HOW CITY HEIGHTS YOUTH SEE THEIR COMMUNITY

A Youth Participatory Action Research Project by

City Heights Youth for Change

A project of the Global Action Research Center and the Somali-Bantu Community Organization of San Diego

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AUTHORS

Executive Committee

Salah Hamadi – Co-President
Halima Musa – Co-President
Boni Musa – Treasurer
Halima Mukoma – Secretary
Amina Sharif – At Large
Sahara Mkoma – At Large
Fatuma Musa – At Large

Research Team

Salah Hamadi
Isha Mkoma
Fatuma Musa
Halima Musa
Amina Sharif

Conducted Surveys

Abdi Ali	**Isha Mkoma**
Ahado Abdalla	**Lillian Ali**
Ali Musa	**Madina Maho**
Amina Sharif	**Mariam Sekondo**
Asha Ahmed	**Maryamo Mohamed**
Boni Musa	**Machair Amat**
Carol Ali	**Megene Abdalla**
Fatuma Musa	**Moulid Mugolo**
Gediya Mohamed	**Sahara Mkoma**
Hajia Mohamed	**Salah Hamadi**
Halima Musa	**Zahara Ali**

Principal Investigator:
William T. Oswald, Ph.D.
Associate Executive Director, the Global Action Research Center
wtoswald@theglobalarc.org
www.theglobalarc.org
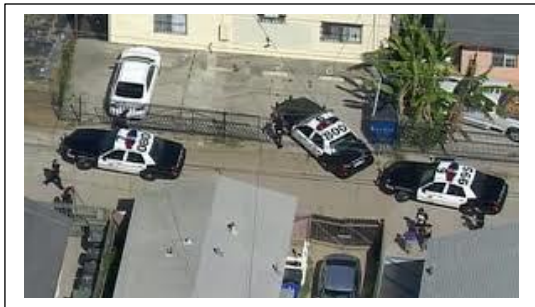
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was inspired by the words of Nate Howard at the 2016 Youth Power Summit held at Lincoln High School in San Diego. His message: ***"Tell your story before they do."***

Feeling as though their story as City Heights' Youth is not being accurately portrayed, this group of youth took a step toward capturing that story by surveying 300 City Heights Youth about how they see their community. Youth from elementary school age to college were asked about safety, law enforcement, education, cleanliness, homeless, lighting, etc. The following pages present the results of those surveys and what they say about how the youth see their community.

Highlights of the study include:

- The youth surveyed came from 24 countries and spoke 23 languages

- The survey shows the youth embracing this diversity as 62% reported interacting "Often" or "Very Often" with youth from other ethnic groups.

- Most youth felt supported by their teachers as two-thirds reported that their teachers care "A Great Deal" or "A Lot" about their futures.

- The survey indicates that youth generally feel safe in the neighborhood and at school but not in the parks.

- Older youth feel less safe than younger youth.

- How youth see their relationship with Law Enforcement changes significantly with age. Nearly all elementary school-aged youth reported "Positive" or "Very Positive" relations with Law Enforcement, while more than 40% of high school and college youth rated the Youth-Police Relations as "Negative" or "Very Negative."

- The presence of Law Enforcement does not make many older youths feel safe. In fact, police often feel like a threat, especially to the males.

    In doing the survey the youth found that, while most youth know City Heights reputation, they don't experience it as negatively as it is projected. They see the good and the bad – the

challenges and the potential. They see the media as exaggerating and perpetuating the negative image of City Heights.

Youth see City Heights as a dynamic community full of life whereas La Jolla is seen as a ghost town and the people in Kensington walk around in bubbles, isolated from each other. City Heights is their community and they plan to live there as adults and raise their family there.

HOW CITY HEIGHTS YOUTH SEE THEIR COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to City Heights, one of the most overlooked communities in San Diego. This survey is brought to you by a group of youth living in City Heights, *City Heights Youth for Change*. These youth realized that most of the residents in their community, especially youth, tend to not see all the aspects that make up their community. People get comfortable and forget that there's more to this community than meets the eye. As youth advocates living in City Heights, this group set out to get more insight into what really goes on in the community by surveying City Heights youth about what they see in their community. Surveying 300 youth living in City Heights, they found the community made up of positives and negatives.

City Heights is the most diverse neighborhood in San Diego. You can walk down the streets and be greeted in more than 23 different languages and everyone is familiar with one another. It's a vibrant place to live in. Compared to communities like La Jolla, City Heights is energetic and loud. If you were to walk down the streets of La Jolla it would feel like being in a ghost town by comparison. In City Heights people are more interactive with one another. You can always expect to see kids and families running around trying to make the best of the situation they are in. People are respectful of others' cultures and find creative ways to have fun in City Heights.

Although this project found that most people love being in City Heights, it also saw that the negatives can, at times, seem to outweigh the positives. After analyzing the data from the survey, it was found that the youth see City Heights as a place that is improving but still needs more improvements. People are expected to pay rent and live an expensive lifestyle without having the well-paying jobs to be able to do so. Most live pay-check to pay-check and must work with what they have just to survive. They don't have the luxury of spending money on things they enjoy because they are too worried about making sure their families have what they

need. Youth in City Heights describe it as a place that sometimes is dark and can lead to a hopelessness, a feeling that there is no pathway to a better life.

The youth see City Heights as home with problems and potential. Its incredible diversity for example, is both a strength and challenge. Since everyone comes from such different backgrounds, there is a tendency for people to stay with those they know and limit themselves from bonding and building strong relationships across those differences. However, as the survey showed, most young people do interact across cultural lines, especially when opportunities present themselves through school, community organizations, etc. There is a general understanding throughout City Heights that we are stronger when we work across our differences than if we stay in our own different communities. Residents also fear that City Heights will be lost to gentrification and understand that if they don't act together it will be impossible to stop it.

