PEACE PROMOTION AMONG ETHNICALLY DIVERSE YOUTH: REFLECTION

ON AN AGENCY'S VISION

by

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We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

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Abstract

This paper is a critical reflection based on my experience as a research consultant with Canadian Mennonite University's nonprofit Institute for Community Peacebuilding (ICP). The focus of this study is ICP's, *The Gathering*: a youth camp, designed to decrease violence in Winnipeg's inner-city. This review employs Ulrich's (1983) critical systems heuristics (CSH) framework as a protocol for facilitating effective professional engagement and dialogue among the Gathering's stakeholders. The analysis highlights underlying assumptions influencing the Gathering and how this may manifest in the organization's capacity to realize their vision. Implications for program development within the Gathering are discussed.

Keywords: peacebuilding, evaluation, reflective practice, critical systems heuristics

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Peace Promotion Among Ethnically Diverse Youth: Reflection on an Agency's Vision

"Reflection is an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning" (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985, p. 19). This paper comprises a critical reflection from my[1] position as a research consultant for *The Gathering,* a camp initiative of the Canadian Mennonite University's nonprofit Institute for Community Peacebuilding (ICP). The Gathering operates within the organization's Youth Peacebuilding Project in Winnipeg. Werner Ulrich's critical systems heuristics (CSH; Ulrich, 1983) approach is applied to the Gathering as a social system. This methodology guides professional development in a growing number of applied disciplines, not least among them, social planning and evaluation research (Ulrich, 2010).

I employ the transformative perspective throughout this paper. This paradigm provides methodological guidance for researchers and evaluators, such as myself, who work in culturally complex communities, to challenge the status quo and to further social justice (Mertens, 2009)**.** From this position, I am prompted to question my role in uncovering implicit assumptions within the organization's community. This paper and the application of CSH is one such response. Core to transformative research is a focus on those marginalized from mainstream society, such as the majority of participants in the Gathering (Mertens, 2005). Additional characteristics of the Gathering initiative correspond with the transformative approach in that the program staff seek to examine the differences correlated with power differential for these marginalized members of

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[1] Use of the first person reference to the author is applied in this paper. This is congruent with my personal engagement throughout the reflection and has been approved by my thesis supervisor.

society (Mertens, 2009). Yet on another level, this critique addresses equality issues

between those working within the agency as well. Grassroots and nonprofit agencies such

as the ICP are often not prioritized or supported in society in comparison to other larger

organizations. This research and the corresponding exploration into the operation of the

Gathering serves to support the program and is intended to provide a source of

encouragement to continue in the pursuit of social justice for the participants in the

program. The transformative paradigm represents those working together for personal

and social transformation, a fitting description of the members committed to realizing the

vision of the Gathering (Mertens, 2009).

   The motivation for the current analysis was conceived after reconsidering the

direction of the evaluation when the original design implementation manifested

differently than anticipated. I intend this study to contribute to professional development

for researchers and for activists. Just as I have learned from this process, I hope that

sharing this reflection will enhance the Gathering staff's professional competence and the

confidence with which they pursue their goals and realize their vision for the youth. The

fundamental questions guiding this reflection are: What is the Gathering's vision and how

can the agency realize this more fully?

   To begin, a brief review of the literature is presented. A description of the

Gathering and overview of CSH is followed by the results and discussion. In conclusion,

implications for future practice are addressed.

Literature Review

   This literature review serves two purposes. First, to provide a background,

including the relevant terms, for the context of this analysis. The second intention is to

communicate the necessity for programs such as the Gathering and the value of applying

CSH in this situation. Refer to the Appendix for a brief orientation to the program

evaluations and their value for youth programming.

Global trends are lending to increasingly multicultural communities worldwide. In

recent decades, approximately 20 million children have become refugees as a result of

international war related conflicts (United Nations International Children's Education

Fund, 2009). For refugees, even at the best of times, transition to another culture is a

difficult, stressful process, and its negative effects are intensified in the wake of traumatic

experiences (Draguns, 1996). Many families flee areas of armed conflict and gain

refugee status in countries foreign to them and to their cultural understandings. Thus, it is

common for young newcomers to also have been negatively affected by war. This

experience adds increased stress for these individuals upon relocation, such as social

isolation, racial discrimination, language problems, and the stress of adapting to a new

culture (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006; Kaplan, 2009).

In this paper, the definition of *newcomer* includes immigrants and refugees, so

long as the individual is new to the country within the last decade. This criterion is as

described in the Youth Peacebuilding Project report appendices (Burns, Williams &

Pankratz, 2009a). Refugees are a subcategory of immigrants. To obtain refugee

protection in Canada, one must identify as a "person who has left his or her home country

and cannot return or does not want to because of a well founded fear of being persecuted

due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social

group" ("Working with Immigrant," 2009, "Refugees and Immigrants," para. 3).

Refugee status is also given to "someone who, if returned to their home country would

more likely than not face torture, a risk to their life or a risk of cruel and unusual

punishment" ("Working with Immigrant," 2009, "Refugees and Immigrants," para. 4).

For the purpose of this review, *youth* or adolescent refers to anyone between 12 to

18 years of age. According to Erik Erikson, adolescents are in the psychosocial stage of

identity versus role confusion wherein youth attempt to establish a self-identity

(Steinberg, 2005). This usually encompasses experimentation of various roles with the

ultimate goal of identity achievement (Guinee, 1998). The combination of being a youth

and a newcomer, which is often connected with being an ethnic minority, places one in

an increasingly vulnerable state. These youth may also experience additional struggles in

the process of formulating a consolidated *ethnic identity*.

