New Hope Computers

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Abstract

New Hope Computers was developed through a partnership of Nicole Carbone, Eliot Yaffa and the United Teen Equality Center (UTEC). Under the leadership of UTEC, a computer refurbishment company will be operated by 10-20 at-risk young adults, ages 18-24. This project focuses on soft-skill and technical skill development,

This development will take place in a series of workshops that focuses on every aspect a young adult will need to succeed in the computer repair industry. These workshops will instill responsible living skills such as the skills needed to become a responsible employee. Special attention will also be placed on technical skills such as how to develop a business plan and financial literacy. At the end of this program we expect that the students will gain the business skills to be successful in future endeavors.

Executive Summary

Education is vital to improving one's quality of life. A person who obtains a BA degree is more likely to be successful than a high school drop out. However, the education system is failing to train many Americans for employment in today's marketplace. As such, many Americans are relying on multiple and often low paying jobs to earn a living.

There are four major economic barriers that are insurmountable for some residents to overcome. 1) Lowell's changing economy. Lowell is a former textile town with many manufacturing jobs available. With the decline of manufacturing in the city, the economy has shifted to a knowledge-based economy. 2) The lack of soft-skills displayed by young adults. Young adults are not retaining jobs since employers determine that they do not have the job readiness skills needed to become valuable employees. 3) The lack of technical skills needed to compete for 21st century jobs. Many young adults lack the higher education degree needed for most jobs within the city. 4) Teens do not have the financial knowledge to prevent them from future credit problems. All of these factors contribute to the economic hardships experienced by young workers. Job training programs are vital for low skills workers.

The United Teen Equality Center created New Hope Computers (NHC) as the organization's job training program. NHC will train at-risk youth ages 18-24 with soft and technical skills needed to run and operate a business. In this program, the teens will participate in a series of workshops that focus on three areas. First, participants will be trained on the soft- skills needed to retain employment and to sell goods in a business. Secondly, participants will be trained in computer repair in order for them to obtain their A+ certification. Finally, participants will be trained on how to write a business plan that can be implemented in the creation of a computer repair business.

After the completion of the program we expect three things will occur. 1) The participant will have the technical and soft skills background needed to compete in the competitive US economy. 2) Many of the participants will further their education and obtain a degree in a computer related field . 3) The participants will become economic dependents through business ownership.

The effectiveness of the program cannot be determined for four reasons. 1) The program is just being implemented. 2) The technical training has taking precedence over the soft-skill training. 3) The organization is implementing a pilot computer training program. 4) The program did not have a host until October of 2006. As such, many of the objectives have not materialized.

I. Community Needs Assessment:

During its infancy, Lowell's urban design surrounded the textile mills along the various canals and the Merrimack River through the center of town. As a result of its industrial roots, many immigrants came to work in the city's factories. Minorities make up 41.4% of the population and 40.7% speak English as a second language. A lack of language skills and lack of a higher degree create barriers for many minorities from obtaining high-wage employment. (Census 2000)
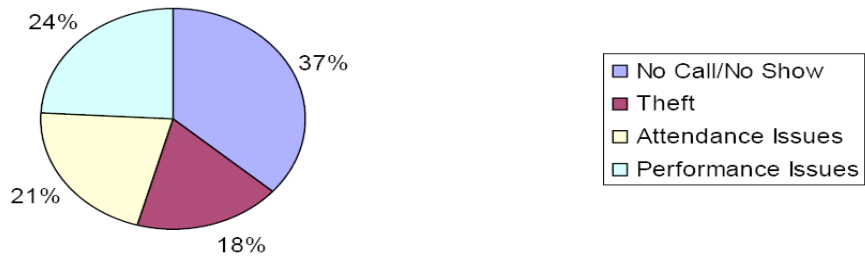
Lowell's employment problems stem from the lack of technical and soft skills among the city's mostly immigrant youth population. This is one reason why 28.8% of the population lacks a high school diploma or GED. With 28.8% lacking a high school diploma many employment options for youth are limited since 40% of the jobs within the city require at least an Associates degree (Kalaja, 2002). The lack of education is one problem causing many residents to be employed in low-wage jobs.

