Afterschool Sustainability

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Abstract: Youth participation in quality extended learning opportunities (ELOs) results in positive academic, physical, mental health, and social/emotional outcomes. Funding is essential to implementing and sustaining quality ELOs; however multiple funding barriers and challenges exist. Understanding the types of funds available for ELOs and the factors that influence sustainability is critical. Through surveys and telephone interviews of ELO providers, this descriptive study identified and examined ELO funding streams, the ways ELO providers use these funding streams, and the barriers and challenges to sustainability. ELO programs often relied on one major funding stream coupled with nutrition supports as well as in-kind resources. Barriers to sustainability included year-to-year funding, transportation costs, reducing community partnerships, and difficulty in diversifying funds. Recommendations to enhance ELO sustainability are offered, particularly in relation to overcoming the challenges to diversification of funding resources and establishing mutually supportive partnerships and collaboration.

Introduction

Many youth fall behind academically due to multiple barriers to learning and healthy development. To improve youth outcomes, one key emergent strategy involves gaining control of young people's time through extended learning opportunities. Extended learning opportunities (ELOs) are educational and positive youth development programs, services, or activities that take place before and after school, on weekends, and/or during summers (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2005). ELOs might include after school programs, extracurricular activities, tutoring interventions, and leadership clubs. ELOs occur in both school-and community-based locations and may be funded through public and/or

private dollars. They often are operated by schools, childcares, and non-profit organizations such as churches and Boys and Girls Clubs.

Research demonstrates the importance of these settings. Youth participation in high quality ELOs results in positive academic, physical, mental health, and social/emotional outcomes. More specifically, ELOs have been linked to improved student attendance and school engagement, better work habits and homework completion, reductions in grade retentions, decreased school dropout, and higher reading and mathematics scores (Afterschool Alliance, 2013; Durlak, & Weissberg, 2007; Hamilton, Le, & Klein, 1999; Lauer, et al., 2006; Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007). In addition, ELOs improve a number of social and emotional outcomes for youth such as increased self-confidence and self-esteem, enhanced school bonding, and reduced problem behaviors such as aggression (Afterschool Alliance, 2013; Durlak, & Weissberg, 2007; National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2006; Vandell, et al., 2007). Young people participating in ELOs also derive health benefits such as increased levels of physical activity, as well as are less likely to use drugs and alcohol (Durlak, & Weissberg, 2007; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007).

Not all ELOs, however, achieve these outcomes. The degree to which ELOs create results depends on a number of quality implementation factors. Eccles and Gootman (2002) and others (Miller, 2003) identify essential quality components, including: physical and psychological safety and security; appropriate structure; the provision of emotional and moral support, supportive adult-youth relationships, strong social norms and values; and strong links among families, schools and the community. They also point to the value of ELOs in providing opportunities for skill building and mastery, belonging, and making a contribution to the community. Oftentimes the degree to which programs can implement these effective strategies and be sustainable over time depends on sufficient, stable, and diversified funding.

Funds to support ELOs support a number of different line-items. Staff and facility costs often constitute the largest share of program expenditures (Lind, Relave, Deich, Grossman, & Gersick, 2006). Funding also is needed to purchase equipment, program supplies, and food. Furthermore, sufficient funds are needed to maintain facilities and conduct program evaluations. In the end, research indicates that the cost of delivering high-quality ELOs depends on a number of variables such as the choice of program model, program location, program size, as well as participant's age and times of operation (Grossman, Lind, Hayes, McMaken, & Gersick, 2009). Various combinations of these factors help account for the lack of firm estimates of per-student costs. But overall, costs to operate ELOs may vary from $449 to $7,160 per child per year (Lind, et al., 2006). Elementary and middle school programs cost $24 per day during the school year ($32 per day during the summer); whereas teen programs average $33 per day during the school year ($44 per day during the summer; Grossman, et al., 2009).

Despite the costs, economic analyses show that each dollar invested in at-risk children through ELOs brings a return ranging from $8.92 to $12.90 (Brown, Frates, Rudge, & Tradewell, 2002). The funding should also be stable so students, parents, and staff can rely on it from year to year. In essence, stable and sufficient funding is critical to implementing and sustaining quality ELO programs and in turn better youth outcomes. Therefore, it becomes important to look more specifically at how ELOs are funded, as well as how these funds might be further maximized and leveraged to support ongoing programming.

