

**CHANGE AGENT PRODUCTIONS:
YOUTH PERCEPTIONS, EXPERIENCES, AND
OUTCOMES**

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Report Summary

The purpose of this evaluation is to highlight the positive impact of the youth development program Change Agent Productions. The program was developed and managed by the Community Development Branch of YMCA of the Greater Long Beach. The program serves approximately 50 youth interns providing opportunities for the enhancement of technology, multimedia, career exploration, jobs, team building, social skills and personal growth. CAP interns benefit by receiving academic support, college preparation, developing healthy and positive relationships with peers, and acquiring a work ethic.

CAP offers potential employers expert staff and interns that could provide technology support, set-up of audio-visual equipment, technology training, and multimedia production and development. Interns provide quality and valuable services to employers. In addition, CAP interns have a positive impact on the schools they attend, the community they live in, and the city of Long Beach, California.

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Introduction

Change Agent Production (CAP) is a social enterprise of the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) of Greater Long Beach, Community Development Branch. It began operations in October 2007, with a grant from Zero Divide Foundation and is currently funded by Beneventures Foundation. When data were collected for this report on October 2011, CAP was managed by Digital Media Artists who assisted in the technology, academic, and social development of 42 urban high school and college-age youth who had graduated from the YMCA Youth Institute (YI). The YI is an eight-week long summer program that recruits youth from grades 8th-10th from three middle schools and five high schools in the area. Also, the YI includes alumni that serve as support and peer leaders and it has a theme about Creative Digital Arts and Literacy.

CAP is a community development program and a social enterprise, focusing in developing technology and multimedia skills of urban youth. It focuses on providing career development opportunities for low-income, ethnically and culturally diverse youth. Some of these youth comes from immigrant families and where English is spoken as a second language. CAP offers a paid internship, freelance opportunities, and options to work in diverse multimedia projects. In addition, interns are offered the opportunity to travel outside Long Beach, and sometimes out-of-state. The internship provides opportunities for on-the-job skills training in addition to building on what interns already learned at the YI. Some of these skills are customer relations, basic business principles, multimedia and technology applications, career exploration, and technical and social skills. Team building is a central skill cultivated and essential in CAP. Interns and CAP coordinators provide a wide-range of multimedia services to a diverse group of clients.

CAP services included: digital video production (filming and editing), graphic design, web design, audio visual set-up and support, digital photography, animation and technology training skills. Interns were exposed to real life applications of technology and a unique hands-on training.

CAP Participants

Youth who participated in the YI were eligible to submit an application for CAP program. They submitted a paper application, filled out a survey, and provided a copy of their grades to CAP staff. Once they were selected for consideration in CAP, youth had a face-to-face interview. This process was similar to obtaining a regular job and it was intended to prepare youth for future job applications. The information requested in the CAP applications included information about their YI contribution, after-school activities, their availability to work in each week, their current technological abilities, including hardware and software proficiency, and areas they wished to improve. In addition, they were asked to describe their future academic and careers plans, including their desired outcomes at CAP. Youth were selected for intern jobs based on their personal abilities, technology aptitudes, level of competency, and their abilities to obtain good grades in school. As of November 1, 2011, 42 high school and college-age youth had completed an application to work with CAP during the last year. Of those, 30 (71%) had actually worked on a least one job and from these group, and from these group, 20 youth (67%) participated in the study.

Community Context

Long Beach, California

Long Beach is a medium city in Southern California with 462,257 inhabitants as of 2010, with a diverse population composed of 46.1 percent White persons, 40.8 percent Latino persons, 13.5 percent African American persons, 12.9 percent Asian persons, 1.1 percent Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and 0.7 percent American Indian and Alaska Native persons and (U.S. Census, 2011). The major industries present in Long Beach are education (Long Beach Unified School District and California State University Long Beach), defense (Boeing Corp), and transportation (Port of Long Beach) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011).

Demographic Indicators

Long Beach has a population of 462,257 inhabitants and it has a significant segment of young person less than 18 years old, equals to 25 percent (115,564) of the total population. In 2010, the percentage of people living in poverty was higher in Long Beach 18.8%, in comparison to California which is 13.2%. In the City of Long Beach, Latino and African American families are more likely to live in poverty than any other race. Furthermore, youth (18-25 years old) have the highest poverty rate in Long Beach, equals to about 30% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

Education Indicators

Low-income and youth from immigrant families face many challenges in the educational system across the nation, but particularly in Southern California. According

to the California Department of Education (CDE) for the school year 2009-2010, the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) had a graduation rate of 78.8 percent and a dropout rate of 14.1 percent. By ethnic group, the three groups with highest dropout rate were Native Americans (18.8%), African Americans (17.9%) and Latinos (16.8%). White students had the lowest rate, 8.6%. Although LBUSD had a higher graduation rates than California as whole state (81.2%) and Los Angeles County (79.7%), minority students in Long Beach still have higher drop-out rates than their white counter parts.

Youth Employment Indicators

Urban youth from culturally diverse and low-income families encounter institutions and services that are fragmented and many times are inflexible and unresponsive to their needs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011), from April to July 2011 the number of employed youth (persons 16 to 24 years old) nationwide rose to 18.6 million or 48.8 percent of all youth; however, this number was the lowest since 1948. In addition, youth unemployment was 18.1 % in July 2011, down one percent in comparison to July 2010. By race, Latinos (22%) and African American (31%) had the highest unemployment rate respectively. In addition, many urban youth have to compete with adults for low-skilled jobs, facing bigger obstacle to secure employment.