Phinney (1996) defined ethnic identity as "an enduring fundamental aspect of the

self that includes a sense of membership in an ethnic group and the attitudes and feelings

associated with that membership" (p. 922). The term ethnic identity also denotes racial

identity in this context. Additionally, ethnicity refers to meaningful groupings of people

who share a race and or a culture of origin. Tajfel (as cited Molix & Bettencourt, 2010)

noted that, "social identity is a part of one's self-concept that originates from the

knowledge that one is a member of a social group" (p. 513). Molix and Bettencourt

observe that this type of group identity can be especially beneficial for members of

groups who are devalued in society, such as ethnic minorities. According to research

conducted by Frideres (2009), a substantial portion of participants in Frideres study

viewed ethnicity as an important factor in determining the outcome of daily activities.

Phinney (1992) proposed that even though groups have their own history and traditions,

the notion of belonging to a group is universal. Personal identification as a group

member, as well as experiencing a feeling of belonging, in combination with participating

in social and cultural activities, may be beneficial in developing a healthy ethnic identity.

    Some tensions associated with minority youth are conceptualized using ethnic

group identity theories. Otto Klineberg identified that unique problems arise when two

different cultures, both with separate standards of acceptable behaviour, come into

contact (Klineberg, 1966). These so-called special problems can be described as conflicts

between various identity and ethnic groups. Klineberg also noted that some cases of

crime and of delinquency can legitimately be attributed to the phenomenon of cultural

conflict.

    As will be explored, situating these young people in an inner-city environment

known for gang activity and for growing ethnic tensions further exacerbate their

developmental challenges. As the number of young refugees increases, so does the need

to address the challenges they must endure.

Newcomer youth in Canada

    Researchers at the Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and

Settlement provide an in depth review on the factors affecting newcomer youth. The

Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement report highlighted the

reality that this demographic is often overlooked (Centre of Excellence for Research on

Immigration and Settlement, 2000). Another study conducted by members of Ontario's

Newcomer Youth Mental Health Project revealled that there is a paucity of Canadian

literature on issues relating to newcomer youth in Canada (Shakya, Khanlou, &

Gonsalves, 2010). According to the 2009 immigration statistics cited by Citizenship and

Immigration Canada (2010), on average, 35,000 immigrant and refugee young people

between the ages of 15-24 years settle in Canada annually. This constitutes

approximately 15% of the 250,000 permanent residents arriving in Canada per year. This information is situated within well-established research on migration and immigration in Canada. Evidently, Canada's demographic is transforming as rising numbers of newcomers enter the nation.

As ethnic diversity rises across the country, Manitoba is no exception. In 2010, Manitoba welcomed a record breaking 15,803 immigrants, with more than 75% settling in Winnipeg (Government of Manitoba, 2010). This is more than the number of immigrants who settled in Quebec City, Regina, Saskatoon, Victoria, Halifax, and Fredericton combined

Winnipeg hosts an increasing number of newcomers. There is a correlation between the area in which most gang activity occurs and the representation of ethnic minority youth in the city (Winnipeg Foundation, 2004). Note that gang involvement is not characteristic of most newcomer youth. However, perceived discrimination and racism are not uncommon experiences for members of these communities. As noted in Kanu's (2009) study, newcomers faced a number of academic, economic, and psychosocial challenges including acculturation stress, lack of access to counselling, loneliness, and poverty, for example. See the Appendix for additional descriptions of challenges facing newcomer youth. Winnipeg's inner-city geographical boundaries can be found at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (2009) in the "State of the Inner City" report. To gain an understanding of the demographic of this area, consider the centennial neighbourhood where nearly 36% of the residents are under the age of 20 years (Winnipeg Foundation, 2004). Furthermore, data from the 2006 census, reported by Silver, McCracken, and Sjoberg (2009) revealled that 21% of Winnipeg's inner-city population was Aboriginal.

To relate concepts, youth are experiencing a period in which they aspire to define their identities, including ethnicity. Overall, Winnipeg hosts an increasing number of newcomers. This scenario leads to a need for peacebuilding. The role of peace education has an important part to play in working with newcomers and other youth alike.

The term *peacebuilding* entered United Nations language in 1992 when then United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali published *An Agenda for Peace* (1992). In this report, according to Boutros-Ghali, assisting in peacebuilding means, "rebuilding the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war and strife; and building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war; and in the largest sense, to address the deepest causes of conflict" (para. 15). Lederach (1997), defined peacebuilding as:

> A comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities that both precede and follow formal peace accords (p. 20).

What follows is an example of a program designed to facilitate peacebuilding.

The Gathering

The Gathering, also known as peace camp or peace gathering, is the Youth Peacebuilding Project's week-long summer camp program. To review, it is organized by the ICP in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This institute is associated with the Menno Simons College branch of the Canadian Mennonite University. The Gathering began as a pilot project in 2008. This program was implemented to address growing tensions, including violence, among Winnipeg's inner-city youth. These youth are comprised of various cultural groups including African, Asian, Métis, Aboriginal, and European communities,

many of whom are newcomers (ICP, 2009b). Among a host of activities, the Gathering

carries out dialogue sessions. The groups are meant to be safe places where participants

can explore and discuss identity issues. As is reinforced on the ICP (2009b) website, the

Gathering is a much needed intervention:

> Winnipeg's inner city is experiencing an increase in tension, and even violence,
>
> between youth, of differing backgrounds. There is an identity group (country of
>
> origin, ethnic) aspect to this tension—as is so often the case when, in a context of
>
> relative scarcity, there is a lack of trusting relationships. Service providers,
>
> schools and other groups in the inner city have identified a growing need for a
>
> variety of programs to deal with this problem (para. 4).

Critical Systems Heuristics and the Gathering

Researchers Grove and Zwi (2008) suggested that those involved in peacebuilding

often lack appropriate tools for screening, monitoring, and evaluating their work. They

suggested that these tools should encompass more than the commonly applied logical

framework assessment and should move toward examining processes and relationships

within programs. CSH addresses both areas with emphasis on the latter. Denskus (in

press) recommended the need for a qualitative methodology that exposes hidden

assumptions and unexplored challenges within the field of peacebuilding evaluation.

