

The BJA Executive Session on

Police Leadership

2013

The BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership is a multi-year endeavor started in 2010 with the goal of developing innovative thinking that would help create police leaders uniquely qualified to meet the challenges of a changing public safety landscape.

In support of an integrated approach to creating safe and viable communities across America, the project directors recruited 20+ principals from a range of disciplines. The principals, in turn, led national field teams of practitioners focused on the work of policing and the organization of the future.

To gain new insights on leadership, the *BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership* engaged police chiefs in documenting their own paths and invited leaders to participate in various audio and video forums to tell their stories and discuss the future of policing and police leadership.

Please visit our website, <http://bjaleader.org>, to learn more about this project and to access a broad array of interactive, multimedia resources.

The principals are supported in their work by a team that includes project co-directors Darrel W. Stephens and Bill Geller, project strategist Nancy McKeon, and BJA Senior Policy Advisor Steve Edwards.

Five Police Departments Building Trust and Collaboration

Innovations in Policing Clinic
Yale Law School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Full Case

by
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Full Case

Trust and Collaboration in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Alyssa Work, in collaboration with members of Yale Law School’s Innovations in Policing Clinic

Introduction

On a cold, sunny day in early March, around 75 teenage boys sit at desks in a converted chapel, arms folded, watching the podium in front of them. They are mostly black, some Latino, and a smattering of white kids. Their eyes are fixed on the unlikely panel of discussants at the front of the room: four of their classmates and four members of local law enforcement—a local police officer, a transit officer, a former chief of housing police, and a juvenile probation officer. At the head of the room is George Mosee, Jr., Philadelphia’s Deputy District Attorney for the Juvenile Division. “Who here has been stereotyped?” he asks, and hands go up—among both the kids and the officers.

This panel discussion taking place at the Glen Mills School, a residential facility for court-adjudicated youth, is one of the youth–law enforcement forums developed and put into practice by the Pennsylvania Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Subcommittee’s Philadelphia Working Group. Philadelphia has been the site of collaboration among the city’s juvenile justice stakeholders for more than 20 years. In the past decade, a group of collaborators—police leaders, public defenders, the district attorney’s office, the city Department of Human Services, schools, and faith leaders—have built and institutionalized forums and a training curriculum for police recruits that bring together youth and law enforcement.

What is Disproportionate Minority Contact?

In 1992, Congress made it a core requirement of federal funding for states to identify disparities in rates of arrest, disposition, and confinement between white and minority youth. The DMC standard requires that states attempt to address those disparities by drafting their own solutions and, frequently, partnering with nonprofit organizations to implement their programs. Federal formula grant funding is conditioned on regular reporting and program development. In Pennsylvania, the Minority Youth–Law Enforcement Forums receive a portion of the state’s formula grant funding.

Held in public schools, youth detention facilities, and facilities for court-adjudicated youth, the forums are intended to give youth and law enforcement strategies for defusing contacts that might lead to an arrest, allow both parties to speak frankly to each other about how they perceive each other’s actions, and ultimately change attitudes in a way that will change interactions on the Philadelphia streets of Kensington, Germantown, and North Philadelphia. In conjunction with the forums, the working group has more recently developed a one-day training program for police recruits, which has been integrated into the Philadelphia Police Academy. The structure of the training program is similar to that

of the forums, and the goals of identifying issues and creating candid dialogue between youth and police remain consistent.

There are limits to what such a program, focused on communicating information and building dialogue, can accomplish in terms of violence reduction and concrete, measurable results. The designers of the curriculum recognize those limits and are seeking to develop the forums and trainings in a way that will allow for evaluation while continuing to supply youth and police officers with identifiable tools for defusing street contacts and improving youth–law enforcement trust more broadly.

Three general lessons can be drawn from Philadelphia’s experience building and institutionalizing youth–law enforcement dialogue, lessons that could be translated into programs for other police departments looking to build relationships and reduce street-level conflict between police and young people of color:

- First, **invest in collaboration** with institutions that may not appear to be natural allies. In developing, implementing, and conducting the forums, the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD), the Defender Association of Philadelphia, the district attorney’s office, and community organizations have maintained close working relationships that have permitted them to build the program in schools, in the police academy, and in community venues.
- Second, **focus on early intervention**, with respect to both new cadets and to young people. The youth–law enforcement curriculum is consciously focused on changing the quality of low-level street contacts between teens and officers, and on reducing the likelihood that a street stop will escalate into arrest or use of force on either side. The trainings reach cadets before their perceptions of youth behavior in Philadelphia have solidified.
- Third, **recognize the importance of changing perceptions**. How officers on patrol respond to youth behavior, and how youth react to police intervention in everyday life, are highly dependent on how each group views the others’ behaviors and motives. Letting police explain to teenagers how they are trained to respond to threats, and allowing young people to tell how their previous interactions with law enforcement affects their actions, lays the groundwork for more productive police–community relationships.

Background: Philadelphia Police-Minority Youth Relationships

Philadelphia is the nation’s sixth largest city.¹ It is poorer than any other U.S. city close to its size—a full quarter of its residents were living in poverty in 2010.² No other city

¹ An estimated 1,526,006 people live in Philadelphia. U.S. Census, State and County QuickFacts (2010), <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/42/4260000.html>.

²Philadelphia’s poverty rate was only 18.5% in 2000, by comparison. Alan Butkovitz, Philadelphia Office of the City Controller, *Economic Report: Financial Forecast and Snapshot* (Aug. 2010), www.philadelphiacontroller.org/publications/fpau/EconomicReport_August2010.pdf.

besides Detroit and Cleveland has more people out of work or looking for work,³ a fact that challenges those trying to lower the city’s historically high crime rate. Minorities make up a majority of the city’s population: census data shows that 43% of Philadelphians are black, 37% are white, and 12% are Hispanic or Latino.⁴ Residential segregation is entrenched in a familiar pattern, with the city’s black residents primarily living in neighborhoods of North Philadelphia like Fairmount and Kensington and in West Philadelphia. Many of those neighborhoods appear at first glance to be in decline, with empty lots and boarded-up homes. Houses have declined in value since 2008 by over 10%.⁵ Between the signs of economic depression, though, elaborate murals cover the sides of buildings and community gardens spring up in empty lots. Philadelphia has historically been a “city of neighborhoods”: tightly integrated and close-knit, but insular.⁶



³ Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia 2011: The State of the City 19 (2011), www.pewtrusts.org/uploaded-Files/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Philadelphia_Research_Initiative/Philadelphia-City-Data-Population-Demographics.pdf.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Pew Report at 2.

⁶ See Jerome Skolnick, *Coping with Crime: Individual and Neighborhood Reactions* 23-24 (1981).