In sum, youth in Long Beach face many challenges and are in need of a supportive environment to help them to be academically successful, learn valuable job skills, provide employment opportunities, and find supportive role models to assist them in their personal and career development.

Method

Evaluation Participants

All eligible CAP interns (interns who had worked on at least one CAP job in the past year) were invited to participate in the focus groups. CAP staff helped the researchers by coordinating with the CAP interns to arrange for times when the focus groups were to meet. Out of the 30 eligible CAP interns, 20 (67%) participated in the study.

As shown in Table 1, over two-thirds (70%) of the participants were male. Their ages ranged from 14 to 18 years old with an average age of 16. The majority (60%) were Latino followed by those who identified themselves as European-American (20%), Asian-American/Pacific Islander (10%), and African-American and Mixed/Bi-Racial (5% each).

Table 1

Change Agent Productions Focus Group Sample Demographics
N = 20

	Percent	Frequency
Gender		
Male	70%	14
Female	30%	6
Ethnicity		
Latino	60%	12
European-American	20%	4
Asian-American/Pacific Islander	10%	2
African-American	5%	1
Mixed/Bi-Racial	5%	1
Age		
14	20%	4
15	5%	1
16	20%	4
17	45%	9
18	10%	2

Materials and Procedures

The methodology for this evaluation was qualitative and this method allows of the study of the social environment in depth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Three (3) focus groups took place on October 11, 12 and 20, 2011. In addition, several attempts were made to facilitate more focus groups to include all participants eligible for the study. The focus groups included the interns and a facilitator (the author of this report). The groups were scheduled in advance and keeping in mind the participants' school schedule. Thus,

all the focus groups were held in the evening. CAP staff was charged with notifying the interns, following-up with them, and making sure interns attended the groups. Groups were one and a half hours long and snacks were offered at the beginning of the groups. In addition, incentives were provided to interns and distributed in a random drawing each session to show appreciation for the interns' time. The incentive was \$5.00 gas card.

The three focus groups had a total of 20 participants. The groups were digitally audio recorded and permission was requested and granted from participants before the turning the digital voice recorder on. To keep confidentiality, participants were given index cards with a unique number (1-30) to identify themselves when participating in answering questions while recording was taking place. Also, participants were asked to refer to other participants in the group by their number and not by their real names.

Participants were asked to participate as much as they wanted, and they were advised to stop their participation, stay in the room or leave their room on their own without consequences. Also, they were asked not to answer question if they did not feel comfortable answering them. Participants in every focus group were also instructed that they could request at any time to stop the recording if they feel to discuss something off the record.

Each of the focus group session was transcribed and there were two interview transcription formats: one that included all the focus groups under each question of the interview guide, and another that grouped the answers by focus group.

The focus groups were facilitated by an Assistant Professor of Social Work from California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). Researchers from CSULB,

Department of Social Work designed the study and developed the interview guide in consultation with CAP staff. The interview guide included the following questions:

1. Why were you interested in working for Change Agents Productions (CAP)?
2. What did you have to do to get the job at CAP?
3. What types of jobs did you work on for CAP?
4. What Technical or media skills did you develop in your work with CAP?
5. What other skills did you develop while working with CAP?
6. For those of you who worked with clients, what did you learn from those intersections? What skills did you utilize?
7. Besides the jobs opportunities, what other help or support Cap provide you?
8. What would you say are the major benefits to working with CAP/
9. If you plan on going on to college or technical school, how might your CAP experiences help you with your future goals?
10. What kind of careers do you hope to pursue in the future? How do you think working at CAP might help you in this area?
11. What suggestions would you make to CAP staff to make your experience better?

Interview notes were taken by the facilitator and these included side notes to keep track of each member's participation in answering each questions, observations about the participants' response to cues, and quick notes to remember clarifying a statement or follow-up questions in case there were needed.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory techniques were utilized to analyze the collected data. Analysis included initial coding (line by line), focused coding and axial coding, and these analyses were guided by grounded theory techniques recommended by Charmaz (2006) and Bryant and Charmaz (2007).

Findings

CAP provided youth who participated in the internship program with opportunities to enhance in their personal, academic, technology and career skills and a positive environment to be young and thrive. Three major codes found after the analysis of the data and which each represented specific areas of impact were: (1) Contributing to personal growth; (2) Improving Career and Technology skills; and (3) Increasing social and team building skills.

(1) Contributing to Personal Growth

CAP offered its interns a safe and challenging environment to learn and develop personal skills necessary to work on its projects. Youth learned technology and media skills in a supportive environment. Their experience included the guidance of staff that was dedicated to contribute to their personal growth. CAP staff were mentors and positive roles models to the interns.

Mentorship and Positive Role Models. CAP staff were dedicated to develop personal relationships with interns. Youth expressed their appreciation for staff dedication and the time they invested on them. In addition, CAP staff showed patience, guidance, and modeled behavior that youth learned. Interns stated:

CAP and the YI something they provided for me was like, practically like a second family. The way they care about you, how they want you to go to college, they want you to have good grades, they want you to be successful in life, to have a career, the way they respect you.