Much of the program evaluation literature makes minimal mention of incorporating

critical reflections into related programs (see the Appendix). The proposed methodology

for the ensuing systemic evaluation of the Gathering holds potential to address this gap in

professional practice.

CSH. The following segment depicts the critical systems heuristics approach in more detail. It is important to understand that critique does not equate with negativity (Ulrich & Reynolds, 2010). Rather, it is recommended that boundary critique be practiced as a reflective attitude, with the intention of facilitating mutual understanding between involved parties (Ulrich, 2005). The systemic aspect manifests by taking into account all those involved and those affected by the system in question. The main construct of this framework is that all problems, decisions, and actions rely on preexisting assumptions about the system in question. Therefore, optimal organizational improvement should take into consideration the larger system (Ulrich, 2005). Heuristics literally means the art or practice of discovery (Ulrich, 2002). In professional practice, this translates to identifying and exploring pertinent problem areas, assumptions, or questions. Beckford (2010) suggested that one of the most beneficial aspects of CSH is that decision makers are urged to self-reflect. This encourages stakeholders to voice the rationale of their choices. With regard to power, another desirable outcome of applying CSH is to create equality among stakeholders, instilling critical reflection skills to all involved.

As a result, global migration trends, in part due to international armed conflicts, are leading to increased refugees and thousands of adolescent newcomers to Canada. Especially for adolescents, identity concerns make for additive challenges in the transition. Thus, needs are arising for communities to respond to these concerns of interethnic adolescent tensions and violence. Some programs are in place to focus on these youth, yet relatively few interventions exist to facilitate peacebuilding between different ethnic groups. In light of these facts, there is a clear need to provide support to initiatives such as the Gathering.

Method

Design

The methodological style of this study complies with Ulrich's (1983) critical

systems heuristics. Put simply, Ulrich's framework is a suggestion of how to point out

the underlying assumptions people hold in making everyday decisions. One of the core

ideas in CSH is that a system is defined by its boundary or environment and by its

relationship with that boundary. Of equal importance is the premise that environment

defines the nature of the system. For supplementary material, refer to some of Ulrich's

(2000, 2005) more comprehensive publications about CSH.

Ramage and Shipp (2009) clearly distill Ulrich's theory into simple language.

Ulrich (2005) used the term *boundary critique* to describe the process of systematically

categorizing issues related to defining a system's environment. This categorization is

developed into twelve boundary categories (see Table 1) that are grouped into four

sources of influence or boundary issues: motivation, power, knowledge, and legitimacy.

The twelve categories naturally lead to twelve boundary questions (refer to Table 1 for

questions).

----- Insert Table 1 -----

The questions are asked in two modes, asking what *is* actually the case in a

situation and what *ought to be* the case. The *is* form requires determining the facts of

actual situations: any observable result or consequence of an action or a possible side

effect of a proposed action. The *ought* mode refers to the values of the system. The latter

identifies the assumptions that influence stakeholder actions. The critique is developed

by way of comparing responses. This complete process is defined as *systemic boundary*

critique. There is no definitive single set of static answers to these questions as boundary

judgments may always be reconsidered (Ulrich, 1998).

Data Collection. The data referenced in this paper is derived from my role as a

research consultant with the ICP. The data includes Gathering documents and my

research journal, including record of in-person consultation and email correspondence.

This consultation was carried out in 2010, with the majority of the consultation occurring

regularly a few months prior to the 2010 Gathering, and at least weekly closer to the start

of the camp. I was responsible for designing an evaluation, with data to be collected by

designated individuals at the camp, and for conducting the analysis after the camp. In

part due to challenges in the data collection phase, the final data set was not as conducive

to conducting the evaluation as was planned. At this stage, my official responsibilities

with the Gathering were brought to an end. From this point, I independently committed

to continue the research with a shift from program evaluation to program development.

In effect, the data used in this analysis was not originally intended for the program

evaluation, or collected with the intent of being analyzed. Rather, this data is a record of

my experience and lends itself well to this reflection. Permission from the ICP's director

allows my continued access to the archival data of the organization's ongoing work.

Data Analysis. This analysis is conducted as a post hoc reflection. The data,

including my interactions with the organization, serve as a reference for answers to the

boundary questions. The answers to each question and the corresponding is and ought

modes were derived by going through the data set. As mentioned above, the process of

systematic boundary critique is applied. Four boundary issues, motivation, power,

knowledge, and legitimacy, are explored by asking, or *unfolding*, a narrative via a set of

12 questions. Refer to Table 1 for a summary of the questions applied to the CSH analysis. The aim of unfolding is to expose the selectivity of our reference systems (Ulrich & Reynolds, 2010). In other words, the process of posing the questions exposes the assumptions that determine the stakeholders environment and ultimately the decisions made by the stakeholders. The questions are posed in the aforementioned is and ought modes. A comparison of the respective answers helps to promote an increased awareness and clarity of the agency's vision. This analysis is limited to the degree that I have been involved with and exposed to the organization.

Results and Discussion

First, as the author, it is helpful to uphold a spirit of transparency by being explicit about my original roles in the system. My connection with the Gathering began a few years prior, when the ICP staff requested resources related to my previous research. As explained previously, I most recently reconnected with the organization as a research consultant. Prior to unfolding the boundary questions, it also is imperative to communicate my personal system of reference for this evaluation (Ulrich & Reynolds, 2010). This frame of reference is a system to enhance the Gathering through program development to decrease adolescent identity conflict and to facilitate peacebuilding among Winnipeg's adolescents. In relation to the analysis, Ulrich and Reynolds (2010) reminded readers that "the point is not that we should claim we have the answers but rather, that we should uncover the inevitable selectivity of all our claims" (p. 254). Instead, through the process, one is made aware of and also reflects upon assumptions rather than one setting limits and fixing boundaries.