Violent crime in Philadelphia is the subject of significant media coverage, largely due to the fact that it was home to the highest per-capita murder rate in 2011. The PPD has responded to a recent spike in the number of killings, many concentrated in areas such as the 24th, 25th, and 12th districts, through targeted evidence-based policing combined with programs like the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership, a focused intervention effort that combines police investigation with social outreach and support.⁷ On a broad scale, though, crime rates have been declining in the city for the past 20 years. Philadelphia experienced high rates of violent crime in the early part of the past decade, and the overall rate of violent crimes and major crimes have decreased since then. Juvenile violent crime rates in 2010 were lower than in 1995,⁸ and the total number of violent crimes (homicide, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery) declined to the lowest level since 1989.⁹

As crime has decreased, the use of pedestrian stops as a tactic by PPD officers has increased. In 2005 (the first year that the PPD was required to collect data on stops), 102,319 stops were recorded. In 2009, the PPD conducted more than twice that number—253,333 pedestrian stops. The stops became the subject of an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawsuit alleging racial profiling, and a consequent consent decree required that the PPD collect and store data on stops to be monitored by a court-appointed expert.¹⁰ The decree stipulated that the PPD and ACLU “recognize[d] the need for . . . the proper use and implementation of stop and frisk practices and policies as instrumental in legitimate police practices.”¹¹ It mandated review of training, supervision and disciplinary policies and required the city to establish “triggering thresholds” upon which enhanced supervision of officers would be necessary.¹²

On Collaboration:

“[A collaborative approach] has more impact. . . . Alone, you can develop an insular view of what you think the problem is. You have to lay out everyone’s perspective and ask, “How are we all going to have an impact on the problem?” and maybe other see the problem in different ways. It’s a more well-rounded, more sustained discussion.”

Anne Marie Ambrose, DHS Commissioner.

⁷ The Youth Violence Reduction Partnership is modeled on Boston’s Ceasefire program and has been in operation since 1999. It attempts to identify those youth in high-crime neighborhoods “most likely to kill or be killed” and offers them support along with increased supervision and monitoring by community organizations and outreach workers. Wendy S. McClanahan, *Alive at 25: Reducing Youth Violence Through Monitoring and Support*, Public/Private Ventures (2004). YVRP was active in 3 of 24 police districts as of 2008. See *Joint Hearing on Mentoring and Community-Based Solutions to Delinquency and Youth Violence* before the Sen. Judiciary Comm., (Feb. 19, 2007).

⁸ See National Center for Juvenile Justice, Pennsylvania Juvenile Delinquency Analysis Data Tool (2010), <http://ncjj-staging.servehttp.com/PADAT/>.

⁹ *Id.* at 24.

¹⁰ 72% of those stopped were African-Americans, who comprise 44% of Philadelphia’s population. See Press Release, ACLU-PA Reaches Agreement with City of Philadelphia in Stop and Frisk Challenge; Complaint, *Bailey v. City of Philadelphia*, No. 10-__ (E.D. Pa., Nov. 4, 2010), at 6.

¹¹ Consent Decree, *Bailey v. City of Philadelphia*, CA No. 10-5952 (E.D. Pa., June 21, 2011), at 2.

¹² *Id.* at 4.

Although data on the number of youth stopped in Philadelphia has not been aggregated, it is likely that the stop rate correlates to the high youth arrest rate. In Philadelphia, youth under 18 make up nearly one-third of citywide arrests for all offenses.¹³ This rate of youth arrest is higher than in Los Angeles, Baltimore, Brooklyn, or New Haven.¹⁴ Anne Marie Ambrose, the Commissioner of Philadelphia’s Department of Human Services, believes that Philadelphia’s poverty rate is at the core of the city’s challenges in juvenile justice and child welfare, but she adds that juvenile judges need education on DMC and lack adequate risk assessment tools to replace their “gut feeling” in determining which kids should and should not be adjudicated.¹⁵ Youth diversion alternatives are prevalent—as Ms. Ambrose points out, the range of options allows judges to assign means of control to teens where they may not actually require any such control. Juveniles can be assigned to GPS monitoring, electronic monitoring, or in-home detention in place of secure detention, but those who are sentenced to incarceration are housed at the Youth Study Center in downtown Philadelphia. The difficulty of extricating a child from Philadelphia’s juvenile justice system once he or she is charged, sentenced, or institutionalized makes it critical for decision makers to address DMC at the point of police contact and arrest.¹⁶

Pennsylvania was one of the first states to implement programs aimed at reducing DMC in coordination with national legislation passed in 1988 [see box above]. As early as 1990, the Philadelphia Commission on Crime and Delinquency analyzed juvenile justice data showing that although minority youth accounted for 12% of the state population, they represented 70% of youth in secure confinement.¹⁷ The data showed that Philadelphia made up two-thirds of minority juvenile arrests statewide—and specific police districts within the city, particularly the 25th District, made up a large proportion of that figure.¹⁸ Jim Randolph, Philadelphia’s former DHS Deputy Commissioner, recalled that the members of the minority confinement subcommittee were influenced by Kimberley Kempf-Leonard’s study on “The Role of Race in Juvenile Justice Processing in Pennsylvania,”¹⁹ an account of racial disparity in the state’s juvenile justice system finding that the most important point of racial disparity was at arrest.²⁰ This led to the DMC Working

¹³ Youth arrests made up 31.5% of arrest in Philadelphia County in 2008. OJJDP Easy Access to FBI Statistics, *Percent of All Arrests Involving Persons Under Age 18 in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania*, http://ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezaucr/asp/ucr_display.asp (last data available from 2008).

¹⁴ Youth made up 13% of arrests in Los Angeles County, 10% of all arrests in Kings County (encompassing Brooklyn), 22.3% in Baltimore County, and 14.4% in New Haven County. See OJJDP Easy Access to FBI Statistics, *Percent of All Arrests Involving Persons Under Age 18 in [Los Angeles County/Kings County/New Haven County/Baltimore County]*, http://ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezaucr/asp/ucr_display.asp (last data available from 2008).

¹⁵ Interview with Anne Marie Ambrose, Commissioner, Philadelphia Department of Human Services, Director of Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice Services (March 12, 2012).

¹⁶ Interview with James Randolph, former DHS Deputy Commissioner.

¹⁷ Heidi Hsia and Donna Hamparian, *Disproportionate Minority Confinement: 1997 Update*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Bulletin 3(1998). Today those figures are 22% and 76%, respectively.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 4.

¹⁹ Kimberley Kempf-Leonard, *The Role of Race in Juvenile Justice Processing in Pennsylvania*, prepared for Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research (1992); see also Kimberley Kempf-Leonard, *The Role of Race in Juvenile Justice Processing in Pennsylvania*, in *Minorities in Juvenile Justice* (K. Leonard et al., eds., 1995).

²⁰ *Id.*

Group making an early decision to focus on arrests and initial encounters between youth and law enforcement.