The lack of accessible employment options is another problem. Scarce employment options are exacerbated by the unreliable public transportation system. According to Nemon, Crisan, Toof (2005), Lowell's youth claimed that seeking these jobs in general were prohibitive since "the bus schedule and routes had a negative impact on their job prospects" and that if they "didn't live close to the job site and did not have reliable transportation they would be unlikely hired (Nemon, Crisan, Toof 2005)." The lack of transportation is a major barrier to job retention. Additionally, many teenagers were concerned about the "lack of well paying jobs in Lowell and surrounding areas. (Nemon, Crisan, Toof 2005)" The lack of reliable transportation forces many youth to become employed in low-paying jobs.
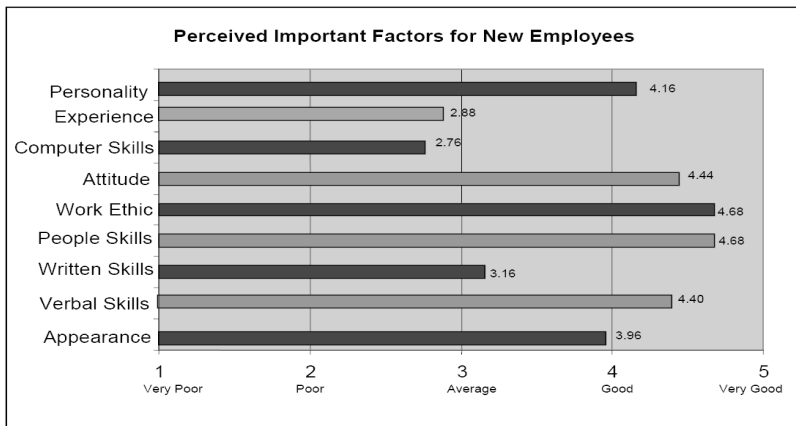
Lowell's youth perceive many of the jobs to be dead end and the end of the road for many. Many of the jobs Lowell's youth can obtain are minimum wage and create more hardships because of the "cost of living, family issues and parenthood (Nemon, Crisan, Toof 2005)." These jobs provide little to no advancement opportunities to rise up the economic ladder. In order to pay for necessities many teens rely on public assistance as well as multiple jobs. Unfortunately, there are few if any training programs for these youth to advance their careers.

Employers' perceptions towards youth also pose a barrier to financial security among low skill workers. For example, teenage mothers found it difficult to get hired since "they face discriminatory attitudes from some employers. (Nemon, Crisan, Toof 2005)" Employers believe that teenage mothers are not reliable due to poor decision-making and that their family obligations will take them away from their employment Employers also had issues with the lack of responsibility among young adults. These employers had issues with this group when trying to schedule, had high turnover rates, and a higher amount of absences.

Most Common Reasons for Dismissal

- No Call/No Show — 37%
- Theft — 18%
- Attendance Issues — 21%
- Performance Issues — 24%

The following is a list of skills most businesses felt that employees needed:

Perceived Important Factors for New Employees

Factor	Rating
Personality	4.16
Experience	2.88
Computer Skills	2.76
Attitude	4.44
Work Ethic	4.68
People Skills	4.68
Written Skills	3.16
Verbal Skills	4.40
Appearance	3.96

Scale: 1 Very Poor — 2 Poor — 3 Average — 4 Good — 5 Very Good

This chart explains that most of the skills needed have to do with personality and appearance. Employers feel that work ethic, people skills and attitude were the highest rated skills needed to hire new employees. Programs focusing on job placement need to focus on teaching these skills.

However, employers are not averse to hiring youth who have soft skills. Many of these employers look for employees that have the following skills: customer service skills, people skills, reliability, and communication skills. Employers also felt that youth were "more trainable, quicker, faster, and more motivated to learn new things, make company look younger, and good predictors of new products. (Nemon, Crisan, Toof 2005)" Overall there is some hope for youth employment.

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II. Problem Statement:

There are scarce opportunities for low educated youth to find quality education and job training programs.

Target Community:

The United Teen Equality Center will work with 10-20 at-risk young adults from the City of Lowell to enhance their employment options. Through the creation of the start-up business, teens can gain a sense of empowerment through the decisions they make to create the business.

Stakeholder Analysis

Name of stakeholder group/organization	Role	Expectation
Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Board (GLWIB)	Provides funding. Provides free use of Career Center for participants Assists participants to find computer related employment	That the program will be able to provide high skill employees to businesses that have lacked skilled employees in their trade
United Teen Equality Center	Operate the program	Provide youth with valuable skills to succeed in the 21st century
Participants	Establish an advisory board Repair Communities Create a business plan Sell Computers	Secure better employment
Businesses	Purchase computers	Program will supply a pipeline of skilled workers
Residents	Purchase computers	Be able to purchase low cost computers
Lowell Small Business Assistance Center	Provider of technical assistance	Create a training program that will increase the number of employees able to fill future job needs

Unless these businesses take an active role in the community, many businesses will be hesitant in purchasing the computers. Because of their perceptions of teens, they may perceive the computers to be inoperable or less than quality equipment. The Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Board, whose focus is on finding employment for all

Lowell residents, the GLWIB, will be concerned that this program only deals with young adults.