They have given me thrive to learn. I'm sure they have done that a lot of times. Over summer, we'll be here doing jobs, and there will be the one staff member that you love and you always talk to, they're like your friend, they're your mentor pretty much. You just want to learn to be better and to be as good as them, so mentorship, thrive to learn that's what they have taught me.

We don't just come here to learn on the computers, we also come here to talk to people when we have problems. You can tell them, "I need your advice for something, help me out..." They will sit down and talk to you on a personal level, everyone here has that one person to talk to or group of people to talk to. Whether you're here to learn media arts or learn more advice for future or how to make things better.

The emotional connection between CAP interns made and staff made a difference since the technological skills they learned were complemented by a supportive environment where youth could talk about their personal lives, as well as the challenges they were facing in their lives. One intern said it succinctly:

Having the staff out there helping you freely, it's a good benefit. If you are trying to get help with your resume, you could go to your school counselor which is not always available or you just try to do it yourself, but it won't come out as great as you want it, and so if you have one of the staff here helping you it comes out better than what you wanted, and there's a better chance of you getting a job, because you have on your resume I have worked for CAP, and I am able to do this, this, and this... if I can't do this I have people skills, I have organization, I am able to work the way you want it.

Academic Support. Since many urban youth faced several obstacles to graduate from high school such as high drop out rates, higher rates of poverty and lack of jobs, education becomes an important path for their success. At CAP, staff provided academic support and good academic expectations for interns who participate in the program. One

specific approach was to mandate good grades in order for intern to be assigned to a job.

Youth described:

You have to keep up good grades and keep up attendance at school, if you miss 2 weeks of school; they're not going to take you out anymore. You just have to keep on top of your stuff.

Everybody goes to high school, they have "school loop" it's on the web where you access it and it shows you your grades from every class, and that's how they check it, or they ask you to bring in your report card and they check it, and they check up on you all the time, cause they want you to have good grades in order to take you out, cause they don't want to take you out if you're messing up in school cause for them school is a priority first, so that's cool.

The requirement of maintaining good grades motivated interns to attend school regularly, keep up with their class assignments, and seek help among CAP staff as needed. One aspect that makes CAP a successful program and an effective tool for academic success is the personal relationship that youth developed over time with staff.

Interns commented:

They help with homework too. Like my Freshmen and Sophomore years I really didn't have any inspiration to do any homework, my grades were pretty bad, and now people they say 'hey, how's your homework?' So I'm be stuck doing homework, and if I'm stuck on something I'm just like 'oh, I don't know, so if I come here and they ask me 'oh, are you stuck?' and I say 'yeah' and they will help me with it, so then that actually gave me the inspiration to at least try, so I'm trying this year to do better.

Being in this program makes me want to learn more, like school I learned because I had to not because I wanted to, but here they taught you the benefits of learning something new and how you can apply it to other things, so ever since, like this year I've had better grades than I did last year.

College Readiness. CAP staff emphasizes the importance of getting a college education and interns discussed how they felt supported in planning to attend college.

Interns shared:

Right now, I'm undecided about what I want to be. I'm leaning towards musician, another way that they help, some of the staff helps you with your college applications, they help you fill out applications for scholarships and they look for colleges that will help you, best in teaching you what you want to learn. They also teach you ways to get financial aid and stuff like that to help get you through college.

They provide us with help to getting into college, they help us fill out applications, scholarships and they help us prepare so we can get into college easily, and it will be a smooth process going from high school into college.

Interns stressed how CAP promoted higher education and how the skills learned at CAP helped them decide which career path to pursue. CAP staff's reinforcement about college as a desirable and feasible option for interns helped them to discuss how their current training is connected to their decision to attend college. Youth reported:

Another thing that helps with college, if you are thinking about majoring in filming and the things they teach here, when you go through the program it actually counts for a year in college.

I have always been into the arts, so working here it's great I do everything I love to do and it improves my skill in every way. So if I wanted to get into an art college, I think I would be really advanced with all the skills I know.

Still deciding on being either a History teacher or an architect. If I wanted to be an architect I would have to work a lot of people. I would need to know basic concepts, if I need something done from you there would have to be trust. If I wanted to be a history teacher I would need to work with kids and teach them stuff they wouldn't even know

I want to finish my credits, I want to do all my social things and I want to apply to all these different colleges, I have to find out what colleges are good, I have to figure out what I want to do.

College preparedness complemented the academic support and the expectations that CAP staff had for interns that included doing well in school and aspiring to get a college education. Some interns expressed their fears and the challenges they faced being first generation college students. Interns shared:

CAP and the YI, something they provided for me was being like a second family. The way they care about you, how they want you to go to college, they want you to have good grades, they want you to be successful in life, to have a career, the way they respect you.

I think it's really good that they helping us as far as college wise and things like that. Yeah, it's well and good to have these mini jobs, but you still need college to have an actual stable support to build on it and stuff like that, and so my mom and my step-dad, they've never gone to college and I'm just about to go there and none of us know what to do and so it was absolutely terrifying and now that they are offering us these resources and 'we're having a meeting to go over this and meeting to go over that...' it makes it much more reassuring because we know that they are there for us, to help us. So it's really good that they have those things to help us out.