Institutional changes in the way those initial encounters take place have put increased responsibility on officers to manage interactions with young people. Twenty years ago, the police department was organized so that the Juvenile Aid Division handled all juvenile cases, and the officers assigned to that division knew all of the kids in contact with the justice system citywide. Today, officers are assigned on a geographical basis, and all officers are expected to maintain the skills to deal with young people.²¹ To this end, the PPD has implemented a number of initiatives attempting to reach out to youth: the Police Athletic League, the Explorer training school for 14- to 20-year-olds interested in careers in law enforcement, and the CHEERS mentorship program are open to all young people in the Philadelphia area.²² These are voluntary programs that try to engage teens in structured weekend activities. Deputy Bethel remarked that these community-oriented police programs, like Youth Aid Panels (a community-based diversion program) and discussions of restorative justice in youth court, are “things that wouldn’t have happened twenty years ago.”²³

Tensions between youth and police are consistently present, though, and flared on a large scale after the youth-driven “flash mobs” in the summers of 2010 and 2011.²⁴ The seemingly random series of mass gatherings, thefts, and assaults, which the mayor called “episodic incidents of teenage insanity,”²⁵ resulted in a 9 p.m. curfew in the Center City area for teens. That curfew still exists with some modification, though city agencies have begun to leave recreation centers open and area transit running late in order to give teens alternative places to spend time. Philadelphia police, led by Deputy Commissioner Bethel, have worked to distinguish the teens responsible for serious offenses from groups of kids looking to dance or socialize. Bethel said that he works with one such group, Tyree Dumas and his dance team the DollarBoyz, to support their events, which often draw several

²¹ Interview with Robert Schwartz, Juvenile Law Center (March 14, 2012).

²² Interview with Kevin Bethel; *see also* Philadelphia Police Department, Community Relations Department, <http://www.phillypolice.com/news/2011-annual-cheers-program-starts-saturday-march-5-2011>. “CHEERS,” which stands for the Community Health Enrichment Empowerment Resource Services, is an eight-week long Saturday program for youth that teaches skills for “anti-violence, anti-drugs, personal finances, goal setting, communication, bullying, conflict resolution, personal health, mentoring, anti-littering, being a good citizen,” www.phillypolice.com/news/2012-annual-community-health-enrichment-empowerment-resource-services-c-h-e-e-r-s-program-starts-saturday-march-3-2012 (last visited April 21, 2012). The Explorer program is designed to “teach young adults the values needed to succeed in a law enforcement career and in life,” <http://ppdexplorers.org/> (last visited April 21, 2012).

²³ Bethel interview.

²⁴ *Philadelphia Mayor Talks Tough to Black Teenagers After Flash Mobs*, Washington Times, Aug. 8, 2011. *See also* Stephanie Farr, *Woman’s Leg Broken, Others Hurt in Spring Garden Mob Attack*, Philly.com, June 27, 2011, http://articles.philly.com/2011-06-27/news/29707961_1_twitter-users-mob-trash-cans.

²⁵ J. David Goodman, *Philadelphia Fights Violent Flash Mobs With Curfews*, N.Y. Times, Aug. 10, 2011, <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/08/10/philadelphia-fights-violent-flash-mobs-with-curfews/>.

hundred young people. Once they know which events do and don't give cause for worry, he said, it becomes more possible to neutralize the negative events through policing.²⁶

Dynamics of Youth Interactions:

“[At the forums] there's an acknowledgment that kids are kids. They're kinda kooky, they're impulsive, they're influenced by hip-hop culture. It's hard for them to distinguish what's real from what's for play.”

Timene Farlow, Deputy DHS Commissioner for Juvenile Justice

“[The] argument is not about the stop itself, but how you conduct it. The stop is rough on everyone, but the complaints are where we don't treat people with respect. You say listen, there was a robbery on the next corner, [and] you fit the description. It's very different from the cursing, demeaning, disrespectful interaction.”

Kevin Bethel, Philadelphia Police Department Deputy Commissioner.

Departmental changes in structured police interactions with minority youth in Philadelphia may not be fully captured in DMC arrest data. Philadelphia's Relative Rate Index at the point of arrest—the value used to determine how much more likely a black youth is to be arrested than a white youth—was 1.69 in 2011.²⁷ This was an increase from the 2009 rate of 1.55, and a significant increase from the lowest rate of 0.92 in 2000.²⁸ The fact that statistical disparity has risen over the decade is notable and parallels the increase in street stops generally over that period. Nonetheless, officers' treatment of youth in street contacts that do not lead to arrest, as well as those that do, are a distinct point of change that juvenile justice stakeholders agree has improved. DMC Working Group members point out that police treatment of youth reflects the commitment of the current Police Commissioner, Charles Ramsey, to community-oriented policing and respectful treatment. Ramsey is seen as a strong leader with high standards who “doesn't expect line officers to be bullies.”²⁹ DHS Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice, Timene Farlow, said that “I don't see kids getting beat up anymore in encounter with the police, and I used to—it was not uncommon: I'd see busted lips, broken arms, kids basically brutally beaten and disempowered.”³⁰ Changing the dynamics of the high number of stops that do not result in an arrest, and the smaller number that do, is a large part of the forum and curriculum's mission.

²⁶ Bethel interview. See also Aaron Kase, *The DollarBoyz: Don't Call Them a Flash Mob*, Philadelphia Weekly, June 22, 2010, www.philadelphiaweekly.com/news-and-opinion/cover-story/New-Boyz-on-the-Block.html.

²⁷ Juvenile Court Judges Commission Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research, *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Monitoring, Reduction and Prevention Efforts* 89 (January 2012).

²⁸ *Id.* at 39 (measuring Relative Rate Index for arrest yearly in Philadelphia County between 2000 and 2009). Between 1989 and 2000, the RRI decreased by more than 0.5.

²⁹ Interview with Timene Farlow, DHS Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice (March 12, 2012).

³⁰ Farlow interview.

Creating and Adapting the Model for Youth–Law Enforcement Forums

The Philadelphia DMC Working Group adopted a coalition model that brought—and continues to bring—police, probation officers, school personnel, city attorneys, and agencies together monthly to discuss potential solutions in what Randolph describes as a prevention effort.³¹ Key law enforcement agencies were involved from the beginning: the Southeast Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) police, led by Deputy Chief David Scott, and the Philadelphia Police Department, which at the time was represented by Kathy Battle, a victim assistance officer in the Homicide Unit. The two driving forces of the coalition, at that time and today, were George Mosee, Jr., the Philadelphia Deputy District Attorney for the Juvenile Division, and Bob Listenbee, the Chief of the Juvenile Unit at the Defender Association of Philadelphia. Of them, Randolph notes, “it was in both of their best interests to do this together and get these kids out of the system.”³²

Around 2000, members of the coalition looked around the conference table and thought, “we have to stop preaching to the choir.”³³ They decided to bring in officers, bring in young people, and get them to talk. With the help of funding from the MacArthur Foundation in 2003, the DMC Working Group set out to institutionalize the forums and began to develop the training curriculum that would, in 2009, become part of the Philadelphia Police Academy. Mosee recalled that the first forums took place in a conference room, around a table. In response to what some participants saw as a one-sided message to kids, that “this is what you should do, this is how you should behave,” members of the working group made a collective recommendation that there should be a more evenhanded approach so that both sides can be heard. “It needed to be more than exploratory,” said Mosee. “We wanted to be effectuating change.”³⁴ The forums moved to institutions—schools, detention facilities, and community centers—before larger audiences.

