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Author(s): Joseph Kahne and Kim Bailey

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## **The Role of Social Capital in Youth Development: The Case of “I Have a Dream” Programs**

**Joseph Kahne**  
*Mills College*

**Kim Bailey**  
*University of Illinois, Chicago*

*This paper presents findings from a 2 ½-year study that focused primarily on two “I Have a Dream” (IHAD) programs. To better comprehend the implications of bringing this youth development strategy model to scale, we also collected more limited interview, focus group, and student performance data from the 10 other IHAD sites in Chicago. Each IHAD sponsor “adopts” an entire sixth grade class and together with a project coordinator provides these students long-term financial, academic, and social support with the hope that they will graduate from high school and attend college. Because IHAD sponsors “adopted” all of the sixth graders at a given school, we compared their graduation rate with the graduation rates of students who were in the sixth grade at the school the previous year. We found that the two IHAD programs were enormously successful. Their graduation rates (71% and 69%) were roughly twice those of their respective comparison groups (37% and 34%). This study examines the programmatic features of IHAD that appear most responsible for its success and the implications for policy and practice. From a theoretical standpoint, our analysis of these cases focuses on the significance of differing forms of social capital (social trust, social networks, and social norms with effective sanctions) in enabling meaningful support of youth in inner-city contexts.*

[What does it mean to be a Dreamer?] Well, knowing that you have support for college or maybe you have a certain problem at home and maybe you can come and talk to [the project coordinator] or . . . I don't want to mention any names, but there were like a few of the Dreamers that were in gangs and he kind of helped them out and [a] boy who wanted to commit suicide for some reason and he helped him into a support program. So I mean it is not just college, they take care of us. (Excerpt from an interview with a Dreamer)

**I**ncreasingly, practitioners, policymakers, and scholars are recognizing that standard educational models do not provide compelling responses to the often extraordinary challenges facing youth in urban contexts. An alternative, one frequently implemented by community-based youth organizations and churches, aims to establish long-term

relationships between staff and youth that provide support and opportunities for social and academic development.

The services offered by youth organizations are varied and broad. They include a safe and dependable environment, academic assistance, motivation, counseling with personal problems, opportunities for leadership and community service, exposure to mentors and role models, chances to envision and build optimism regarding the future, and facilitated access to a variety of academic, health, and social services (Gambone & Arbreton, 1997; McLaughlin, Irby, & Langman, 1994; National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth, 1996; Pittman & Wright, 1991). Fundamental to the approach is the emphasis on developing strong relationships between youth workers and participants. These relationships and the overall sense of be-

longing or membership that youth develop, are thought to facilitate productive engagement with the varied supports and opportunities outlined above (Pittman, 1992). While the rationale for such efforts is clear and support for this agenda growing, there is little systematic evidence regarding these programs and their impact.

In what follows, we present findings from a 2 ½-year study of one such initiative. The "I Have a Dream" (IHAD) program provides financial, academic, and social support to randomly chosen classes of sixth grade students attending public schools throughout the country. Local sponsors, generally a wealthy family, adopt all of the sixth graders at a given school and promise college scholarships for all students who graduate from high school. The sponsors and the full-time project coordinator (PC) they hire become personally involved in the students' lives. They work to provide long-term relationships through which trust, understanding, and support can be fostered. The PCs, often working with volunteers and AmeriCorps Members, facilitate a range of services including tutoring, mentoring, employment, engagement in community service activities, and a variety of counseling, health, and social services. These services and supports aim to help youth negotiate barriers and tap into opportunities in ways that foster both social and academic development. The program is grounded in the belief that with personal support and financial resources, inner-city youth will graduate from high school prepared for and oriented towards either college or successful entrance into the workforce.

The program deserves careful attention for several reasons. First, when fully implemented, IHAD provides one form of a "best case" scenario—youth receive coordinated and comprehensive academic and social support. While clearly not an ideal situation—systemic change that supports families and alters the broader social context (jobs, housing, neighborhood safety) must also be pursued—it makes sense to assess what comprehensive support can achieve. Second, in terms of policy and educational reform, studying IHAD can shed light on a collection of strategies that are currently promoted by many in the youth development and educational reform communities: An emphasis on coordinated social and human services (Dryfoos, 1994), creation of a personalized environment and the development of long-term relationships (Pittman, 1992), facilitated connections between

schools and youth organizations (Heath & McLaughlin, 1994), and an emphasis on education and educational opportunity as the key to a believable and desirable future (see Csikszentmihalyi 1996; Nurmi, 1991). Finally, from a theoretical standpoint, this study provides an opportunity to connect the programmatic emphasis on personalized environments and long-term relationships to broader social theory. Specifically, the case studies permit analysis of differing forms of social capital (social trust, social networks, and social norms with effective sanctions) in enabling support of inner-city youth<sup>1</sup>. These concepts are discussed below.

### **IHAD and Youth Access to Social Capital**

Increasingly, social capital is viewed as an important determinant of individuals' ability to meet needs and pursue interests. The term describes the functional value of social structures that facilitate pursuit of various goals. Components of social capital, which include social trust, communication patterns, and behavioral norms, all affect the capacity of individuals in a particular community to pursue particular goals. When James Coleman (1988) presented his theoretical model of the concept, he identified three forms of social capital. The first reflects the degree of social trust existing among community members that obligations and expectations will be met. The second is characterized by the degree to which social networks facilitate access to information that helps individuals achieve their priorities. Finally, community norms, which reward/reinforce certain kinds of behavior and sanction others, represent the third form of social capital.

During the past decade, scholars have examined the connection that exists in different communities between social capital and educational success. Overall, they have found that social capital does vary and that, when other variables such as socioeconomic status are accounted for, social capital is related to educational attainment and achievement (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Coleman, 1988; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Hagan, MacMillan, & Wheaton, 1996; Marjoribanks, 1991; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994).

While these studies make the wisdom of pursuing social capital clear, the means of doing so remain in question. The relationship between various forms of social capital and the desirable results they facilitate are also underconceptualized. The

IHAD program is of interest, in this regard, because it exemplifies a particular strategy for supporting youth through the development of social capital. The program leverages one aspect of social capital, social trust, to facilitate access to other forms of social capital as well as to other supports and opportunities. Specifically, IHAD aims to develop social trust between Dreamers, staff, and sponsors. Simultaneously, it provides direct services, monetary resources, access to social networks that provide information regarding opportunities and supports, and a setting with norms that include high academic expectations and prosocial behavior. Social trust facilitates the delivery of these supports and opportunities and develops as a result of them.

In concrete terms, IHAD is structured to provide long-term relationships characterized by trust and understanding. The staff and sponsors work to establish particular norms and expectations while providing access to information and funds for private schools, colleges, and various enrichment activities. According to this model, as relationships develop, Dreamers become more comfortable and motivated to access these resources and networks when confronting a barrier or pursuing a goal. Greater trust also promotes acceptance of prosocial

and academic norms. As Dreamers benefit from these supports and experience greater success, their relationship with the staff or sponsors, in turn, is likely to strengthen. In modeling these relationships, we use two-sided arrows to reflect the mutually reinforcing nature of social trust and other forms of support (see Figure 1).

### Data and Method

The bulk of our analysis focuses on case studies of two IHAD programs and provides a comparative synthesis of these two cases. As detailed below, we also have graduation data for the control groups in each of our case studies. In addition, to better understand the challenge of bringing this kind of model to scale, we have gathered more limited data on the other 10 IHAD programs in Chicago.

Our study began in April of 1995 when students in "La Familia"<sup>2</sup> (LF) (one of our case study programs) were finishing 11th grade and students in "Project Success" (PS) (the other case study) were finishing 10th grade. We observed and interviewed these students until October of 1997, by which time the students in LF had been out of high school for a year (many were beginning their second year of college), while those in PS had graduated from

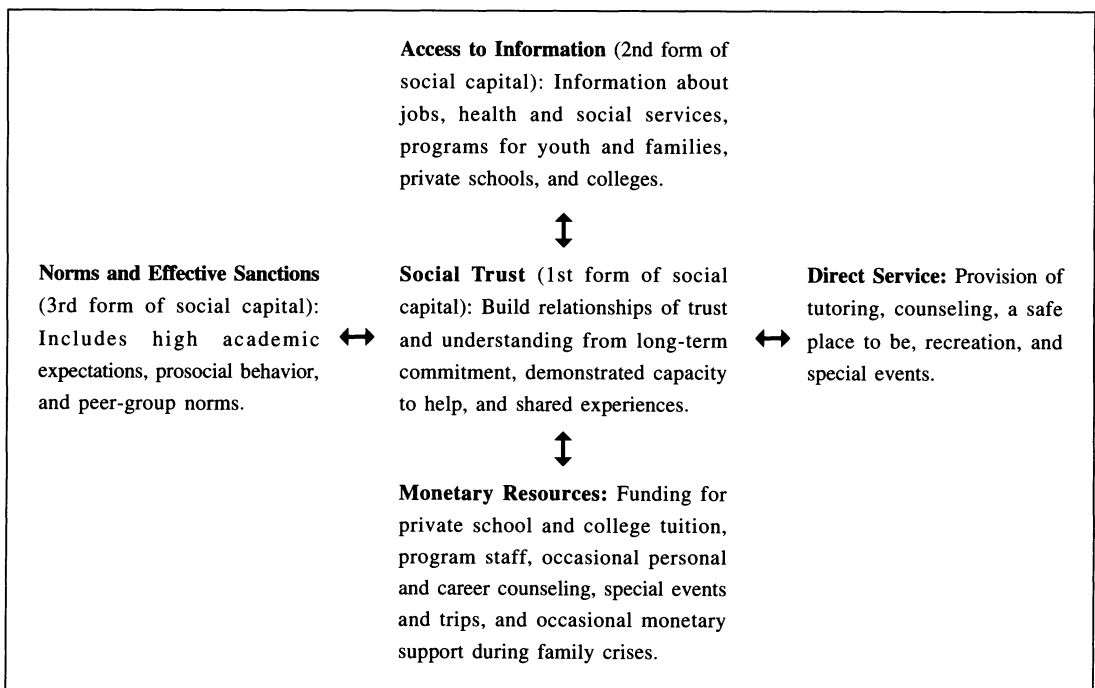


FIGURE 1. IHAD strategy of support.

high school and many were just beginning college.