Traveling. For many interns, CAP offered them the opportunity to travel outside Long Beach. Youth were exposed to different places and cultures in California. Interns expressed their excitement of traveling to new places, connecting with interesting people, and being independent. Interns shared:

And then also, a lot of our parents they never been outside the country, they have never travelled. They never had the opportunity, the opportunities

Basically, what he just said, this great opportunity to go to new places and meet new people. Like they always say, a lot of people from our family have never gone outside of Long Beach or somewhere else. It's a good experiences, you get paid for it and they see you do a good job they hire you for another job.

At first, I didn't know what it was all about, until I started going on the trips. I been to San Diego, Sacramento, Yosemite and other places. I thought it was good. They take you out of school, and I personally think I learned more being over there and doing what I'm doing, actually you bond more with people, and they hire for another jobs if you do good on the first one.

Many interns took the opportunity to participate in CAP and travelled to places their families or themselves could not afford to do so. One said:

There are some advantages to working with CAP, I've gotten the opportunities twice to go to San Francisco, to go to L.A., to go to different places, so that's one major benefit of it, you get to travel, you get to see things. My parents, personally, my family doesn't have the stable income to let me go travel and yet I love

traveling, it's one thing that I really enjoy doing to get to look around at a scenery of a place I've never been to it's really incredible

Work Ethic. As competition for jobs have increased in recent years, youth that develop a work ethic early on are more likely to become successful in securing a job later on. Interns learned at CAP many work-related responsibilities such as getting the work done, knowing that they were expected to work hard, and that staff counted on them to act professionally while on the job. Interns said:

Along with experience and seniority, it's also the way you act when you are on these trips. Like if they see that you're acting like a little kid and you're messing around/running around when you're not supposed to and all that, they're not going to hire you again, but if you get better with talking to the people and selling the program, they take you to trips where you talk a lot more to adults and try to sell the program.

Now you know what to expect when you walk into an interview; you got to be face to face, you got to be serious and that's pretty much what we do here when we are with a client you got to sit serious and do what you got to do or what they tell you to do.

One of many positive benefits of CAP was that interns earned a stipend allowing them to manage their own money. Many youth expressed that through the money they earned they were able to afford clothing and other personal items and enjoyed the ability to spend money as they needed it. Youth elaborated:

Sometimes you feel bad when you're with your parents and they don't have money, "hey mom, I need money for this..." And the fact you have your own money you don't have to ask your parents for money, I can waste my money on anything I want. It teaches you to be hard working your whole life.

I think what we all have on our mind, working with CAP there's always some kind of incentive, there's an incentive to always come, if there's a job there's an opportunity and there may be a little money but we are still learning. I think that's been a major benefit for us, because not a lot of us can pay for a certain book or have a few fines, or have to pay for a bus pass just to get to school every day, that's one major benefit "oh, yeah, let's go train some high school students to edit

and film, why not put money in my pocket?” that’s a bonus, that’s one of the major benefits in having CAP.

Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem. One essential and significant aspect of CAP is the ability to instill self-confidence on interns. Interns become role models and shared their expertise with others and this increases their ability to feel good about themselves. Also, many clients showed appreciation for their technical abilities and this motivated interns to learn and become more proficient. Youth described:

Throughout the days, I got more and more interactive with the group and with the people, and I could tell that I was impressing them more than just doing it for them. So, then also, when you feel like you, when someone respects you a little bit more, you feel like learn something new from how... like you improved it.

I like making an impression on adults, being a kid, adults don’t respect you much because you are a kid, they think you’re a child and you have the mindset of a child, which is not true. Once, this young woman, I was helping her at a conference I was talking to her and then afterwards she was like “You know what? Your words, they changed my life.” The next time I went to the conference again, I saw the lady again and the same thing she thanked me again; “You know I’ve always thought of the words you told me, they always kept in my mind and it’s made me a better person.” That just feels good to know an adult is looking at you for guidance, so it feels really good.

CAP interns faced clients that had misconceptions about youth and doubted their abilities to assist them. Interns learned to be assuring about their skills and not to take some of the client’s resistance personally. Interns further explained:

With a lot of the more people... a lot of times with clients who are more like “you’re children, you don’t know what you’re talking about”... I kind of get nervous around them, because they are watching you like an eagle, and if they see you accidentally... if you’re typing something and you make a typo, they’re going to point you out on it, so I get very nervous. Like trying to show this person that I’m not just a kid, that I know what I’m talking about.

Basically everything overall, they teach how to be a good person, they help you with your skills, they help you get ready for the future and they show you the things you can do and never give up, you can always be better. There’s always going to be someone that will be proud of you. You know, you just going to work for it. The harder you work for it the higher you become.

As interns were exposed to a diversity of clients, they learned how important their knowledge and skills to others, and their self-esteem increases. Their ability to perform their task under pressure and to keep focus on the job no matter the situation was remarkable. Interns stated:

Some kids they be crazy so you can't stress out. So you pretty much have to keep your cool and ignore all that, so that they can be interested in learning it. In life there's going to be people like that, and you have to get them into liking it in a way. So you are going to be mentally prepared for that.

Basically everything overall, they teach how to be a good person, they help you with your skills, they help you get ready for the future and they show you the things you can do and never give up, you can always be better. There's always going to be someone that will be proud of you. You know, you just have to work for it. The harder you work for it the higher you become.

