Six Youth Capabilities to Increase Opportunity and Equity
The Mission Impact Council

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*Social responsibility is an organization's moral obligation
to creatively and effectively invest
its scarce human, financial and technical resources
to produce goods and/or services in a way
that benefits the larger societal good.*

Introduction

"….to address inequities, it will not be enough to simply expand options by adding more well-run programs, proving a few more resources, or reforming a subset of schools. It will take a transformation of adult beliefs and practices within the existing institutions and structures that shape children's learning and development. It will mean building a collective sense of responsibility for expanding the possibilities for all young people, not just for our own children.

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"Foundation for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework"
University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, June, 2015

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What is the Mission Impact Council?

The Mission Impact Council (MIC) is a collective impact initiative of over 30 diverse grassroots and mainstream organizations that work together for positive social change through developing innovative and community-based solutions that increase life opportunities and equity for Twin Cities youth. The founding organizations are the Twin Cities YMCA, the Greater Twin Cities United Way, and Youthprise.

What are the Mission Impact Design Groups?

During 2014 and 2015, the Mission Impact Council convened a series of design groups with six diverse communities from the Twin Cities to identify opportunities and gaps facing their youth. The six communities were: 1. East African; 2. Homeless and Highly Mobile; 3. Latino/Hispanic; 4. Hmong; 5. African-American; and 6. Native American. Some of the groups were composed mainly of community elders or leaders. Some were represented by high school youth. Some represented a broad cross-sector of individuals and organizations.

What is the Common Agenda for the Mission Impact Council?

The Mission Impact Council synthesized the findings from the community design groups and identified three key areas that offered promise for increasing opportunity and equity: 1). youth development and leadership, 2). cultural competence, and 3). employability. The resulting common agenda is:

> *"To increase opportunities and equity for 12 to 24-year-olds that result in young people thriving as socially responsible, culturally competent youth leaders and employees that will create a greater Twin Cities."*

What are the Six Capabilities?

In addressing the common agenda and the three opportunity gaps, we identified six capabilities that answer the question: *What is it we want all youth to be able to be and do?* What follows is a series of two-page handouts explaining those capabilities, their importance, obstacles they face, and some sample ideas about how they can be implemented. The six capabilities are:

Transforming the Youth Development & Leadership Gap
- Leadership Capability ("Civic Smart")
- Social Competence Capability ("People Smart")

Transforming the Employability Gap
- Strengths Finding Capability ("Personal Asset Smart")
- Growth Mindset Capability ("Possibility Smart")

Transforming the Cultural Competence Gap
- Positive Identity Capability ("Self Smart")
- Cross-Cultural Competence Capability ("Culture Smart")

How Do You Grow Opportunity?

There are two sides to creating greater opportunities that are shown on the following pages. One side is the *internal capabilities* (what youth will be able to be and do), and the other is the *systems capabilities* (the opportunities that corporations, public institutions and non-profit organizations could provide for youth to be able to develop their potential and build a greater Twin Cities that works for all).

Summary: Six Capabilities to Increase Opportunity and Equity for All Youth

	Capability	Intelligence	What Youth Can Be & Do	Key Term	Community Voice	Research
Youth Development	**Leadership**	Civic Smart	Youth possess the leadership mindset, skills and knowledge to shape their life path and to problem-solve in their communities.	Agency	Communities want to raise youth that are involved in and contribute to their community (and worry too many aren't).	University of Chicago's research synthesis named agency as one of the three key factors to successfully transition to adulthood.
	Social Competence	People Smart	Youth form and sustain healthy, developmental relationships with friends, family, and within the community.	Connected	Communities want youth to possess competencies to navigate and succeed in a range of social contexts.	Studies show that social skills predict multiple outcomes including high school graduation and stable adult employment.
Cultural Competence	**Positive Identity**	Self Smart	Youth explore, understand, and integrate their culture, talents, passions, family and faith into a positive identity.	Roots	Communities want youth to know their roots as a source of stability and strength. (This is more complex for youth that are diverse from the dominant societal culture)	University of Chicago's research synthesis named "integrated identity" as one of the three key factors to successfully transition to adulthood.
	Cross-Cultural Competence	Culture Smart	Youth comfortably and effectively engage people that are diverse by race, ethnicity, faith, culture and beliefs.	Empathy	Communities value monocultural experiences but also want their youth to be exposed to and confident in dealing with other cultures.	Cross-cultural competence is repeatedly shown to be an indispensable skill and asset to succeed in today's global economy.
Employability	**Strengths Finding**	Asset Smart	Youth identify, grow and use their unique passions and strengths to succeed and to contribute to the community.	Passion	Communities want their youth to develop the unique skills that make them exceptional and special.	Search Institute found that youth identifying their "spark" yields multiple key positive outcomes.
	Growth Mindset	Possibility Smart	Youth love challenges, believe that success comes from hard work, and are resilient from setbacks.	Potential	Communities want youth to explore their full potential and not be held back by fears, stereotypes or other possible limitations.	Stanford's Carol Dweck's shows that youth with a growth (versus a fixed) mindset are more likely to fulfill their potential.