Project Goal(s) in CED terms:

The United Teen Equality Center will develop New Hope Computers. This program will seek to capitalize on the growing technological needs of the community through the development of a computer repair business. New Hope Computers will focus on enhancing the soft and technical skills of at risk teens in the City of Lowell. Objectives for New Hope Computers are measurable and specific.

Project Objectives:

Objective 1: 70% Students attend classes on a regular

Objective 2: 60% of the participants will have enhanced their soft skills

Objective 3: One business will be created

Objective 4: All of the participants will become employees of the business

III Project Design

Literature Review:

Education is essential for securing employment in professional fields, which require an advanced degree. Those that do not receive an advanced degree find that their employment prospects are limited. This review will search for solutions on how to improve the job prospects for out of school of youth.

The review will examine the reasons why out of school youth drop out as well as the difficulties they experience in the employment sector. Four questions need to be answered when discussing programs benefiting out of school youth.

1. What factors cause teenagers to drop out?
2. What skills are needed to improve the employment prospects of out of school youth?
3. What economic impact does dropping out have on out of school youth?
4. What do successful programs look like?

Teens have a variety of social factors that limit their employment prospects. There are four societal factors that must be considered when examining drop out rates.

1. Teenage pregnancies. Teenagers have higher pregnancy rates than other age groups. This causes teenagers to drop out as well as constrain their future earning potential. According to Ribar (2005), child-care responsibilities restrict single mothers' economic opportunities."
2. The lack of role models. According to Ivry and Doolittle (2003), many low income young people come from families and communities where relatively few adults work in the mainstream economy." Thus, teens do not have an established set of networks to draw upon when seeking employment.
3. Housing placement is also a key factor to job placement. If at risk youth live in the inner city or on the outskirts of town in public housing then their access to jobs are decreased. Ihlanfeldt and Sjoquist (1990) found that "the nearness to jobs was found to have a strong effect on the job probability of youth." If jobs relocate further and further from the city limits then youth have a difficult time obtaining employment.
4. Pop culture influences teen decision-making. Teen pop culture is often at odds with mainstream culture. Once teens start to become influenced by pop culture then their societal image suffers. This image "compromises personal and economic growth" (Doolittle Ivry (2003).

These four factors contribute to the high drop out rates and the lack of high-end employment prospects. Out of school youth drop out for a variety of reasons. According to Freeland (2003), there are "5.5 million young men and women between the age of 16 and 24 … 2.2 million of them are high school dropouts." This figure is a cause of concern since 15% of youth are dropouts. However in order to give credence to this percentage one needs to analyze the reasons why students drop out.

These students believe that they are adults. As a result they take on roles that they cannot handle, such as entering the workforce full-time. According to McNeal (1997), "dropouts rationally choose work over school for many reasons including a desire to obtain the

status of adult roles." They desire to be something they are not prepared for. Additionally, students drop out of schools when they are employed in a field they perceive serves an "opportunity for immediate and substantial employment." Many of the jobs that these drop outs obtain are entry-level low pay jobs.

Full time or part time employment is a major factor in this determination. Students, who work full time, at least 20 hours a week, are more likely to drop out. A student working 20 or more hours a week cannot efficiently and successfully manage classes as well as work. According to Barro quoted in McNeal (1997), those students working 21 or more hours per week have a "100% higher dropout rate than those who work 0-14 hours." These rates are not universal among the races. Gustman and Steinmeier (1981) claim that nonwhite males in low unemployment areas will be in the labor force full time 40% to almost 50% more often than will similar males in high unemployment rates." When unemployment is low then the youth do not have to compete with older workers for low- wage employment. Economics are a major determinant in the youth unemployment rates.

Minimum wage plays an important part in youth employment. Wages are set to boost the financial stability of low-income families. However, the unintended consequence is that it is hurting youth employment. According to Rees (1986), "a 10 percent increase in the minimum wage would reduce teenage employment by about one percent." If businesses have to pay a higher wage they would want workers that have some skills. Additionally, this produces fewer positions available to low wage workers. This is shown by a study done by David Ribar (2005), which found that "higher minimum wages contribute more to employment loses than to earning gains." Minimum wage rates create a situation where employers are paying more for labor costs though sales are not necessarily increased. High skills assist in a person obtaining well paying jobs. The question then becomes "What skills are necessary to obtain a decent paying job?"