Philadelphia’s Police Commissioner since 2008, Charles Ramsey, has been willing to embrace experimentation, including but not limited to participation by department leaders in the forums and the introduction of youth training in the academy. This openness to new approaches held even through the rise in homicides at the beginning of Commissioner Ramsey’s tenure; for example, the department instituted and continues to maintain foot patrols in several high-crime neighborhoods.³⁵

Among the early law enforcement leaders to buy in to the youth forums were Deputy Commissioner Richard Ross and Deputy Commissioner Kevin Bethel, two long-time Philadelphia police leaders who understood the need for strengthened youth relationships. Deputy Commissioner Bethel, who has been interested in police–youth partnerships and mentoring for 25 years, became involved at the request of Mosee in 2006. “Anytime you

³¹ Randolph interview.

³² *Id.*

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Interview with George Mosee, Deputy District Attorney, Juvenile Division (March 13, 2012)

³⁵ Jerry H. Ratcliffe et al., *The Philadelphia Foot Patrol Experiment: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Police Patrol Effectiveness in Violent Crime Hotspots*, 49 *Criminology* 795 (2011). See also Alex Wigglesworth, *Officials Announce Nutter Administration’s Crime Plan Progress*, Metro Weekly Philadelphia, March 22, 2012, www.metro.us/philadelphia/local/article/1131691--officials-announce-nutter-administration-s-crime-plan-progress.

can make that positive contact, it's the right thing to do," he said. "It's negative engagement most of the time, so that window of opportunity is so important."³⁶

A strong concern articulated by the PPD was that the forums be sensitive to law enforcement's point of view and include police concerns about public safety and genuine threats. With the input of all of its members and the assistance of outside curriculum developers, the group was able to build a curriculum that all of the stakeholders could stand behind.

School Forums

An Out-of-the-Ordinary Forum Story:

"Deputy Commissioner Richard Ross, the PPD's second-in-command, has participated in several forums as a panelist. Once he befriended a kid [and] gave him his cell number. The kid was stopped a few months later, [and] he hadn't done anything. He says, 'I'd like to make a phone call; I'd like to call Richard Ross.' The officers are like, 'Yeah, whatever.' And Ross answers, and he says, 'Put the officers on the phone.' They were surprised, to put it mildly. They know now that the top leadership takes this seriously."

George Mosee, Deputy District Attorney, Juvenile Unit.

The earliest forums conducted were in area high schools and middle schools, using volunteer officers and enrolled students. Officers in school forums are brought in by invitation—the working group reaches out to the department to say that they plan to hold a forum on a certain date, and the department provides officers to participate.³⁷ The structure of the forums (the same structure that is used in detention facilities and community forums) is generally as follows:

- 1. Introductions:** The facilitator (in most cases George Mosee) introduces himself, lays out the purpose and history of the forums, and introduces the panelists. Generally, the student panelists are drawn from an earlier meeting with students to determine who has interest.
- 2. Panel discussion and role-play:** The facilitator asks a series of questions to the students and officers on the panel, and then directs the questions to the larger group. They start off by talking about stereotypes—what is a stereotype, and what kinds of stereotypes do people carry with them? Timene Farlow, who has participated in a number of forums and been a leader of the breakout groups, said that black cadets will often report that they have been stopped, which "really drives home the point that there are stereotypes to be dealt with."³⁸

As part of the forum, officers and students take part in role-plays designed to get each group to see the difficulties of the others' position. The students get to play the officers, and the officers act out a scenario in which they refuse to move off a

³⁶ Bethel interview.

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ Interview with Timene Farlow, DHS Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice (March 12, 2012).

corner and are laughing at the “cops.” Often, the students get visibly frustrated. Sometimes the whole thing dissolves into laughter, but often there is a valuable message delivered about the frustration of police work.

3. **Tool kits:** An aim of the forums is to give students and officers concrete tools to use in future contacts. For the youth, one emphasis is on appropriate responses in an incident where they are mistreated or improperly stopped. Said Mosee, “We tell them, don’t try to win the fight, don’t retaliate, because you’ll end up in handcuffs. But we give them the tools to respond.”³⁹ This means informing the students about the procedures for filing a complaint and letting them know when to ask for a badge number, who to call, and who to follow up with. Rhonda McKitten of the Juvenile Defender Association says she tries to emphasize what the students’ options are, even when she gets pushback from the teens that the system is rigged against them. “We tell them that they’re not going to win it on the street, and they’re not going to win it in handcuffs,” she said. “We have to say, maybe it’s not your complaint alone that makes a difference, but in the aggregate it matters.”⁴⁰
4. **Small group sessions:** The officers and students form into “breakout groups,” where the audience is given a chance to be heard in a smaller setting. Each group generally includes one member from law enforcement, another from a member of the working group team, and a small group of students.⁴¹ The groups discuss stereotypes, police practices—similar to what is discussed in the large setting—but with an emphasis on hearing from all students and, in some cases, allowing relationships to develop between officers and youth participants. Some officers have reached out to kids in these small group sessions and established mentoring relationships from these sessions.⁴² Another effect the breakout groups have on the students is conveying to them the fact that officers are concerned about their own safety and want to return home safely at the end of their shift. They are often asked to talk about how the forums affect them and they say, “I never thought about the fact that they have families.”⁴³

Deputy Commissioner Bethel is the first to admit that it is hard to get young people’s attention and to ask them to listen to law enforcement, even in a neutral setting. “The level of trust is very diminished,” he admits. “I’ll introduce myself, say ‘I’m Kevin Bethel,’ but it takes time, repeatedly going back to ask more questions and getting them to open up. You may touch one. You’ve got to be mindful, though, that you’re not going to walk into a room of kids and have them immediately trust you. I come from an environment where that’s difficult, but I go in realistically.”⁴⁴ Deputy Chief Scott echoed the challenge of overcoming a trust deficit, recalling a lunchtime break during one forum at the Youth Study Center where a 15-year-old told him “I hate all cops.” The teenager’s explanation

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ McKitten interview.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ Bethel interview.

was that “cops always harass you, plant things on you.” He told Scott, also, that a police officer had shot his cousin. Scott’s reaction, he said, was “that’s why I’m here, and hopefully by the end of the day you won’t think that [you hate all cops].” What seems to get even the toughest young people to listen, said Scott, is telling them that officers want to stay safe and have to take precautions to do so. That resonates with them, he said.⁴⁵

With the school forums, there is often a follow-up session, in which the officers and the working group make a commitment to come back and talk to them again, to get information, and do a presentation on collateral consequences. At the early stages of the youth forums, Deputy Chief Scott said, a group of youth would regularly attend the working group meetings and would participate in repeated forums. This was a valuable way of getting institutionalized input from youth, and the working group has discussed the possibility of re-implementing this system.⁴⁶

Forums for Youth in Detention and Court-Adjudicated Youth

Teenagers who have already had contact with the criminal justice system participated in forums as well. To date there have been three forums at the Youth Study Center, the city’s youth detention facility; two at St. Gabriel’s, a residential facility for court-adjudicated youth in Philadelphia; and one at the Glen Mills School, another residential facility. Deputy Commissioner explained the magnitude of the message that law enforcement tries to convey to the youth at these forums: “You think I don’t want you to be on that corner; I don’t want you to get killed on that corner. There’s a reason why we don’t want you on that corner. If you’re a young black male in this city, your number one chance of dying is through violence. You have to understand that.”⁴⁷

Glen Mills School Forum:

Glen Mills School is a residential facility for court-adjudicated youth about 20 miles outside of Philadelphia. The first youth–law enforcement forum at the school was held there in March 2012, with about 75 students and a number of school staff present alongside the panelists. Although there are 600 students at the school—most from the Philadelphia area but a number from cities as far away as Oakland—the students present at the youth–law enforcement forum have been chosen by virtue of their position as “student leaders” to participate in the forum. The law enforcement officers, too, are there as a result of an interest in working with young people. There are two ground rules at the youth–law enforcement forum: don’t interrupt, and do your best not to use profanity.