Leadership Capability
The Importance of Being "Civic Smart" for Youth Development

"How can we design and enact practices with schools, youth organizations, families and communities that not only prepare young people for the 'real world,' but that also inspire and equip them to create a better world?" University of Chicago (June, 2015)

What is a Leadership Capability?

A leadership capability equips young people to be proactive rather than passive about their own life direction, and to make a difference in others' lives. Although a leadership capability requires multiple important skills, young people are most transformed when they develop a confident "leadership mindset" for how they see themselves and their place in the world. As the University of Chicago authors write: "When young people have the opportunity to make contributions that are valued by others, they gain self-confidence and come to see themselves as capable and able to effect change in their own lives and in the larger world."

From Leadership Myths	To Leadership Mindsets
You need to be famous and powerful to be a leader.	I see myself as a leader.
I don't have much to offer as a leader.	I know, value and develop my unique strengths.
Most social problems are too complex to solve.	I am a creative and innovative problem-solver.
Leaders are born.	Leaders are made.
Leadership is about the big decisions.	There are daily opportunities for leadership.
Leadership is a position.	Leadership is a choice (nobody need appoint you).
Leaders take command of situations.	Leaders are comfortable leading from the front, the back, or the middle.

What are Examples of a Leadership Capability?

When programs share that they teach civic leadership, it's important to ask what kind of citizens they are producing. There are citizens that bring cans to the food drive (traditional citizenship), those that put on the food drive (participatory citizenship), and those that create social innovations that will make food drives unnecessary in the future (transformative citizens).
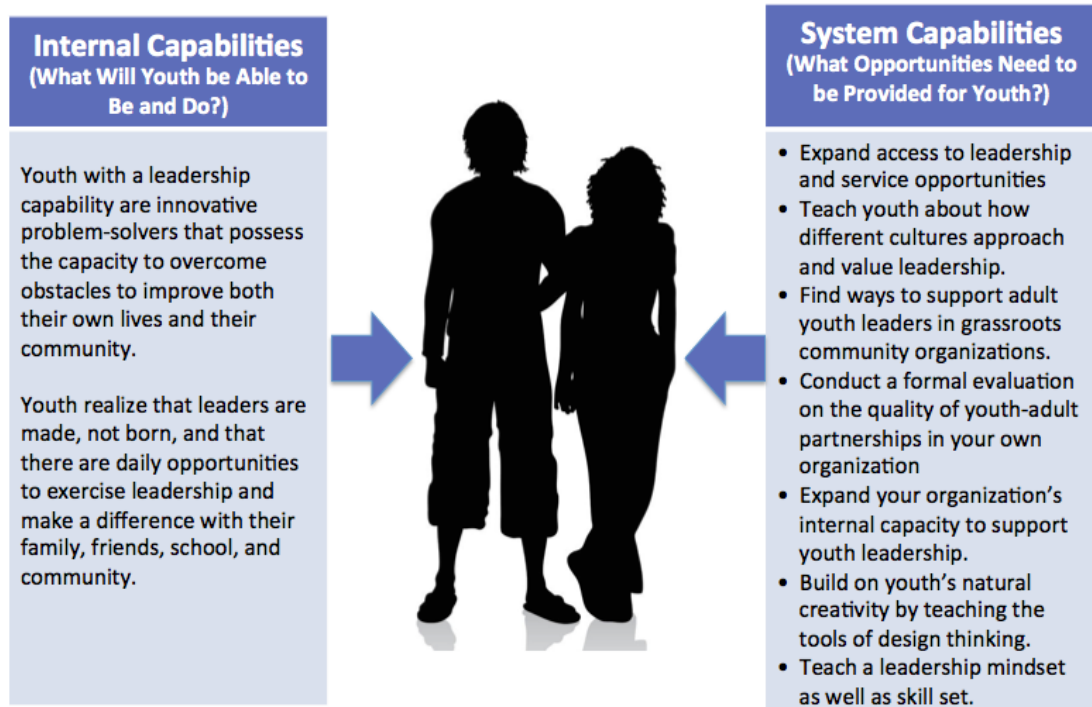
Why is a Leadership Capability Important to Youth Development?