WHO IS CITY HEIGHTS YOUTH FOR CHANGE

In 2013 when City Heights for Youth for Change was just forming, the members were asked what story they wanted to be told about them. Their response was:

> Our story would tell of a group of youth who didn't like what was happening, so they came together to make changes to improve their community with a particular focus on education. We do not want those coming behind us to have repeat our struggles. We cannot fix what has happened, but we can change the future. Our story would tell of a group of youth who made their community visible to the School District and the broader community.

> It would tell of how we believe we have an important insight into the problems with education and by staying connected to the community we can bring about change and improve educational outcomes for the youth in our community.

City Heights Youth for Change is a youth-run organization committed to improving the City Heights Community through its work on issues that are important to youth and refugees. The group was formed by six young Bantu women late in 2013.   Feeling like they were being left

behind and that nobody even knew who they were, these youth decided to take matters into our own hands. Their goals are:

1. To be a youth-run organization
2. To be a voice for their community
3. To develop programs that support our community

These youth see themselves as part of the City Heights Community and are committed to raising the voice of youth – especially African Youth.

Since their founding, they have grown in size to a network of nearly 50 refugee youth and have engaged in several campaigns. They:

- Helped found the Parent~Student~Resident Organization that got the school district to recognize multiplle language and to provide interpretation

- As a large part of Mid-City CAN's Food Justice Momentum Team, got the school district to improve the quality of its meals and to ensure the meals are culturally appropriate for all students

- Helped organize and carryout the 2016 Youth Power Summit that drew over 700 youth focused on disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline

- Have been involved in state-wide efforts to create healthy communities

- Brought over 100 people to a School Board candidates forum for people running to represent them

- Worked to increase voter registration and voter turnout, helping bring City Heights voter turn-out from 22% to 77% in the 2016 election

WHY THIS STUDY

In October of 2016 City Heights Youth for Change helped organize and participated in the San Diego Youth Power Summit that drew over 700 youth from around San Diego County. The summit focused on stopping the criminalization of youth and the disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline. In processing their experience, the youth identified the message, ***"Tell your story before they do"*** as their greatest take-away from the summit.

Recognizing the complexity of telling the story of City Heights youth with all their diversity, the group decided to launch a Youth Participatory Action Research Project, a research

project designed, implemented, analyzed and presented by youth. The goal of the study was to document how the youth of City Heights see their community. Armed with this information, the group's goal is use what they learn to bring the voice of youth into the public dialogue on the development of their community.

THE GOALS OF THE STUDY

What was learned from this study is that City Heights Youth know the community's reputation, but do not see it as negatively as it is projected. From their perspective, the media exaggerates and perpetuates the community's negative image. The youth are able to identify the bad yet they choose to appreciate the good.

The purpose of this study is to raise important questions and bring the voice of youth into the public dialogue about City Height's future. The group's fear is that City Heights will be lost to gentrification and they want to clarify that: "**WE ARE BUILDING THIS COMMUNITY FOR OURSELVES AND OUR FAMILIES – NOT THE GENTRIFIERS!!**"

THE STUDY

In April of 2018 City Heights Youth for Change decided to conduct this study out of their concern for changes occurring to their community. Realizing that their story as City Heights youth was not being told and their voices was not being heard, the group decided to speak to the youth directly and document how they see their community. With that goal in mind, twenty-two members of City Heights Youth for Change surveyed 300 City Heights youth. The findings of the study are presented in two parts. Part I speaks to the challenges facing City Heights while Part II speaks to the Community's strengths.

HOW THE STUDY WAS DONE

City Heights Youth for Change formed a research team of 5 members who developed the survey instrument. This team spent time answering the questions:

1. What do we want to know from City Heights youth?
2. What questions do we need to ask to find out what we want to know?
3. Who do we need to ask these questions to?

The Research Team used the answers to these questions to develop the survey. Once the draft survey was developed it was presented to and approved by the rest of the members. With that approval, the members each piloted the survey with two youth who gave them feedback on the understandability of the questions, how long the survey takes and their willingness to answer such a survey.

Once the survey was finalized, the group's members went through a training to insure the surveys were given appropriately. The surveys were collected in the spring and early summer of 2018.

WHO WAS SURVEYED

Twenty-two youth surveyed 300 youth residing in City Heights. The demographics of the respondents are as follows:

- 57% female and 43% male

- 50% were in under 15 years old and 50% were over 15 – average age = 14.5 years

- 12% were elementary school students, 23% were Middle Schoolers, 57% were in High School and the remaining 4% attend college

- 25% identified English as their first language

- 55% identified English as the language they were most comfortable speaking

- Just over half (54%) were born in the United States while 46% were born outside the US – coming from 24 countries and speaking 23 languages
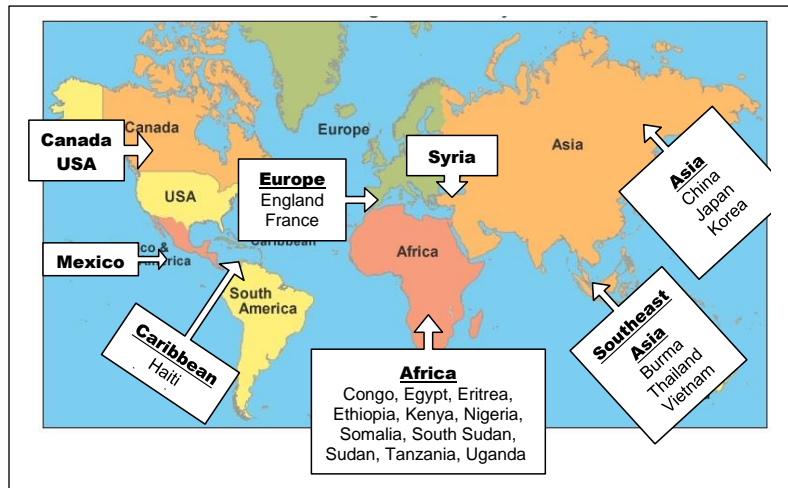
THE FINDINGS PART I: THE CHALLENGES

The analysis of the responses to the survey highlighted how the issues of cleanliness, homelessness, lighting and law enforcement are interrelated and connected by the issue of safety. The most lasting image of City Heights is that it is not a safe place. While safety has historically been a problem in the community, City Heights no longer lives up to its image from the 1980s and 1990s in spite of the negative media coverage. That said dirty streets and parks and the amount of homeless project an image of the community as a place where nobody cares, and the poor lighting make it feel unsafe and unwelcoming.