Although the youth in IHAD programs were selected from public schools, neither of our case study programs was based in a school. LF was based in a youth organization on Chicago's west side. Fifty-two sixth graders from a local elementary school began coming to LF in the middle of sixth grade in January of 1989. The program served a largely Latino population (Dreamers included 31 Mexican-Americans, 14 Puerto Rican-Americans, 5 of mixed ethnicity, 1 European-American, and 1 African-American. For additional demographic data regarding the Dreamers and their families see Table 1).

LF's project coordinator was in his early 20's when the project began. He was Latino, from a similar Chicago community, and had a degree in social work. He provided tutoring (mostly help with homework) and personal support, developed relationships with parents and teachers, took small and large groups of Dreamers on outings roughly once a month, and engaged interested Dreamers (generally around 15) in a variety of projects each summer<sup>3</sup>. The PC was supported by a part-time assistant in the early years of the program and by an AmeriCorps member and a Princeton 55 intern (a recent Princeton graduate committed to work-

TABLE 1  
*Demographics of Dreamers and Their Families*

	La Familia	Project Success
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	23 (44%)	17 (42%)
Female	29 (56%)	23 (58%)
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
Mexican-American	31 (60%)	0
Puerto Rican-American	14 (27%)	0
Mixed ethnicities	5 (10%)	0
European-American	1 (2%)	0
African-American	1 (2%)	40 (100%)
<b>Mother's education</b>		
Less than high school	41 (79%)	6 (15%)
High school	8 (15%)	22 (55%)
Some college	1 (2%)	7 (18%)
College	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
No data	1 (2%)	4 (10%)
<b>Father's education<sup>a</sup></b>		
Less than high school	38 (73%)	
High school	12 (23%)	
Some college	0	
College	0	
No data	2 (4%)	
<b>Family income</b>		
On welfare for entire program	7 (13%)	16 (40%)
Both welfare and work	17 (33%)	13 (32%)
No welfare	28 (54%)	11 (28%)
\$0-11,000	13 (25%)	17 (42%)
\$11,000-20,000	24 (46%)	15 (38%)
\$20,000 +	15 (29%)	7 (18%)
No data	0	1 (2%)

*Note.* Data come from program records (applications for parochial schools and colleges, for example) and from PC's conversations with Dreamers and parents. In the case of the seven students with whom the programs have lost contact, data reflects each parent's status at the time his or her child was involved.

<sup>a</sup>We could not gather reliable data on more than half of the fathers in Project Success.

ing for social betterment) during the Dreamers' last 2 years of high school. The PC and other staff also arranged for tutoring support from a local college (a college nine Dreamers ultimately attended) and mentors from that college and elsewhere<sup>4</sup>. The two couples that sponsored the program would meet with the Dreamers for special events such as the annual Christmas party and to talk with Dreamers each term (four times a year) after report cards were distributed. One of the sponsors became much more involved. He would go to the Dreamers' school, stop by the office, and would work with the Dreamers on summer service projects. Participation in tutoring was greater when the Dreamers were younger and declined the further they got into high school. According to the PC (and consistent with what Dreamers reported during interviews) roughly 75% of the Dreamers attended tutoring at least once a week during seventh and eighth grade and 50% of the Dreamers attended tutoring at least once a week between 9th and 11th grade. During the fall of their senior year, we observed roughly a third of the Dreamers participating at least once a week. The PC and sponsors also helped finance and facilitate enrollment of 24 of the Dreamers in parochial high schools.

The other program, Project Success (PS), began in June of 1991 as the 40 sixth graders from a particular elementary school were finishing their sixth-grade year. PS used space in a church on the city's south side and served an entirely African-American group of youth. The PC for this program was a White woman in her early 20's who had grown up working with youth in this neighborhood and had recently graduated from an elite university. This program provided a very similar set of services to those provided by LF. The main difference was that tutoring took place more frequently at PS. According to the PC (and consistent with what we observed during their junior and senior years in high school) numerous students came to after-school tutoring 3 or 4 days a week and roughly half of the students came at least twice a week. African-American mentors were identified for most Dreamers and 12 Dreamers maintained relationships with their mentors for 3 or more years. PS initially covered the cost of parochial high schools for all but 2 of their 36 Dreamers. Ultimately, 13 of these students were either expelled or chose to leave. They returned to public schools. As was the case in LF, once Dreamers entered high school, summer service projects for which Dreamers were

paid were frequently Dreamers' first employment opportunity. The PC in this program was also supported by part-time staff early in the program and by a full-time AmeriCorps member and a Princeton 55 intern during the Dreamers' last 2 years of high school.

Both programs also provided several substantial supports and opportunities related to college enrollment. The programs took Dreamers on trips to colleges during spring and winter breaks as well as on weekends. In addition, the programs worked individually with and monitored each Dreamer's college application process. PS also hired a college counselor from a prestigious private school to meet with each Dreamer. LF assigned an AmeriCorps member to focus entirely on this process. In addition, each program held forums on college for Dreamers and their parents where they discussed both the application process and the challenges associated with the transition from high school to college. The strength of the relationship between PCs and parents appeared to be very important during this process. For example, many parents were reluctant to let their children live on a college campus, go to a school outside the city, or take on debt. In many cases, PCs had multiple conversations with parents about these and related issues. Finally, these IHAD programs provided Dreamers who attended college with partial scholarships. The scholarships ranged in size, but rarely exceeded \$5,000. The size of the scholarship depended on the other funding Dreamers were able to attain through financial aid programs.

Several factors facilitated analysis of our two case studies. In particular, because program staff have worked with the Dreamers since the sixth grade, we had access to records of their academic performance, PC and staff perspectives on their social development, and information on the programmatic and environmental factors that influenced them. In addition, because an entire sixth grade class was "adopted" by the sponsor, we could use records from the central office to create comparison groups (the group of sixth graders at the school who were 1 year older). The central office then supplied us with information regarding the number of these students who graduated, so that student graduation rates from the two case studies could be compared with similar students who were not offered the program. For reasons of confidentiality, however, the central office did not provide us with the names of the students in the comparison

groups, so we could not contact them for interviews or to attain information regarding their lives after leaving their high schools.

In conducting the two case studies, we interviewed 85 individuals (Dreamers, staff, parents, and sponsors). Most of these interviews were conducted when the students were in high school. We interviewed students from LF when they were seniors and students in PS when they were in 11th and 12th grade. Because students in LF graduated one year earlier, we conducted eight interviews of Dreamers from LF regarding their first year in college. Though it was necessary to modify our questions to fit each participant's particular experiences, our interviews focused on a few core issues regarding their experiences with and perspectives on central components of the programmatic model. We asked, for example, about the personal and academic supports the program aimed to provide, about Dreamers' relationships with program staff and sponsors, and about the ways their family and community context have influenced who they are and what they want to be. During these interviews we asked about specific incidents to help us understand the contexts that formed the basis for their opinions (see Flanagan, 1954). Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 2 hours with most lasting 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

We also typed up notes from over 100 program observations. Roughly three quarters of the observations were of tutoring sessions and of informal gatherings after school at the IHAD offices. We also observed visits to college campuses, meetings with parents to discuss college opportunities, and weekend outings and service projects involving groups of Dreamers.

We decided to focus on LF and PS for several reasons. First, we wanted to study programs that were currently operating so that we could contact a broad range of participants and so that we could observe the program in operation. We also wanted to study cases where the participants would graduate during the course of the study so that we could assess the extent to which the program realized its primary goal of high school graduation and transition to college or employment.

There were 12 IHAD programs in Chicago when our study began. Three of the programs had largely disbanded because their students had made the transition to college or work. Five of the programs had only recently begun. Studying these five sites

was impractical because we would have had to follow the programs for additional years in order to examine the program's impact on high school completion. Of the four IHAD programs that had students in high school, we chose to focus on the two programs that appeared to be the strongest. These programs were operating smoothly and had maintained contact with at least 90% of their Dreamers, so data regarding participant outcomes and experiences could be collected. We decided to focus on two relatively successful interventions because our primary goal was to understand the ways a youth organization could mobilize social capital to provide supports and opportunities for youth development.