Boundary questions are intended for a specific system of interest. In this case, the system in question is the Gathering. First, it is necessary to establish stakeholders.

Stakeholders are those who are involved in and affected by the system. Identifying

stakeholders proves helpful in specifying the scope and the dynamics at work in the

system at large. Stakeholders in the system are identified in Table 2.

----- Insert Table 2 -----

Please refer to Table 1 for an outline of CSH boundary categories and questions.

Questions in this table are generically phrased. This section applies the questions

specifically in relation to the Gathering. Wording for the prompts was adapted from

Larsen (2011).

As the process of boundary questioning progresses, I outline the rationale for and

the natural flow from one question to another, as suggested by Ulrich and Reynolds

(2010). Thus, the numerical sequence in this presentation does not match the order in

their presentation. The is and ought responses are combined in this section. See Table 3

and 4 for separate summaries of the is and ought boundary responses.

----- Insert Table 3 -----

----- Insert Table 4 -----

The discussion integrated within the presentation of the results encompasses a

comparison of both modes of analysis, yielding the critique aspect of the process.

Comparing the answers to both sets of questions provides a platform on which to

recognize possible discrepancies between the real (is mode) and the ideal (ought mode)

actions of the Gathering. It is necessary to consider all four sources of influence, for

together, these constitute the overall assumed reference system (Ulrich & Reynolds,

2010). The numbers represent the CSH questions 1 to 12 as seen in Table 1. In keeping

with the questions motivating this reflection, I begin with the boundary category that

most directly relates to the vision for the system.

1. What ought to be and what is the stated purpose or vision of the Gathering?

According to the ICP (2009b) website, "Winnipeg's inner city is experiencing an increase

in tension, and even violence, between youth, of differing backgrounds. . . . The Institute

for Community Peacebuilding aims to build strong peaceful communities by promoting

just and nonviolent relationships, structures and practices" (para. 4). The declared

objective of the camp is to "bring together three groups of youth (Aboriginal, newcomer,

and established[3]) to provide a context and process that would give them the opportunity

to build bridges of understanding and peace between them as individuals and as identity

groups" (Burns, Williams, & Pankratz, 2009a, p. 4). Together the camp coordinator and

director shared additional camp goals including to build peace and to promote intergroup

relations so that the youth will promote change (D. Pankratz & P. Burns, personal

communication, April, 2010). In addition to a general vision and to overall goals,

desirable outcomes are defined in the ICP's (2009a) partnership agreement. Some of

these outcomes include (a) to decrease stereotypes and prejudice, (b) to establish

curiosity about other identity groups, (c) to create youth leaders who respect each other

and encourage others to do the same, and (d) to foster a safe culture of openness within

the youth community. In exploring the various responses to this question, a theme of

desiring peaceful relationships between communities and individuals is made clear.

The stated purposes and objectives of the camp are admirable and are on par with

what the vision ought to be, given their motivation for implementing the program. The

response to this question leads to an inquiry of who ought to be the intended

beneficiaries.

2. Who ought to be and who are the Gathering's beneficiaries or clients? That is,

whose interests should be foremost considered? In relation to the camp's vision, the

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[3] Refer to Youth peacebuilding gathering 2008: Final report (Burns, Williams, &
Pankratz, (2009b) for definitions of all three groups.

camp participants, including Aboriginal, newcomer, and established groups, in addition

to the inner-city community, ought to be considered of highest priority in implementing

the Gathering. This is the community in question and ought to be treated as the main

beneficiary. Overall, the camp participants are prioritized. There are also instances when

funding agency requirements may compete with this priority. For example, funding

agencies may request specific information, such as quantitative results, to determine

whether or not funding will be secured for the future. According to some staff, these

measures, including a survey, have been interpreted as discriminating by some of the

participants. Upon determining the intended beneficiary, one can more easily determine

the appropriate measure of success and improvement in the system.

3. What measures ought to be taken to assess whether or not the camp objectives

are being met? Or how might the underpinning values be given formal expression,

quantitatively or qualitatively, through evaluation, to gauge improvement? The main

beneficiary should be considered in determining the measure of success for the

Gathering. Thus, feedback from campers through evaluations gauged in accordance with

the Gathering's vision and objectives, and observed changes in the community, would

identify whether or not the purpose of the project is being met. Furthermore, the

measures of improvement ought to correlate with the organization's theoretical

underpinnings (Burns, Williams & Pankratz, 2009a). There is a host of theories declared

to influence the camp. This theoretical foundation can serve a great benefit to the camp

and would be even more meaningful if it is clearly incorporated into the evaluation.

To date, the evaluation portion of the Gathering includes annual reports

integrating survey responses and anecdotes from the participants. Leaders of the institute

are confident that the outcomes and impact are long-term and positive. As a result, the

ICP team reports, "we accomplished our objectives beyond our expectations" (Burns,

Williams, & Pankratz, 2009a, p.3). This assertion is based on observations made by the

staff, comments from the youth, and the surveys. Note that the team is appropriately

focusing on the actions and the expressed experiences of the campers. These first three

questions increase the transparency of the value basis of the system.

The following is a brief discussion of critique and recommendations based on the

answers to these first three questions. The Gathering documents include multiple

statements of objectives, purpose, and vision. In comparing what the Gathering's vision

is and ought to be, there is a correlation; however, it may be beneficial to refine this with

an explicit alignment with their theoretical foundations and means of evaluation. It is

natural for organizations to evolve and to incorporate various positions and theories in

understanding and implementing their programs. Nevertheless, a coherent narrative of

this evolution of theories would also be valuable. For example, the vision statement

could be distilled to *bridging communities, building peace.* The mission could be *uniting*

ethnically diverse youth to build healthy relationships and lasting change. The

objectives have been outlined in a preexisting document (ICP, 2009a).