Funding Mechanisms

ELOs often rely on federal, state, and local investments to support ELOs (Finance Project, 2007). The Finance Project estimates that the annual federal investment for ELOs or afterschool initiatives is approximately $3.6 billion dollars. In a study conducted by Grantmakers for Education (2005), a significant number of funders reported that their foundations currently provide approximately $150 million dollars per year for out-of-school time programs. Another critical element is diversifying funding streams. The degree to which programs are able to diversify funds (i.e., utilize multiple funds from different entities) impacts their ability to ensure sufficient funding. Understanding what funding streams ELOs utilize and the degree to which they diversify funding is therefore critical to examining program sustainability.

Funding Barriers and Challenges

At the same time, a number of barriers prevent the sustainability of quality programs for youth. ELO finance is often cited as one of the largest barriers to providing youth with quality opportunities (Halpern, 1999), the most common barrier is the seaming maze of different funding streams that ELO leaders confront. Leaders must figure out how to identify, access, and then utilize multiple funding streams (Eisner, 2008; Halpern, 1999; New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN, 2008). Some ELOs utilize four different funding sources, while other ELOs rely on as many as eight or nine (Halpern, 1999). Funding diversity is an asset because it enables ELOs to provide an array of programs and services to meet the often diverse needs of youth. However, these multiple sources and streams tend to have unique rules, regulations, and reporting requirements. ELOs must do more than satisfy each source's funding requirement, they must prioritize their objectives and target populations.

In the end, what ELOs prioritize, do, and accomplish is heavily constrained if not determined by their funding sources (NYSAN, 2008). For example, many funding sources (e.g., foundations, federal grants) support starting new programs or replicating quality programs but they do not provide stable, ongoing funding to sustain existing quality programs (Grantmakers for Education, 2005). Consequently, many federally funded ELOs for low-income youth are unable or struggle to provide the same level of services after their federal grants end (Eisner, 2008). Sustainability is then compromised when ELO program developers depend on short-term grants.

Administrative management capacities are also a challenge for ELOs. In particular, contract reporting requirements, together with low administrative reimbursement rates, significantly limit providers' abilities to effectively plan, implement, and manage cost-effective ELOs (Summers & Price, 2008). This problem is especially apparent in ELOs that rely on multiple funding streams. Place and local context also matter. In contrast to urban and suburban ELOs, rural providers face an even tougher road in trying to fund their ELOs. Specifically, leaders of rural ELOs often face lack of provider partners (i.e., rural areas may lack community businesses, universities, and foundations), limited tax base due to low socio-economic status of residents, high transportation costs, fewer funding streams that target rural areas, and may not meet the concentration of low-income students needed for some funding streams (Sandal & Bhat, 2008).

Thus, understanding the types of funds available for ELOs and the factors that influence sustainability is critical to supporting and maintaining quality programs. Data on existing funds to support ELOs and the ways in which those funds are used is a valuable place to start. As such, the purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the ways in which current programs fund and sustain ELOs and the barriers to sustainability. This might shed light on what funding streams are used and the ways these funds sustain quality programming.

Additionally the examination of barriers will point to recommendations to enhance sustainability of quality ELO programs.

Study Purpose

This descriptive study had two aims:
1) To identify and examine the diverse funding streams that support extended learning opportunities (ELO) and the ways ELO providers use these funding streams to sustain quality programming and
2) To identify barriers and challenges to sustainability so that recommendations may be made to enhance the sustainability of quality ELO programs.

Methods

This study included two parts. The first part was a survey of ELO program providers across one Midwestern state, which addresses the first research aim by identifying and examining the diverse funding streams that support ELOs and the ways these funds are used. The second part examines barriers and challenges to sustainability and consisted of follow-up interviews with ELO providers. This research was approved by the university's Office of Responsible Research Practices' Institutional Review Board.

Participants and Data Collection

Survey participants included ELO providers in one Midwestern state. A questionnaire was administered by the state Afterschool Network to their members for completion both at a quarterly meeting and through the Afterschool Network's listserv. Support staff from the state department of education also distributed the questionnaire to 21st CCLC grantees across the state. Data were then provided to the authors for secondary analysis. One hundred and thirty-one (N=131) ELO providers responded to the questionnaire. Respondents consisted of community-based providers (58.2%), school-based providers (25.5%), and faith-based organizations (23.4%). The respondents served pre-K children (24.1%), youth ages 5-12 (49.6%), and youth ages 13 and older (28.4%).

