Social Services (GLASS)	Pathways Transitional Housing Program
California Youth Connection	Guardian Scholars Program	San Francisco Youth Commission
Casey Alliance	Honoring Emancipated Youth	Stanislaus County Community Services Agency
Casey Family Programs	ILSP (Independent Living Skills Program)	Youth in Mind (formerly known as Youth Leadership Academy, or YLA)
Child Abuse Prevention Center/ Mutual Assistance Network AmeriCorps Program	Larkin Street Youth Services	Youth Led Evaluation Project
Court Appointed Special Advocate Programs (CASA)	National Governors' Association	Youth Transition Action Team
EMQ Children & Family Services		

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN SURVEY

- ▶ **Cal Poly Pomona Renaissance Scholars**
- ▶ **California Health Advocates for Children and Youth (CMHACY)**
- ▶ **California Health and Human Services Agency**
- ▶ **California Institute for Mental Health**
- ▶ **California Youth Connection**
- ▶ **Casey Family Programs**
- ▶ **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)**
- ▶ **Daniel's Place**
- ▶ **Family-To-Family Initiative**
- ▶ **Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) of the Japanese Community Youth Council**
- ▶ **Kern County Dept of Human Services Independent Living Program (ILP)**
- ▶ **National Center for Lesbian Rights**
- ▶ **National Resource Center for Youth Services**
- ▶ **Orangewood Children's Foundation**
- ▶ **Out of Home Youth Advocacy Council (OHYAC)**
- ▶ **Pathways to Adulthood**
- ▶ **Youth in Mind (formerly known as Youth Leadership Academy, or YLA)**

Organizations that Purchased Digital Stories
Above the Line – Group Home Society
Bay Area Academy, San Francisco State University
Beyond Emancipation
Boise State University
California Dept of Social Services/Foster Care Ombudsman
California Permanency for Youth Project
California Social Work Education Curriculum
California Youth Connection
CASA, Alameda, California, & National
Casey Family Programs
Child Abuse Prevention Foundation
Child welfare organization in New Zealand
Contra Costa County Office of Education
CSU Long Beach
CSU Northridge
Department of Social Services, State of Hawaii
El Paso, TX County Social Services
Foster youth services organizations in the SF Bay Area, Hawaii, and
Fred Finch Youth Center
Fresno County (and various other CA counties)
Group homes in several counties
Guardian Scholars, Fullerton
Homeward Bound of Marin
Independent Living Programs of several counties
<i>It's My Life Conference</i> , 2007 (nationwide audience of youth, providers, and advocates)
Legal Services for Children
National Curriculum on Child Abuse and Trauma
National foster care conferences
Oakland Unified School District
Orange County Probation
Public Child Welfare Training Academy, UC San Diego
San Diego Center for Children
Seneca Center
Spectrum Youth and Family Services (VT)
STAR Programs
University of Denver School of Social Work
University of Houston
University of Texas at Arlington
Youth Focus (NC)
Youth Law Center

Youth Trainer Impact Survey

When did you begin working with the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project?	#	%
Within the past year	3	7%
1 to 2 years ago	10	23%
3 to 5 years ago	18	42%
Over 5 years ago	12	28%
Total Respondents	43	100%
Skipped Question	1	

What is the name of the position(s) that you hold/held at the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project?	#	%
Y.O.U.T.H. Trainer	43	98%
Project Assistant	4	9%
Curriculum Developer	2	5%
Project Director	1	2%
General Assistant	1	2%
Total Respondents	44	NA

Total exceeds 100% because some held more than one position.

Do you still work for the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project?	#	%
Yes	39	89%
No	5	11%
Total Respondents	44	100%

Youth Trainer Impact Survey (continued)

What role do (or did) you have with this organization?	#	%
Paid Consultant	12	31%
Trainer	10	26%
CYC Chapter Member	8	21%
Advisory Board Member	7	18%
Board Member	5	13%
Peer mentor	5	13%
Employee	4	10%
Paid and/or Unpaid Speaker	4	10%
Commissioner	2	5%
Coordinator	2	5%
CYC Advisory Board Chair	1	3%
CYC Chapter Chair/President/Co-chair	1	3%
ILSP Alumni Association Co-chair	1	3%
Observer and Presenter	1	3%
Workgroup Member	1	3%
Youth in Mind Member	1	3%
Other	7	18%
Total Respondents	39	NA
Skipped Question	5	

Total exceeds 100% because several have held more than one position and/or worked with more than one organization.

How often are (or were) you in contact with this organization?	#	%
Daily	16	19%
Weekly	30	37%
Once or more/month	17	21%
Once or more/quarter	13	16%
Once or more/year	6	7%
Total Possible Responses	82	100%
Total Respondents	39	
Skipped Question	5	

Youth Trainer Impact Survey (continued)

Do you think that you have/had a positive impact on this organization?	#	%
Yes	70	89%
No	1	1%
Not Sure	8	10%
Total Possible Responses	79	NA*
Total Respondents	38	
Skipped Question	6	

*There were 38 trainers who felt they had a positive impact on at least one organization. They answered this question a combined total of 79 times regarding their interactions with each of one or more agencies.

What kind of impact do youth trainers have on organizations?	#	%
Bringing the foster youth perspective/awareness	14	37%
Training: creating materials and leading	13	34%
Leadership/Initiation of new projects	10	26%
Serving as a role model for youth	9	24%
Educating peers/other professionals	7	18%
Advocacy on behalf of youth served by agency	5	13%
Connecting youth with new resources	5	13%
Impacting/Supporting youth decisions	4	11%
Organizational skills	3	8%
Connecting staff with new resources	1	3%
Total Respondents	38	NA
Skipped Question	6	

Total exceeds 100% because several youth responded in terms of their work with more than one organization.

Partner Organization Staff Survey

What organization are you with?	#	%
Cal Poly Pomona Renaissance Scholars	1	5%
California Health Advocates for Children and Youth (CMHACY)	1	5%
California Health and Human Services Agency	1	5%
California Institute for Mental Health	1	5%
California Youth Connection	9	43%
Casey Family Programs	1	5%
Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)	1	5%
Daniel's Place	1	5%
Family-To-Family Initiative	1	5%
Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP)	1	5%
Kern County Dept of Human Services Independent Living Program (ILP)	1	5%
National Center for Lesbian Rights	1	5%
National Resource Center for Youth Services	1	5%
Orangewood Children's Foundation	1	5%
Out of Home Youth Advocacy Council (OHYAC)	1	5%
Pathways to Adulthood	1	5%
Youth in Mind	2	10%
Youth Leadership Academy (YLA)	1	5%
Total Respondents	21	NA
Skipped Question	1	

Total exceeds 100% because some respondents indicated more than one organization.

Did the youth's involvement with the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project influence your decision to hire or work with her/him? (n=21*)	#	%
Yes	14	74%
No	4	21%
Not Sure	1	5%
Total Respondents	19	100%
Don't remember working with youth from YTP	2	

*Response from Youth in Mind staff was excluded from calculations. See report for note.

Partner Organization Staff Survey (continued)

Are you familiar with the digital stories developed by the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project?	#	%
Yes	20	91%
No	2	9%
Total Respondents	22	100%

What kind of impact do Y.O.U.T.H. trainers have on organizations?	#	%
Leadership/Initiation of new projects	5	33%
Educating peers/other professionals	4	27%
Training: creating materials and leading	2	13%
Bringing the foster youth perspective/awareness	2	13%
Advocacy on behalf of youth served by agency	1	7%
Total Respondents	15	NA
Skipped Question	7	

Total exceeds 100% because some staff indicated more than one kind of impact.