Related to feelings of safety are the youths' relationship with law enforcement. The survey showed that, while the respondents in elementary school rated community-police and youth-police relations overwhelmingly positive, a significant percentage of high school and college students rated those relations as negative. Older youth do not see Law Enforcement as contributing to their safety. In fact, police are often viewed as a threat, especially by males.

SAFETY

Figure 2 shows that while only 10% of all respondents reported feeling Unsafe/Very Unsafe only 37% of all participants reported feeling Safe/Very Safe. The graph in Figure 3 shows respondents sense of safety based on age and gender. As can be seen, slightly more females reported feeling Safe/Very Safe than males: 38% v. 34%. It also shows that feelings of Safety

Figure 2: Safety

Neither 53%

Unsafe/Very Unsafe 10%

Safe/Very Safe 37%

decrease significantly as youth get older. While over half (53%) of elementary school students feel Safe/Very Safe, just under a third (32%) of high school/college students reported feeling Safe/Very Safe.
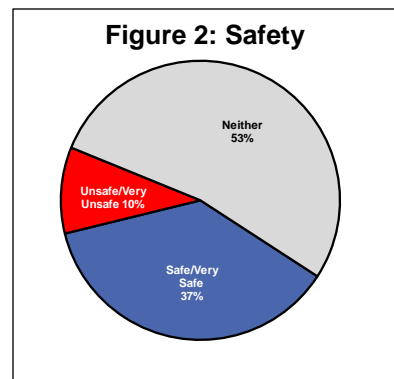
Figure 3: How Safe is City Heights by Gender and Age?

■ Safe/Very Safe	■ Unsafe/Very Unsafe

Figure 4: Safe and Unsafe Areas of City Heights

Red Areas where less than a quarter (25%) reported feeling Safe/Very Safe
Blue Areas where no respondents (0%) reported feeling Unsafe/
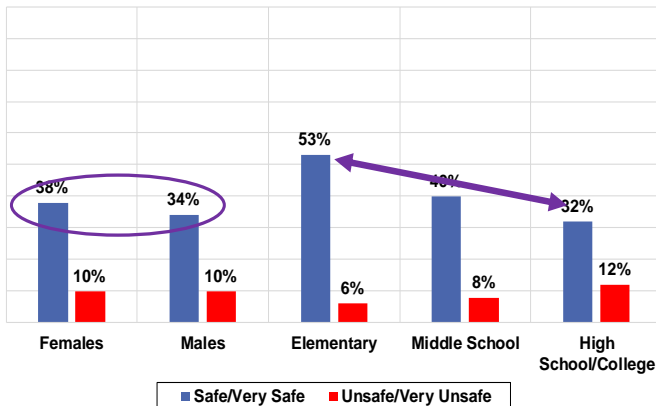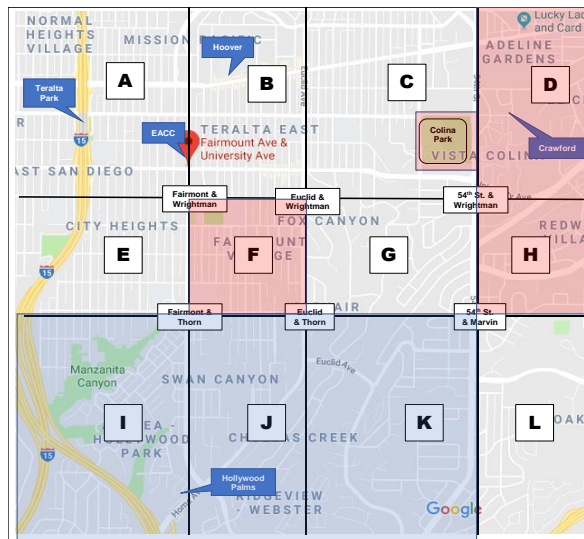
Figure 4 shows how respondents rated different areas on safety. While, as noted in the Introduction, City Heights has a reputation for being unsafe, the map shows that the concern about safety is not uniform throughout the community. The areas marked in red are places where more than half of the respondents stated they felt Unsafe/ Very Unsafe while the blue areas are places where none of the respondents reported feeling Unsafe/ Very Unsafe.

Respondents identified areas around Rosa Parks Elementary (Area F) and areas around Colina Park, Mann Middle School and Crawford High School (Areas D and H) as places where less than a quarter of the youth felt Safe/Very Safe. On the other hand, no youth reported feeling Unsafe/Very Unsafe in the southwest corner of City Heights (Areas I, J, K).

Figure 5 shows the youths' response to the question about places where they feel safe and where they feel unsafe. More than two-thirds (68%) identified their home and a third (32%)

identified schools as safe places. More half of the youth (53%) identified parks as unsafe while only 8% rated the parks as safe.

Ironically, the three areas that have been identified as Unsafe/Very Unsafe are also the areas of the community where police facilities are located.