- **Developing Citizens:** Communities want to raise youth that possess the mindset, knowledge and skills to understand and create innovative and sustainable solutions to the discrimination and injustices they face.
- **Solving Inequities:** Leadership capability can equip youth with the competencies that allow them to confront and transform injustices and build a a more equitable society (one in which youth development opportunities are more available to all).
- **Agency/ Assertiveness:** Youth can develop a sense of agency, voice and control over their lives and circumstances through leadership. The 2013 Minnesota Student Survey asked eleventh graders about their sense of agency: "I feel in control of my life and future" (71% said often or almost always).
- **Life Skills:** Leadership experiences provide a powerful tool for a broad range of youth development outcomes. Youth must clarify their own values, learn about the outside world, engage with diverse people, think on their feet, act assertively, and constantly both plan and reevaluate their progress in solving complex problems.
- **Meaning and Purpose**: Helping other people is not just a nice thing to do. It is integral to good mental health. Youth can gain meaning, purpose, and a lifelong ethic for service.

What are the Obstacles to a Leadership Capability?

- **"Cultures Define Leadership Differently."** Current leadership theories often reflect a Western- or European-influenced way of seeing the world. Often overlooked is that African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and other ethnic minorities offer leadership insights and tools that may be more effective in the 21st century. Juana Borda writes in "Salsa, Soul, and Spirit" about six common leadership principles in communities of color: honor your roots, a "we" culture, a spirit of generosity, collective problem-solving, leaders as guardians of public values, and leaders as community stewards,

- **"Leadership Can't Be Taught."** Some people think leaders are born, not made. A look at history, however shows many cases where people transformed themselves. Gandhi moved from a self-admitted coward to someone that brought down the British empire.

- **"Who Gets to Lead?"** Leadership experiences are often reserved for a small and select group of youth. Such approaches overlook the huge resources and insights that the wider population of young people have to offer.

- **"Do I Learn to Live in the World or Change It?"** There is a need to continually balance the tension between teaching youth to thrive in the world as it is and develop the skills to change it.

- **"To Lead is to Live Dangerously."** Harvard's Ronald Heifetz points out that leadership is a dangerous activity because it often challenges people's daily habits, loyalties and ways of thinking. People will often push back.

- **"How Do I Act?"** Youth must negotiate a right balance between obeying adult directives and leading.

Growing a Leadership Capability
To Increase Youth Development Opportunity and Equity

Internal Capabilities
(What Will Youth be Able to Be and Do?)

Youth with a leadership capability are innovative problem-solvers that possess the capacity to overcome obstacles to improve both their own lives and their community.

Youth realize that leaders are made, not born, and that there are daily opportunities to exercise leadership and make a difference with their family, friends, school, and community.

System Capabilities
(What Opportunities Need to be Provided for Youth?)

- Expand access to leadership and service opportunities
- Teach youth about how different cultures approach and value leadership.
- Find ways to support adult youth leaders in grassroots community organizations.
- Conduct a formal evaluation on the quality of youth-adult partnerships in your own organization
- Expand your organization's internal capacity to support youth leadership.
- Build on youth's natural creativity by teaching the tools of design thinking.
- Teach a leadership mindset as well as skill set.

Key.Resources

Bordas, J. (2012). *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishing, Inc.

University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (June, 2015). *Foundations for Youth Success: A Developmental Framework.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Kaye, C.B. (2010). *The Complete Guide to Service-Learning.* Mpls, MN: Free Spirit Press.

Heifitz, R. & Linsky, M. (2002). *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading.* Boston, MA. Harvard Business School Press.

MacGregor, M.G.(2007). *Building Everyday Leadership in All Teens:* Mpls, MN: Free Spirit Press.

Social Competence Capability

The Importance of Being "People Smart" to Youth Development

"Relationships are the forgotten work. You can't put them on your resume. It is difficult to measure outcomes. They combine hard skills and soft intuitions. You never stop needing to learn more. But they affect everything you are and do, including the shape of the world around you and even whether you live or die." James Toole, University of Minnesota.

What is a Social Competence Capability?

Youth need to learn social skills in the same way that they need to learn how to write a good sentence or compute mathematical equations. Social competence, however, is emotionally complex. There are a range of teachable social skills like question-asking and listening, but there is also the ability to negotiate the deeper issues that populate our daily lives including "matters of trust and loyalty, rivalry and conflict, belonging and exclusion, {and} secrets and lies." (Selman, 2003). These issues require two core competencies: 1). self-awareness (i.e. the capability to know yourself, your perspective, your motivations, and to be able to express them when appropriate); and 2). empathy (i.e. the capability to understand and coordinate other people's point of view with your own).