It is advantageous to be explicit about goals and purpose, so that those involved

can support a shared vision and can be reminded of the reason for their participation with

the camp. The ICP could hold an annual meeting to review the program's mandate and

to maintain open communication about the program's changes. Having staff sign an

agreement to the Gathering's goals and vision would provide more unity among

stakeholders as well. This lends to questions about the necessary resources for success.

4. Who ought to be and who is in a position to make change for the Gathering's program and required resources? The declared staff roles, with some expressed overlap, are that the reporting and evaluation design is the director's responsibility. In the process of meeting with the staff, I learned that the coordinator is to be involved in decisions about evaluation methods as they pertain to camp logistics (D. Pankratz, personal communication, June 18; September 29, 2010). In meetings and correspondence with the Gathering staff, I perceived a lack of clarity of roles when members, myself included, voiced uncertainty about who is responsible for program evaluation, for instance. However, I also witnessed definite efforts to clarify responsibilities by individuals beginning to document roles and responsibilities. A partnership agreement, including clear decision making processes, has been created. It was also brought to my attention that some of those in position of power on occasion felt unable to make executive decisions (D. Pankratz, personal communication, September 29, 2010). The one who ought to make the decisions ought to be the individual who is most competent in the area of interest and also who is ultimately held responsible for the program's results.

5. What resources or conditions of success ought to be and what resources are controlled by the decision makers? The declared ultimate decision maker, in this case the ICP director, ought to be responsible for financial capital, ensuring location for camp, and accountability for volunteers and staff for camp and for general management. I also understand that some staff may be responsible for aspects of the program that are outside of their area of expertise. Overall, whatever the areas of control, it appears to be most valuable for the roles to be clear among staff and volunteers. This elicits questions with regard to areas outside of the decision maker's control. This is posed to ensure levels of

accountability and division of resources so that the responsibility does not all lie with one person to maintain a healthy decision making environment.

6. What conditions of success should be and what conditions of success are outside of the control of the decision makers? Areas wherein the decision maker is not qualified or trained should require the involvement of additional expertise. I was not exposed to this aspect of the decision-making environment throughout my time with the organization. However, the director ought to have additional social network supports and access to experts in the area of program evaluation and design in order to fulfill his ultimate responsibility for the project's evaluation. These questions regarding power basis lead to other areas of knowledge within the system. According to Ulrich and Reynolds (2010), "in an ideal setting, human 'capital' (embodying expertise) ought not to be under the sole control of the decision maker but should have some independence" (p. 261).

The Gathering has stated roles and decision making guidelines, some that are documented and others that are not. The partnership agreement document is a good example of what can be done for the other staff and of what could be amended when new employees and volunteers become involved with the Gathering. The staff would benefit from developing an agreed upon hiring process for new staff. Clearly establishing this process could also create increased communication and collaboration among the staff. This would clarify individual roles and responsibilities.

7. What information and skills ought the experts contribute and what skills do the experts contribute? On what expertise does the Gathering rely? The skills that experts ought to contribute include program evaluation skills. Skills to facilitate effective communication between staff members would also be of benefit. At present, the

Gathering relies on consultants and volunteers for these things. It may also be true that

immediate assumptions are made about volunteer and consultant credentials. The

Gathering uses the skills of the partner organizations to organize the youth and gain

participants. The Gathering relies on volunteer research assistants and students for their

research and for the evaluation portion of the project.

       8. Who should be and who is involved as an expert? Trained professionals, who

are competent in the areas that the Gathering requires support, ought to provide the

expertise. This competence could be determined by demonstrating a history of previous

success in the area of expertise, as well as recognizing the Gathering's needs and having

the resources to complete the task. In actuality, it appears that most are permitted to

become involved in the program without an interview or a question of motivation.

According to the ICP (2009b) website, expertise will be provided by funding agencies,

the Canadian Mennonite University, and the Menno Simons College. This includes a

combination of faculty, staff, and volunteers (ICP, 2009b). Researchers who specialize in

challenges facing war-affected adolescents may be potentially beneficial resources in

order to develop a camp experience that meets the organization's goals. Additionally, the

staff at the participant's schools may provide a source of expertise.

       9. Where ought those involved and where do those involved seek guarantee that

their efforts lead to success for the Gathering? Participant responses from camp

experiences as well as observations from Gathering staff are used to confirm that

participants are successfully changing their attitudes. The surveys administered before

and after camp are used to support that the youth experience positive shifts in attitude

(Burns, Williams & Pankratz, 2009a). Although there is merit to these impressions, this

does not yet address whether or not desired change is occurring within the larger inner-city community. Skilled evaluators ought to be responsible for exploring success at the Gathering. One may also consider the presence of false guarantors. This may be experienced as incomplete expertise or incompetence in an area or by rigid authority without flexibility in the event of unforeseen events (Ulrich & Reynolds, 2010). These questions facilitate transparency in the knowledge-basis of the system.

Reflecting on the agency's sources of knowledge, it is evident that efforts are being made to secure specialized skill sets and effective guarantees of success for the camp. As is common with nonprofit organizations, funding may not always exist to hire experts or specialists. Nevertheless, when assistants join the Gathering team there should be sufficient resources and stability to provide the needed support for these individuals. Otherwise, the intentions may not be actualized. This may be, in part, why the initial program evaluation did not manifest as planned. It may be advantageous for the decisions makers to reference a project readiness checklist (Government of Ontario, 2006), to use as a guide in preparation for desired changes in the agency. For instance, some requirements include having clear goals in place, and perhaps more importantly, receiving support and commitment for the project, prior to beginning new projects within the organization.

This final set of questions is intended to explore the legitimacy of the system considering wider spheres of human interests.