⁴⁵ Scott interview.

⁴⁶ Scott interview.

⁴⁷ Bethel interview.

Glen Mills School Forum (continued):

On the panel today are four Glen Mills students—two from North Philadelphia, one from West Philadelphia, and one from California. Sitting alternated between them are Don Holden, a white juvenile probation officer with a laid-back demeanor; Corporal Robert Fraser, an energetic young, white officer in the Ridley Park Police Department; James Johnson, a thoughtful black 18-year SEPTA veteran officer who tells the audience he grew up in West Philadelphia; and Dan Richmond, a retired member of the Philadelphia Housing Authority. They introduce themselves and tell the young people that “we’re hear to lend an ear to you.”

Mosee begins by asking the audience to define stereotypes, and asks who’s been stereotyped. A young man in the audience responds, “I was stopped wearing a hoodie, standing with a group of people.” Mosee asks the kids what they think it is about hoodies that makes police respond fearfully. He proposes that it might be because it prevents eye contact, and one student says, “I think it’s because [the officer] thinks I have a gun.” Richmond speaks up to say that police officers are trained observers, and not being able to see someone’s hands and eyes puts them on edge.

Pastor Damon Jones, the leader of the Bible Way Baptist Church in West Philadelphia and a member of the DMC Working Group, stands up. “I’m not always in a suit,” he says. “Sometimes I’m wearing a hoodie, and I get a different response.” Mosee follows up by asking, “what about law enforcement uniforms? Does a stereotype flow from that uniform?” One teenager in the audience says that his first thought is always to get away from the police, because “you never know what could happen.” There is some back and forth about how officers should explain a stop when they see someone who fits a suspect description. One student says that he was “jumped out on” and hauled into the station with no explanation before he learned that there had been a call about a robbery in the area and he fit the description.

Officer Johnson speaks up to say that he has been on both sides. At 14, he says, he was pushed up against the wall and arrested and cuffed in a store; he didn’t want to see any police until many years later, when he decided that it sounded like a way to support his family. Mosee asks why the law enforcement officers on the panel chose their jobs, and they say, without exception, that they wanted to help people. A particularly telling moment comes when Mosee asks the kids if any of them want to be police, and no one raises their hands. “Why not?” he asks. One teen offers, “because who wants to be in a life-threatening situation, and be the most hated?”

Glen Mills School Forum (continued):

Then it's time for role-play. Mosee asks the students to show the police how it should be done. They put the officers in the role of kids sitting on a stoop, and the students in the role of officers trying to be respectful and not escalate the situation. They find themselves repeating themselves over and over and getting frustrated. One young man admits afterwards, "I would have just had them locked up because I didn't know what to do with them." Mosee compliments the students on their restraint. Officer Johnson says, "you see, you do get tired of dealing with the same people in the same situations." A woman state trooper joins the conversation, and her tone is a bit too hectoring for the situation. "I don't know you, and in a car stop I will assume that you are dangerous until I feel safe," she repeats.

Pastor Jones intervenes again. "What I'm hearing," he says, "is that if we put on a hoodie, or we look down, we're guilty until proven innocent. It's a mutual interaction. Officers have to earn something too." The students are nodding. "So what does law enforcement need to do?" Mosee asks. The students have myriad responses to this question: Be patient. Be specific about why we got stopped. Approach with respect. Don't lie. Stop insulting people. Explain it's a safety issue. Just say hello.

The officers close by admitting that there are officers in their departments who aren't respectful and who don't know the law—and when the students encounter one of them, Officer Johnson advises, know the complaint numbers and write down their name. "If there's an officer mistreating you, you're not the first or the last person." To close the forum, and before lunch moves the conversation out to the dining hall, Jim Randolph gets up to tell the Glen Mills students, "We want to make sure you have the skills to successfully navigate these encounters. If you know you won't win on the street, we want you to know how to respond."

Afterward, the working group notes that the example above was somewhat different from other forums because, due to time constraints, there were no small group sessions. They noted that the officers adopted a slightly more lecturing tone than in some forums. There is always a chance that the forums veer toward a situation in which law enforcement participants are telling kids how to behave and what to do. "We want to make sure that law enforcement is directed to listen to the kids," said Mosee. "Some listen and stop telling kids what to do; some don't." Although it is often hard for newer officers and officers involved in community affairs departments to rein in well-meant advice-giving instincts, the more the kids are on equal footing, the more effective the forums are in changing perceptions.

Youth reaction to the Glen Mills forum was generally positive. One young man from Philadelphia said that he did not expect the officers to talk about having been stopped themselves, and another said that he was impressed that they were given most of a school day to talk with the officers.⁴⁸ Some noted, though, that those officers did not seem "like"

⁴⁸ Interviews with unnamed Glen Mills School residents (March 6, 2012).

the officers who treated them badly during street encounters, indicating that in some cases a self-selecting group of officers at the forums might be seen as less effective.

Glen Mills students' thoughts about how police can improve relationships with youth primarily concerned communication and fair treatment. For example:

- “Approach with respect; if you don’t see a gun, allow us to live our lives.”
- “Don’t lie to us; just say why you’re stopping us.”
- “Stop trying to belittle people.”
- “Show more respect. It’s not what you say; it’s how you say it.”

Officer James Johnson, a SEPTA officer who participated in the Glen Mills forum, said that he finds participating in the forums to be a way to hear what kids think officers do and to tell them what their jobs are actually like, but he realizes that not all of his colleagues want to participate in the forums. He has “been on both sides” of the youth–law enforcement discussion, he said, and he likes seeing how people’s views have shifted by the end of the day.

Community Forums

Over the last several years, the forums have expanded from institutions like schools and residential facilities to community-based settings in immigrant and ethnic minority-dominated neighborhoods within the city. By linking with community groups such as Congreso, in the Latino community, and officer associations like the Haitian-American Law Enforcement Officers Association, the forums have begun to take root in neighborhoods where there has been little historic dialogue with police. To date, there have been three youth–law enforcement forums in Latino neighborhoods with Congreso, one forum in the Haitian community, and another in Philadelphia’s growing Liberian community.⁴⁹

Though these forums are conducted like the school forums, in that the panelists are law enforcement officers and teenagers, these forums are open to parents and other community members. This participation by parents and family members allows for community education and a chance for “shaking up families and getting their attention.”⁵⁰ Parents are sometimes more receptive to law enforcement’s perspective, and when they are not, they are often vocal with their feedback.