What are Examples of Social Competence Capability?

University of Chicago business school professor Nicholas Epley argues that empathy is our brain's most important skill: "At its best, being able to read the minds of others enables understanding between friends, forgiveness among enemies, empathy between strangers, and cooperation between countries and couples and coworkers." It gives us the ability to reach beyond ourselves and connect to other people. Dev. Patnaik's book "Wired to Care" shows how companies from Nike to Harley-Davidson use empathy as the new competitive advantage.
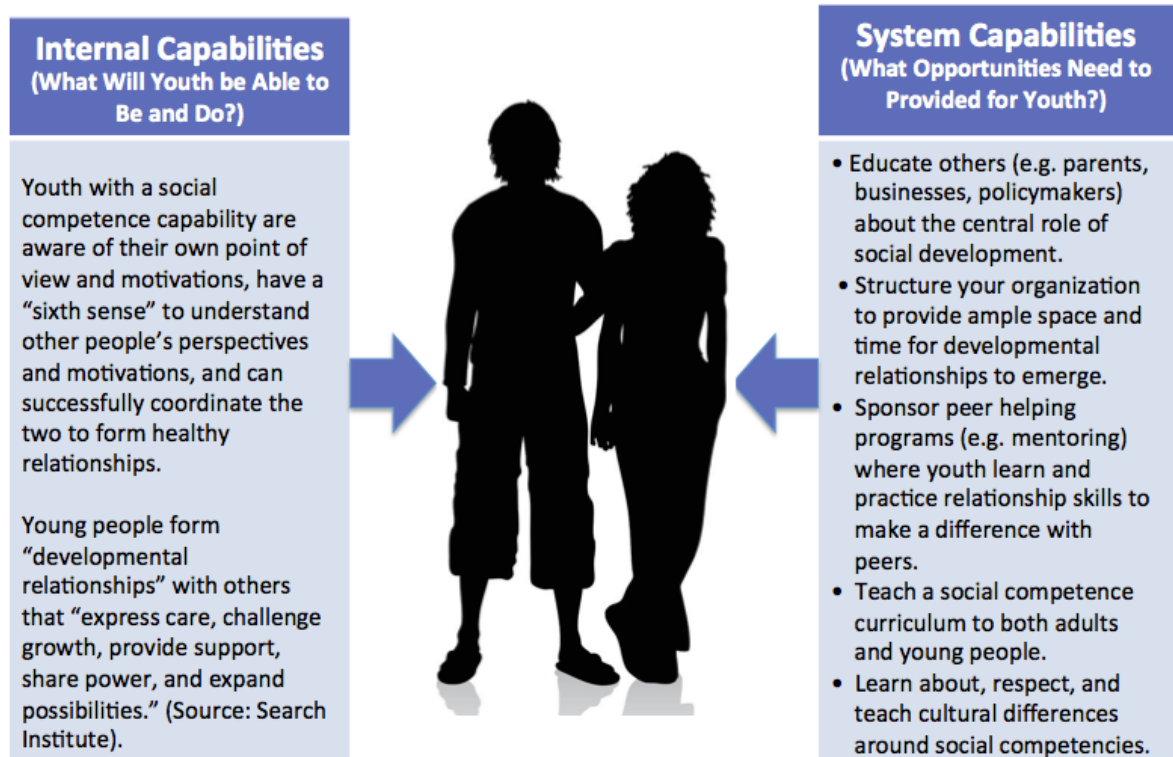
Why is a Social Competence Capability Important to Youth Development?

- **Ubuntu:** Ubuntu is a African Nguni Bantu term roughly translating as "human kindness." It means that "a person is a person through other people." It is how we treat other people that makes us human.

- **Belonging:** Youth that possess the social opportunity to experience a sense of belonging and connection to their school and community do better on a whole host of developmental outcomes. Some groups face discrimination that limit those opportunities.

- **Thriving:** Youth's ability to thrive depends on their ability to form trusting and healthy relationships with others that provide social support, listening, encouragement, feedback, and sharing.

- **Workforce Preparation:** Social competence helps workers to understand their bosses; helps managers sense how to best work with each employee; helps non-profits understand how to make an effective pitch for their cause, and helps those in sales to close a deal.

- **Combating Discrimination:** History is repeatedly filled with examples where people dehumanize other groups to justify extreme actions against them. There can be not only a physical distance between peoples, but a social or psychological distance that must be overcome. A lack of social competence, including empathy, can lead to massive indifference to the plight of others.

- **Academic Success:** Bornstein (2015) notes research that shows that the ability to get along with others and be liked is a key variable in a long list of life and academic outcomes, including college graduation. Additionally, he cites examples and data to show that social competence can be taught.

