



Evidencing Youth Social Entrepreneurship Sundance Implements Five Innovative Strategies

The Sundance Family Foundation has been championing Youth Social Entrepreneurship (YSE) as a way to support youth age 14-18 in low-income or underrepresented communities. YSE programs integrate positive youth social and emotional learning, with community engagement, and entrepreneurial workforce skills. Most nonprofits with YSE enterprises encourage youth to take a variety of leadership positions in business and the community.

The YSE model also tracks the emotional impacts and socio-cultural disposition of youth in settings that might be challenging. Rather than focusing only on job acquisition, as do classic workforce skills training programs, the YSE model seeks to address several overlapping layers of complexity of the issue. The model also seeks to minimize invasive surveying of youth by encouraging nonprofits to use databases to hold demographic, pre- interim- and post-program data.

In 2020 Sundance created its Earn and Learn model for youth age 18-24+. The elements of the YSE model are the foundation for an expanded and robust model that includes: 1) social/emotional support to increase youth personal agency and confidence 2) community engagement to increase personal social capital 3) work readiness/work skills acquisition through nationally recognized credentials that can articulate into degree credits 4) mentoring during training and into job acquisition 5) on the job apprenticeships and workforce guidance 6) job retention supports: emergency funds, transportation and career laddering guidance.

Sundance has been combining several strategies to advance the field of YSE and Earn and Learn by:

- 1) Building the capacity of nonprofits to produce rigorous evidence-based evaluation
- 2) Developing partnerships and collaborations between youth, post-secondary training, and job opportunities
- 3) Inspiring innovative transportation, apprentice, and workplace mentoring programs
- 4) Producing **Wunderkammers and during COVID Zoomerkammers: Tech and Training Exploratoriums** which provide hands-on or virtual career exploration with working technicians, and
- 5) Communicating these bold innovations through video, social media, and storytelling.

Our goal is to cultivate rich environments for disconnected and/or underrepresented youth living in low-income communities where they can explore careers, post-secondary training and discover their own meaningful futures.

Strategies to Implement the YSE and Earn and Learn Models

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1. Building the Capacity of Youth-Serving Nonprofits

In March 2015 Sundance became aware that either 1) the youth-serving nonprofits we serve could not produce required evidence-based data or 2) they were overwhelmed with reporting data to external funding sources. Most did not have a central repository of data and found it challenging to report quantitative evaluation data. **The lack of capacity to produce evidence-based data, analysis and reports is preventing impactful Twin Cities nonprofits from receiving needed funds from federal, state and other funding sources.**

As a solution, in December 2015, Sundance underwrote a 36-month pilot project with Wilder Research and partners Bridgewater and Sunrise Banks, Deloitte, Dorsey Law, Jacobs Investments, and Goldman Sachs to create a cohort of 14 Twin Cities YSE programs from 13 nonprofits to build their data capacity. This cohort is jointly creating logic models, individual evaluation plans, building databases, and collecting verifiable data. Many of the nonprofits are already positioned for and are applying to gain access to new dollars.

Nonprofits Must Evidence That They Create The Systems To Eliminate Disparities

Sundance research into federal programs and national foundation grant guidelines taught us that:

- Data-driven analysis is now a key required element of Federal and State initiatives: grantors are requiring preliminary or moderate evidence-based research to then be paid for performance
- Standardized processes and collective information sharing are needed to advance the YSE field. These include: effectiveness trainings for program managers, uniformity in data-collection, longitudinal research across groups, and jointly publishing analysis and reports.
- Developing pathways to middle-skill careers for youth living in low-income areas are key indicators of nonprofit success
- The indicators captured should support the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SDG strategy 8.b.1: creating a youth focused workforce development system. This allows evaluation data to become aggregated with a local, regional and national lens. In this way, both progress and the reduction of disparities can be monitored.
- The SDG indicators should allow for local and state goals to simultaneously be achieved

Be Part Of The Solution: The 36-Month Evidencing YSE Initiative With Wilder Research produced tools, an app for use with Salesforce, and standards for success. The Youth Retrospective Survey is one of the first in the country to measure youth personal agency. The other is a modification of the widely used WIOA Workforce Readiness Survey. All the tools and apps are open-source and are found on the Sundance Resource Page.

2. Developing Bridges and Pipelines

As an important thought leader, catalyst and convener, the Sundance Family Foundation is joining collaborations and partnerships with manufacturers, union representatives, community and academic leaders to provide robust support to YSE nonprofits, school guidance counselors, and workforce navigators. Finding career paths for youth has become an imperative.