In order to better understand we must first examine the different skill sets that need to be in place. Soft skills are essential non-technical skills needed for employment. These skills include "effective work habits, appropriate dress, managing family crises, maintaining motivation, and building a support system" (Temali 2002). Soft skills only ensure temporary employment. These skills "seem to be what count for surviving the first few months on the job" (Taylor, Rubin 2005). However, they become a key component to gain entry into the workforce. Soft-skill development is perceived as valuable by the business community. Many employers look only at soft skills when determining if they are going to hire a candidate. According to Timothy Bartik, (2000) "employers have great difficulty in judging whether job seekers have adequate job skills, particularly "soft skills." These skills are beneficial for retention when workers have little to no work experience.

Can soft-skills prevent employees from suffering as a result of an economic recession? The answer is soft-skill development does position an employee to weather economic cycles a little longer. According to Timothy Bartik (2001), during the economic boom in the 1990's the US economy needed to produce "9 million full-time, full-year jobs" to

employ every citizen. Since that is politically unfeasible soft-skill and hard skill development allows some residents to fare better than others in retaining and obtaining employment.

Technical skills or hard skills are the only skills that allow for advancement opportunities. These skills can only be learned from an educational environment or on the job. There are no common skills that fit into one category. These skills are "job specific" (Temali 2002).   Therefore, the skills necessary for employment are determined by the field. According to Taylor and Rubin (2005), "technical skills are essential in order to stay on the job and advance." These hard-skills are taught in an educational setting.

Education is vital for long-term employment and quality of life. According to Mare, Winship, and Kubitschek (1984) "schools retain persons with the kind of characteristics that lead to relatively good employment prospects." In order to obtain employment that pays a living wage one must have obtained at a minimum an associates degree. Richard Curtain (2000) concurs with this opinion when he claims "education attainment and young people's chances of gaining employment are intimately linked." Also, he believes that "leaving school early and not acquiring recognized skills may condemn a young person to a life of limited income earning prospects" (Curtain 2000). Therefore, the longer you stay in school the chances of finding employment are greater. A college graduate can expect to earn a median wage of $48,000. This wage is substantially decreased for a high school graduate. They can expect to earn only $30,800. To compete in the workforce employees must have obtained an associates degree since a "growing proportion of jobs require some postsecondary training" (Ivry, Doolittle 2003). Out of school youth must gain the education and skills necessary to obtain a family-sustaining wage.

What implications does this have for out of school youth? Out of school youth are placed in a vulnerable position. One, they lack the skills needed to obtain meaningful employment. The lack of skills is directly correlated to their enrollment status. Two, since they are not in school they cannot obtain these skills in conventional settings. As a result programs need to be established to become a bridge to adequate employment.

There are a couple of nationally recognized programs that work with at risk youth. These two programs are Job Corps and YouthBuild. Job Corps serves at-risk young adults ages 16- 24 through a residential education and training program. This program is administered by the United States Department of Labor. Job Corps takes at risk youth out of the inner city and trains them. This element has proven to be beneficial by removing "participants from often-negative neighborhood environments" (Public Private Ventures 2002). The program focuses on soft and hard skills. They provide soft skills training by providing assistance with the job search. The educational component comes in the form of GED and technical training. Participants are paid a monthly allowance that is progressive the longer you are in the program. The program also provides a solid employment support system by providing career counseling and post-placement support for up to 12 months after they graduate from the program. (Job Corps 2006)

YouthBuild is another organization that works with at risk young adults. YouthBuild's purpose is to "unleash the positive energy of unemployed young adults to rebuild their communities and their own lives with a commitment to work, education, responsibility and family" (Clymer, et al 2002). This program focuses on empowering their community through education and construction skills. Students spend one week in class earning their GED while the following week they learn to rehabilitate and construct housing for low income communities.

A program that is similar to our proposed model is housed in the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. This program focuses on soft-skill development and job training. Their theory is that youth are at risk of not being retained since the participants "lack the social skills necessary to integrate into the workplace culture" (White 2005). The classes deal with time management issues and workplace orientation. The rest of the review will discuss lessons from the youth development field.

There are many lessons from this field ranging from empowerment, programming, and support systems. According to Clymer et al (2002), "truly effective youth employment programs help young people develop their own capacity to manage the responsibilities of adult life." When discussing development the following are often mentioned: social skills, critical thinking skills, comprehension skills, planning skills, hard skills, and responsibility. Interest in youth programs are limited since they often do not treat youth with respect. Finally, program eligibility requirements make it difficult for some teens to enroll. Additionally in order to achieve positive impacts for this community programs need to be "well structured, well implemented and provide participants with intensive exposure to a variety of program activities. (Public Private Venture 2002)" However, without a strong support system many of these programs will not serve its purposes. The question remains as to how does one design a program that will have an impact on young adults?