Figure 5: Safe and Unsafe Places
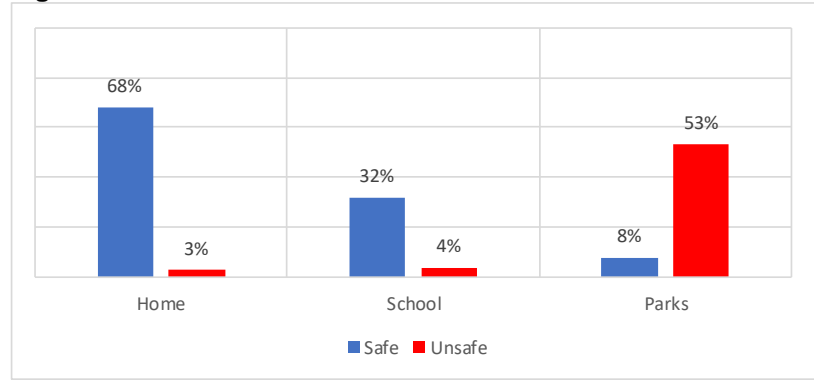
LIGHTING

When asked if there was enough lighting in City Heights, just over half (53%) of the youth surveyed stated there was NOT enough lighting in City Heights (Figure 6). As can be seen on the map in Figure 7, respondents reported that some areas have enough lighting (blue) while others do not (red). More than half of the respondents rated the areas colored red as not having enough lighting while the blue areas did. It is worth noting that two of the areas identified as not having enough lighting (Areas F, D) were also identified as areas where less than a quarter of the respondents felt safe.
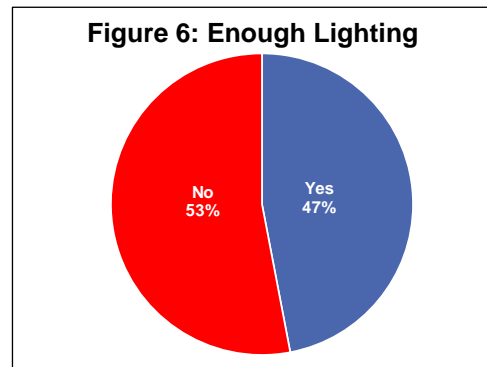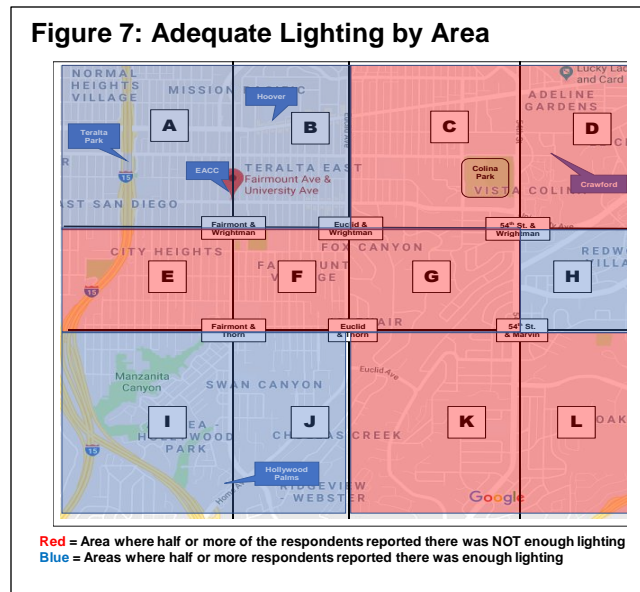
Figure 6: Enough Lighting

Figure 7: Adequate Lighting by Area

Red = Area where half or more of the respondents reported there was NOT enough lighting
Blue = Areas where half or more respondents reported there was enough lighting

When asked if neighborhood cleanliness was important to them, three quarters (75%) of the respondents reported that it was Important/Very Important to them while only 4% stated it that it was Not Important. In response to the question of how clean City Heights was, more than a third of the respondents (38%) said City Heights was Dirty/Very Dirty and, while nearly half (46%) reported City Heights was neither clean nor dirty and only 16% of respondents rated City Heights as Clean/Very Clean (Figure 8).

Figure 8: How Clean is City Heights
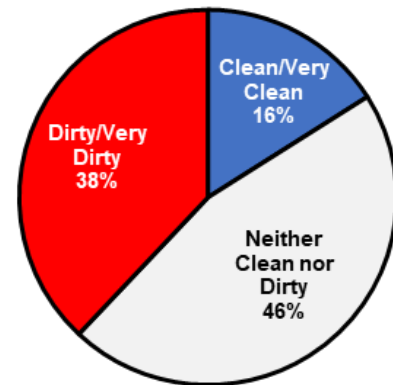
Where the youth in the survey reported that safety was only an issue in particular areas, the lack of cleanliness was widespread. The map in Figure 9 illustrates the community-wide nature of the issue. A third (33%) or more of the youth rated nine of the twelve areas as Dirty/Very Dirty while a third (33%) or more youth only rated one area as Clean/Very Clean.

Figure 9: Cleanliness by Area
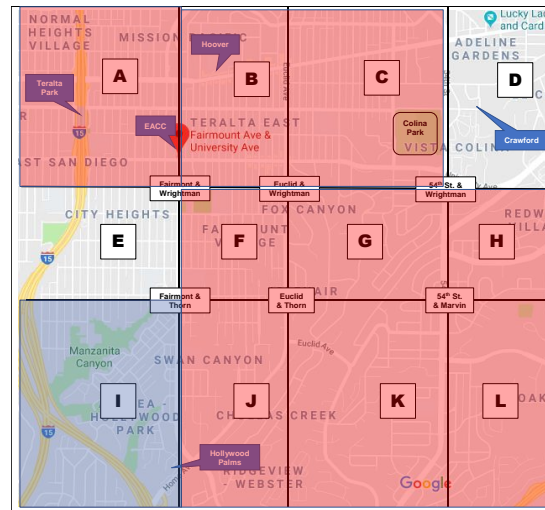
Red = **A third (33%) or more youth rated these areas as dirty/very dirty**
Blue = **A third (33%) or more youth rate these areas as clean/very clean**

HOMELESSNESS

More than half of the youth surveyed (58%) responded "yes" to the question of whether homelessness was a problem in City Heights (Figure 10). The youth who said yes were asked to rate how big of a problem it was on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being a Very

Figure 10: Is Homelessness a Problem
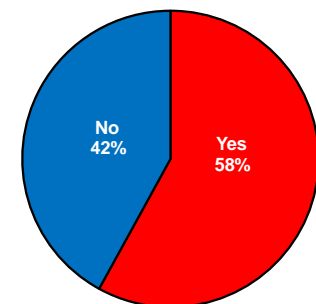
Big Problem and 5 being No
Problem. The average rating was
"2" indicating those who saw it as a
problem saw it as a "Big Problem."