For these reasons, readers should not assume that all IHAD programs are of the quality of the two programs on which this study focused. On average, the other programs in Chicago were less successful. The uneven quality of IHAD programs and of youth programming more generally (see Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992; McLaughlin et al., 1994) raises important issues for policymakers and practitioners who wish to bring high quality programming to larger numbers of youth. To consider this challenge, we collected some data on the other IHAD programs in Chicago. We conducted 25 interviews of staff, students, and sponsors from the other programs, held three focus group discussions, and examined graduation rate data of Dreamers in the other IHAD programs who were old enough to graduate. Unfortunately, we have less complete record data regarding Dreamers in these other programs because the programs lost touch with a larger percentage of their initial participants.

Our study aims to understand not only the ways the programs "worked" or didn't, but also how and why (see Yin, 1984). Specifically, we wanted to understand the ways Dreamers experienced various programmatic features (many of which either are or could be features of other youth programs) and the ways those features may have contributed to varied outcomes. As noted in the previous section, we frame these issues using the language of social capital theory. We focus on the causes and consequences of social trust, social networks, and social norms.

Systematic analysis of our interview and observation data occurred on three separate occasions. At these times we grouped evidence by theme to consider both emerging findings (patterns that

TABLE 2  
*Status of Dreamers in the Fall Following On-Time Graduation From High School<sup>a</sup>*

	Total	Data on	Graduated	GED <sup>b</sup>	2- or 4-year college
La Familia	52	49	35 (71%)	3 (6%)	31 (63%)
Control	43	35	13 (37%)		7.0 (20%) <sup>c</sup>
Project Success	40	36	25 (69%)	0	24 (67%)
Control	46	41	14 (34%)		7.4 (18%)

<sup>a</sup>September 1996 for LF; September 1997 for PS.

<sup>b</sup>GED data not available for control groups.

<sup>c</sup>This estimate assumes enrollment rates mirror those found in the study by the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy.

existed across multiple observations and interviews) and areas where additional data would help clarify key issues. We also shared our findings and interpretations with program staff and sponsors. We did this to provide them with feedback and to help us refine our interpretations and findings.

When assessing these strategies and their impact, we hope to present a picture that is neither romantic in its depiction of participants and program effects, nor insensitive to the less tangible ways in which the program contributes to Dreamers' lives. We report extensive interview data because we feel these interviews are a valuable means through which to consider and convey the Dreamers' perspectives, programmatic strengths and weaknesses, and the humanity of this effort.

### Programmatic Impact

Did the program "work"? As this is the question we are most commonly asked, it seems an appropriate place to begin.

Numbers provide the easiest summary. IHAD's primary goal is graduation from high school and transition to college. As was described above, the performance of IHAD participants was compared with a natural control group—students from the same elementary school who were 1 year older. The findings displayed in Table 2 can easily be summarized. The high school graduation rates of IHAD participants in LF (71%) and PS (69%) were roughly twice those of students from the control groups (37% and 34%, respectively).

These differences should not be solely attributed to the IHAD program. Beginning in the ninth grade, the PCs and sponsors were critical of high school settings. As we describe in more detail later, they found these schools to be unresponsive to their requests, to insufficiently monitor student academic and social behavior, and to expose

Dreamers to destructive peer pressures. Because of these concerns, the two programs worked to enroll many Dreamers in parochial schools. It seems likely that the parochial schools contributed to the Dreamers' success. However, given that the stronger students generally enrolled and stayed in parochial schools and that Dreamers from LF who did not enroll in parochial schools did roughly as well as those who did in terms of high school graduation (see Table 3), we feel the parochial schools deserve only partial credit for Dreamers' successes. We will return to this issue later in the paper.

IHAD participants' college enrollment rates cannot easily be compared with a control group. The school system does not collect data regarding the activities of its students once they leave high school. Our best estimates of college attendance rates for these students come from a study conducted by the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance (Storey & Qualls, 1991), which found that 54% of Hispanics and 53% of African-Americans who graduated from high school in Chicago enrolled in higher education the following fall (also see Smith, 1996, for discussion of national trends). We used the Panel's findings for the system as a whole as an estimate for the control group's rate of college attendance. This likely overstates our comparison group's rates of college attendance.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, 63% of LF's initial Dreamers and 67% of PS's initial Dreamers enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges. In contrast, we estimate that 7.0 students from LF's control group (54% of the 13 graduates) and 7.4 students from PS's control group (53% of the 14 graduates) enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges. This makes their enrollment rates 20% and 18%, respectively (see Table 2). Thus the overall college attendance rate for IHAD participants in the two case studies was roughly three times that of our estimates for the comparison group.



TABLE 3

*Status of Public Versus Parochial School Dreamers in the Fall Following On-Time Graduation From High School<sup>a</sup>*

	Total	Diplomas	GED	Still in school	Drop-out	4-yr college	2-yr college
LF public school	25	16	3	3	3	8	5
LF parochial school	24	19	2	1	2	13	5
PS public school	15 <sup>b</sup>	6	0	8	1	4	1
PS parochial <sup>c</sup> school	21	19	0	0	2	18	1

<sup>a</sup>September 1996 for LF; September 1997 for PS.

<sup>b</sup>Thirteen of these students initially enrolled in private schools. Of these 13, 7 were expelled for disciplinary offenses or low grades (3 of whom graduated from public school), 3 others chose to leave because of low grades (1 of whom graduated from public school), and 3 moved and attended public schools (1 of whom graduated from public school). One additional student was also expelled from a parochial school. He is not counted above because he severed ties with the program early on in ninth grade and we do not know if he graduated.

<sup>c</sup>Two of these students went to private non-parochial schools.

Although these profoundly positive results make the potential of this model quite clear, the implications for policy are not. In addition to knowing that “it worked” we wish to consider what “it” is, how “it” worked, and the policy implications. We therefore consider the programmatic features which appear most responsible for the success of these two IHAD programs, their relation to varied forms of social capital, the technical concerns related to bringing such an intervention to scale, and several fundamental questions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the IHAD model.

### Programmatic Strategies

#### *Building Social Trust Through Long-Term Supportive Relationships*

“More than anything, it was just confusion,” Hector<sup>6</sup> told us when asked to describe the day 5 years earlier when his class heard speeches by the sponsor and PC and learned they had been selected by IHAD. “Why are they here? Why do they care? What do they want from us?” His was the most common description. Most Dreamers said it took between 1 and 2 years for confusion and skepticism to subside and the nature of the program to sink in.

I remember I didn’t want to be a part of it at first because, I was like, they are probably lying, it ain’t going to work out and its just going to be a waste of my time. I mean it was kind of wild what he was telling us and it was kind of warm that day and he wanted us to come to tutoring and I was like, nope, I’m going home. (Angela)

What might motivate Angela to attend tutoring? What might lead her or a different student to push harder at their school work or to get assistance with a personal or family problem? What might help her make present-day choices in ways that create opportunities as an adult? The challenge for IHAD, as for most youth programs, is to build the social trust and commitment necessary for productive engagement. Skepticism has a rational basis in inner-city neighborhoods. “[The IHAD offer] was like a shock. I thought it was real phony. [Why?] It comes from a lifetime. It was a bad neighborhood, it was a bad school. So why would they pick us” (Rachel)? In this context, it took both time and demonstrated commitment to build social trust (the first form of social capital—see Figure 1).

IHAD realized success with the first part of this strategy—the creation of strong, trusting, and sustained relationships with youth. At LF, 49 students out of 52 took part in the program. Thirty-six of PS’s 40 students participated. Both PCs remained in touch with at least 90% of their original Dreamers all the way through high school (meaning that the PCs reported having a good working relationship with the Dreamer and would speak with the dreamer at least once a month). As we detail below, in the vast majority of cases, PCs and Dreamers formed strong relationships. PCs in both programs reported seeing or talking on the phone with the majority of their Dreamers at least once a week.

IHAD’s success at building and maintaining relationships appears tied to its structural advantages over other youth organizations such as YMCAs or

health service providers, which often struggle to stay connected with youth for more than 2 or 3 years and which often provide a narrow range of services (athletics or tutoring or counseling or employment). The combination of a long-term intervention with the provision of social, cultural, human, and financial capital (tutoring, trips, help with personal problems, knowledge of and funds for private high schools and college), provides a strong symbolic and experiential basis for developing relationships. Still, the challenge of building relationships is formidable. "The kids test you," one PC explained. "They want to see if you're sincere."