For some CAP interns, the skills learned allowed them to become successful once they transitioned to college life. The attitude and aptitude learned at CAP allowed interns to become assertive, self-reliant, and successful in their lives. Some interns shared:

Well, I was in a competition to see if I could get a scholarship to go to college this year, and I won it because I made a major presentation and I gave a speech about what I thought was possible for me to do this year and how I want to portray my ideas, so then I got accepted and I'm going to college, Cal State and City College, and high school, and I've gotten so much experience because of them.

I'm already in the university, and it actually does help a lot, because there are certain projects that you have to work in teams. So, for me it helps me during class, that first week we got in I didn't know anybody, so having the experience of getting to know people and talking to them and getting to know them, it helped me get to know my classmates that first time and to start getting along and talking to them. And, also the technology part helps where there are certain projects we have to do. I have that technology background so it makes it easier to get the project done.

(2) Improving Career and Technology skills

CAP interns developed technology skills in several multimedia areas: graphic design, web design, digital video (filming and editing), audio/visual, digital photography,

animation, and technology training skills. Besides learning the technical skills, interns learned hands-on and real life applications to the above skills, making their experience as close as possible to a real job. CAP staff provided assistance, support and valuable teaching to interns.

Computer Skills and Applications. Before entering CAP, most interns have the basic knowledge and skills in computers and technology. However, after being trained at the YI and further at CAP, youth enhance these skills allowing them to train their peers, children, and adults. The skills they learned at CAP helped to strengthen their resumes.

Some interns shared their experience:

So with CAP and YI they take us places and teach us things that will help us in the future, like media skills. Not a lot of kids can say, “oh I know how to make a movie” or anything like that stuff. So they really boost our confidence

They are teaching Web Design, later when you get really good at it you can charge companies to work on their website, for this and this much.

I’ve done a lot of trainings, where we go to different cities or states and we’ll teach kids or adults these programs, how to use like I-Movie or Garageband so they can go back and teach their kids. And it’s a never ending cycle that way, that’s a lot of the CAP jobs we do.

In the future we do this thing like, we work at after school site with little kids you go for four times, 2 months I think it is and we teach them about the technology. It’s like the basics, teaching them how to set up slide shows and little stuff like that,

The technology skills learned by CAP interns are also used to teach others. CAP interns become peer educators and also modeled to others how to teach technology skills.

For instance, an intern explained:

I’ve done A/V conferences, which is Audio/Visual, where we are basically the technicians there, the only ones I’ve been to have been in San Diego, I guess it’s from schools, people come from different schools, they are from after school programs that come and they talk with each other about how to make their program more effective or the school more effective.

Multimedia Skills. CAP interns learn to challenge themselves in learning and improvising a particular multimedia skill, such as web design, graphic design, digital photography, and even digital video filming and editing. Interns shared their experience at CAP,

First of all you have to go through the whole Youth Institute it's a Summer program and they teach you all the basic skills you need, such as video editing, how to make a movie, all that. Throughout the year you turn in an application form and they'll consider you for a job, you have to show that you're good enough and prove, not really worthy, but trustworthy and able to do what they ask you to do, you have to show potential.

Once you learn skills here, and your skills improve you can actually tell people about your skills, people ask you know, like a company or just people "can you make me a movie?" Charge them whatever, well I'm a photographer so people will ask will you take photos.

So what we basically do is, we're there to set up their laptops and so they can project onto a screen and so if they have any technical difficulties we are there to help them and assistant. Usually they last, well the last time it was 3 days that we were there.

Some interns have learned skills that not only enhanced their technology abilities, but they have put to use in their academic life. The confidence they earned at CAP afford them to adapt their skills to school assignments, to explore many media choices, and to advance their skill level. Interns reported:

With a lot of projects, like last year in my Biology class I had to turn in a 3-D cell, and the teacher was asking that we have all these little things, it didn't have to be too expensive but we still had to go out and buy things for it and so instead of going out and buying little pipe cleaners and stuff like to make a 3-D cell model, I just came here and used one of the programs to make a little video of a DNA model just spinning, and I sent it to my teacher with a little message, I'm poor. My teacher said it was creative.

After learning Photoshop as well as I, and I love Photoshop so much I will pledge allegiance to that program, the idea of becoming a graphic artist or even a web comic artist, cause I draw on Photoshop I don't really manipulate pictures much,

but I know that one of the staff here is a digital media artist as well, I've taken that as an idea of what I want to become.

The kind of careers I'd hope to pursue in the future... as I mentioned I'd like to be a Special Effects artist or digital media artist because I do love creating effects, I do love creating animations, I do like making videos, I do like the behind the scenes of cutting the video, exporting it and all that business, so Digital Media is one thing I'd like to look into or pursue.

The combination of technology skills, thinking outside the box, and the ability to apply these skills to academic settings set CAP interns apart from their peers. Since computers, software, and media artists were readily available at CAP, they learned new skills and also put them in practice almost immediately.

I mostly learned how to edit, cause I really didn't know how, because I would see other people editing movies and I would think it's hard but then I tried it on my own and then I actually liked editing things, and that's something I really learned how to do well.