The organizer behind most of the community forums is Edwin Desamour, the founder and director of Men in Motion in the Community (MIMIC), a youth development organization in Kensington that creates mentoring and skills workshops. Desamour, who spent eight and a half years in prison for a crime he was convicted of when he was 16, has immense credibility with the kids he works with in MIMIC and uses that to build useful relationships with law enforcement. He has arranged space and facilitated the community forums that have taken place so far.

“We’re not sugarcoating anything,” said Desamour. “You might run into a cop who’s an asshole, and a cop might run into a kid who’s a jerk. But that doesn’t mean they’re all

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ Farlow interview.

jerks. We're trying to get at false perceptions and misunderstanding. There are cops who are good people and just trying to get home to their families. Let's talk to them. MIMIC brings in kids in the community who want to participate, and that one-on-one is what's needed. Their perceptions shift, and I've seen kids build relationships with officers."⁵¹

Repairing Relationships:

At a community forum in a Latino neighborhood last year, some community members told a story about how a search warrant had been executed on the wrong house a few days prior—the officers knocked down the door of the wrong house and barged in, scared everybody, scared the kids before realizing it was the wrong house. When a man told this story, one of the officers stood up and said, “I was there, that was my responsibility,” and he walked to the back of the room and gave that guy a hug.

Jim Randolph, former Philadelphia Department of Human Services Commissioner

A chief benefit of the community forums is that the PPD officers that participate are the same officers that patrol the districts within which the forums take place. An effort is made to include officers of the same ethnicity or nationality on the panels, too. As a result, interactions with officers influence future interactions on the street the next day or next month. Officers will remember the faces of the kids they worked with in the forums, and youth might feel less threatened by a familiar face from a community panel discussion.

The community forums allow neighborhoods hit hard by violence to air serious concerns in a public forum. In one community forum, Mosee recalls, a woman in the neighborhood had been murdered because it was believed that she was cooperating with law enforcement. Several people at the forum, upset and angry, stood up and said to the officers, “you sold her out, you let on that she was snitching.” The police were able to share the fact that she had not been cooperating and had not had any contact with police. Receiving candid information about a painful event may have helped restore some trust with that neighborhood.

Curriculum for Cadet Training: Reaching Receptive Trainees

Developing a thorough training curriculum for police academy cadets that would educate them in youth development and behavior as well as effective youth contact was a lengthy process. Development of the curriculum with professional curriculum designers and the DMC Working Group began in 2003 and led to a pilot training with 20-25 SEPTA cadets in 2005. Deputy Scott recalled that the officers had graduated from the academy and were called back for a one-day training with youth from IDAAY,⁵² a local youth organization. After some adjustments to the curriculum, the first PPD academy visit took place in March 2009. A second cadet training followed in the summer of 2009, then one in November 2010 and another in February 2011. Philadelphia's Police Academy trains a class

⁵¹ Interview with Edwin Desamour (March 13, 2012).

⁵² Institute for Development of African-American Youth. See <http://idaay.org/>.

of recruits as soon as it has a sizeable enough number of hired cadets to conduct training—generally around 40 people.⁵³ Over the course of the trainings conducted so far, the curriculum has been used to train nearly 500 officer recruits.⁵⁴

Youth–Law Enforcement Forum Agenda

8:30 a.m.	Module 1—Panel Discussion
10:00 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m.	Module 2—Panel Debrief
11:15 a.m.	Reconvene in large group
11:30 a.m.	Lunch with breakout groups
12:15 p.m.	Module 3—Adolescent Development
2:15 p.m.	Module 4—Effective Use of Communication to Interact with Youth
4:00 p.m.	End of program

The training curriculum is aimed at cadets rather than veteran officers for several reasons. First, it was logistically feasible: it would be immensely more difficult to get all 6,600 sworn officers in the PPD to be physically present for a training program than it would be to integrate the youth–law enforcement curriculum into the existing framework of the academy. Although the PPD conducts ongoing professional development, many of these trainings are done via online coursework, which, for obvious reasons, is not compatible with the objectives of the forums. In other cities where the curriculum model is being developed, though, departments have decided to train all veteran officers, as well as cadets, using the youth–law enforcement discussions.⁵⁵ The first training at the smaller Lancaster County academy, which took place in April 2012 using the same curriculum as the Philadelphia cadet trainings, brought in incumbent officers, state police, and probation and parole officers.⁵⁶

A second reason for focusing training on cadets is that they are more receptive to new ideas and information in the early stages of their training. In the process of being re-aculturated to innumerable details of their daily lives, they are open to rethinking assumptions. Most of the Philadelphia Police Academy cadets are young, and since the PPD and SEPTA have no residency requirement, a number come from other cities and counties in Pennsylvania, many of which could not look less like Philadelphia. Deputy Commissioner Bethel points out that in many cases this is the cadets’ first real job, and many come from particular moral and religious backgrounds. “We are going to put them in some of our worst neighborhoods, with violence, poverty, the working poor,” said Bethel.

⁵³ Interview with Deputy Commissioner Kevin Bethel, Philadelphia Police Department (xxxxx). Hiring freezes prevented any new cadets from entering the Department between June 2009 and November 2010.

⁵⁴ Interview with Rhonda McKitten, Assistant Defender, Juvenile Division, Defender Ass’n of Philadelphia (March 14, 2012).

⁵⁵ James Randolph interview.

⁵⁶ Telephone interview with Deputy Chief David Scott, Southeast Pennsylvania Transit Authority (April 20, 2012).

He added that when they have conversations with kids, it “makes them think for a moment and opens their eyes to understanding.”⁵⁷ By changing the standards of one class a time, says Mosee, “we reduce the number of future bad cops.”⁵⁸

At the Lancaster County training, Deputy Chief Scott said that cadets were very frank about how they tend to label youth and become automatically suspicious when they see young people walking around in certain modes of dress. After participating in the group discussions and adolescent brain development session, one veteran officer on the panel voiced his intention to “step back and watch what I do.”⁵⁹

The format of the training adds several components to the structure of the youth–law enforcement forums. First, it includes a lecture-style presentation on adolescent brain development, including a slide-show summary of key changes and development in the teenage brain.⁶⁰ Facilitators discuss specific teen behaviors that demonstrate underdeveloped reasoning and ask cadets to share other examples that illustrate how youth brains are still developing. This section of the training includes discussion of hypervigilance and coping strategies among youth who have been exposed to trauma.⁶¹ They learn, too, about issues common to girls in the criminal justice system: according to McKitten, close to 80% of girls in Philadelphia’s criminal justice system have been abused, and “these are things that officers need to know.”⁶²

In addition to the module on teenage brain development, the training includes a session on effective strategies for communication between youth and police. This section includes role-play by officers, who enact scenarios, like an officer approaching a group of kids shouting on the street and escalating the situation into an arrest.