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### What are the Obstacles to a Social Competence Capability?

- **"My Own Social Competence is Not That Great."** Many adults don't possess the same skills we are hoping they will model and teach to youth. Some form of interpersonal or peer helping training can be transformative for adults as well as youth.
- **"My Ability to Empathize is Limited."** While Epley's research reveals the power of our brain's ability to empathize, it also shows that we are likely to understand much less than we think. And that applies even to our family, closest friends, and ourselves.
- **"Other's Minds are Invisible."** With empathy, we are challenged to infer rather than see what is most important. As Epley writes: "You've never actually seen a *belief,* smelled an *attitude,* or poked a *feeling*. No *intention* has ever walked past you on the sidewalk. You can't weigh a *want*."

Growing a Social Competence Capability
To Increase Youth Development Opportunity and Equity

Internal Capabilities
(What Will Youth be Able to Be and Do?)

Youth with a social competence capability are aware of their own point of view and motivations, have a "sixth sense" to understand other people's perspectives and motivations, and can successfully coordinate the two to form healthy relationships.

Young people form "developmental relationships" with others that "express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities." (Source: Search Institute).

System Capabilities
(What Opportunities Need to Provided for Youth?)

- Educate others (e.g. parents, businesses, policymakers) about the central role of social development.
- Structure your organization to provide ample space and time for developmental relationships to emerge.
- Sponsor peer helping programs (e.g. mentoring) where youth learn and practice relationship skills to make a difference with peers.
- Teach a social competence curriculum to both adults and young people.
- Learn about, respect, and teach cultural differences around social competencies.

Key Resources

Bornstein, D. (July 24, 2015). Teaching Social Skills to Improve Grades and Lives. *New York Times.* http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/24/building-social-skills-to-do-well-in-math/?_r=0

Epley, N. (2014). *Mindwise: How We Understand What Others Think, Believe, Feel and Want.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Patnaik, D. (2009). *Wired to Care: How Companies Prosper When They Create Widespread Empathy.* Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Search Institute (2015). *Framework for Developmental Relationships*: www.search-institute.org.

Selman, R.L. (2003). *The Promotion of Social Awareness: Powerful Lessons from the Partnership of Developmental Theory and Classroom Practice*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Varenhorst, B. (2011). *Training Peer Helpers: Coaching Youth to Communicate, Solve Problems, and Make Decisions.* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.
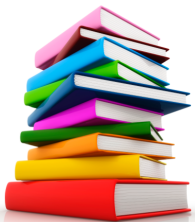
Positive Identity Capability
The Importance of Being "Self Smart" for Cultural Competence

"Sankofa is a mythical West African bird with its feet firmly planted forward and its head looking backward. It symbolizes the respect (people) have for the insight and knowledge acquired from looking to the past. It reminds us that our roots ground and nourish us, hold us firm when the winds of change howl, and offer perspective about what is lasting and significant." Adapted from Juana Bordes

What is a Positive Identity Capability?

Youth with a positive identity capability are those that have successfully integrated the different parts of themselves— their race/ethnicity, culture, faith, family, history, interests, and talents—into an affirmative and holistic sense of who they are. This is not an easy task for anyone, but youth that face frequent stereotypes, misunderstandings, or discrimination face additional complexity and obstacles.

What are Examples of a Positive Identity Capability?

Youth most actively forge their identity as teenagers and young adults. It is a dynamic process of both discovering who you are and creating who you are. It is a lifelong task, but critical commitments begin in adolescence. On the 2013 Minnesota Student Survey, youth were asked: "I feel good about myself." As the results below indicate, there is a great deal of slippage at the very time when identity formation is happening. On another survey item, students were asked: "I feel valued and appreciated by others." There, the slippage from 5th to 11th grade for "almost always" was 41% to 27%.