I have learned, like she said movie editing and Photoshop, I learned a little bit while I was in middle school, but coming here and really like made me expand my skills and I got a lot better than how I use to be.

Belkin Corporation, the energy saver company. They asked us to do short films for a group of kids that were coming into the company. Belkin is trying to get the students to understand what ways to save energy and things like that. Going to Belkin not only broaden our aspect on how corporations and how big businesses work, it also showed us the energy efficient aspect of it all, you know what is so important about keeping our earth greener, so it opens doors for

Career Exploration. As a workforce development program, CAP was successful in preparing youth for technology and multimedia jobs in media, graphic design and computer applications. Furthermore, CAP was facilitating interns learning how manage the stress in a job, how to better perform it, and how to work as a team. Youth stated:

Right now I'm just in high school, and I'm just living the daily life of high school. But it gives me other opportunities to continue after high school and know what to do, and apply some skills that most other people don't have so that could help you in business.

I felt more like I was applying for a program, but then they pay you and watching you, seeing how you talk to people see how you do all that, and that's how it also felt like a job.

If like going to a technical school like you have to learn how to work with other people to create something, and they teach stuff here like people skills, like public speaking skills, like stuff that you need.

Another advantage of CAP as a youth program was its ability to offer opportunities for interns to explore career choices. In many instances, interns learned what kind of technical specialization they wanted to pursue in their lives; in other situations, youth learned which ones was not their strongest suit. This exploration enabled interns to seek and investigate career choices in a safe and supportive environment that otherwise would not have access to at school or at home. Interns explained:

I want to be a musician as a career, I plan to go onto college to master in music, hopefully master in music, major at least and this place has taught me different fields of it actually. Producing and creating our own, I've created a bunch of songs here, made a lot of song with people here. They've taught me Garage Band and Reason, stuff like that. Producing, there's a bunch of aspects they touch upon here, music and movies, that's a big one too, I think that is one to pursue, there's a lot that they do with music here, for me personally.

What CAP has really introduced to me, is really going into graphic design. Maybe I'll take a course in graphic design, maybe I'll just want to do communication. Maybe I will want to teach a class, maybe I will go into study Art History, get a major in Art. Maybe I'll become an art teacher or a history teacher, definitely keeping the skills that I learned working with CAP and shifting into an actual career.

Another advantage for CAP interns was that they learned that they hold technical skills, learned at CAP, which will help them to secure a job later in their lives. Having hands on experience and having demonstrated their ability to apply it to real jobs, interns were confident about their ability to utilize these skills once they are ready to seek a job.

One youth elaborated:

I think like he said, experience, we learn to be... like when you go to a job interview there's going to be hundreds of people going for it and you have to show them why they want to hire you and not the other people, so we kind of learn that here, and if you have it on your resume that you were a CAP Intern it might help you get the job too.

Entrepreneurial skills. Some of the CAP interns started to explore their careers choices, including starting their own business. CAP exposed interns to many jobs where basic technology skills are necessary to run their own businesses were involved. For instance, interns learned how to create webpages, how to create and manage social media such as Facebook or Twitter, how to create visual media such as digital videos or digital photographs, and how to produce printed media such as flyers or brochures. These skills, along with social skills, proved to be necessary for a small business. Youth commented:

Also, it teaches you how to make yourself look presentable, and make you be wanted whether they want to hire you or whether umm... you learn how to talk to people, you learn how to make yourself look good so that other people like you and respect you or they want to pay you for something.

I plan on pursuing a career as a musician, and with CAP they taught me how to film, taught me how to edit. That will help when I plan on releasing a music video, I can come over here and ask to borrow equipment and they will lend me it, rather than pay some guy to do it for \$300-\$400, so I'm actually saving a lot of money by learning skills from here, and they taught me how to use Garageband where I learn how to record, edit everything myself and with Photoshop it helped me, like, produce album covers. There's all that, plus I could help other musicians out too.

The career choice... being able to do Graphic Design is a help as a career choice as a professional tattoo artist, so I don't have to necessarily film everything I tattoo, but for example if I am able to do digital media artistry with the like Photoshop or any of the illustration program I am able to design my tattoo flash that I need or that I want and it makes it so much easier than having to draw it or having everything to scale. And having that for my future I'm able to go to school like this, so if I want to join the tattoo school they'll say, "can you draw flash?" and I can be like "no, but I can produce it at mass production faster than any of the students here and then I can get a job selling flash books or something flashy, that's how it could help career wise. School wise, like I said it could help me get into a tattoo school way faster.

(3) Increasing social and team building skills.

CAP was instrumental in supporting the developing of social skills of its interns. These included how to handle difficult clients, how to best manage their interpersonal relationships, team building skills, how to resolve conflicts, and how to solve problems. Besides their application during CAP jobs, these skills were essential for interns to use at school and at home. In addition, CAP interns developed a sense of belonging and camaraderie from their attendance to the Youth Institute (YI).

Dealing with Clients. Since CAP interns dealt with clients from diverse backgrounds, they learned to adjust their demeanor and technology presentations to many situations. They learned how to explain technical terms and skills to young children, youth, and adults. Also, they learned how to handle difficult clients and how to act professionally while on the job. Youth elaborated:

The way that I saw it, you really don't learn new stuff, but you learn how to talk to people. You get better at what you are doing, but you learn how to talk to people and that's something you really don't do just sitting here that's why you going to go out. It's a challenge I personally haven't done it before them, talk to these people and let them know what you are doing. You just going to open yourself and let it out, and you get more comfortable the more that you do it.