No Work in Sight for Low-Income Youth:

- May 2016 Teens in Minnesota face 7.3% unemployment: community leaders report that teens in low-income communities face 30-50% unemployment <http://bit.ly/1xZ4g2r>
- Feb 2015 WalletHub <http://bit.ly/1A1Rtch> Pew Research Center survey ranks Minnesota 51st--the worst of all states (including Wash DC) for financial disparities between White and Black citizens
- Feb 2016 WalletHub study also suggests discriminatory policies and institutional racism account for two-thirds of Minnesota's racial income gap. <https://policylink.app.box.com/equity-brief>
- Sept 2020 with unemployment cresting nationally at 9.8% in June 2020, it was found by Oligubenga Alijore (2020) that despite economic conditions, the Black unemployment is always at least 2Xs that of the average unemployment. Analysis by DEED, Georgetown Center for Workforce Improvement, Compass and ACS data shows young adults in low-income communities and in communities of color were experiencing rates of 4-6x the state average.

No Workers on Site by Low-Income Youth:

- Second Quarter Minnesota Job vacancies grew 11,543 with 65,879 job vacancies in the Twin Cities seven-county area (59%) according DEED This was the first survey since 2016 where there were more unemployed people than jobs. <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/job-vacancy/jvs-findings.jsp>
- Low-income Youth were underrepresented in job applications, over represented in unemployment numbers, and in temporary lay-offs.
- Employers are facing a skills gap; current middle-skills openings demand short-term training which many entry-level workers do not currently have.

Be Part Of The Solution: Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, PPL, LEAP, Anne E. Casey Foundation, and JFF Foundation are working to create pathways to prosperity for underestimated young adults. Help Is Needed to build a specific youth workforce pathway to middle-skills careers that can sustain families and lead to continuous achievement.

- Sundance collaborated with Minnesota Centers for Excellence and the Minnesota Department of Labor to create the cross-sector alliances needed to build systemic solutions.
- Sundance participated in local and national conferences about creating indicators and evaluations that support the needs of program managers, and of young adults who are overly measured, yet underfunded or supported.

3. Creating Transportation, Mentorship and Apprenticeship Supports

It isn't enough to find youth workers and place them in jobs. Youth from low-income and/or underrepresented communities are facing multiple challenges. They typically need transportation and mentorship supports. Transportation is an issue being explored by partners JobsConnectionMN, DEED, Ramsey County Workforce, Minneapolis Workforce Center, Youthprise, and local leaders. Sundance has joined groups of civic, manufacturing, academic researchers, and government decisionmakers to help create models or solutions.

Be Part Of The Solution: Simply Put, more Philanthropic Partners Are Needed To Create Innovative Solutions.

4. Piloting Wunderkammers and Now Zoomerkammers: Tech and Training Exploratoriums to build Career Pathways

Traditional Job Fairs don't allow youth from low-income areas to experience the myriads of 21st century jobs currently available. Community events which involve youth, program managers, parents, guardians and talented technicians can engage all in creative exploration--similar to a interactive museum exhibit. Features of these new job exploratoriums should include hands-on building, small products fabrication and learning, while engaging with people from manufacturing or trades who are passionate about what they do. These new models are called **Wunderkammers: Tech and Training Exploratoriums. In the age of COVID, these have been temporarily moved to a virtual platform and renamed Zoomerkammers.**

Be Part Of The Solution: Sundance Produces Zoomerkammers With Strategic Local Nonprofits, Post-Secondary Credential and Degree Programs, and Employers. A Goal Is To Have Diverse Communities Across The Twin Cities Become Hosts To Wunderkammers.

5. Communicating Bold Ideas as Thought Leaders

Parents do not want their children to move forward without college, and yet a 4-year college degree is out of the question for many youth. Yet, more than 50% of middle-skill careers with salaries of \$55-73,000 are accessible with short-term certificates. Helping youth get access to these trainings and pathways begins a continuum starting with entry-level youth career exploration. This exploration and work-readiness is being provided in school pathway programs, and by youth-serving nonprofits. Most Manufacturers, Trade Unions, and even Post-Secondary Training Centers abound with new technology and exciting opportunities. Yet, because there are 800:1 students to high school guidance counselors in MN, (National averages are 400:1) many parents and youth, especially those in low-income communities, aren't assisted when planning careers. Parents, guardians and youth may not be aware of certificate, one-year and two-year programs in local colleges, or apprenticeships that could lead to immediate jobs.

Be Part Of The Solution: Partners Are Needed To Create Video And Messaging To Youth, Parents And Manufacturers

- Create innovative campaigns targeting low-income youth and their families about short-term trainings for a 3-5 year journey to a middle-skills position
- Create inspiration for youth to find and learn these accessible technologies
- Include 30 second, 1 and 3 minute videos on social media platforms focused on youth (see LocalLinkz.com and SundanceFamilyFoundation.org/zoomerkammers)
- Develop innovative social media links between manufacturing and youth, their families, and various communities

Results of These Collective Strategies

Sundance believes that Youth Social Entrepreneurship (YSE) and Earn and Learn programs provide entry-level workforce skills and introduce career options. YSE programs are making connections for youth to post-secondary certificate programs, apprenticeships and jobs. This "wrap-around" learning inspires youth to acquire the skills, self-confidence, entrepreneurial thinking and community support needed to "put poverty out of business."