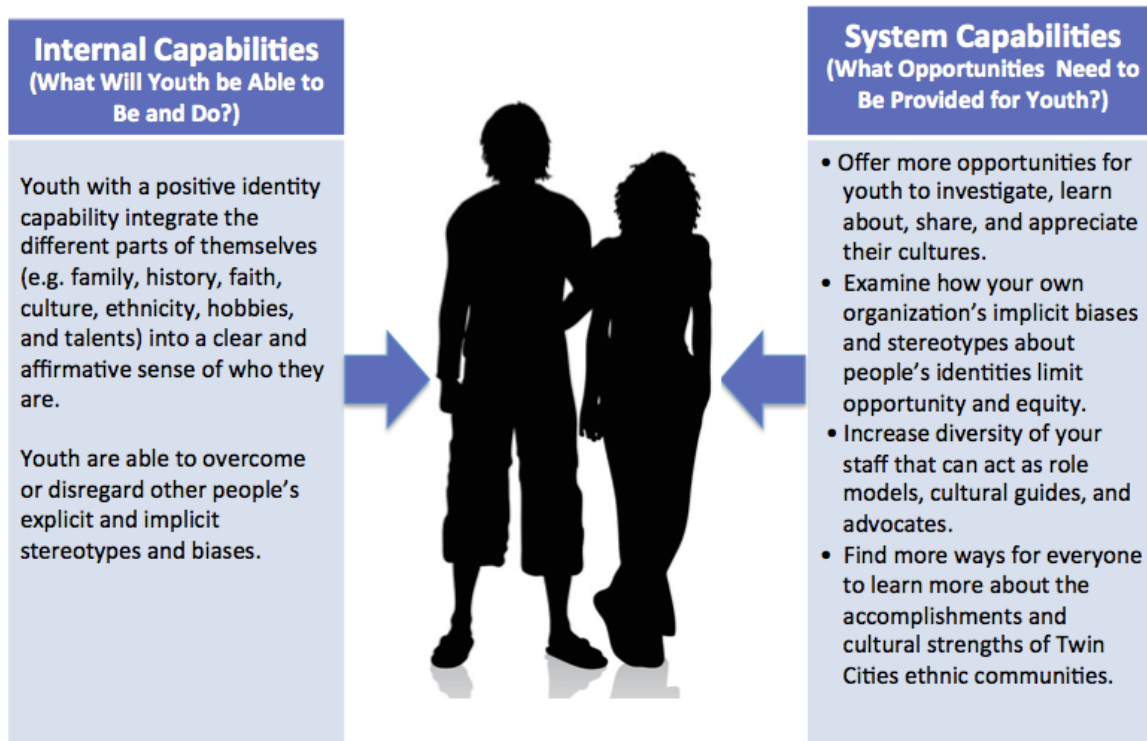| "I feel good about myself."	5th	8th	9th	11th
Not at all or rarely.	4%	7%	8%	7%
Somewhat or sometimes.	14%	22%	24%	26%
Very or often	35%	38%	38%	41%
Extremely or almost always	48%	32%	30%	27%

Why is a Positive Identity Capability Important to Cultural Competence?

- **Roots:** In a world of confusion and constant change, knowing your roots gives people a sense of identity, strength, and stability. We use the phrase: "Never forget where you came from!" Part of this is an awareness and appreciation of both the historical struggles that one's people have endured and the spiritual traditions and values that have helped them survive. Native American's oral story tradition and Latinos "La Dia de los Muertos," for instance, honor the gifts, stories, and wisdom passed on by ancestors.

- **Overcoming Implicit Bias:** The pioneering research of Stanford Social Psychology professor and MacArthur Genius Grant recipient Jennifer Eberhart reveals the hidden ways that even well-intentioned people can possess unconscious bias that shapes outcomes for people of color (see Scott, 2015). If youth are to develop a positive identity, then it will be essential to surface and challenge such unrecognized bias.

- **Cultural Identity:** Communities want their youth to know and appreciate their culture, history, faith, and community. Both adults and youth emphasized the importance that people know "who they are."

- **Cross-Cultural Understanding:** Paradoxically, learning about and honoring one's own culture helps to honor others' cultures. Respect breeds respect.

What are the Obstacles to a a Positive Identity Capability?

- "**I Live in Different Worlds" (Code-Switching)."** Youth may find that their social or economic survival depends on an ability to code-switch (i.e. to express different parts of themselves to different audiences). Youth may display one side of their linguistic and cultural background in a neighborhood playground game and another in their after-school job. You can even see President Obama code-switching in the types of handshakes he offers to different people in different contexts.

- "**We Work with Youth, Not Families."** Youth development programs may target youth exclusively and ignore the potential role and contribution that parents and families can play. This is highly counterproductive since families are potentially positioned to play the essential role in developing that positive identity.

- "**I Don't Fit the Social Norms."** Youth that don't fit the predominant cultural norms face a more complicated process to creating a positive identity. In an analysis of the 2013 MN Student Survey, there were significant differences on the positive identity scale between white students and different racial and cultural groups in the Saint Paul Public Schools (Source: Dr. Michael Rodriguez and the MN Youth Development Research Group).

- "**I Don't Know What to Do With My Life."** We have moved from a more traditional society that largely prescribed the path for adolescents to enter adulthood to one where there is much more ambiguity. Previously, the job market, gender, faith, and societal expectations created a clear route to adulthood. Today, individuals have much more freedom but also greater challenges to forging their identity and future direction.