Figure 11: Why Homelessness is a Problem

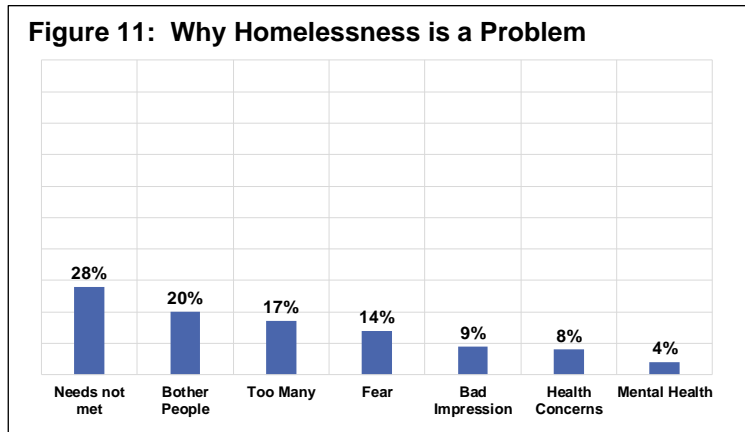| Category	Percentage
Needs not met	28%
Bother People	20%
Too Many	17%
Fear	14%
Bad Impression	9%
Health Concerns	8%
Mental Health	4%

Several responses were
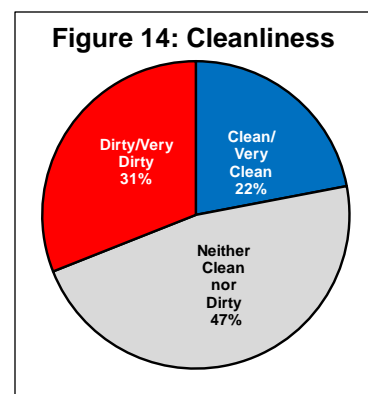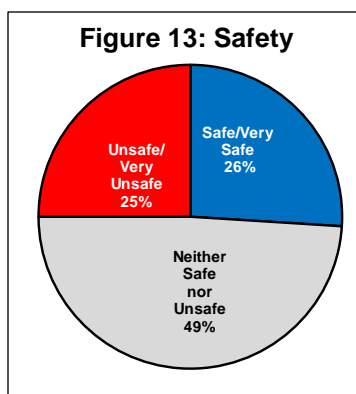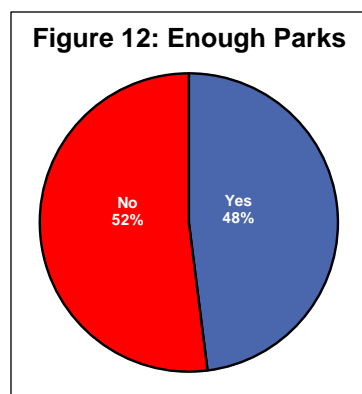given to the question of why
homelessness was a problem. As
can be seen in Figure 11, the most frequent reason given was that the needs of the people who
are homeless were not being met (28%). A fifth (20%) of the respondents stated that they
bother people, 17% stated that there were too many of them and 14% said they were afraid of
them. A smaller percentage (9%) said the number of people who were homeless was
contributing to a bad impression of City Heights and 8% named health concerns, e.g. hepatitis.

These responses indicate youth have mixed feelings on the issue. While many feel they
are people in need of help, they also have some fear and concern for their impact on health and
people's perception of City Heights. As pointed out at the opening of this section, poor lighting
in addition to dirty streets and a growing number of homelessness contributes to the image of
an unsafe and unwelcoming community.

PARKS

Youth were asked if there were enough parks in City Heights and how safe and clean

Figure 12: Enough Parks

Response	Percentage
No	52%
Yes	48%

Figure 13: Safety

Response	Percentage
Safe/Very Safe	26%
Unsafe/Very Unsafe	25%
Neither Safe nor Unsafe	49%

Figure 14: Cleanliness

Response	Percentage
Clean/Very Clean	22%
Dirty/Very Dirty	31%
Neither Clean nor Dirty	47%

those parks were. The pattern of responses to these three questions is similar to the pattern of

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responses on safety, cleanliness and lighting. Just over half (52%) of the respondents said there were not enough parks (Figure 12) and, while nearly half of the respondents (46%) said the parks were neither safe nor unsafe, a quarter (25%) said they found the parks to be Unsafe/Very Unsafe (Figure 13). Almost a third (31%) responded that the parks were Dirty/Very Dirty (Figure 14).

Stepping back, two things jump out. First, while 31% of the respondents rated the parks as Dirty/Very Dirty, 38% of the youth also rated the whole of City Heights as Dirty/Very Dirty (Figure 8). These responses would indicate that cleanliness is a community-wide problem. The responses to questions about safety, however, tell a different story. While a quarter of the youth rated the parks as Unsafe/Very Unsafe only 10% rated the whole of City Heights as Unsafe/Very Unsafe. These numbers would indicate that how safe one feels may depend on where one is in City Heights and that the parks feel less safe to the youth than the neighborhood in general. This conclusion is supported by the responses to the questions of what places are safe and what places are not safe. Figure 5 shows that 53% of the youth named the parks as Unsafe/Very Unsafe while only 8% named them as Safe/Very Safe.   The maps on cleanliness and safety (Figures 4 and 9) illustrate this point. In Figure 4, reflecting cleanliness, most of City Heights is identified as being Dirty/Very Dirty while in Figure 9, reflecting safety, only two areas are highlighted as Unsafe/Very Unsafe. Interestingly the two sections identified both contain parks, i.e., Officer Jeremy Henwood Memorial/Highland and Landis Park (Area F) and Colina Park (Area C/D).