I didn't really accept them at first . . . [but] he wouldn't let me sit there quietly. He said, "If you think you're going to just sit here and wait until we go away, its not going to happen." I kind of, he gained my respect from that. (Hector)

Another Dreamer remembered:

[After I met my volunteer mentor] I was real mean. I just had this attitude like I didn't care, cause that's what I was used to. Then I finally saw that she was trying to reach out to me, so I started opening up, and we're real close to this day. (Rachel)<sup>7</sup>

#### *Relationships and Social Trust Facilitated Use of Social Networks and Adherence to Social Norms*

By building relationships of trust and understanding, IHAD aims to provide services and guidance that help Dreamers deal effectively with barriers to their success. Consistent with extensive research on youth in inner-city environments, the programmatic model assumes that participating youth will have numerous experiences that could derail their personal and academic development. This assumption certainly turned out to be true. We asked PCs to fill out forms on each Dreamer that included only those events they "knew" occurred (events they were told about by Dreamers or parents, or witnessed). These data indicated that 51% of the Dreamers in LF and 40% in PS had a parent who abused alcohol or drugs; 59% of Dreamers in LF and 32% in PS experienced physical or sexual abuse; and 50% in LF and 40% in PS had some gang involvement, with 20% in LF and 32% in PS experiencing significant involvement (they became a member, attended meetings and ceremonies, and took part in gang activities). Four Dreamers in PS were incarcerated while of high school age, as was one Dreamer from LF. One 19-year-old Dreamer from LF was killed during a conflict with

police. Many youth faced more than one of these challenges and 73% of Dreamers at LF and 58% of Dreamers at PS were victims of physical, sexual, or substance abuse in the home and/or participated in gang activities for at least 1 year<sup>8</sup>. These challenges come on top of a broader context that includes a lack of jobs that pay living wages (70% of LF and 80% of PS Dreamers lived in families with incomes below \$20,000), racism, inadequate schools (less than 40% of students from their elementary schools received regular high school diplomas), high rates of crime and violence in their communities, and often inadequate housing (see Massey & Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1997). Scholars are finding that these neighborhood contexts present challenges that undermine success even after family and individual characteristics are taken into account (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Sealand, 1993; Crane, 1991).

The staff's and sponsors' rationale for pursuing these long-term relationships—that they would facilitate support, guidance, and ultimately academic and social success for Dreamers—was also supported by our data. Through interviews and observations, it became clear that whether youth showed up for tutoring often depended more on how they felt about the person telling them to come than on how much help they needed with their school work. Similarly, whether youth sought help with personal problems depended on more than the severity of their needs. Dreamers said they were influenced by their relationships with particular staff members and by whether their friends had found the staff helpful (we discuss the importance of peer relationships in a separate section below).

In terms of adults, most Dreamers' strongest relationships were with PCs or related full-time staff such as AmeriCorps members.

He [the PC] is like my friend. You could just tell him anything, you can joke around, it is not like he is going to get offended or like I'm going to get offended. . . . He is like, "oh come on" so I won't stay mad or anything like that.

[The PC] looks at your face and knows there's something wrong. . . . She'll sit me down, "shoot what's going on, what's the matter," or just talk to me. You should take it this way and that way. I had a problem with expressing my feelings, and I'd be mad all the time and not say nothing. It's easier to snap on someone. I had that real bad, so she started giving me contracts and time outs and

... I would whine and she would tell me not to whine, so she's helped me.

These trusting relationships became avenues for motivation and for reinforcing norms of prosocial behavior and academic commitment. A Dreamer reflecting on the role of the staff told us,

If it weren't for them, I wouldn't even be in college. I probably would have never finished high school. I would probably have dropped out or just did a work program or just worked the rest of my life because I was not motivated and he was like after my butt. "Oh, you didn't go to school today?" And I am like, "How do you know?" And he would know me better than me sometimes. He knew me better than my own parent and he would talk to me and help motivate me. ... I always went to him [when] I have a problem—I would call him at midnight, one in the morning.

Just as the ability to push, intervene, and support is facilitated by trusting relationships, these interventions became the means through which relationships developed. Not surprisingly, the trust Dreamers put in the program also appeared related to their sense that the staff was or was not able to deliver.

My Dad would drink a lot and he used to give us problems, ... he would make us cry all the time and I told [my PC and sponsor] and they talked to some counselors who could talk to my Dad. ... Ever since that day he has not had a beer and I thank them a lot for helping me because my Dad, I know he would still be drinking without that help and, I mean, he still goes to [Alcoholics Anonymous] meetings.

Competence in urban youth organizations, as McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman (1994) found, requires more than the educational certificates that are prerequisites for many jobs working with adolescents. Competence also requires a "Ph.D. in the streets" (p. 133). The PCs often become bridges, helping a Dreamer deal with a disrespectful teacher in one instance and a gang leader in another. Their ability to help often depends on the strength of their relationships with Dreamers, on their ability to connect Dreamers with relevant services and opportunities through their own social networks, and on their ability to provide counseling and academic support. Most of the services (battered women's shelters, Alcoholics Anonymous programs for parents, foster care, legal services, planned parenthood, summer jobs, services for victims of abuse,

homeless shelters) already exist. "But the Dreamers often won't seek these groups out," a PC explained, "adolescents don't want to acknowledge their needs—especially to strangers."

The importance of relationships and of combining networking with support thus highlights some structural advantages the IHAD model may have over other potential supports. First, the Dreamers' relationships with the PCs were voluntary and thus in some ways were controlled by the Dreamers to a far greater extent than their relationships with their school or family were. This may have led the Dreamers to feel more comfortable talking about personal issues such as sex, gangs, or skipping school. Second, unlike many other settings (school counselors' offices, health care clinics, police stations), strong relationships are established prior to crises (though they certainly develop during these episodes as well). It matters that the PC who is helping when a Dreamer's baby gets sick was also there when the Dreamer discovered she was pregnant. And it matters that a PC who wants to help a Dreamer confront an abusive boyfriend also worked hard with the Dreamer on a term paper and celebrated when she received an A-. Because one PC knew a Dreamer and his parents well, the parents called when the Dreamer came home having experimented with heroin. The PC went with the family to the hospital and the next day talked with the Dreamer not only about his drug habit but also about drug use by his friends in the program.

In fact, the relationships that develop between participating youth also appear highly significant. "Almost all my friends are Dreamers," many Dreamers told us. The importance of peer groups for youth is well documented by scholars (Brown, 1990). Commentary regarding youth, particularly inner-city youth, often emphasizes the ways peer culture is in opposition to academic goals and other mainstream adult priorities (Coleman, 1961; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Indeed, studies of successful strategies used by families to promote mobility of African-American youth find that parents often restrict their children's interactions with others in their neighborhood (Jarrett, 1995). In many of the IHAD sites, peer interactions, grounded as they were in a setting with an academic/betterment focus, created norms which supported success. "Me and [another Dreamer] compete with each other to get our grades up—that is how we do it. Cause sometimes I am lazy and don't do my work." Similarly, in each of the case studies, students' interest in college was

linked to the fact that all their friends from the program were also applying. In addition, it was often through more involved Dreamers that the staff found out about other Dreamers who were getting involved with a gang, missing school, or having problems at home. This phenomenon, which Coleman (1988) labels "closure," facilitated adherence to norms linked to programmatic goals. These norms were promoted and maintained by the peer group as well as by program staff, families, and the schools.

### *Using Strong Ties to Tap Into Weak Ties*

Though IHAD seeks to promote strong relationships, work by sociologists reminds us that "weak ties" (social networks of friends and acquaintances with whom one may have limited interaction) are often as important as "strong ties" (close relationships of the kind described above) in opening up options and opportunities (Granovetter, 1973). These social networks can provide youth with important access to information regarding opportunities and can expose youth to a broader range of norms and expectations (see Yowell & Gordon, 1996). Dreamers, for example, frequently found jobs through the strong and weak ties of staff and sponsors:

First it was with his son-in-law, and I was doing office work [downtown]. Pretty good pay for a 13-year-old. After a year or two, I started working with a friend of his as a clerk on the Chicago Board of Options Exchange, on the floor. As soon as I turned 16, I started working there in the summer-time... After a while, I started working there full-time... I was in the door. I started working downtown and going to school at night.

Part of the strength of the IHAD model appears related to the ways involvement facilitated access to the social networks of the staff, sponsors, and mentors (the second form of social capital). These individuals generally had extensive knowledge of social service providers, job opportunities, various private and public schools, artistic and athletic extracurricular activities, and various other city programs. The nature and value of these social networks, however, must be clarified. We saw substantial evidence that youth gained access to the social networks of staff and sponsors, but not that they developed extensive networks of their own. Most importantly, for these youth at least, it appeared that access to social networks became valu-

able only in the context of strong trusting relationships. *The youth needed strong ties to benefit from weak ties.* As a PC put it, "They need to share the problem with someone they trust and then we need to be there after (they get help from the service provider we told them about) to help them make sense of it." This follow-up is especially important because many times when Dreamers sought assistance from "service providers"—be they Department of Child and Family Service workers, financial aid officers, or school staff—they encountered alienating bureaucracy and disrespect, and, often, their needs were not met.

In making these points, we do not mean to imply that youth cannot develop social networks. As McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman (1994) and Heath (in press) have shown, youth-based organizations often provide authentic opportunities for role-taking in relation to such substantive responsibilities as organizing events, publishing a paper, or performing a meaningful act of community service. When youth undertake these challenges, they quickly recognize the value of networks and develop their capacity to use them.

Still, the general critique of "strong ties," (that tight friendship circles are of limited value in terms of gaining information regarding opportunities in the broader society) may need modification, at least for adolescents from inner-city environments. Emphasizing, as IHAD does, strong ties to a small number of extensively networked individuals who form trusting relationships with youth appears essential to facilitating access to meaningful support and opportunities.