Young adults join programs for a variety of reasons. One reason is to improve their lives. Out of school youth decide to join programs after an extensive period of analyzing their lives. After this process, youth determine that it is time for a change. Additionally, they determined that there was one goal that they wanted to achieve and were looking for a program that can help them attain this goal.

To design a program that meets the emotional and social needs a variety of factors must be taking into consideration. One factor is the lack of awareness or interest among the target population. Poor programming design and outreach limit the exposure the program have on youth. Additionally, some youth perceive that programs do not treat them with respect. Program eligibility requirements appear to be "intrusive and intimidating" (Ivry, Doolittle 2003). Awareness and outreach is one of three factors that must be taken into account.

The second factor is services provided by the program. There are four sub-factors in this category. One, financial incentives are key to enhance the program's retention rates. Two, programs need to be accessible by public transportation and offered at convenient times.

Three, program staff should be trained to deal with issues affecting youth. Four, programs are not responsive to labor market and employers' needs. These four factors are critical in program retentions.

Psychological issues make up the last factor. Inner city youth lack the positive influences and/or support system needed to live fulfilling and productive lives. These youth rely upon programs such as the United Teen Equality Center and other similar organizations to provide these influences. Hence, program staff becomes the support system that guides the youth to make sound decisions. These staff must become these parental figures since some youth lack the reinforcement from external forces. Program must combat these barriers by meeting the needs of the youth.

Youth must feel that programs are meeting their needs in order to enroll in them. Programs that focus on producing well -rounded individuals are most successful. Elements of a successful program include: skill development, paid work experience, and leadership development. These elements along with a sense of belonging retain and gain participants.

To ensure retention, participants must feel a connection to the program. According to the Public/Private Ventures (2002), "programs that provide high-risk youth with a sense of belonging and group identity appear more likely to retain them." This type of atmosphere is created when programs incorporate the following elements: "Family-like atmosphere, a sense of camaraderie with peers and staff, and a sense of belonging" (Ivry, Doolittle 2003). All of these elements lead to a sense of belonging by program participants.

Youth enterprises are another by which youth feel connected to a program. Entrepreneurship is perceived by youth to be "very varied and challenging" (Jeroen Onstenk 2003). Francis Chigunta (2002) in his report for the Youth Employment Summit concurs with this opinion when he claims "youth enterprises give young people, especially marginalized youth, a sense of meaning and belonging."

There are many businesses skills that are important to youth development. According to Chigunta (2002) "entrepreneurship… helps young women and men develop new skills and experiences that can be applied to many other challenges in life." Programs focusing on establishing youth enterprises enhance the sense of worth among its participants. In order to be successful in business one needs to "promote yourself" (Sonya Kimble-Ellis, 2002). Being able to promote one's self allows one to be able to see a sense of worth in themselves as well as being able to be successful in job interviews and/or selling products. Also participants through its business planning will enhance their academic skills. According to Adrienne Harris (1994), "To develop a business plan, they (youth) needed strong reading and writing skills. To keep track of the money they earned, the students needed good math skills." Additionally, networking is vital to having a successful business. The enterprises may "create linkages between youth entrepreneurs and other economic actors, such as through sub-contracting, franchising, and so on (White and Kenyon, 2000). These linkages would not be available to the youth and the community without the youth participating in the local economy.

There are multiple advantages in today's economy for youth to start their own business:
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1. According to Marilyn Kourilsky quoted in Bonnie Morris (1999), "the reason so many kids are in computer-generated businesses is because they have the edge over the adult population. Youth are technically more savvy then adults therefore they can use new technology to their advantage.
2. "Kids are willing to undercut the competition and are willing to trade goods for services to get their foot in the door" (Bonnie Morris, 1999). Thus, youth are more willing to take risks in getting their business known than their adult counterparts.
3. Bill Cunningham, who founded DialUSA, believes that "kids in business are a lot more balanced than adults in business" (Patti Watts, 1986). Youth are not the only one's who benefit as a result of their enterprises.

These businesses also benefit the communities. Social costs for the community are lowered by these programs. Investment in youth lowers the costs to businesses as well as the public. According to the Canadian Department of Justice (2000) quoted in Juliano Tupone (2003) "economic, social, and personal value of investing in the lives of children in a positive and constructive manner decreases future costs that result from youth participation in crime." With lower costs on crime prevention, the community can focus on enhancing the economic opportunities for all residents.