In looking at the three maps together there is only one area that is identified as having poor lighting, as Dirty/Very Dirty and as Unsafe/Very Unsafe, i.e., Area F. It is also in this area where many homeless people congregate, especially in Officer Jeremy Henwood Memorial Park.
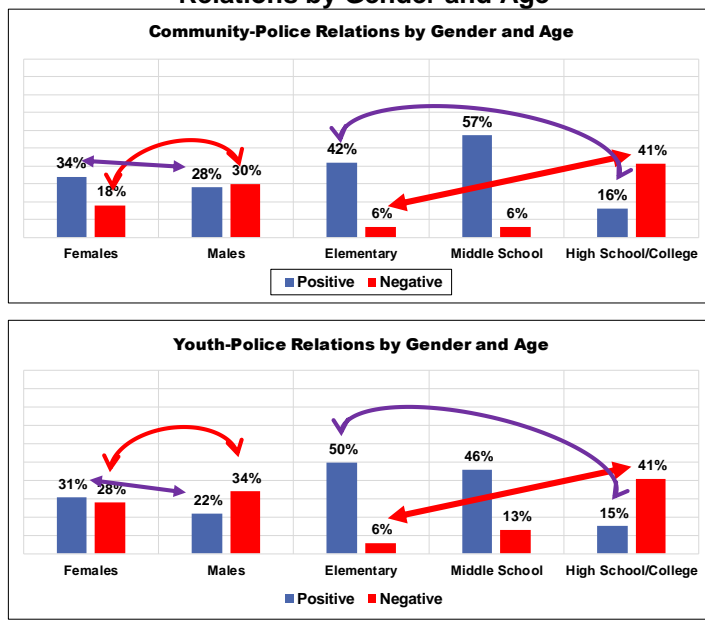
Any conversation on safety must include one on Law Enforcement. This survey asked youth to rate Community-Police Relations and Youth-Police Relations on a scale from Very

Figure 15: Police Relations with the Community & Youth

Youth-Police Relations
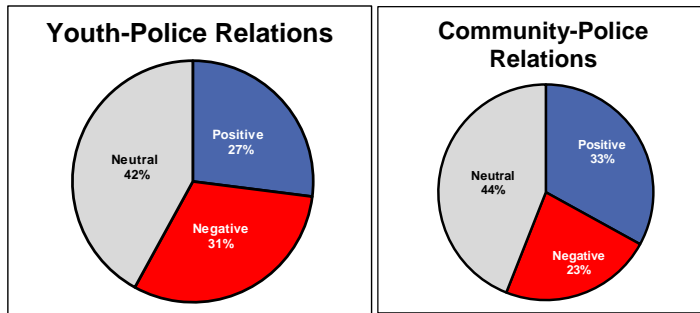
Positive to Very Negative. As indicated earlier, how youth feel about their relationship and the community's relationship with police differs by age and gender. The picture projected by the survey is a complex one.

As can be seen in Figures 15, one-third of the youth surveyed (33%) rated Community-Police Relations as Positive/Very Positive, while almost a quarter (23%) rated Community-Police Relations as Negative/Very Negative. A little more than a quarter (27%) of the youth surveyed rated Youth-Police Relations as Positive/Very Positive, while nearly a third (31%) rated Youth-Police Relations as Negative/Very Negative. These

Positive 27%
Neutral 42%
Negative 31%

Community-Police Relations

Positive 33%
Neutral 44%
Negative 23%

Figure 16: Community-Police & Community Youth Relations by Gender and Age

Community-Police Relations by Gender and Age

Females: 34% / 18%
Males: 28% / 30%
Elementary: 42% / 6%
Middle School: 57% / 6%
High School/College: 16% / 41%

■ Positive ■ Negative

Youth-Police Relations by Gender and Age

Females: 31% / 28%
Males: 22% / 34%
Elementary: 50% / 6%
Middle School: 46% / 13%
High School/College: 15% / 41%

■ Positive ■ Negative

responses indicate that the youth see their relationship with police somewhat less positive than the community's relationship with police.

Looking at the graphs in Figure 16 you can see in both Community-Police and in Youth-Police Relations that more females view these relationships positively than males (34% v. 28%; 31% v.22% respectively). Additionally, more males view Community-Police Relations as

negative than females (30% v. 18%). The difference between males and females, however, is less when rating Youth-Police Relations (34% to 28%). More females rate Youth-Police Relations negatively than they do Community-Police Relations (18% v. 28%).

Age also influences how youth rated both Community-Police Relations and Youth-Police Relations. Youth in the 8th grade and below rated both sets of relationships more positively and less negatively than youth in 9th grade or above. In particular

- o Half (50%) of the youth below high school rated Community-Police Relations as Positive/Very Positive while only 16% of youth in high school or college rated the relations as Positive/Very Positive.
- o Nearly half (48%) of youth below high school rated Youth-Police Relations as Positive/Very Positive while only 15% of the youth in high school or college rated relations as Positive/Very Positive.
- o Only 6% of youth below high school rated Community-Police Relations as Negative/Very Negative while 41% of youth in high school or college rated the relations as Negative/Very Negative.
- o Similarly, 6% of youth below high school rated Youth-Police Relations as Negative/Very Negative while 41% of youth in high school or college rated the relations as Negative/Very Negative.

These responses indicate that the youth have an ambivalent relationship with law enforcement. The fact that more females rated the relations between police and the community and youth as Positive/Very Positive than males is a reflection of the different ways police interact with males and females and the different roles they play with each gender. Police are generally seen as playing a protective role with females while they are seen as viewing males with suspicion.   Youth spoke of how police tend to react to a group of girls by waving, saying hello, chatting, etc. while they "mad-dog" a similar group of boys, as they drive by slowly and stare suspiciously at the group.

The difference in feelings toward law enforcement across age groups reflects how elementary and middle school youth are introduced to police. Through programs like Safety Patrol and PAL, police are introduced as adults who are part of the community and someone there to protect and help them. The significant increase in those seeing the relationship as

negative from elementary to high school (6% to 41%) indicates that something happens that sours this relationship by the time the youth are becoming young adults.