A potential risk regarding strong ties should also be considered. Dreamers involved in these programs might become dependent on rather than empowered by the powerful support networks that surround them. Judgments regarding this issue are difficult to make and problematic forms of dependency are difficult to identify at this stage in Dreamers' lives. There is no doubt that Dreamers were dependent on IHAD support, but given their age and the challenges they faced, their dependence on support most often seemed legitimate. Still, it may be that IHAD "carried" many Dreamers across barriers to high school graduation and college acceptance and that they will fail to complete college at greater rates than otherwise similar students because they have grown reliant on the intensive support IHAD provided. If we are able to study this group of Dreamers several years from now (some-

thing we are hoping to do), this will be one of the issues we examine.

While we currently lack data regarding Dreamers' long-term outcomes, we do have some data from the PCs regarding the status of the Dreamers one year after high school. Each project remains in touch with their Dreamers—although they provide no academic support and substantially less personal contact than when the Dreamers were in high school. In LF, 3 of the 31 Dreamers who initially enrolled in college had dropped out by the end of their first year. Three of the 45 Dreamers with whom the PC is still in contact are neither in a school/GED program nor working. One Dreamer died during a conflict with police. Not counted in these totals are three Dreamers with whom the PC lost contact during the year. In PS, 8 of the 24 Dreamers who initially enrolled in college dropped out by the end of their first year. Four of the 33 students with whom the PC has been in contact are not in school and are not working and three are currently incarcerated (four were in jail prior to the end of high school). PS also lost contact with three Dreamers during the year.

Unfortunately, we have no comparable information regarding our control groups. We do know that stopping out of college and dropping out of college after 1 year is relatively common. A survey by the National Center For Education Statistics (Fitzgerald, Berkner, Horn, Choy, & Hoachlander, 1994) found that 30.6% of all college freshmen, 41.9% of African-Americans, 33% of Hispanic-Americans, and 46% of those whose socioeconomic status is in the bottom quartile did not return in the fall of their sophomore year. Thus, the performance of students in LF appears to be better than expected and that of Dreamers in PS appears similar to overall trends.

#### *Relationships Enable Norms and Practices That Lead to Academic Support*

At 4:55 two boys and a girl each in 11th grade enter the IHAD office for "late tutoring," which runs from 5:30pm to 7:00 pm. Malcolm, the tutoring coordinator, looks up from the table where he is helping a student with math, "Take your hats off fellas and let's do some work. . ."

JEROME (11th grade): Can I get attendance points because I'm here, but I want to leave?

MALCOLM: Give me some work first.

JEROME: What kind of work?

MALCOLM: I find it hard to believe you have no homework.

JEROME: How long do I gotta stay?

The tutoring coordinator leaves that question hanging and returns to the student with whom he was working.

To say that the Dreamers developed strong relationships is not to say that they ceased being adolescents. Trusting relationships made efforts to establish and reinforce norms (see Figure 1) more legitimate; they did not make the process easy or guarantee results. Indeed, when asked to describe times they (Dreamers) felt frustrated with the program, 90% described times the staff kept pushing them or constrained their independence.

I don't know? I guess when I get older I'll appreciate it, but the little things, they try and lecture, stuff I don't really want to hear. Stuff like, "You have to do all your work before you can go and play basketball." So you finish your work and they are like, "Let me see it." And they are like, that is wrong and this one is wrong, and it gets frustrating.

Well I feel frustrated when they try and force me to do my work and make me try and do other assignments and I have it under control, but they act like I don't. Like they will make me sit down and do my work. Like I will have an English paper due and like one day I don't have time to do it so I will do chemistry, cause I think chemistry is more important than English—I don't know why—and my English is half-way finished and they will be like, "no, work on this first and then stay for late tutoring." Can I have a life? So they try and make me stay for late tutoring . . . and I don't like that and [the PC] she be trying to push me on the college stuff, like she was trying to get me to go on the college trip and I didn't want to go and she kept asking me all these questions—"Why don't you want to come? Why are you giving me all these excuses?" So I finally left a message on the machine that I was not going to be able to come because I had things to do that week. And she called me back—she was like, "You will be back on Friday so you have Saturday and Sunday to yourself." (Angela)

At the same time, most students recognized, "They get on my case for not doing things that I'm supposed to be doing but sometimes, I mean, I shouldn't get frustrated, I should thank them, which I do after a while." Similarly, "Last year when I got an F in English and I was like forget it and I wasn't

going to do the term paper, but they stayed on my back and I had to do it and I was really frustrated with them and the paper. [Looking back, how do you feel about that situation?] I'm glad they stayed on my back."

These statements by Dreamers highlight the importance of monitoring and norms that reflect high academic expectations (the third form of social capital), but they also illustrate the resistance PCs often faced. Again, it appears that students' willingness to respond to these standards was linked in fundamental ways to the strength of their relationship with the PC. As Frederick Erickson (1993) persuasively argues,

Assent to the exercise of authority involves . . . a leap of faith—trust in the legitimacy of the authority and in the good intentions of those exercising it, trust that one's own identity will be maintained positively in relation to the authority, and trust that one's own interests will be advanced by compliance with the exercise of authority. (p. 36)

Had these relationships been weaker or viewed by Dreamers as disrespectful, Dreamers could have withdrawn. Their participation was, of course, voluntary.

In terms of direct services linked to academics, it is difficult to separate out the impact of the tutoring and academic press on student performance. What evidence we do have indicates that these sessions provided support with homework more than academic instruction, that they were attended by roughly 50% of the Dreamers in LF at least once a week during high school, and that they were linked to students' sense that support was always available. As reported earlier in the paper, tutoring was more structured and involved more youth at PS than at LF. Roughly 50% of PS Dreamers attended tutoring two or more times a week during high school. Overall, our sense is that tutoring helped keep students focused on school, was a valued means of helping Dreamers with their school work, and provided the staff with opportunities to monitor other developments in Dreamers' lives. As described earlier in the paper, the program also provided several substantial supports and opportunities that likely increased college enrollment.

### **Issues of Design, Implementation, and Evaluation**

While the programmatic strategies described above have enormous potential, many complex

issues and choices face those committed to this kind of youth development program.

#### *Using Parochial Schools to Access Social Capital*

Initially, the IHAD program was designed to support students' academic development through tutoring sessions and other enrichment activities that took place during the summer and school year. While staff and sponsors clearly thought such academic support was important, they came to believe it was insufficient. By the middle of eighth grade, it became clear to staff and sponsors that "if we really want some of these kids, not all of them, some of them to succeed in high school, they need to go to a private school" (Roberto). The staff and sponsors felt that as many Dreamers as possible needed to be pushed, in the right direction, and by many people in addition to themselves. "The local high school was graduating 29%—we were like no way" (Rebecca). "These kids need structure. In private schools, they will let me know if a kid doesn't come because they have a lot less kids. In the public, they don't do that" (Roberto). "At [the public school], one student missed 60 days, [before] we found out [from another student]" (Janet).

Student perceptions and experiences were similar. "[In the public school] you could come out of the classroom if you wanted, take you a smoke. . . Get a doughnut" (Norma). "[My public] school teachers, they didn't care like if you missed 15 days of school you could still get A's and B's, stuff like that. It was fun though" (Ty). Importantly, the draw of parochial schools was tied as much to issues of social capital as to the quality of academic instruction. The staff of both programs felt the parochial schools created an academically oriented context and expectations of college attendance in a way public schools did not. They also believed the academic instruction was better than in the public school, but the staff qualified their support for parochial schools. Though they felt youth received a better education than in the neighborhood public schools, they did not feel the parochial school students received an academically rigorous curriculum or necessarily had better-qualified teachers. Some PCs said that if the social context of the public schools could be improved, those schools would be at least as well equipped to educate. "The public schools [often] have [more experienced and challenging] teachers, better resources and equipment and computers" (Roberto). Unfor-

unately, these schools also had “apathetic and burnt-out teachers” as well as “exposure to peer cultures that would pull many Dreamers in the wrong direction.” The major difference, the staff believed, lay in the parochial schools’ commitment to the youth and in their ability to establish an orderly, safe, and personalized climate where youth could focus and graduate.

St. John’s<sup>9</sup> is fabulous. . . . They are interested in helping the kids who were not great students. They will take the behavior problems, kids who have been kicked out of every other school. They will take them and give them a chance. . . . They are safe in the school. No one ever shoots anyone, there are no weapons. Our kids most involved in gangs are the ones most scared to go to public schools. (Rebecca)

Several students commuted an hour and a half each way to a Catholic school where they felt safe.

Although the value of parochial schools was not questioned by students, parents, staff, and sponsors, students who went to public schools also did well. Indeed, LF sent a similar number of students to public high school as to parochial high schools and the parochial school group had only a slightly higher graduation rate [79% vs. 64%—both substantially higher than the control group rate of 37%]. Initially, PS sent all but two of their Dreamers to parochial schools. Only two of those who did not transfer to a public school dropped out, but seven were expelled for low grades or disciplinary offenses, three chose to leave because of low grades, and three more moved and could not make the commute. These 13 students then enrolled in public schools. Thus, it seems likely that the lower graduation rates of public school Dreamers in PS was partially due to a selection bias (See Table 3).