Growing a Positive Identity Capability
To Increase Cultural Competence Opportunity and Equity

Internal Capabilities
(What Will Youth be Able to Be and Do?)

Youth with a positive identity capability integrate the different parts of themselves (e.g. family, history, faith, culture, ethnicity, hobbies, and talents) into a clear and affirmative sense of who they are.

Youth are able to overcome or disregard other people's explicit and implicit stereotypes and biases.

System Capabilities
(What Opportunities Need to Be Provided for Youth?)

- Offer more opportunities for youth to investigate, learn about, share, and appreciate their cultures.
- Examine how your own organization's implicit biases and stereotypes about people's identities limit opportunity and equity.
- Increase diversity of your staff that can act as role models, cultural guides, and advocates.
- Find more ways for everyone to learn more about the accomplishments and cultural strengths of Twin Cities ethnic communities.

Key Resources

Bordas, J. (2012). *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishing, Inc.

Scott, S. (Sept. Oct. 2015). A Hard Look at How We See Race. *Stanford Alumni Magazine.* https://alumni.stanford.edu/get/page/magazine/article/?article_id=80755

University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (June, 2015). *Foundations for Youth Success: A Developmental Framework.* Chicago: University of Chicago

Cross Cultural Capability
The Importance of Being "Culture Smart" for Cross Cultural Competence

"A Senegalese poet said, 'In the end we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.' We must learn about other cultures in order to understand, in order to love, and in order to preserve our common world heritage." Yo Yo Ma, French-born Chinese American cellist

What is a Cross-Cultural Capability?

Youth with a cross-cultural capability possess the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that enable them to effectively enter into cross-cultural environments. They possess a high degree of self-awareness about their own culture and point of view and know it is only one way of looking at the world. They approach customs and values that are different as learners rather than judges. They have developed the sensitivity to effectively engage individuals from other cultures whether they have prior knowledge or not.

What are Examples of a Cross-Cultural Capability?

What is the difference between youth that are and are not culturally competent? The chart below illustrates examples of the differences in values, attitudes, and knowledge.

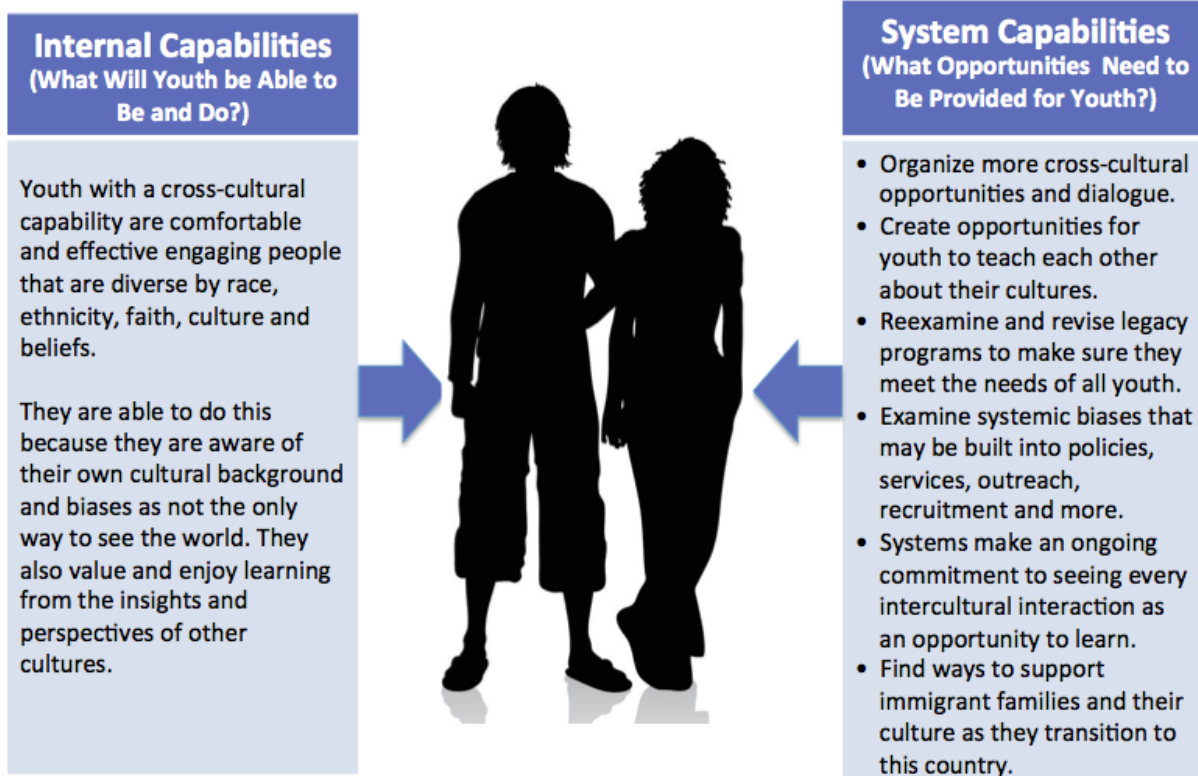| From Culturally Not Competent	To Cross Cultural Capability
I am largely unaware of my own culture.	I know and honor my own culture, faith, and history (i.e. everything starts with a positive identity).
I am not confident outside my own cultural group.	I am able to negotiate and succeed in a multicultural, interconnected world.
I have little interest in understanding other cultures.	I enjoy exploring different cultures and perspectives.
I possess stereotypes and am quickly judgmental of others different than me.	I am empathetic and strive to understand how other people see the world.
I see all issues as local.	I understand how local and global issues are intertwined.