I think we're all nervous the first time we go out. These are people from, people who have multi-million dollar programs that are funded from the government and stuff and then like you don't know what to expect from them. Like the last San Diego trip I took, there was one person who was more willing to let the CAP kids, the teenagers, come in and help them with all the technical stuff, and he was really talkative and stuff.

When I've worked with clients I've noticed a lot of them are very uneducated when it comes to technology or programs, so that's when I use my technology skills, talking and my self-confidence and I'm able to teach them this, and they get pretty impressed like "how'd you learn all this?" and I tell them I just took a summer program.

Ability to solve problems. CAP trained intern to become proficient in their chosen technology skills and this in turn resulted in youth being assertive which allowed them to resolve problems promptly and efficiently. Interns said:

Oh yeah, that's where the professionalism comes in, you have to act like an adult and actually ends up impressing them more than likely most of the time. You have to slowly earn your respect, that's my view on it.

That also helps you hire you back, that person will tell your boss "This guy really knows his materials, I would really love to have him back so I can talk to him more about stuff," so they hire you back.

I kind of gained a technical skill, as far as, socializing with people and understanding people. Being able to talk with someone and not get too frustrated if you don't know how to do something, that's just one thing I have clearly developed with CAP, and traveling and being able to talk to someone.

Learning to solve problems in CAP allowed interns to use the same skills in their daily lives and solve problems at school, at home, and in other settings. Interns shared:

In my experience, working with CAP makes you look at every situation in your life as a problem solving situation, if anything happens with your friends you break it down and see what needs to get done, and you get it done.

I plan on being an engineer, so what it has helped me with is more of the how to look at a problem and solve it. Or how to look at something and see "ok, is this how I want it, can I lay it out, and make it happen?"

Conflict Resolution. One skill that stood out in interns was their ability to resolve conflicts among themselves and also with clients. Since part of their jobs was to identify and resolve problems, dealing with difficult clients posed a challenge to many interns.

They learned to act professionally and respect clients. They elaborated:

They also teach you that it's like the real world, in the real world you don't always like everybody so you have to work with them still, they teach that principle too, work together bond, if you don't like them- hold your tongue and get along and work together still.

Also the YI, it's like little things have a great effect, like one day something might happen and gets someone mad, people like... they don't like each other, but the next day be like a big ole' family again.

One of the benefits is the way you present yourself. You have a conflict with a teacher, for example, any other kid would whine and say something bad and they'd get kicked out, but if you are able to portray yourself, like if you have a difficult client you know what to say and how to say it and how to seem older than you are, so as you're talking to them you figure things out and you get your point across, and it's important to be able to do that cause then that way you don't get in trouble.

Team Building. One of the aspects CAP emphasized among interns was team work. Team building began at the beginning of YI and continued throughout the program. Many of the jobs youth performed were conducted in teams, directly monitored and supported by CAP staff. An intern shared:

Basically, as soon as you enter the program, they take you to a retreat in which they help you bond with each other, because they say you have to be able to work with each other, we are always working with each other in groups and so if we can't work with each other the whole group goes down. And so basically from the get go they teach us how to help one another and that's the way we actually get the jobs and we get along with anybody, because we are used to getting along with strangers.

Interns learned that team work required understanding the difference between down time and time to perform their jobs. This distinction helped interns to develop a sense of responsibility and accountability while working in teams. Interns learned that their work share is essential to complete a job successfully. A participant commented:

Pretty much when we go to this trip once were down with people, and there's people sitting down getting ready to get started, that's when you got to get serious and then focus on what you got to do. And once you're with the group, having lunch or whatever, you acting like yourself because you're not working, just have a good time with them.

Inters also learned at CAP that part of the program is to have fun and enjoy being young, they learned to balance work life with recreating time. Youth explained:

I don't really know, I know were out to get experience. They do what they have to do and we have a good time. Obviously when you have to get down to work, you have to get down to work, and when it's time to have fun you have fun.

The way we interact with CAP staff, it's not like you're talking to a higher authority or teacher, it's just another friend that you have, they have somewhat of higher authority but they don't flaunt it, they're just part of the group with you. Same thing with the students no one is above anybody, even if its alumni or new class, everybody is still learning and you are able to communicate with each other at the same level.

Peer Support. One of the many ways CAP was effective is the peer support that is fostered within the program. Interns became peer mentors to one another and to other youth, and they used their skills to teach other people as well. Youth explained:

I didn't get interest in the program until I saw pretty much other people doing it and from their feedback so it was a lot about "I'm in this program, you should do it, I've been to this place and that place" so I pretty much was influenced by older people, people who were 2-3 years older than me that had worked with CAP in the past, and so just their whole feedback brought me to having a particular interest in CAP.

It's more professional over here, we still act like kids all that, but when it comes to jobs and serious things that's when we have start acting like young adults and we going to stop joking around and behave ourselves.

Basically that we grow our own, we teach and they grow up and they learn that they want certain things, and they go on and they teach and they come back and they work here, so we grow our own and we also inspire people.