It is similarly difficult to determine how much of the higher 4-year college attendance rates of parochial school graduates (31 out of 38, or 82%) versus public school graduates (12 out of 22, or 55%) was the result of the greater emphasis on and support for transition to college and how much resulted from the parochial schools enrolling more academically oriented Dreamers.

While it seems reasonable to assume that a significant part of the Dreamers’ academic success in terms of high school graduation and college attendance stems from the supports many received from parochial schools, we also saw many indications that students’ ability to stay in the parochial schools was significantly enhanced by supports from the

IHAD programs. In particular, the tuition scholarships, the tutoring sessions, help with personal and family problems, and the creation of a peer community with norms that emphasized academic success all appear to have helped. Similarly, the combination of college scholarships, visits to colleges, hiring a staff person during Dreamers’ senior year to closely monitor and help with each Dreamer’s application process, and the creation of a setting in which the clear expectation for most students was that college attendance was the desired goal, likely improved the attendance rates for Dreamers graduating from both public and parochial schools.

It is also important to note that without strong ties to PCs or sponsors who have the information and financial resources to facilitate connections with private schools, few of these students would have enrolled. IHAD staff identified appropriate schools, promoted the idea to Dreamers and parents, worked with and encouraged the schools to accept some marginal students, and provided financial support. Chicago Public School records reveal that only 1 of the 76 students in the control groups for either program transferred into a private or parochial school. This underscores the important role of the cultural, social, and financial capital the IHAD model provides. It is not that parents lacked interest in this option. Families from LF contributed an average of \$667 for tuition each year. Still, their interest and financial resources without IHAD involvement would have been insufficient.

In terms of educational reform, reliance on parochial schools highlights a potential shortcoming of IHAD’s programmatic model. Like many parents with the resources to select an alternative, IHAD staff and sponsors moved many youth into parochial schools. Thus, the program sponsored individual youth without addressing the structural problems such as inadequate public schools that put so many inner-city youth at great risk. IHAD’s resources went to parochial rather than public schools and they did not help improve the provision of public education.

This non-systemic focus, however, grew out of experience. The earlier IHAD programs in Chicago made a conscious effort to work to help strengthen the public schools but were largely unsuccessful. The focus on parochial education by LF and PS was in large part a reaction to the unresponsiveness of the public schools. The tradeoffs between pursuit of structural changes and the support of

individual youth are complex and we address these directly in a related paper (Kahne, 1999). For now we simply note the importance of these issues.

### *Does IHAD Undermine Parents?*

In many respects, the IHAD model embodies assumptions, common in the educational policy community, that families, especially low-income families, lack the social capital and other resources necessary to fully support their children's educational pursuits (see Coleman, 1987). Indeed, many core roles played by the program (motivating educational effort, choosing schools, setting guidelines for behavior, providing support with personal problems) are traditionally associated with parents and families. There is therefore a potential for overlap between the relationships and other resources project staff and sponsors seek to provide for youth and what is provided by parents and other family members. The program model also creates the opportunity to support parents and families so that they, in turn, can support their children. Thus, it is important to consider how a comprehensive intervention such as IHAD restructures the role parents play in guiding their child's development.

Although IHAD wanted to work with parents and families to help them support their Dreamers, the program model assumed that IHAD's goals for the youth (high school graduation, upward mobility) were unobjectionable and that the program should promote these goals even if parents were passive. In addition, it was assumed that youth would benefit from social capital as well as from emotional and financial support that their families either could not or did not provide. That assumption appeared supported—program sponsors and staff often provided highly valued personal support, knowledge regarding opportunities, help negotiating often confusing bureaucracies, and valued financial resources. What though, would this intervention mean to the parents of Dreamers who were also deeply concerned for their children and had intimate knowledge of their child and their child's context? Many parents of Dreamers worked extremely hard to contribute their own social, cultural, and financial resources for supporting their child.

Might working directly with Dreamers rather than empowering parents to help their children have some unintended negative consequences? Would parents view the program as an intrusion or as a force that undermined their parent/child rela-

tionship? Would parents see IHAD as promoting values and priorities different than their own? One Dreamer, when asked about the strengths of the program told us,

It's cool—there be a lot of things that I can do that my mother can't do for me. [Like what?] I mean I am not trying to say my mother is not able to do it because she can do anything she wants to, but it is just that Project Success has done a lot of things for me and my sister—like help us find jobs—you know, stuff like that.

Did exposure to IHAD staff and sponsors as well as their resources lead Dreamers to reassess their parents' strengths and weaknesses or lead to conflicts between parents and the program staff?

We are less confident than we would like to be when discussing these issues because youth provided fewer details about their families during interviews than about other topics, because parents often seemed hesitant to say anything negative about the program, and because these issues were not a main focus of the study. Still, it is possible to outline the main themes of what we heard. In general, Dreamers positively assessed both IHAD and their parents. Similarly, parents rarely expressed complaints about the program, except that they sometimes wished the PC would call them back sooner or that their other children could be included in the program (PS set up a companion program that offered similar services to the Dreamers' younger siblings).

Several Dreamers did describe conflicts between the staff and their parents around issues such as spending a night away from home to visit a college. This was particularly true of parents of female Hispanic Dreamers. Parents, like Dreamers, also said that it took considerable time for them to learn about and trust the program staff and sponsors. On a few occasions we also heard concerns that Dreamers were being exposed to values regarding birth control that they or their parents did not hold. "I didn't really agree with the issue of condoms and the sort of detachment . . . from the values of the parents," a Dreamer in college told us. A different Dreamer in this focus group explained, "No one stopped to ask—'do you mind if I give your daughter this?' It was part of an insensitivity that wasn't intended."

Our overall impression, and one shared by Dreamers, parents, and staff, was that parents were often passive in relation to IHAD programming, that explicit conflicts between the program and



parents were rare, that the PCs and sponsors often worked directly with parents when they or their child had a crisis, that parents generally trusted the program staff and valued the support IHAD offered, but that parents were never fully integrated into the program. This lack of integration was seen as a shortcoming by all involved. Dreamers, staff, parents, and sponsors told us that the program would be better if more parents were involved, but we didn't hear a clear strategy for how this change might come about. No one wanted to exclude Dreamers whose parents didn't participate and, given limits on time, few felt they were able to build and maintain strong bridges that fully integrated parents into the program.

*Moving to Scale While Maintaining Quality*

That this program has potential and is doable does not mean that it is financially viable or likely to be implemented effectively on a large scale. Those considering policies or programs that align with IHAD's emphasis on long-term relationships and academic support must also consider financial and technical concerns, particularly as they relate to programmatic impact.

Interestingly, the cost does not seem prohibitive (see Table 4). For the 6 1/2 years between December 1989 and July 1996 when the students graduated from high school, the LF program spent \$472,147 on staff salaries, parochial school tuition, and other program expenses. The per student, per year cost was \$1,482. If one subtracts the \$89,000 the program spent on private school scholarships the total comes to \$1,203 per Dreamer per year<sup>10</sup>. PS

started with their Dreamers when they graduated from the sixth grade. Between June 1991 and June 1997 when the Dreamers graduated, the program spent \$611,000 or \$2,829 per Dreamer, per year. This larger cost was due mainly to the \$333,827 spent on private school tuition. If this cost is subtracted, the cost of running the program for 6 years drops to \$1,284 per youth, per year. The average cost of a public education in Chicago over this same 6-year period (September 1991 through June 1997) was \$5,800 per year (Chicago Public Schools, 1997), so this additional expenditure is significant but not exorbitant.

The challenge of bringing potentially powerful interventions to scale, of course, extends beyond financial concerns. Indeed, as McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman (1994) and Schorr (1989) have noted, a program design and funding creates the potential for positive impact, but successful strategies are idiosyncratic and often depend on finding particularly gifted individuals capable of high-quality implementation tailored to specific contexts. Most Dreamers, for example, required intense support and not all staff were able or willing to make that commitment. When put to the test by the Dreamers, sponsors and staff were not always successful. A PC from one of the other IHAD sites was criticized by several Dreamers for writing off those who weren't doing well. One Dreamer explained,

The PC we had was very picky and choosy. . . . I was on his choosy side. But I saw how he treated other Dreamers, like, "No, I gave up on that Dreamer." How do you give up on a Dreamer?

TABLE 4  
*Costs of Running IHAD Programs Between Program Initiation and On-Time High School Graduation*

	Program costs			
	La Familia		Project Success	
	Total	Per student <sup>a</sup> /per year	Total	Per student <sup>b</sup> /per year
Parochial school tuition <sup>c</sup>	\$ 88,855		\$333,827	
Total costs excluding parochial school tuition	\$383,292	\$1,203	\$277,256	\$1,284
Total costs	\$472,147	\$1,482	\$611,083	\$2,829

<sup>a</sup>Forty-nine youth participated in the program during the 6 1/2 years between the initiation of the program and Dreamers' graduation from high school.

<sup>b</sup>Thirty-six youth participated in the program during the 6 years between its inception and the Dreamers' high school graduation.

<sup>c</sup>Some students from each program attended parochial schools between 9th and 12th grade. For details, see Table 3.

Your job is to help them. How do you give up on him cause he's selling drugs now? Is that right? No. You knew when you came into the program these were underprivileged children who weren't going to do nothing with their lives but go out and sell drugs and stuff. The job was to come in and mold their minds, show them more, bring that out of them. . . . I was on his choosy side, but now I guess I'm on the other side. He said, F-me. I'm over with. He finished with me.