Program:

New Hope Computers was developed through a partnership of Nicole Carbone, Eliot Yaffa and the United Teen Equality Center (UTEC). Under the leadership of UTEC, a computer refurbishment company will be operated by 10-20 at-risk young adults, ages 18-24. This project focuses on soft-skill and technical skill development,

This development will take place in a series of workshops that focuses on every aspect a teen will need to succeed in the computer repair industry. These workshops will instill responsible living skills such as the skills needed to become a responsible employee. Special attention will be placed on the following technical skills: how to create a business plan, financial literacy, as well as computer literacy. At the end of this program we expect that the students will gain the business skills to be successful in future endeavors. The mission of this program is to educate our youth to ensure that they will gain the skills necessary for adulthood.

Participants:

New Hope Computers will educate 10-20 low-income youth from Lowell, MA. The teens will come from the membership of the United Teen Equality Center as well as other area youth

Community Role:

A youth advisory committee will be established. This committee will research and develop a business plan for the program. Additionally, the community will be responsible for developing a website to publicize the program. They will also act as sales people when the business is established. The United Teen Equality Center will host the project.
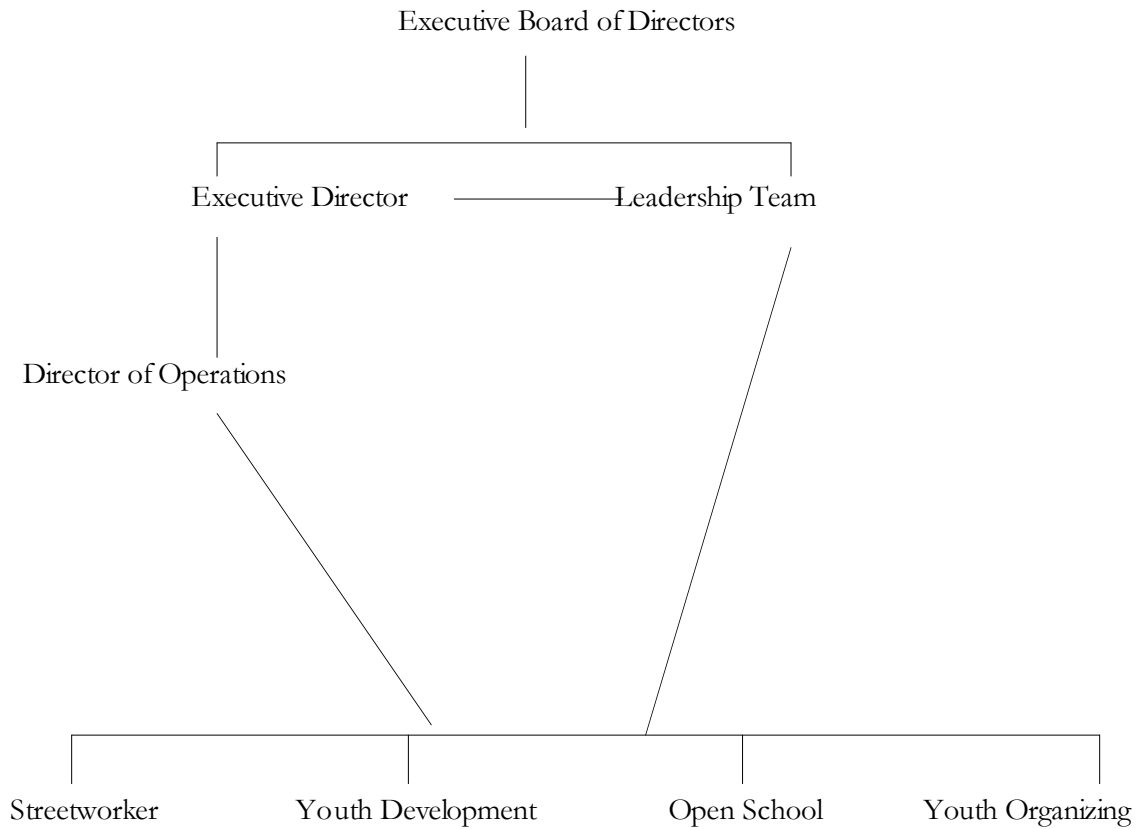
Host Organization:

The United Teen Equality Center mission is to be a "by teens, for teens" safe-haven for youth development and grassroots organizing. UTEC provides a safe and multicultural place of belonging emphasizing the holistic development of Lowell's young people, ages 13-23, particularly those most often overlooked and labeled as "at-risk" (http://utec-lowell.org/mission.php).

The United Teen Equality Center role will be to handle the outreach to students from the local high schools. Additionally, the center will operate the program and ensure use of its facilities. My role in the program will be to do outreach to the community and provide development support to further the goals of the program.