10. Where ought and where does legitimacy lie? In other words, are those who are affected by the system given the opportunity to be agents of change? The legitimacy ought to lie with the experience of the participants. The participants ought to have an influence on the camp's design and speak up about their experiences at the camp. While

serving as a research consultant, I was unaware of the degree to which this freedom for the clients exists; however, I understand that efforts are being made to involve previous participants in the program planning such as wanting a provide leadership roles for them at the Gathering.

11. Who ought to be and who is represented to voice the concerns of those affected by but not directly involved in the Gathering project? Another way to pose the question is to ask who may consider themselves capable of making representations on those who may be negatively affected, and what justifies them to do so. As previously outlined, those involved include campers, the Youth Peacebuilding Project, and the partner groups. Some of the affected include the participants school communities and other community centres in which the youth are involved. This also includes families of the youth and possible faith groups to which the participants belong. They would make this claim on the basis of having regular interaction with the camp participants and on the premise that they have an experienced understanding of the daily struggles facing the youth. Future generations of youth and families yet to arrive in Winnipeg's inner-city could also be a voice for those who will be affected by the changes in the neighbourhood and changes among the youth.

12. What worldview ought to be and what worldview is relied upon? The worldview that ought to be represented is one that views all humans as equals and does not treat others differently based upon country of origin or ethnic identity. The surveys categorize youth according to ethnic and racial groups; this may be unintentionally marginalizing, contradicting the desired worldview for the camp. The Gathering's actual underlying worldview is that increasing violence in Winnipeg's inner-city is deeply

rooted in lack of trusting relationships between identity groups of youth. Since being

inspired by a similar program in the United States, many theories, such as Redekop's

(2002) identity group theory, have come to influence the camp's worldview (Burns,

Williams, & Pankratz, 2009a). Additional economic factors and multi-systemic factors

that influence inner-city resident challenges also ought to be included in the worldview.

This last set of questions clarifies the system's basis of legitimacy, with specific address

to worldviews.

This integrated overview of the Gathering combines multiple sources of data and

helps to organize observations around program priorities and values. As a clarification

strategy, this review helps to formulate high priority questions for stakeholders in the

Gathering. The various recommendations and suggestions for the Gathering, as

highlighted throughout this section are the most relevant and practical, based on my

perception of the organization's current capacity and preparedness for change.

The main purpose of this reflection is not to solve problems. As Beckford (2010)

pointed out, using CSH does not lead to any distinct problem solution. In fact, more

questions emerge than answers; however, unless questions are raised, they cannot be

answered. As Ulrich (2001) noted, "competence depends more on the questions we ask

than the answers we find" (p. 6). The significance of the analysis is the usefulness of the

emerging questions to help stakeholders clarify and prioritize. A summarized critique

with some of these queries is provided in Table 5. Refer to Table 6 for summarized

recommendations arranged according to the critique.

<div align="center">----- Insert Table 5 -----</div>

<div align="center">----- Insert Table 6 -----</div>

Overall, the Gathering holds ambitious objectives and has been successful in implementing a camp experience for the system's beneficiaries since the project's inception. The previous are specific areas wherein they could focus for future program development. Although I have shared suggestions for the Gathering, based on my reflection, a possible longer lasting benefit of this work may derive from sharing the process of CSH with stakeholders. They may find the critique formulation useful in becoming more aware of their own assumptions and in reflecting on how these beliefs influence their decisions. This new skill set leaves them with a critical tool as they continue the much needed work of the Gathering.

I hope that this paper serves an example of the type of practice stakeholders can exercise in their own reflections as professionals within the peacebuilding agency, a set of tools to analyze their own experiences. I am hopeful that this reflection provides a guide that those envisioning peace can apply and integrate as they continue to cultivate their own professional competence, and ultimately, put the youth first; by working toward bridging communities and building peace.

Not only can this review be valuable to the Gathering, but also to those working for broader community psychology and community development initiatives. Reflecting on how an agency functions can also be valuable form of evaluation and program development for other peacebuilding initiatives. This process embodies the counselling psychology's value of advocacy by joining with these activist groups to collaborate, support, and sustain social justice initiatives.

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Table 1

CSH Boundary Categories and Questions

Sources of influence	Social roles	Role-specific concerns	Key problems
Motivation	1. *Beneficiary* Who ought to be/is do we (want to) see the intended client or beneficiary of S?	2. *Purpose* What ought to be/is the purpose of *S*?	3. *Measure of improvement* What ought to be/is our measure of improvement?
Power	4. *Decision Maker* Who ought to be/is in control of *S*?	5. *Resources* What resources ought to be/are controlled by the decision maker?	6. *Decision environment* What conditions of success should rightly be/are controlled by third parties?
Knowledge	7. *Expert* Who ought to be /is contributing their experience and expertise?	8. *Expertise* What kind of expertise ought to be/is consulted?	9. *Guarantor* What ought to be/is regarded as assurance of successful implementation?
Legitimacy	10. *Witness* Who ought to be/is contributing their experience and expertise?	11. *Emancipation* What ought to be/are the opportunities for the interests of those negatively affected to have expression and freedom from the worldview of S*?*	12. *Worldview* What worldview ought to be/is relied upon?

Note. S = system of concern. In this case it is the ICP's Gathering project and those involved and affected by the project. Adapted from "Critical Systems Heuristics," by W. Ulrich, and M. Reynolds, 2010, In *Systems Approaches to Managing Change: A Practical Guide*, by M.Reynolds and S. Sue (Eds.)., p. 244. Copyright 2010 by Springer.

Table 2

Stakeholders in the System

Major stakeholders	Major stakeholder roles
Partner Agencies: Institute for Community Peacebuilding, Ka Ni Kanichihk, YMCA/ YWCA of Winnipeg, MB Interfaith Immigration Council, Immigrant and Refugee Organization of MB, Newcomer Employment and Education needs Services, Ma Ma Wi Wi Chi Itata Centre	Beneficiary (agencies include camp participants and their families)
United Way of Wpg, MB Labor and Immigration Multiculturalism Secretariat, Government of Manitoba (Education Citizenship and Youth, Culture and Tourism, Heritage and Sport)	Funders (private and public- vary annually)
The Gathering staff and volunteers (including consultancy roles)	Expertise
ICP associated Institutions: Canadian Mennonite University, Menno Simons College)	Indirectly affected
Winnipeg's inner-city community	Potentially affected on a larger scale

Note. Stakeholders in the system may have changed since this table was compiled.