To gain insight into the challenges of widespread implementation, we conducted 25 interviews of staff, students, and sponsors, held focus group discussions, and, where available, examined record data from the other IHAD programs operating in Chicago. We focused on programs with Dreamers old enough to graduate.

In terms of quantifiable outcomes, these earlier programs were less successful. Unfortunately, because the programs lost touch with many Dreamers, because one program took on additional dreamers after the sixth grade, and because the records of these programs are less complete, we cannot make precise comparisons between these programs and their control groups' high school graduation rates. What data we have indicate smaller differences in high school graduation rates between participants in these programs and the control groups. Of the 140 (out of 211) Dreamers with whom these programs are still in contact, 111 received a high school diploma or GED and 78 are enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college or a vocational school. Because IHAD programs often lost touch with the Dreamers when they dropped out of school or after they had already dropped out of school, we suspect a small percentage of the 71 Dreamers with whom the program lost touch graduated from high school. Thus, there is reason to believe that IHAD as currently structured cannot consistently produce the results of our two case studies. Only one of the five other programs in Chicago with Dreamers old enough to graduate had graduation rates that parallel the case studies.

To understand these outcomes, we believe it makes sense to consider three differences between the other Chicago programs and the case studies. First, the other programs had significantly higher turnover of the PCs. In our two case studies, each PC stayed with his or her program from start to finish. None of the other five programs with students old enough to graduate were this fortunate. They had between two and five PCs per project,

with an average of three different coordinators for the 6 years between sixth grade graduation and high school graduation. Given the importance of trusting long-term relationships, the impact of staff turnover is not difficult to anticipate. For varied reasons, many Dreamers cycled in and out of contact with the program as they matured. We suspect that PC turnover made it less likely that Dreamers would reconnect with the program. We know that levels of program involvement were significantly lower in programs with PC turnover. Whereas LF and PS were still in touch with at least 90% of their original participants, these other programs knew the whereabouts of between 56% and 73%<sup>11</sup>.

A second major difference between these earlier programs and the case studies is that the earlier programs did not place many students in parochial schools. As detailed in the previous section, parochial schools appear to have supported success by providing a safe, supportive, consistent, and personalized learning environment through which trust and understanding could develop along with expectations and information regarding college attendance. Indeed, as Bryk et al. (1993) found, parochial schools also provide forms of social capital and this aligned well with what IHAD offered.

Finally, the pioneering programs in Chicago had less supplemental staff than LF and PS—generally, part-time college students. The programs we studied each benefited from AmeriCorps members and the Princeton Project 55 program. Together these programs added two full-time staff members at both LF and PS during the last 2 years of each program. This additional staffing proved extremely helpful. Given the enormous demands on PCs' time, it made possible the provision of tutoring, support with the college application process (which included trips, test preparation, and completing applications), as well as the crisis intervention and general support services. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, numerous Dreamers told us of the strong relationships they developed with these interns. Broadening the staff significantly increased opportunities for meaningful relationships. In several cases, these interns, who were often hired on after their internship ended, built relationships with youth whom the PCs were having a difficult time reaching. Sometimes it was a chance to start over, sometimes it was the new staff's style of interaction. A variety of factors including personality, interests, gender, and race seemed to influence the

kinds of connections Dreamers made with the staff and PCs.

When we first started, all the PCs were White. . . . They may have heard about things that happened to Blacks, whatever, but when the Black people (the interns) came, you could really talk with them about it and it really kind of changed the program.

Our sense is that PC turnover, fewer staff, and less supportive high schools handicapped the earlier programs in Chicago. Though our interviews highlighted numerous cases where these programs were viewed positively by participants, we did not see the same quantitative impact in terms of college attendance and high school graduation rates.

Other studies of IHAD and of similar programs also reveal mixed results. Andrew Hahn's (1995) study of the Ford Foundation's Quantum Opportunity Program, which employed a very similar model, revealed comparable results to those of the case studies (students in the program's four sites averaged a 21% higher high school graduation rate than their comparison groups). At the same time, other studies of IHAD programs (Aron & Barnow, 1994) and of a similarly structured program run by the Kaufman Foundation (McGuire, 1997) reveal that such programs do not consistently lead to dramatic improvements in college attendance and high school graduation rates.

Perhaps the program that best mirrors IHAD's design and operates as part of a public school system is the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program which began in San Diego and now operates nationally. This 4-year high school program provides participants (low-income, ethnic- and linguistic-minority youth with relatively high achievement test scores, but low junior high school grades) with an academically oriented group identity and the explicit goal of college attendance. The central figure is the AVID coordinator who meets with students daily, coordinates weekly access to college tutors, arranges for outside speakers and field trips, shows students how to use note taking and writing strategies to enhance learning, and provides numerous personal supports for students—helping them with barriers they face both in school when dealing with teachers and at home. Studies of students' experience in the program reveals dynamics similar to those in our case studies. The coordinator, program structure, and related services create a trusting and supportive context that motivates and supports stu-

dent achievement. Analysis of data regarding the program's impact in 14 San Diego schools revealed that students who stayed with the program for 3 years attended college at rates that exceed both local and national averages (see Mehan, Hubbard, & Villanueva, 1994; Swanson, Mehan, & Hubbard, 1995). The parallels regarding AVID's and IHAD's structure and impact indicate that elements of IHAD's youth development strategy may be effective in the public schools.

### *The Problem With Numbers*

Everybody always wants to know how many are going to college and how many graduated—the numbers to count them. I'm not as concerned with the statistics as I am with the children.

This sponsor's sentiment, consistently expressed by staff and sponsors, reflects their recognition and commitment to the many intangible ways they helped support Dreamers. These relationships had value in their own right, even when they didn't translate in clear ways to academic success. Indeed, it was often the sincerity of the relationship, more than the specific kinds of support, that the youth talked about. One student described the relationship with her sponsor in the following way:

I mean I could call him and leave a message and he would call right back. He told me one time, mine was the first name he saw after coming back from an out-of-state trip, so he called me. . . . He always seemed so interested in what you were doing and how you were doing it. He would never put you down and say you can't do that. He wasn't like this big, high man that you never saw, so distant. You could just talk to him one-on-one.

Similarly, a Dreamer who had been out of high school for 3 years said of his PC, "He's the man. If I take you to my house right now and showed you my telephone book, I got his home number and work number right there at the top and whenever there's something happening, I can just give him a call." Though this support did not always result in scholastic achievement, these relationships often provided services of more fundamental significance. For example, a student who was beaten with the flat side of a butcher knife by his mother's boyfriend when he refused to break into nearby apartments to support their cocaine habit showed up in the morning at the IHAD office to ask for help. The staff took care of his medical needs and found him a place to stay until he could move in with rela-

tives in a different part of the city. Though not an everyday occurrence, program staff became personally involved in crises of this magnitude at least once with 29 (57%) of the youth in LF and 22 (55%) in PS between 6th and 12th grade. (Crisis often revolved around gangs, homelessness, sexual assaults, abortions, physical abuse, and suicide attempts).

Of course, the value of these relationships extends in both directions. “This is the most meaningful thing that’s happened to me and I’ve done community work for 50 years,” one sponsor explained. A different sponsor described her involvement this way, “It’s knowing that this is the best thing you could ever do with your time or your money, and it makes you feel better than anything else you’ve ever done.” A PC put it most succinctly when asked what he would tell a sponsor or PC who was just starting out:

They need to know that if the Dreamers let you in, you’ve been blessed. Many people don’t realize how hard it is to build the trust and respect needed for a real relationship or the gift that has been given when it occurs.

Indeed, several sponsors were not able to develop more than superficial relationships with the Dreamers. They might show up for large gatherings and continue to fund the program, but they often did not become personally involved. Thus, a central assumption of the IHAD model, that caring sponsors could work with youth to build meaningful relationships despite enormous differences—age, race, social class, culture—often did not hold. In some cases, sponsors did build bridges of trust and understanding with the youth. According to some, this is the program’s most important outcome.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the challenge for policymakers is to understand and value the humanity imbedded in these efforts, while also asking hard questions about the challenge of implementing this model or its features on a larger scale.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

The IHAD model has potential. It provides philanthropists and practitioners with a way to make a personal, meaningful, and observable difference for a particular group of children. When strong relationships and substantive supports are provided and maintained, this intervention can be enormously successful. At the same time, we are not sure how consistently this outcome can be

achieved. Numerous factors can constrain implementation and impact. Our overview of less successful programs in Chicago revealed a variety of factors, including staff turnover, inadequate supports from schools, and insufficient staffing, that may have created a context in which the relationships and support needed for high rates of high school graduation and college attendance did not occur.