THE FINDINGS PART II: THE STRENGTHS

As noted in the Introduction, City Heights is a place with negatives and positives. While the findings above provide a picture of the challenges, the following set of findings provide a picture of the Community's strengths. The youth find City Heights to be a dynamic, active place where you "can always expect to see kids and families running around trying to make the best of the situation they are in." In addition to seeing people out and interacting, they also see a community where people "are respectful of others' cultures and find creative ways to have fun in City Heights." While this community is seen from the outside as a dangerous place, there are many youths who say they only feel safe in City Heights. Muslim girls, for example, have spoken of only being harassed for wearing a hijab *outside* of City Heights.

Two sets of data support this sense of City Heights, i.e., youth responses to questions about their education and how much they interact with youth outside their own ethnic, cultural, linguistic community.
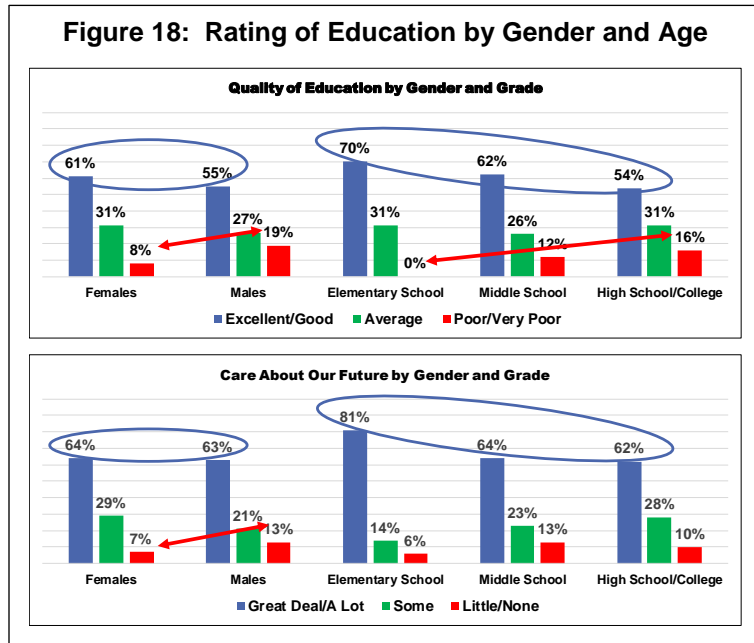
EDUCATION

Youth were asked to rate both the quality of their education and how much they felt the teachers cared about their future. As can be seen in Figure 17, most

Figure 17: Quality and Level of Caring in Education

Quality of Education

How Much Teachers Care About Our Future

of the youth surveyed rated their education very positively - 58% of all youth rated the quality of education in City Heights as Good/Excellent and 65% of all youth rated their teachers as caring for their future A Great Deal/A Lot.
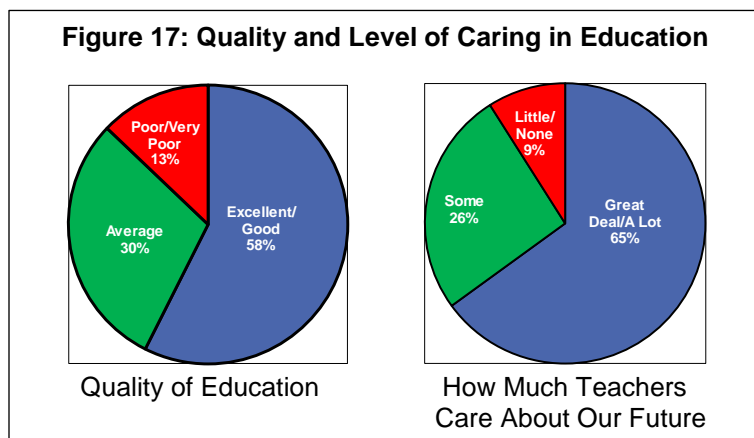
Looking at how youth rated their education based on their gender or age show some interesting patterns. As can be seen in Figure 18, 61% of females and 55% of males rate the quality of education Good/Excellent and 64% of females and 63% of males say their teachers care a Great Deal/A Lot about their future, showing little difference between males and females on these two questions. However, males are twice as likely to rate their education as Poor/Very Poor than females (19% to 8%) and the amount that teachers care about their future Little/None (13% to 7%).

Figure 18: Rating of Education by Gender and Age

While there appears to be little difference between males and females on the rating of schools, age does seem to matter. Figure 18 shows that 70% of elementary school respondents rated their education as Good/Excellent compared to 62% of respondents in middle school and 54% in high school/college.
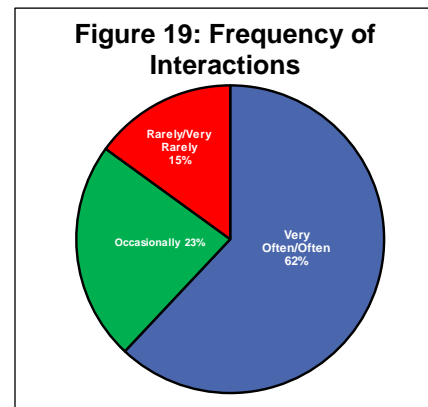
A similar pattern exists in responses to the question of how much teachers "care about your future." More elementary school respondents rated their teachers as caring a Lot/A Great Deal than middle school and high school respondents – 81%, 64%, 62% respectively. Additionally, while none of the elementary school respondents rated their education as Poor/Very Poor, 12% of middle school and 16% of high school/college respondents did. While responses indicate that most youth view their schools positively, it is important to note that the percentage of students giving their education high ratings drops as they go through the system.

It is also important to note that when asked to name safe places in the community, 32% of the students named school, second only to home (see Figure 5)

Recognizing the diversity of City Heights and the percentage of youth who come from another part of the world, the survey asked the youth how often they interacted with youth from different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and where those interactions take place. As can be seen in Figure 19, nearly two-thirds (62%) said they interact "Often" or "Very Often" while only 15% reported interacting "Rarely" or "Very Rarely."

Figure 20 shows the percentage of students who interact across ethnic lines by age and gender as well as where those interactions take place. Females reported interacting with youth from other ethnic backgrounds more than males - 67% v. 56%. More elementary school respondents reported interacting with youth from other ethnic

Figure 19: Frequency of Interactions

groups than middle and high school/college respondents – 78% v. 59% and 63% respectively. The high percentage of students interacting with other students from different ethnic communities validates the sense of City Heights as a place with a great deal of respectful interaction.