For the telephone interviews, the state department of education agency provided the researchers with a list of all the schools whose fifth year of the 21st CCLC funding cycle had just ended. Using this list as a sampling frame, fifty-nine participants were solicited to participate via email. Sixteen individuals returned the email. Ultimately, six (n=6) ELO providers participated in follow-up telephone interviews on sustainability. A graduate research assistant conducted and transcribed the interviews. The participants included a program coordinator (n=1), community organization representative (n=1), educational learning center staff (n=3), and a school superintendent (n=1). Of the six ELO programs, 1 ended after the 21st CCLC grant ended, 4 programs continued with some programming cuts, and 1 program was renewed for a new five year cycle with 21st CCLC grant funds. None of the programs maintained without any program changes after the 21st CCLC grant ended.

Measures and Data Analysis

In collaboration with leaders at the Afterschool Network, the authors developed the Afterschool Funding Survey, to elicit input from a large ELO stakeholder group. The first part of the survey asked about program information such as location of the program (e.g., school-based, community-based). The second part consisted of items related to the financial resources utilized. Financial resources used were measured with a list of 52 financial resources (Table 1).

For each financial resource the response categories included "currently receive this funding," "have received this funding in the past but not currently," "have never used this funding source," or "don't know." At the end of this section, one open-ended item asked respondents to indicate any other financial resources they use that were not listed. The third section assessed use of in-kind resources. One open-ended item asked respondents to list the source of any in-kind services or resources they have secured for the ELO program. The final section measured funding barriers. Funding barriers were assessed with a list of nine funding barriers. Survey respondents were asked to indicate to what degree they believed the funding barriers were evident in their experiences. The nine barriers included stringent eligibility requirements, administrative requirements (such as paperwork), funding that is year-to-year, reimbursement-based funding, narrowly defined allowable services, funding transportation costs, funding professional development costs, and evaluation. Response categories included "not a barrier," "somewhat of a barrier," or "a significant barrier." Survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Table 1
Afterschool Funding Survey Funding Streams

Education Funding
21st Century Learning Centers
Title I: Supplemental Education Services Funds
Title I: Grants to Local Education Agencies
Safe and Drug Free Schools Funds
GEAR UP: State Grants and Partnership Grants
Inexpensive Book Distribution Program
Arts in Education Federal Funds
Poverty-Based Assistance Funds
Safe Schools/Health Students Initiative
District General Revenue Funds
Health and Human Services Funding
Community Development Block Grant-County
Community Development Block Grant-City
Title XX Social Services Block Grant
Title IV-E: Foster Care for Independent Living Funds
Title IV-B: Child Welfare Funds
Medicaid
Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities Initiative
Health Schools, Health Communities
Drug-Free Community Program
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Funds-County
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Funds-County
Labor and Economic Development Funding
AmeriCorps
Cooperative Extension: 4-H Youth Development Program
TRIO: Upward Board or Talent Search
Federal Work Study Program
Job Corps
Volunteers in Services to America (VISTA)
Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
Multipurpose Funding
Prevention, Retention, Contingency Program Funds
Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
Community Outreach Partnership Center Program
Gang Free Schools and Communities: Community-Based Gang Intervention
Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP)
Weed and Seed Program
City General Revenue Funds
Local Tax Dollars

Nutritional Services Funding	
National School Lunch Program	
Child and Adult Care Food (CACF) Program	
Summer Food Service Program	
School Breakfast Program	
Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Funding	
Title V: Block Grant, Juvenile Justice, & Delinquency Prevention	
Local Law Enforcement Block Grants	
Private Sources of Funding	
United Way	
National Foundations	
Local Foundations	
National Business/Corporation	
Local Business/Corporation	
Fee-for-Service/Parent Pay	
Local Food Banks	
Universities	
Other Local Community-Based Organizations	
Revenue from other sources (for example, for-profit fundraisers)	

A semi-structured interview guide consisting of 12 questions helped guide the sustainability interviews. The questions related to topics such as the status of the program, sustainability, and partnerships. Example questions included "What strategies did you use (or do you recommend using) to promote the sustainability of the 21st CCLC program?" and "What barriers/challenges have you encountered related to program continuation?" The interview responses were examined by a content analysis of themes using an inductive approach (Patton, 1990). Conceptual themes emerged through the data coding process, as recommended in qualitative research (Glaser, & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln, & Guba, 1985; Miles, & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). To establish trustworthiness and ensure integrity of the data analysis, two researchers independently reviewed the interview responses (Barker, & Pistrang, 2005; Miles, & Huberma, 1994).