From the standpoint of policy, the IHAD model has both strengths and weaknesses. First, given the difficulties associated with implementation and the limited pool of sponsors and staff willing and able to make this enormous long-term financial and personal commitment, IHAD is unlikely to reach a large percentage of inner-city youth. In Chicago, a large city with a strong philanthropic tradition, the IHAD organization has adopted only 12 classes over the past 10 years. This critique, however, is partially misplaced. IHAD does not aim to help all youth in Chicago. In fact, the model exposes the wisdom of focusing in a comprehensive and personalized way on the needs of a manageable group—something reformers in a large and bureaucratic city often fail to do. By keeping the scale small and both funders and staff involved with the youth, the model also provides forms of accountability and opportunities for learning that larger reform efforts often lack. Indeed, it may be a mistake, at least metaphorically, to focus on “scaling up” this intervention. Given that the small-scale personal environment was essential to the success of this program, it may make more sense to think about “scaling down” other initiatives.

A different critique of IHAD’s design appears more significant. Embracing IHAD and similar philanthropic efforts that emphasize individual sponsorship rather than structural change signals a decreased expectation. The model does not address the structures (inadequate schools, inadequate job opportunities for parents, dangerous neighborhoods for youth) which consistently put hundreds of thousands of youth in this city and millions of youth across the country at great risk. Indeed, while making an important and at times life-changing contribution to the lives of participants, programs like this can only be part of the solution. Though a “comprehensive” approach in one sense, it is not in another—it does not attempt systemic change.<sup>13</sup>

While our overall assessment of IHAD and of similar initiatives is mixed, the success of the two

case studies has implications that extend beyond this particular type of program. By examining the reasons behind the success of the two case studies, we can identify conditions, postures, dispositions, and practices that appear extremely important and can inform both policy and practice. From the standpoint of theory and model development, this study highlights the importance of varied forms of social capital. Social networks, norms with effective sanctions, and social trust all appear to facilitate youth development. Moreover, the value of varied forms of social capital as well as of other supports and opportunities are interdependent—particularly with respect to social trust. For youth in low-income urban environments, social trust appears to significantly expand the value of these resources. Specifically, when in a trusting context, youth are more likely to seek out and take advantage of various supports and opportunities. They are also more likely to respond positively to teachers and other adults who emphasize prosocial and academic norms.

These findings may help to explain why so many academic and social support services are not well used by many of the youth for whom they were designed. Indeed, instead of promoting isolated interventions and bureaucratically organized personal and academic support services, locating services and access to information in settings where social trust and understanding can develop over time may be more effective. If the setting can be designed to work with an identifiable cohort of youth, the peer group may provide additional benefits. Similarly, our two case studies indicate that those working to encourage a group of youth to pursue rigorous academic standards and to abide by appropriate social norms will be far more effective if they have created a context of trust, understanding, and respect. As the popular aphorism goes, “young people don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

It appears that many students in urban schools will benefit substantially from programs and structures that facilitate strong, trusting relationships between an identifiable and relatively small group of students and either one or a small number of trained and committed adults. Exactly how and where to structure such settings is less clear. The widely documented impersonal and inflexible nature of many urban schools and school systems, as well as the IHAD experience with public schools in Chicago, lead us to believe that situating such

programs in community settings is often desirable. Youth organizations’ less formal setting, community base, and activities youth find intrinsically motivating (often sports, arts, or service activities where youth take on adult/responsible roles) make youth organizations well suited to create trusting contexts. The challenge facing these organizations is likely to be leveraging these relationships in ways that support social and, particularly, academic development. Schools, on the other hand, generally have the best access to youth and to a stable resource base that could support this kind of programming. As the success of the AVID program discussed earlier demonstrates, school-based supports mirroring the important elements of IHAD’s youth development strategy are certainly possible. Their largest challenge will likely be creating structures through which long-term, personal, trusting, and supportive relationships can develop. The potential for partnerships between youth organizations and schools also clearly exists (see Heath & McLaughlin, 1994).

This study of IHAD does not identify the ideal location, programmatic structure, or ways to overcome the challenges of school/community collaboration. It aims to clarify the fundamental importance of creating environments, whether in schools or youth organizations, through which social trust and other forms of social capital can develop. The relationships that formed in LF and PS transcended narrow and immediate goals. These relationships looked more like those among family members than those between doctors and patients, lawyers and clients, or businesses and consumers. The social trust that developed facilitated access to social networks and social norms, to direct services, and to monetary resources that helped the youth realize dramatically more than they otherwise would have achieved.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup>The scale of the intervention (over \$50,000,000 spent at over 160 different sites across the country) also provides a compelling rationale for a careful and systematic study.

<sup>2</sup>All proper names are pseudonyms.

<sup>3</sup>Program descriptions for LF and PS come from interviews with the PCs. Dreamers' recollections and our observations were consistent with these portraits.

<sup>4</sup>Efforts were made to pair each Dreamer with a mentor. According to the PC, only four Dreamers stayed in touch with their mentor for 3 or more years.

<sup>5</sup>There is reason to believe the figures from the Panel's study (53% for African-Americans and 54% for Hispanic-Americans) overstate the actual enrollment of Chicago public school graduates in college. Despite extensive effort (phone calls and three mailings), the response rate for the Panel's study was 57.4%. The response rate of graduates from selective schools was also 20% higher than from non-selective schools, and others have found that graduates who respond to these studies tend to have better grades and standardized test scores than those who do not respond (Storey & Qualls, 1991, p. i).

<sup>6</sup>All names are pseudonyms and are provided for youth whom we quote more than once.

<sup>7</sup>Staff at both programs were unanimous in believing that confrontation over important standards combined with clear signs of a long-term commitment to help were necessary in order to point Dreamers in the right direction and to gain their respect. As illustrated by Rachel and Hector's statements above, this stance often appeared effective. At the same time, even when the commitment was sincere, efforts sometimes failed. For example, although confrontation is often a necessary precursor to support, the same straight-talking strategy that worked with some youth did not work with others.

[The PC] asked to have this meeting with me [and] I never [was] completely comfortable talking to [him]. . . . So he was talking to me and he was like, "What are you doing?" And I was like, "What do you mean what am I doing?" and he was like, "Come on, cut the crap, what are you doing?" And I was like, "I am going to school and that is it," and he was like, "No, no you're not, you are involved with gangs aren't you?" And I was like, "Gangs, what are you talking about?" And then I just said yea I am and he was like, "What are you doing, what do you get from them?" . . . And that is when he thought that I was promiscuous and he had this little evaluation sheet on me. . . . I wanted to be involved in this program but he was pushing me away from it because I didn't feel comfortable in it and he blew my cover [about being in a gang and dropping out] and I was no, stop it. It made me feel worse. It wasn't like he said you should straighten up. To me, I took it like he was saying I was a little slut or something going to bed with all of these

guys and I wasn't. . . . So, I was like, "Man," and after that, I didn't really come.

<sup>8</sup>These figures are not precise and may well be lower than the true numbers because they only include events the PCs knew about. The large number of events the PCs knew about also indicates their level of involvement in Dreamers' lives.

<sup>9</sup>A pseudonym.

<sup>10</sup>These figures do not include the funds for parochial schools that families (\$55,000) or the private schools (\$50,000) contributed. They do not include AmeriCorps members' salaries, but do include the salary of the project coordinator and the intern from Princeton. Costs in 1998 would be slightly higher due to inflation.

<sup>11</sup>Clearly, identifying and retaining appropriate staff is a fundamental challenge for those pursuing the IHAD model. The qualities of successful project coordinators are difficult to specify and such people are rare. The lack of a professionally recognized category of "youth worker" with appropriate educational programs and standards complicates this task still further. Moreover, the structure of the program, which asks project coordinators to work in relatively isolated environments, pursuing an extremely broad array of goals with relatively little guidance or clear benchmarks of performance, is a structure likely to promote burnout and one that places tremendous demands on staff (See Cherniss, 1980; Smylie, 1999).

<sup>12</sup>Ironically, the good fortune of the sponsors—their ability to give so much to the youth without it affecting their own financial well-being—also presented a problem. It meant that sponsors could commit to "supporting" Dreamers without first knowing or caring about them and it meant that the youth needed evidence that their intentions were sincere. Sometimes the Dreamers felt like "charity cases" the sponsors might want to help, but didn't actually care for. "We were a little experiment," Maria, a Dreamer, told us. Indeed, Dreamers in several programs expressed the concern that their sponsors didn't care about them as individuals.

You know if a sponsor is there to do this as a tax write-off or doing career service or appeasing guilt. You know who those people are. They're also the people whose money's their only support. They just write a check and that's it. You don't want to be with those people. We need their help financially, but a lot of us have too much pride to have people bow down to you. There are sponsors that a lot of the Dreamers have written off because we know what they're all about. It's like just because you are in this program and you support us with your check doesn't mean your heart is in it. (Robert)

(We discuss this issue in greater depth in Kahne, 1999).

<sup>13</sup>It is also important to note that the funders of these programs recognize this issue. Inspired in large part by their IHAD experience, one group initiated a publicly funded school that also provides IHAD-style after school supports, the IHAD foundation is developing a charter

school, and one sponsor has initiated a comprehensive neighborhood development initiative.

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### Authors

JOSEPH KAHNE is an associate professor at Mills College, Department of Education, 5000 McArthur Boulevard, Oakland, CA 94613; e-mail: jkahne@mills.edu. He specializes in educational policy.

KIM BAILEY is a doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Policy Studies (MC 147), College of Education, 1040 West Harrison Street, Chicago, Illinois 60607-7133. Her area of specialization is academic and social development in school and community contexts.

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