Each small “break-out” group compiles responses by the youth participants about the tips that they would give to officers. Deputy Chief Scott said that the most common input from the small groups has to do with how officers approach: “A lot of young people say that police are verbally abusive and don’t explain themselves, that they lack respect. They want to know why some officers jump out or pull their nightsticks out without provocation.”⁶³ These tips are written upon a white board for the large group to discuss, and some of them have made their way into facilitator and participant manuals.

The cadets are sometimes reserved in the beginning, Randolph said, but “we’ve had intense, lively discussions.” Tension surfaces during the trainings, as well. The first training that took place, in 2009, was one where “emotions were running high.”⁶⁴ The academy was held after a rash of shootings had left five officers killed in the line of duty in the

⁵⁷ Bethel interview.

⁵⁸ Mosee interview.

⁵⁹ Scott interview.

⁶⁰ See Facilitator Manual, DMC Youth/Law Enforcement Curriculum, Philadelphia Working Group of the DMC Subcommittee of the Philadelphia Commission on Crime and Delinquency (MacArthur Foundation Models for Change 2010).

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² McKitten interview.

⁶³ Scott interview.

⁶⁴ Scott interview.

previous year, the most recent of which had been within several weeks of the training. As SEPTA Deputy Chief David Scott recalled, “when we brought the youth in, we could sense the tension; the cadets were visibly uncomfortable.” By the end of the day, after the small groups and the role-play, Scott said, the cadets were able to relax and to hear that “young people can be intimidated by police, and they are affected by negative interactions.”⁶⁵

A more recent training in early 2012 brought up another source of tension, Schwartz recalled: academy trainers raised a concern that the facilitator’s advice that officers “pause” and consider whether youth behavior was dangerous was likely to put those officers in danger. One trainer accused a facilitator of being responsible for future harm to officers; the working group leaders were concerned that it would threaten to damage relationships with the incoming cadets. Bob Listenbee closed the session by saying, “we’re not trying to tell you how to be safe. We’re just giving you another tool to work with. You’re dealing with a community traumatized by violence, and we want to give you ways to deal with that.”⁶⁶ This kind of tension with some members of law enforcement may be inevitable in such a working relationship, but working group members felt strongly that this should be addressed carefully, and quickly, with police leadership. In the same training session, a few of the kids dropped out from the training, citing concerns about being seen as snitches. As Bob Schwartz recalled, they thought, “what if what we say ends up in the newspaper?” The officers can only say, well, we can’t control what reporters write.⁶⁷

The curriculum for the officer trainings is currently being exported to other jurisdictions. At the moment, several manuals for learning from Philadelphia’s curriculum exist: a two-day train-the-trainers manual, a facilitator manual, and a participant manual.⁶⁸ As of spring 2012, the current working group has been engaged in train-the-trainer sessions with future trainers in Allegheny County and in Lancaster County.⁶⁹ These counties are much smaller, which will allow for veteran officers to participate in the trainings.

Three Principles for Success

Invest in Collaboration

From the outset, the forums have been a collaborative effort. Maintaining different perspectives allowed the working group to thoroughly address the concerns of all organizations involved. When law enforcement leaders expressed concern at the outset that police officers would be set up to receive undiluted criticism at youth forums, and that leadership would not be in a position to respond, the group worked to ensure that the forum also gave officers time to share their perspectives. As Mosee explained, “They didn’t want to open the door to the forums so that people could throw mud on them ... but they know me, and they know I won’t allow it to happen.”⁷⁰ Input from law enforcement also contributed to the working group’s understanding that “trying to tell officers how to handle

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ Schwartz interview.

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ McKitten interview.

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ *Id.*

themselves from a safety perspective” would meet pushback. Instead, the benefit of the forum for law enforcement is framed as helping to prevent officers from being exposed to dangerous scenarios.⁷¹ Law enforcement leaders’ willingness to convey their concerns openly and honestly kept the parties engaged and invested. Ambrose expressed the importance of having law enforcement leaders invested in the project: “The fact that [police leaders] are at the table is huge.”⁷²

Building a project that will sustain itself has required not only personal collaboration between city and state organizations and law enforcement agencies, but a network of funding and management. The program received a grant from the MacArthur Foundation in 2008 as part of its Models for Change program, followed by funding for program evaluation. The DMC Subcommittee became a 501(c)(3) corporation in the past year, which allows it to apply for foundation funding beyond the DMC Federal Formula Grant and state funding it continues to receive.⁷³ It is looking to build partnerships with new facilitators, which would allow for more forums around the city.

Focus on Early Intervention

The immediate practical outcome that the forums seek to achieve is threefold: to reduce altercations, to minimize arrests, and to minimize assaults on officers. Each of these three goals revolves around the reaction to the initial stop. To change the tone and the outcome of those low-level stops, dialogue between officers and kids has to precede those stops so that the lessons learned in those dialogues have an outcome on those first interactions with the criminal justice system. “It’s the stop that puts everything in motion,” noted Ambrose. “It’s the opportunity at the front end to engage that’s so important.”⁷⁴ Law enforcement’s understanding that the intervention is focused on low-level stops is also key to maintaining officer buy-in, since officers know that “if a crime is in progress, this doesn’t apply.”⁷⁵ Another way in which the early intervention principle plays a role is in reaching cadets while they are relatively impressionable. As Deputy Commissioner Bethel noted “they’re all going to have contact with kids soon, so they get this first contact in a controlled, neutral setting. We can sit back and talk openly about what’s going to happen, so that they’re prepared.”⁷⁶

Recognize the Importance of Changing Perceptions

A primary goal of the forums is to have conversations between kids and cops in order to improve communications about the impact of getting stopped. As nearly every person involved in the forums has said, “Both sides need to hear from each other.” The forum designers try to emphasize that kids and cops are on equal footing and that both sides have a lot to learn from each other. When officers begin to tell kids what to do, the intervention loses some of its value.

⁷¹ Mosee interview.

⁷² Anne Marie Ambrose interview.

⁷³ Interview with Autumn Dickman, Project Manager, Models for Change (March 14, 2012).

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ Mosee interview.

⁷⁶ Bethel interview.

Changing Perceptions:

“[The impact for the kids is] you’ll see the officers that will pass you on the street, and they will know that you’re a person, you’re intelligent, and you have things to say.”

Rhonda McKitten, Juvenile Unit, Defender Association of Philadelphia

George Mosee puts it this way: “Being in the community gives the opportunity for dialogue. It’s unlike anything else I’m involved in; everything else is goals and outcomes; I’m trying to get to a certain point. Here, I’m just focused on making sure it’s an active forum. Different responses doesn’t mean it didn’t succeed—we want open, meaningful communication no matter what’s being said.”⁷⁷

Room for Improvement

Despite the enthusiasm of the partners involved in the project, and the anecdotal evidence of changed perceptions among participants, the youth–law enforcement forums are still “preaching to the choir” in some respects. They would benefit from penetrating more widely into the department and continuing to become institutionalized to allow for broader participation. The lack of formal evaluation leaves unanswered questions about what tools officers and kids retain from the forums a week, a month, or a year later.