Figure 20 also shows response to the question of where the youth interact. As can be seen, 40% of the respondents identified School, Sports and Clubs. Nearly a third (30%) reported that they just talk to youth of other ethnic

Figure 20: Places of Interaction and Frequency by Age and Gender
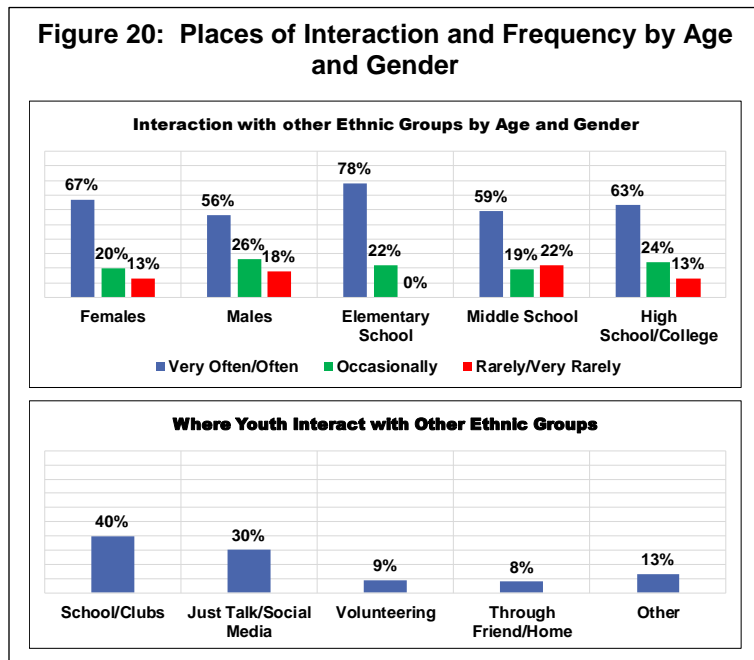
backgrounds or interact through social media. Nine percent of respondents said they met youth from other ethnic backgrounds while volunteering at school or in the community and 8% said

they met youth from other ethnic backgrounds through friends or because they live near each other. An important note to add to these findings is that the youth who conducted the survey reported that the respondents never expressed bad feelings or prejudice toward the other ethnic groups whether they interacted with them or not. Even though most young people do tend to hang-out with other youth like them, they do so because it is comfortable and easy, not because of "bad feelings" or negative stereotypes among the groups.

City Heights is a unique place for a number of reasons. While its diversity stands out in comparison to most places, it is how those different ethnic communities interact that makes City Heights unique. It is a community that has developed a sense of itself as an international community that respects and supports its neighbors regardless of any differences. It is the tendency of residents to see their common interest as neighbors and to actively support and cooperate with each other across the differences rather than compete. It is not uncommon to see the entire community come out in support of a particular ethnic, cultural, linguistic community if they perceive it as under attack by an outside force. How the community came together in support of its immigrant and refugee neighbors when the federal government began to threaten them is an example. Community meetings to show support and how to advocate were held and emergency response networks were set up to come to the aid of anyone being targeted. Perhaps the greatest compliment for City Heights is how many of its youth plan to raise their children in City Heights

CONCLUSIONS

Youth know community's reputation – but don't experience it as negatively as it is projected. They see the good and the bad – the challenges and the potential. They see the media as exaggerating and perpetuating the negative image of City Heights. Youth see City Heights as their community and plan to live there as adults and raise their family there. For that reason, they want a voice and to be able to shape the community they live in.

The youth see City Height as special. An extremely diverse community that cooperates and collaborates rather than competes. They see the community's strength is in its diversity and its ability to work together across those differences, increasing their ability to make an impact. Again, the youth have a sense that City Heights is their community and, when facing the negativity, they ten to pull together with other youth and work to make the situation better. Perhaps most importantly, the youth feel that as immigrant and refuges they play a crucially important role and want to see it recognized and expanded.

THE GLOBAL ACTION RESEARCH CENTER

The Global ARC holds *a **vision of healthy, resilient communities where people learn and work together and life flourishes in just and equitable environments***. It works toward this vision by assisting communities to find, articulate and insert their voice into the public dialogue by connecting the grassroots to policy makers and researchers. It does this by:

- Building Civic Engagement
- Helping Communities Use Science and Technology to Address their Concerns
- Assisting Communities and Universities to Learn from Each Other

The purpose of this work is to create **AUTHENTIC DEMAND**. Authentic Demand occurs when the constituents are at the decision-making table, have access to the same knowledge and information as others around the table, have a voice in the decision (not just input), and are connected and accountable to an organized constituent group. The Global ARC uses a place-based approach with its methodology rooted in the principles of Popular Education, working to build on and strengthen existing social networks within a community.

The Somali Bantu Community of San Diego

The Somali Bantu Community of San Diego (SBCSD) was created by Bantu residents to meet the needs of their community. Their leaders created the organization's vision, mission, and goals and identified three main areas of focus: access to health care, education, and employment. Since the SBCSD's inception, the organization has successfully mobilized the community and made significant contributions through volunteer efforts.

Although known as the "Somali Bantu," the Bantu are a distinctly different ethnic group with a different history, culture and language than Somalis. In Somalia, the Bantu were mostly farmers and, because of their status, had little or no access to the formal institutions such as education, healthcare, etc. When the Somali government collapsed in 1991 the Bantu became particular targets for violence because their food stores. In response to the violence many escaped into Kenya where they lived in the refugee camps. In 2003 the United States government recognized the Bantu as a particularly disadvantaged ethnic group and offered permanent resettlement to 12,000 Bantu in the United States with approximately 500 Bantu arrived in San Diego in 2004.

> For Copies of this report Contact: William T. Oswald, Ph.D. wtoswald@theglobalarc.org
> www.theglobalarc.org