Table 3

The Gathering: Is Response Summary

Sources of influence	Social roles	Role-specific concerns	Key problems
Motivation	1. *Beneficiary* Camp participants, funding agencies	2. *Purpose* To build peace, have youth promote change	3. *Measure of improvement* Anecdotes from participants, qualitative survey
Power	4. *Decision maker* Director, coordinator, partner agencies, community volunteers, whomever presents as most knowledgeable	5. *Resources* Hiring, evaluation, financial	6. *Decision environment* *
Knowledge	7. *Expert* Volunteers, Menno Simons College and Canadian Mennonite University associates	8. *Expertise* Volunteer and staff skills	9. *Guarantor* Main stakeholders annual reporting, staff observations
Legitimacy	10. *Witness* Some Gathering staff/partner groups may represent concerns of the affected.	11. *Emancipation* Supposed inclusion of participants with program development	12. *Worldview* Assumes all stakeholders act in accordance with vision.

*insufficient exposure to comment

Table 4

The Gathering: Ought Response Summary

Sources of influence	Social roles	Role-specific concerns	Key problems
Motivation	1. *Beneficiary* Camp Participants, inner-city community	2. *Purpose* Safe place for identity development, to facilitate respect for others, decrease violence in inner-city	3. *Measure of improvement* Should be related to purpose, once operationalized.
Power	4. *Decision maker* Director/coordinator, Stakeholder who is most competent or expert in area of concern	5. *Resources* Administration, Financial, Management	6. *Decision environment* Decisions to be made by those competent in area of concern
Knowledge	7. *Expert* Those with proven expertise in area of need	8. *Expertise* Program evaluation, human resources skills	9. *Guarantor* Camp participants and state of the inner-city ought to determine whether desired results occur
Legitimacy	10. *Witness* Participant's schools, families, community agencies	11. *Emancipation* Participants ought to be influence program planning.	12. *Worldview* Reflective and embody camp vision of unity, equality and effective communication among stakeholders as well.

Table 5

CSH Boundary Issues Summary Critique

Sources of influence	Critique
Motivation	Key beneficiaries appear to be camp participants. Part of the stated objective is also to decrease violence in Winnipeg's inner-city. To what extent is this happening? How clearly do evaluation measures align with the project's theoretical underpinnings and objectives? Are all stakeholders aware of the Gathering's vision?
Power	Roles are designated among main stakeholders. How much role clarity exists between Gathering staff? Is there a document outlining the various roles? Are decision makers competent in decisions they make?
Knowledge	Gathering stakeholders obtain expertise from community members. Are current guarantees of success authentic? Are decision makers aware of the needed expertise?
Legitimacy	Do stakeholders respect and embody the vision they have for the Gathering participants? e.g., viewing all as equals and 'surfacing the conflict?' (concept practiced at camp) Who represents those affected but not involved with the program?

Note. Adapted from "Critical Systems Heuristics," by W. Ulrich, and M. Reynolds, 2010, In *Systems Approaches to Managing Change: A Practical Guide*, by M.Reynolds and S. Sue (Eds.)., p. 271. Copyright 2010 by Springer.

Table 6

CSH Critique and Recommendations

Sources of influence	Critique	Questions	Recommendations
Motivation	Clarity needed between ideal/real clients, imprecise goals/vision.	To what extent are the Gathering's goals being met? How clearly do evaluation measures align with the project's theoretical underpinnings and objectives? Are all stakeholders aware of the Gathering's vision?	Create unified vision, mission and objectives and create evaluation accordingly. Hold annual meeting to keep all members informed of changes. Have staff sign agreement to uphold vision.
Power	Those in power are responsible for areas outside of competence.	How much role clarity exists between Gathering staff? Is there a document outlining the various roles? Are decision makers competent in decisions they make?	Main decision maker to consult partner agencies in decision making, align roles according to competencies, document roles for each member.
Knowledge	Experts may not have required skills, seek additional expertise.	Are current guarantees of program success authentic? Are decision makers aware of the needed expertise?	Consider supports and readiness for change prior to commitment.
Legitimacy	Unity needed between worldview and camp operations.	Do stakeholders respect and embody the vision they have for the Gathering participants? e.g., viewing all as equals and 'surfacing the conflict?' (concept practiced at camp) Who represents those affected but not involved with the program?	Seek more involvement from affected community members, continue to seek support past camp participants.

Appendix

Brief Overview of Program Evaluation for Youth Programs

To the extent that is possible, research on evaluation of similar programs to the Gathering is presented here. Since the intervention targeting this specific population is minimal, additional interventions including related concerns and populations will be described. Details of the various interventions are also presented.

The reason for the lack of literature in this area is unclear. Nonetheless, one may speculate that the logistics of collaborating with various ethnic groups to develop the multiethnic populations poses a barrier to program coordinators. It is also possible that the theoretical orientations of the coordinators' program orientations may be such that they do not conceptualize the shifts toward positive ethnic identity formation as encompassing other racial groups.

Community interventions in this field of study are becoming increasingly common. Nonetheless, formal evaluations are lacking in the area (Ohmer & Korr, 2006). Programs are being developed and implemented across North America to facilitate healthy identity development in youth and young adults. Little research has been longitudinal in nature in the study of ethnic identity formation in adolescents (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006). Unfortunately, such community initiatives are often implemented without a research base to support them or specific evaluation efforts to guide their development (Chalk & King, 1998). Molix and Bettencourt (2010) highlight the gaps in current research, where work is minimal in exploring the significant variables explaining the relationship between group identity and well-being for ethnic minorities.