Results

Financial Resources Utilized

Table 2 illustrates the funds most frequently used organized by fund area (e.g., education, health and human services). Across the fund areas, the most often used funding source was 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) funds (62.7%, n=82). The second most commonly used was Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) county (29%, n=37) and state (21.8%, n=28) funds and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) funds (19.7%, n=25). 21st CCLC funds are intended to extend the school day and/or year to provide opportunities for academic enrichment, while TANF funds may be used to support afterschool and summer programs for low-income youth. CCDF funds are geared to support the childcare needs of low-income families. Among the nutrition funds, respondents reported that their ELOs used the Summer Food Program (33.6%, n=44), National School Lunch Program (29.5%, n=38), Child and Adult Food Care (22%, n=28), and the School Breakfast Program (20.2%, n=26). In addition, many ELO programs received funding and other resources from key local entities, particularly United Way, local foundations, local businesses/corporations, and local food banks.

In addition, ELO programs utilized a fee-for-service/parent pay system (39%, n=51), fundraising (21.3%, n=27), and community-based organizations (13.1%, n=17).

Reliance on one major funding stream, coupled with food/nutrition supports was the most common funding combination. Respondents whose ELOs received 21st CCLC often did not have other types of funding resources supporting their programs. For instance, only 11% (n=14) of respondents with 21st CCLCs also received Supplemental Educational Service (SES) funds; only 17.6% (n=23) used fee-for-service; and only 20% (n=26) also received TANF dollars. Only 20% (n=26) receiving 21st CCLC also tapped into general revenue, poverty-based assistance, or United Way supports. Respondents whose ELOs used fee-for service/parent pay systems rarely used other funding streams.

Less Frequently Used Financial Resources
Few respondents indicated that their ELOs used competitive federal funding streams that support afterschool (i.e., federal programs such as the Drug-Free Communities Support Program). Few respondents reported that their ELOs accessed juvenile justice and delinquency prevention and/or WIA dollars. For example, only 1.6% (n=2) of respondents utilized Title V: Block Grant Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funds and only 1.6% (n=2) accessed Local Law Enforcement Block Grant funds. With the exception of poverty-based assistance funds, respondents reported that their ELOs tended not to access potential funds within school districts. Specifically, only 14.9% (n=19) of ELO respondents received Supplemental Education Services funds; 10.6% (n=13) accessed Safe and Drug-Free School funds; and 14.4% (n=18) utilized Title I dollars in their programs. Respondents indicated that very few ELOs were able to capitalize on funds available through city governments. Only 4.3% (n=5) of respondents were tapping city general revenue funds and only 10.7% (n=14) were using local tax dollars for their ELOs.

A few respondents (< 5) mentioned that they had accessed other competitive, federal programs, not mentioned in the survey, such as the Carol White Physical Education Grant and Full-Service Schools Program through the U.S. Department of Education. Others mentioned funding from a Center for Disease Control HIV Prevention program grant. Still others received dollars from their national organizations such as pass through dollars within the Boys and Girls Club of America. Some sites tapped into permissible line items, such as the Ohio Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, in the state's budget.

Table 2
Funding Streams Utilized by ELO Providers in one Mid Western State

Funding Stream	% Utilizing Funding Stream
Education	
21st Century Community Learning Center	**62.7**
District General Revenue Funds	20.3
Poverty Based Assistance	18.5
Supplemental Education Services	14.9
Title 1 LEA	14.4
Safe and Drug-Free Schools	10.6
Gear Up	4.8