The camaraderie encouraged in CAP motivated interns with more technical skills to mentor and support interns with less skills. CAP staff modeled these mentoring by teaching some interns advance technical skills; in turn, these interns shared those skills with others. This mentoring cycle fostered interns to collaborate with one another rather than to hoard their skills and compete. Interns explained:

They also give us the opportunity, if you are able to, come back and maybe get hired, become a full on staff of CAP, and I'd be able to teach youth, at our age, the skills that we knew.

It's just weird, I grew up, we grew up around this program with people that are good as you or even better, so when you go to these people who never touched a computer before, and they're like "how do you open it?" and I'm like "you double click", so they can be very uneducated when it comes to technology, that's very surprising nowadays.

They have to bring the new young one in, they come in during the summer and they learn these skills, they need to give them that opportunity to use them in the real world. That's why they are using more of the new class, cause of the new ones coming in, yet at the same time they call some of the older alumni to come and help them adapt to that real world learning environment.

Change Agent Productions Contributions

Change Agent Productions had a profound impact on the lives of their interns. It assisted them in finding supportive staff that cares for them, finding peers with similar interest and provided a safe and supportive social space where youth could grow emotionally, intellectually, and emotionally healthy.

Beside essential technology skills, youth learned work ethics, collaboration, team work, how to respect one another and how to get a job done. Peer support and mentorship were essential parts of their development since they learned to share their knowledge and skills with others. CAP had three major areas of influence: (A) personal; (B) peer group; (C) Community.

A. Personal

CAP interns benefited by developing a sense of self-worth and confidence. Academic support and college readiness were two major areas of growth for interns. CAP staff expected interns to maintain good grades while at the same time they provided academic assistance and guidance to interns. In addition, CAP staff made sure interns were focusing in higher education and made available their expertise to make sure interns

learned how to fill out college applications, how to apply for financial aid, and how to use their lives experience to secure scholarships.

CAP interns found supportive mentors and friends among the staff and peers. Youth found adults they could trust and talked to on the regular basis. Also, they learned valuable life skills: conflict resolution skills, team building skills, and how to solve problems. They also were exposed to public speaking, how to train people in technology, and how to handle difficult clients. The combination of technology skills and social skills gave CAP interns self-confidence and improved their self-esteem. Many interns found a unique place at CAP where they could be young and playful, and serious and professional. CAP inters were supported in their personal and academic life, they were directed and motivated to attend college, and they had a place where they felt safe and accepted.

B. Group

At the group level, CAP interns learned how to collaborate and work in teams and how to get along with one another. Team work was essential at CAP and interns learned that the best way to accomplish their tasks was to be responsible and accountable within their work teams. The work ethic learned at CAP assisted them in appreciating their contribution to their team efforts while also bond with one another. One important skill learned was to distinguish when the time to relax was and when it was the time to work. This distinction allowed interns to remain true to their personality, while open to accept others as they were and focused on the job to be done.

One major benefit to interns is that they learned to share their knowledge and skills with one another and to those they were hired to train. Interns learned to be

patience, generous, and forgiving to their mistakes as well as the mistakes of others. CAP staff modeled how to be supportive and interns used this skill with their peers. The collaboration and support that interns gave to each other is fundamental to allow youth to make mistakes, correct them, and feel safe with one another and staff. Since computer and multimedia skills require repetition and new applications, the environment created by CAP staff and interns allow for learning outside the box and teaching new skills learned to each other.

C. Community

Long Beach, its public schools, and the neighborhoods where interns study and live benefited from CAP by having skilled and confident youth. Youth in Long Beach from minority groups face a higher danger to drop out of school, bigger challenges securing a job, and barriers to finish high school and access college education. CAP provided the technology skills, work ethic, and employment experiences to interns and this opportunity could help them become more employable. Also, CAP provided essential skills to support starting a small business, such as how to produce digital and printed media, how to use technology in specialized fields such as music or graphic design, or how to network with potential clients or collaborators.

A big benefit to the community is the development of young leaders that are improving their multimedia skills and helping others doing the same. The positive environment created at CAP is fostering a generation of urban youth who are technological competent and socially skillful.

In sum, CAP interns are in pathways to become successful by finishing high school, eventually entering higher education, and pursuing careers in the entertainment,

technology, and multimedia industries. Change Agent Productions is having a positive and meaningful impact in the community where their interns study and live.

Conclusions

In conclusion, Change Agent Production is an effective youth program targeting mostly urban youth from minority groups in Long Beach. CAP staff are teaching youth to become technological savvy. Youth are able to use the skills learned in the program in order to complete high school and apply to college. In addition to supporting healthy and confident youth, CAP is also assisting in developing a local workforce that is socially aware, able to apply their skills to real life settings and assume leadership roles.

The multimedia skills that CAP interns learned are beneficial for youth academically and will be advantageous for them in the future as they become professionals. Youth are benefiting from this program by being able to explore career choices in a supportive and safe environment. In addition, they are learning how some of these careers are challenging but rewarding

Hence, CAP is developing strong youth leaders with technology and multimedia skills that will benefit them beyond the program while making sure interns are earning good grades, learning meaningful skills, and completing high school. Therefore, CAP is positively contributing to the personal development (intellectual, emotional, and social) of interns, their well-being as a group, and to improve their lives and the lives of the community in Long Beach, California.

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