Difficulty of Measurement

By their nature, the forums and training are difficult to assess using data-driven methodology. Although arrest rates are measured, in Philadelphia, data on juvenile stop rates is difficult to come by, and it is hard to know whether a kid or an officer acted respectfully during an interaction because of training, or because of independent reasons. “It’s very, very difficult to count kids,” Ambrose says.⁷⁸ The city’s methods of counting youth, particularly in the Latino community, must be improved in kind, frequency, and accuracy before any kind of broad assessment can be done. The type of intervention that the forums seek to create—changing perceptions and improving communication—is possible to measure only in follow-up qualitative surveys of easily locatable subjects.

An evaluation of the MacArthur Foundation grant is in progress that is focused on following up with the schools—an evaluative technique that can gather information on the effects of the forums on youth but not on the effects on officers. As Bob Schwartz pointed out, “It’s one day of the six months of training the officers receive. Then they go out with senior officers and they may tell them, this is what it’s really like, and they’re learning from them. So how do you isolate the training for purposes of evaluation?”⁷⁹ Data about the frequency and outcome of stops of young people following specific cadet trainings are another potential measure, but one that has not been implemented yet.

⁷⁷ Mosee interview.

⁷⁸ *Id.*

⁷⁹ Interview with Robert Schwartz (March 13, 2012).

Limited Reach Within the Ranks

When it comes to training law enforcement officers on adolescent behavior and youth culture, the strategy is top-down (from Deputy Commissioners Bethel and Ross) and bottom-up (from the current academy cadets). As Ambrose points out, “We’re not hitting a bunch of people.” With hiring slow within PPD in the past several years, there is a definite limit to how many officers can be trained using the forum method, meaning that it is difficult to assess how well the points made in training are reaching the middle rank. One possibility would be to use roll calls to address issues discussed in training like adolescent development and youth culture. Another approach would be to train parts of specific bureaus and divisions on predetermined days so that no division would lose manpower for trainings; the drawback of this method would be the additional logistical planning required to design such a schedule.

If the department is serious about changing perceptions of officers as well as youth, it should rely less on voluntary participation by interested officers, many of whom are already committed to working with kids in school and community forums. The department could require participation by middle-rank officers once a year, or propose incentives for participation among officers who have not attended a forum before. The department maintains records that would indicate which officers might benefit from an exposure to youth perceptions; those officers might be asked to attend community forums within their districts as part of their duties.⁸⁰

Reliance on an Existing Network of Partners

Philadelphia’s strong partnership between the PPD, juvenile defenders, and the district attorney is a major component of what made the development of the forums possible. As Mosee notes, a large part of creating success with a youth–law enforcement curriculum is “having the right people at the table. If you can’t bring people together to authorize this, it’s not going to work.”⁸¹ Police leadership must tell the officers they can go to the trainings, and working to establish a dedicated day of academy training takes relationships with the right people to authorize. DHS, the school district, and community stakeholders have to be involved to create access. Although in Philadelphia these relationships existed from early on, the working group succeeded by continuing to make sure that stakeholders met regularly, discussed concerns openly, and brought in new people (like Commissioner Ramsey, who took the lead of the PPD in 2008) who were critical to the success of the project. Expanding the network of forum leaders and facilitators able to conduct trainings and forums would enable semi-weekly or weekly forums—which, in turn, would broaden the reach to a greater number of youth and officers.

Tools for Building Trust and Collaboration

⁸⁰ Asking all officers to participate in school or community forums might meet some resistance. But other departments, beginning with Lancaster County, are undertaking that challenge beginning by mandating curriculum training for veteran officers as well as cadets.

⁸¹ Mosee interview.

1. **Bring as many partners to the table as feasible.** Deputy Chief Scott stressed that beyond the “obvious” people in such a collaboration (police, juvenile defenders, prosecutors), input from public schools, probation and parole officers, and judges is key to building a program that reflects perceptions from all sides.
2. **Develop a template conducive to the specific city/department.** Individual jurisdictions will have different priorities regarding groups of officers to train. Whereas Philadelphia did not think it was possible to bring in department veterans right away but did want to train transit officers and university security, Lancaster County was a small enough department that it was able to work veteran officers into the training, as well as parole and probation officers. Depending on the needs of the community and the local jurisdiction, the most important participants might be different.
3. **Include top brass in forums and trainings whenever possible.** Trainings and forums have overwhelmingly been more effective when Deputy Commissioners are present and/or participating. Their presence signals to line officers that the leadership is bought in and prepared to stand by the project. They also signal to the youth present that they have allies among the decision makers in the department.
4. **Don’t expect immediate trust.** Many black and Latino youth in Philadelphia have tense relationships with police because of past stops or arrests, and the most effective interventions do not pretend those incidents did not happen. Instead, officers have a better chance of getting kids to pay attention if they first listen and attempt to understand those past experiences before explaining law enforcement’s point of view has a better chance of getting kids to pay attention. The same goes for kids listening to law enforcement.
5. **Focus on improving interactions in low-level street stops.** Police leadership and working group members agree that the tools they are giving to officers—including using the knowledge learned from training to consider whether youth are acting dangerously or just behaving like normal adolescents—are applicable on routine patrol, not when crime is in progress. But all of those involved with the forums stress that one of the ultimate goals of the trainings is to reduce the likelihood that stops will escalate into an assault or an arrest.
6. **Give youth and officers concrete tools going forward.** Officers and forum facilitators tell kids that if they encounter mistreatment, they “won’t win on the street.” Instead, they give kids information about reporting complaints afterward, and instruct them on how to follow up. Conversely, the cadet training offers recruits specific methods for communicating with teenagers and identifying responses to trauma and/or sexual assault.
7. **Follow up.** In schools, officers have been able to go back to and follow up to determine how much of the trainings kids remember and ask whether they have been able to use that knowledge in their contact with law enforcement. Follow-up

on an individual level has led to mentoring relationships between officers and teens. The department could, and should, follow up with cadets on the training they receive to ensure that they receive repeated reinforcement.

The Yale Law School Innovations in Policing Clinic is made up of Rebecca Buckwalter-Poza, Kyle Delbyck, Jamil Jivani (lead author for Milwaukee case study), Jeremy Kaplan-Lyman (lead author for Seattle case study), Jessica So, Trevor Stutz (lead author for High Point case study), Carolyn Van Zile (lead author for Charlotte-Mecklenburg case study), and Alyssa Work (lead author for Philadelphia case study).

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The principals on our team include John Crombach, Gail Christopher, Darrel Stephens and James Forman, Jr.

Cite as: Work, A. (2013) “Five Police Departments Building Trust and Collaboration, Innovations in Policing Clinic, Yale Law School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.” A paper of the BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice; and St. Petersburg, FL: Center for Public Safety Innovation, St. Petersburg College.

9/25/2015

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This project was supported by Grant #2009-D2-BX-K003 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, to St. Petersburg College. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the SMART Office, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



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