Safe Schools/Healthy Students	4.1
Arts in Education	1.6
Health and Human Services	
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-County	**29**
TANF-State	21.8
Community Development Block Grant-City	4.9
Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities Initiative	4.9
Community Development Block Grant-County	4.1
Medicaid	3.2
Title IVE Foster Care or Independent Living Funds	2.4
Title IVB Child Welfare	2.4
Drug-Free Communities Program	1.6
Healthy Schools/Healthy Communities	0.8
Local and Private Dollars	
Fee-for-Service/Parent Pay	**39**
United Way	22.8
Local Foundations	21.6
Fundraising Activities	21.3
Nutritional	
Summer Food Program	**33.6**
National School Lunch Program	29.5
Child and Adult Food Care	22
School Breakfast Program	20.2
Multipurpose Funds	
Child Care & Development Fund	**19.7**
Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Program Funds	9.8
Local Tax Dollars	10.7
City General Revenue Funds	4.3
Labor and Economic Development	
Workforce Investment Act	2.8
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	
Title V: Block Grant, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention	1.6
Local Law Enforcement Block Grants	1.6

In-Kind Resources Utilized
Many respondents were effective in securing in-kind resources that can support quality programming for their ELOs. Respondents reported securing in-kind resources in three main areas: logistics, personnel support, and materials/supplies. Logistics included facilities, space, utilities, and transportation (e.g., school buses, bus tokens). Examples of personnel support included college interns and volunteers (e.g., AmeriCorps, America Reads). Examples of materials and supplies included educational materials, copiers, equipment, cabinet space, access to computers and technology, televisions, and phones.

Barriers to Accessing and Utilizing ELO Financial Resources

The most frequently endorsed funding barriers were funding that is year-to-year (57.3%, n=75), funding transportation costs (53.9%, n=70), and stringent eligibility requirements (49.2%, n=64). In addition to these barriers respondents reported that funding food costs (37.1%, n=48), narrowly defined allowable services (34.2%, n=44), reimbursement-based funding (31.5%, n=41), and funding professional development (31%, n=40) were barriers to sustaining their ELOs. Importantly, respondents reported several evaluation challenges, such as trouble securing funding for evaluation, problems finding quality evaluators, and the need for professional development and quality improvement processes that build from evaluation findings.

Sustainability Interview Themes

From the interviews three broad themes emerged: facilitators of sustainability, consequences of limited funding, and barriers to sustainability. More details on the emergent themes are described next.

Facilitators of Sustainability

The origins of the programs appeared to impact whether or not the program was able to sustain after 21st CCLC funding ended. For example, programs with a long historical presence in the community were more likely to stay intact even after 21st CCLC funding was discontinued while those that started specifically as a result of 21st CCLC ended when the 21st CCLC money discontinued. One participant noted, "Love the concept of start-up-but is it working? No. Where is the viability data?" Therefore, some programs felt that newer programs could not sustain from 21st CCLC.

State, community, and school level support also was critical to program continuation. Such support included linkages to the state Afterschool Network and other local groups supporting afterschool sustainability. Other forms of support such as formal or informal mentorship and collaboration between school districts may be particularly helpful for new programs. One participant highlighted that competition for resources may hinder collaboration,

> "We are all working toward the same goal, we're all in this together and we need to be collaborating. The competitiveness compromises our student's education and development."

Buy-in from school-level administrators was also identified as critical to sustainability. The strongest partnerships appeared to be the ones where programs were not just asking for help, but trying to make a win-win with community partners.

Finally, programs that sustained diversified their funding as much as possible to access as many funding sources as they could. Some programs, particularly those in rural areas, believed they could sustain longer with continued 21st CCLC funding in smaller amounts over longer periods of time. One participant stated,

> "What we need is 50% from the state and we can get the other 50% from other resources. ODE needs to have partial funding in programs continuously in order for programs to sustain. It's a snowball effect in decline. By having our relationship with ODE funding, we are able to provide a 'leveraging effect' and access additional donations."

The leveraging effect aids programs in securing additional financial resources that could help them to sustain. However, some noted that fund raising-to access diverse funds-was not a big focus.

Consequences of Limited Funding

As a result of limited funding, some interview respondents identified ways of coping such as charging participants. However, charging participants often resulted in lower participation. Respondents in rural and impoverished communities did not feel they could charge for services at all due to the unemployment rate of families using the program. Others noted parents of younger children were more willing to pay a small fee as the program was seen as babysitting whereas getting parents to invest in paying for services for older children who were perceived as more independent was a challenge. One respondent described this challenge,

> "Charging fees is necessary, but it's easier to sell fees to parents with younger kids. Older kids don't need the supervision aspect, so for parents they are less likely to pay for afterschool programs."