The organizational chart for the chart is the following:

The following chart outlines UTEC's organizational structure:

Executive Board of Directors

Executive Director ——————— Leadership Team

Director of Operations

Streetworker   Youth Development   Open School   Youth Organizing

Method:

The United Teen Equality Center is expanding their computer repair class to create a small computer repair business. Participants will participate in a series of workshops that will allow students to gain the necessary financial and soft skills necessary to operate this business.

Products and Outputs:

The trainings will produce the following:
- A small business is created
- Participants gain technical and soft skills to further their careers

IV. Implementation Plan:

All of the activities below will take place within the training program:

Activity	Resources	Timeframe
Soft Skill Workshops	**Room** **Materials** **Instructors** **Curriculum**	**3 months**
Financial Literacy Workshops	**Room** **Instructor** **Curriculum** **Financial brochures**	**3 months**
Pre and post test students	**Surveys**	**Before and after each series of workshops**
Business planning	**Internet hookup** **Computer** **Binders** **Room**	**4 months**

Inputs:

The following inputs are needed for the project
- Computer
- Copier
- 1 Soft skill instructor
- Financial literacy brochures
- Pre and post tests
- Printer
- Refreshments for meetings
- Room to conduct classes
- Telephone
- Microsoft office suite
- Class materials
- 1 Outreach worker
- 1 Case worker
- Funding for tuition classes

Staffing Pattern:

Position	Responsibilities	Supervisor	Training
Instructor Jim Sullivan	Hold workshops in soft skills Conduct financial literacy classes	Greg Coutreau	Business owner with supervisory experience Knowledge of the banking system
Outreach Worker Sovanna Pouv	Recruit teens to the program Meet with businesses to discuss merits of the program Meet with youth one on one to discuss problems	Greg Coutreau	Proven organizing skills Proven ability to work with teens
Fundraiser Aaron Chalek	Seek funding for the program	Greg Coutreau	
Assistant Fundraiser Eliot Yaffa	Seeks funding for program	Greg Coutreau	

Budget:

Operating Budget

Since the program is just being implemented at the end of the last semester at SNHU a pro forma budget could not be established. As such the following is a proposed budget for the program:

Revenues	
Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Board	$29,500
Expenses	
Instructor	$3,000
Tuition Costs	$2,500
Heat	$500
Electricity	$550
Food	$1,500
Emergency Funds	$1,000
Supplies	$3,000
Outreach Worker	$7,000
Fundraiser	$6,000
Benefits	$4,000
Total	**$29,050**

Project Implementation Gantt chart:

	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Find a site	■	■	■												
Hire instructo				■	■										
Create curric						■									
Outreach to				■	■	■									
Sign up stude					■	■	■								
Perform work							■	■	■						
Administer questionnaires							■	■	■						
Sign students									■						
Students atte business plan workshops										■	■				
Students mar program to c												■	■	■	■

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V. Monitoring/ Evaluation

Management Information System:
UTEC has created a schedule that will require them to survey students prior to attending the workshops and after the workshops. Additionally, they will also survey the participants every three months to determine how well they are using their new skills

Summary Monitoring Table:

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcome	Long-term outcomes
Space Funding Materials Food	Business Planning workshop	5-6 students attend workshops	Students learn how to create business plan	Business plan is created	Successful business is created
Staff Young Adults	Soft-skills development training	10- 20 participants attend soft-skills workshops	Soft-skills Enhanced	Participants are perceived as valuable members of the workforce	Increased job retention
	Financial literacy workshops	10-20 participants attend financial literacy workshops	Students are financial literate	Participants open savings account	Assets are increased

Performance Indicators:

New Hope Computers will evaluate the success of this program by measuring the following indicators:

- Establishment of a business
- Pre and post survey results
- Employees in the business
- Attendance at classes
- Classes Conducted

Data to determine the effectiveness of the program will be garnered through surveys of the employers, participants, and the participant's parents.

Sustainability Elements:

UTEC has obtained a verbal commitment from the local Workforce Investment board to receive federal Department of Labor youth program funding for our program. To supplement this funding the teens will be responsible to establishing their small business. Profits from this enterprise will be used to pay for the teen's salaries and/or contribute to the teen's savings account.

UTEC will also address the sustainability elements through a variety of methods. 1) UTEC outreach workers will publicize the program to area businesses. We expect that the business will help develop the curriculum for the program. Also, we expect that the businesses to create internship opportunities for the participants. 2) A long-term partnership will be created with the local workforce investment board. This partnership will allow the participants to become visible to area businesses not reached by outreach. 3) Through media outlets the organization will publicize this program. The Lowell Telecommunications Corporation produces shows that reach much of the population that we are attracting. 4) The participants of the program will conduct outreach to community leaders to publicize their business as part of their marketing effort. 4) business plan. 5) UTEC will train and recruit business leaders to become instructors of the training.