The following is a preliminary search into the literature of programs and their respective evaluations in this field.

To begin, a program to for Aboriginal youth is presented. A First Nations youth gathering with 550 young Aboriginals from across Canada was held to discuss the themes of education and culture in Winnipeg ("First Nations," 2007). One of the purposes in this initiative was to encourage ethnic identity formation. Note that this is one of the likely helpful interventions, but is exclusive Aboriginals. It appears that no formal evaluation of the program is available.

Building Hope, an intervention launched in 2003, was developed to explore avenues for appropriate programming for adolescent and young adult newcomers of war affected backgrounds and Manitoba schools (Mackay & Tavares, 2005). The evaluation portion of the study includes a report of the initiative's intervention. The conclusions are derived from surveys, interviews, the literature, and experiences in other jurisdictions. Final inferences based on this inquiry consist of pointing out that a lack of appropriate and specialized programming for adolescent and young adult learners with English as a second language or other language needs is the reality. Plus, when newcomers arrive from a war-affected area, their schooling has been interrupted. In relation, the newcomers may also experience exacerbated socio-emotional and learning challenges. Finally, a call for special programming for these youth appears valuable. This outcome supports the position that this population is in need of specialized services.

Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, and Hawkins (2002) were granted funding to investigate the state of evaluations of youth intervention programs which were designed for at-risk children. Of the programs evaluated, it was important that identity formation was an aspect of the programs in question. For instance, the authors explain that within

treatment outcome research, lack of follow-up is a common problem, but is especially

problematic for studies of prevention and for positive youth development programs. The

benefits of longer-term research include a greater commitment from the community and

families involved when documentation of the effects of the intervention is made, to

determine whether or not the sessions are beneficial. Methodology of the program

evaluations was concluded as lacking in development; a suggestion for quasi-

experimental designs was proposed. In response to this article, Gillham, Reivich, and

Shatté (2002) noted that more than one half of the program evaluations employed pre and

post designs, and that follow-up assessments should be incorporated into the design. It is

important to take these suggestions into consideration for the current study.

French, Seidman, Allen, and Aber (2006) conducted a longitudinal study

exploring the process and the development of ethnic identity formation in adolescents.

They discovered that changes were occurring longitudinally; however, no intervention

was utilized. Differing groups were compared at various times and increases in both areas

of ethnic identity formations, group esteem, and exploration were displayed across a time

period of three years. This exploration serves as an example of the numerous studies

being conducted to assess for elements of ethnic identity. It is also evident that there is

room for improvement of the effectiveness of these interventions.

Along a similar thread, although not a direct intervention evaluation, Rog et al.

(2004) evaluated the value and the success of utilizing a collaborative community

approach to interventions. The analysis pertained to the National Funding Collaborative

on Violence Prevention. In this context, it is beneficial to take note of the internal

evaluations of the collaboratives to obtain a more thorough idea of evaluation design in

the field. Evaluators conducted interviews with project directors and collaborative

members. Each evaluator also used meeting minutes, reports, as well as other documents

and records to obtain specific details about the meetings and the work of the

collaborative. Two of the eight collaboratives interviewed community leaders and groups.

Another collaborative interviewed residents and youth. One collaborative utilized a focus

group to gain data. Participant observation was included in half of the evaluations. The

impact of the prevention activities was determined to create healthier communities and

displayed decreased violence as a result. This analysis is also relevant to consider as the

results may have implication for the direction of the community collaboration in the

design and the implementation of the valuation for the intervention in the current study.

Whaley and McQueen (2010) described an Afrocentric intervention program

applying the cognitive-cultural model of identity in evaluating cohort and intervention

effects on the ethnic-racial identity of African Caribbean youth participating in the Imani

Rites of Passage program. The design consisted of a prepost program evaluation to assess

the impact on race-related variables such as ethnic-racial socialization and ethnic-racial

identity. The evaluation of the program included an Adolescent Survey of Black Life, a

30-item measure addressing three essential features of the cultural self among Black

youth: (a) attitudes toward being Black and things Black, (b) attitudes toward Whites, and

(c) perceptions of racism. The cognitive schemata were evaluated by Multidimensional

scaling (Whaley & McQueen, 2010). Similar to many studies and interventions in this

field, the population consisted of one ethnic group.

One of the more established programs developed to target the population in

question is Seeds of Peace (Social Impact, 2005). Developed in 1993, Seeds of Peace

hosts multiple programs geared toward building peace and ethnic identity development

with youth from conflict areas worldwide. The most acclaimed aspect of the organization is a summer camp wherein youth from around the world gather to participate in various peacebuilding activities such as practicing conflict resolution skills. Seeds of Peace staff also gather local youth to address ethnic and racial tensions between diverse communities. The organization Social Impact, conducted an impact evaluation of the Seeds of Peace camp. The firm utilized a quasi-experimental design including surveys and interviews of staff and key stakeholders to create their report. Some of the constructs measured include the degree to which participants trust and have empathy for the other groups, and the desire to maintain involvement in conflict and peace issues, as well as if camp facilitated enduring friendships with those of the other side (Social Impact, 2005).

Despite the host of such programs for youth, research is sparse in the area of cross cultural youth ethnic identity development and peacebuilding initiatives. One can speculate that this may be due to the logistics and the challenges inherent in developing such interventions. According to members of the Institute for Canadian Peacebuilding, The Gathering may be one of the few interventions of its kind in North America (ICP, 2009b). The aforementioned studies, with the exception of Seeds of Peace, are not explicit in addressing peacebuilding or ethnic identity formation in the context of multiple ethnic groups. Plus, the camp element of the intervention is also seemingly rare in comparison to other day program interventions for instance. Interventions in this area are lacking, as the need to address symptoms of the tensions increases.