Other respondents acknowledged that limited funding often times results in fewer program opportunities. One respondent highlighted this dilemma by stating, "If you can't provide the Cadillac of programs, you've got to make it work with the Kia." Another consequence of limited funding is that staff dedicated to making and maintaining partnerships are diminishing, which may result in fewer program partnerships. The liaison role is often critical to maintain partnerships as one respondent stated, "Really enjoyed partnership relationship, but they will likely deteriorate because of lost liaison role." The respondents observed that others do not have time to maintain these relationships in the way that a dedicated liaison could.

Finally, lack of funding to support administration costs was identified. One respondent received multiple local grants for supplies (i.e., Time Warner donated computers), but they did not obtain any money to help administer or sustain the program. Respondents tried to reduce program costs by, for example, reducing transportation costs by incentivizing parents to pick up their children. Families received $1.50 voucher for gas for every 6 miles they have to drive to pick up their kids from the afterschool program. Additionally, to help reduce costs, some respondents discussed incorporating high school students to volunteer to be tutors for the middle school students.

Barriers to Sustainability

Another theme emerging from the interviews centered on barriers to program sustainability. The respondents noted that community partnerships are reducing. These linkages "needed to happen" between schools and programs, but were less likely to happen or are non-existent with 21st CCLC funds. Diversifying funds was also a challenge for many. For example, respondents from smaller organizations found themselves in a constant struggle between limited funding and dedicating time to apply for and manage smaller grants. One respondent articulated,

> "It's too hard to go after the small grants (unrealistic to believe it's worthwhile) as they are too short and too time consuming and they create a false state of sustainability."

This is further complicated by the fact that certain resources will only cover a particular percentage of program costs. For example, the area United Way will not pay for more than 25% of a program.

Interview respondents from rural areas noted unique struggles to sustainability. Rural communities felt that there was too much emphasis from 21st CCLC on getting sustainability

support from local industries and businesses, which is often not a viable option in isolated areas. One respondent put this struggle into words,

> "We have a great need for our program, however, with unfunded mandates and reduced funding across the board in education, such programs are difficult to sustain without outside help. In our area, that help is just not there. Mom and Pop businesses are struggling and strapped although many are very generous in providing support to other programs."

Discussion

This research provides key insights into the funding nuances associated with ELOs. Given the importance of ELOs, especially those that are implemented with fidelity and sustained over time, an understanding of the types of funding used, the challenges and barriers, and the facilitators of long term sustainability is imperative. There are several key findings.

Respondents reported that their ELOs primarily relied on one major funding stream coupled with food/nutrition resources; therefore most respondents reported that their ELOs did not diversify their funding resources. Diversifying funding streams is critical to sustaining quality programs. This study identified a number of potential funding streams for ELO providers to consider. For example, respondents in this study reported that their ELOs primarily used 21st CCLC, TANF, and CCDF funds, which are all federal block grants for which states and local agencies apply through a competitive grant process. Further, while few respondents reported that their ELOs used juvenile justice and delinquency prevention and/or WIA dollars, these, among others (e.g., Safe and Drug Free Schools) represent additional funds that could be explored to diversify ELO funding resources. Respondents also indicated that their ELOs used in-kind resources in the form of logistics (e.g., facilities), personnel support (e.g., college interns), and materials/supplies (e.g., computers, technology). Partnerships with schools, universities, and local businesses are often needed to secure such resources. In the end, the findings point to a need for more training on identifying and securing diverse funding streams as well as cultivating partnerships to ensure sustainable quality programs.

Many challenges get in the way of sustainability. Both survey and interviews found that funding barriers and other barriers to sustainability exist. The most prevalent funding barriers include year-to-year funding, funding transportation costs, and stringent eligibility requirements. Interview respondents also identified barriers to sustainability such as reducing community partnerships and challenges to diversifying funds. While diversifying funds can help sustain a program, smaller programs have difficulty dedicating the time needed to locate and apply for the funds. Additionally, diversifying funding streams requires ELOs to meet a variety of enrollment and evaluation requirements from various funding agencies creating enormous paperwork responsibilities. This challenge is often compounded when funders do not allow for administrative costs to be reimbursed.