 Institutional Plan:

During our discussions to determine a host for the project, UTEC made it clear that the program become a mainstay of their organization. The organization's leaderships stressed that they were thinking of expanding their current program offerings. They were in the process of thinking of opening a computer repair program. New Hope Computers provided the organization computers as well as the ability to create a social enterprise.

Conclusions & Recommendations:

The road to getting this project off the ground was bumpy and had many facades. At the beginning the Lowell Boys and Girls Club was going to host the project. The project entailed a soft-skill training and job placement for at risk teens. During this time I had been in contact with the Lowell Career Center to create a partnership with them. They agreed to work with us in any capacity needed. Unfortunately, staffing changes scuttled the plans for this project.

Once it became obvious that the project with the Boys and Girls Club was going nowhere Nicole Carbone and I discussed a possible merger of our projects. Both of us were creating training programs with the youth and had some difficulty communicating with original sites. Given all of our difficulties we decided that it was best to merge. I brought local connections to the table while she brought a fresh set of ideas to the project. When we finally merged in April 2006 our projects we sought out a host for our newly formed project called New Hope Computers.

Through a series of conversations with people from UMass-Lowell I made contact with a person from the Wish Project. The Executive Director was pleased to have myself and Nicole establish this program with her since it met her client's unmet needs. At the onset of this new site we discussions over a 3 month period with the organization's Executive Director to create a contract for services. Again I had difficulty communicating our needs to the director. A main sticking point was to convert a section of the factory for workspace as well as agreeable contract terms. As discussions progressed, the cooperative atmosphere started to break down. I found out later, that the organization had no capacity to hold a workforce development program. With Nicole and I working full-time positions external to this organization there was no capacity for us to fully implement this project.

As such, I researched through emails, phone conversations, as well as web searching possible alternatives to host this program. During my conversations with various workforce development agencies, I was initially steered away from the United Teen Equality Center since they did not have a good reputation of being responsive. At first I was swayed by this advice. But as I continued my search, UTEC was becoming more and more of a viable organization since they were doing what my project was supposed to accomplish. After a few initial emails it was determined that UTEC was the best choice. Finally in October 2006 after a couple of meetings UTEC was thrilled to have the project aboard.

It became apparent that this was a win-win situation for all of the involved parties for a number of reasons. 1) UTEC at the time wanted to expand their services into starting a small computer repair business. 2) We needed a site to host our project and were in possession of 60 computers. 3) UTEC wanted to expand their services and thus I was able to work with them to take a limited role in the project. Even though this turned out be a positive situation for all parties it did not come without some caution flags.

There are some difficulties though in the organizational decision making. UTEC relies on the teens to determine what the organization's projects will be. As such, the teens could eventually decide that they do not want to have this training program. Currently, this is happening since the technical skills training is taking precedence over the soft-skills training.

We are in the midst of implementing the project. Currently, we are seeking funding for the program as well as establishing a pilot computer training program for 6 youth. Once the pilot program is completed we will survey the six students to determine if they want to proceed with further training.

We expect that at full implementation, participants will have greatly enhanced their technical skills to be competitive for employment in the high tech industry. Additionally, we also expect that the participants will be able to run a viable computer repair business. Once the students start to the computer repair business, I expect that they will become aware of how important soft-skills are to operating a successful business.

To get to the participants to become aware of the importance of soft-skills the participants will need to take field trips to a variety of business. During these trips we expect that the students observe how the employees interact with each other as well as customers. When they are finished with these trips we will ask them to meet and discuss their findings. At this meeting we will also ask them to self-reflect on how they interact with each other and with other acquaintances. We expect that their findings will lead them to

For someone developing a project in a similar situation to mine, here are a few suggestions an individual should take note. One, an individual needs to research, research, and research community organizations and their programs. If you are part of an organization, as a member, determine what projects they are doing and try to create a project that fits in their plans. If you are not a member of a community organization, you need to determine what projects are currently going on in your community. Start a discussion with an organization that you have an interest in and begin the getting to know you process. The getting to know you process is key. Do not automatically be swayed by adverse opinions by others and research this opinion carefully. This whole process should start as soon as you finish the first class weekend. It might take you more than a semester to successfully find a host.

Once you have secured a site, make sure you determine your role. It is unrealistic for a person, not an employee of an organization, to be doing bulk of the work. Unless you are working part time you should not expect to be in the organization during normal business hours. As such, you need to choose a role that allows you to do your project work at home. Any work that you agree upon with the organization is going to be time consuming, make sure that your schedule your time wisely so you do not get burnt out.