The interviews also shed light on the facilitators for funding and sustainability. These include programs with a long, historical presence, state, community, and school support, particularly in the form of partnerships, and diversifying funds. Although diversifying funds can present challenges (such as increased need for fiscal oversight and competence), those who are able to successfully diversify funding resources report that this contributes to their sustainability. For example, a few ELO leaders have been able to blend and braid federal funding streams to support programming. Specifically, some ELOs have been successful in utilizing CCDF and 21st CCLC funds simultaneously. By blending and braiding these funds, these ELOs have been able

to maximize the number of children served by their programs. Further, in an effort to maximize funding streams, innovative partnerships have been developed among community agencies and local school districts. In some case, local community agencies work with school-based 21st CCLCs to provide a specific component of a comprehensive ELO program. These community agencies are often funded by a variety of local or state foundations to provide programming to target a specific need or student population. By partnering with the 21st CCLC, the community provider has access to their youth participants and the ELO was provided with an enrichment activity free of charge.

Implications

Study findings point to a number of important implications related to sustainability. There is a need for diversifying funding sources to enhance program sustainability. In order to diversify, ELO programs should be aware of what funding streams are available. Specifically, ELO program staff and administrators need to understand private and public dollars, how to leverage these dollars, and be aware of grant cycles. Leaders within ELOs also need training or personnel support to write grants, build and cultivate relationships with funders, and manage grant administrative requirements. In particular, professional development and training on the grants that provide the largest amounts of dollars is needed. ELO programs also need financial resources to invest in personnel who are able to manage multiple funders' administrative requirements, as well as the integration of funds to support program administrations.

Establishing and promoting partnerships and buy-in from multiple stakeholders (e.g., community, schools) may also be useful in sustaining ELO programs. For instance, university partnerships may offer personnel support such as college interns while business partnerships might provide supplies such as computers or printers. In addition to in-kind benefits, partners may also supply technical assistance. In particular, personnel with experience administering TANF may provide technical assistance and support to local ELO providers around TANF documentation and allowable expenses under TANF would be beneficial. Those with more knowledge are often more successful with accessing the funds. In some cases a staff liaison who is able to make and develop these partnerships may be warranted. Grant makers may be particularly mindful of the challenges rural localities experience. For example, smaller amounts of money over a longer period of time may be more beneficial to sustain rural ELO programs.

These partnerships are particularly critical. Often ELOs are operating in silos, alone and not connected to schools, businesses, or community agencies. The best models are ones where multiple organizations and funders partner together in a comprehensive way to share outcomes and programming for youth. These seem to be more sustainable, as well as often make a greater impact on youth outcomes (Anderson-Butcher, 2004). In the end, the findings point to key funds that ELOs might use and a need for diversification. If ELOs do this, then there is the potential to build more sustainable ELOs that can be implemented with fidelity overtime and contribute to better academic and social-emotional outcomes, especially among youth that need it most.

Limitations

As with any study, findings should be interpreted with caution. Foremost, the findings are based on only a small number of respondents (N=131) from ELOs in one Midwestern state. The sample is not representative of the broad, diverse ELO providers in the state. Further, only one person from each organization completed the survey. These individuals may or may not know the entire fiscal picture of their ELO. Since there is no centralized database of ELO providers across the state, the ELO providers who participated in this study were limited to those who are

on the state Afterschool Network or 21st CCLC grantee listserv. Likely there are ELO providers across the state who are not on the Afterschool Network or 21st CCLC grantee listserv. Because they are not on these lists, these providers' perspectives are not included in this report. Also, ELO providers with program designs that do not fall into the broad "afterschool program" arena were not necessarily targeted within this project. Likewise, 21st CCLC grantees on the other hand may be over-represented. Most likely missing are perspectives from leaders operating other types of programming (i.e., traditional child care, faith-based, workforce preparation program, etc.).

Conclusion

Quality ELOs yield a number of positive outcomes for youth. However, sustaining such programs is often complicated by funding barriers, decreasing community partnerships, and challenges to diversifying funds. Overcoming the challenges to diversification of funding resources and establishing mutual partnerships may be critical to enhancing program sustainability. Ultimately, investments of time, funds, and energy may be fruitful to creating quality extended learning opportunities programs that sustains overtime and produces positive academic and social emotional outcomes for youth.

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