Why is Cross-Cultural Competence Important?

- **Parents:** Communities want their youth to be exposed to and confident in dealing with other cultures. They value the safety and learning in monocultural experiences, but they also see cross-cultural opportunities as critical to their children's future.
- **Youth Programs:** Many mainstream organizations and successful legacy programs were created and designed decades ago for a demographic that has changed substantially. To serve the needs of all youth, they will need to reinvent how they operate to fulfill their missions.
- **Career:** Cultural competence in a global economy is an essential and valued workplace skill. Businesses increasingly require a global footprint to compete. Youth will engage people from different cultures that will be their bosses, colleagues, clients, partners, and/or suppliers. Colleges, hospitals, retail stores, technology companies, and more all need to figure out how to engage diverse people as both employees and customers.
- **Civic Life:** Leaders, citizens and policymakers will require cultural competence to understand the needs and points of view of more diverse constituents.
- **Community Living:** Youth will also benefit from cross-cultural competence in the environments they inhabit daily: schools, sports teams, friendships, and neighborhoods. The percentage of people of color in the Twin Cities will grow from 24% in 2010 to a projected 40% in 2040.

What are the Obstacles to a Cross-Cultural Capability?

- **"The System Doesn't Work for Me."** Current systems, laws, and policies sometimes reproduce racial disparities and poverty. Systems will need to be willing to uncover and address racial bias.
- **"I Stay With My Own Group."** Youth reported that race-based cliques are common and that they don't mingle enough in schools. Organizations will need to intentionally create more opportunities for quality cross-cultural experiences and courageous conversations.
- **"Students Don't Get Educated."** Youth reported that they are not being taught enough about other cultures. In the 2013 Minnesota Student Survey, youth were asked how strongly they agreed with "I accept people who are different than me." The percentage that checked "almost always" dropped from 64% in 5th to 50% in 11th grade.
- **"I Have a Single Story Narrative."** Cross-cultural communication involves a balance between understanding a culture but not placing a whole group into a single narrative.
- **"To Lead is to Live Dangerously."** Harvard's Ronald Heifetz points out that leadership is a dangerous activity because it often challenges people's daily habits, loyalties and ways of thinking. People will often push back.

Growing a Cross-Cultural Capability
To Increase Cultural Competence Opportunity and Equity

Internal Capabilities
(What Will Youth be Able to Be and Do?)

Youth with a cross-cultural capability are comfortable and effective engaging people that are diverse by race, ethnicity, faith, culture and beliefs.

They are able to do this because they are aware of their own cultural background and biases as not the only way to see the world. They also value and enjoy learning from the insights and perspectives of other cultures.

System Capabilities
(What Opportunities Need to Be Provided for Youth?)

- Organize more cross-cultural opportunities and dialogue.
- Create opportunities for youth to teach each other about their cultures.
- Reexamine and revise legacy programs to make sure they meet the needs of all youth.
- Examine systemic biases that may be built into policies, services, outreach, recruitment and more.
- Systems make an ongoing commitment to seeing every intercultural interaction as an opportunity to learn.
- Find ways to support immigrant families and their culture as they transition to this country.

Key Resources

Bordas, J. (2012). *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishing, Inc.

InterCultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) http://idiinventory.com

Livingston, D.A. (2009). *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group.

Strengths Finding Capability

The Importance of Being "Personal Asset Smart" to Employability

"There is no passion to be found in playing small—settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living." Nelson Mandela, Former President of South Africa

What is a Strengths Finding Capability?

Youth with a strengths finding capability know their distinctive talents (what makes me special?), know their passions (what inspires me?), and have found ways to meaningfully channel them (when and where can I apply my strengths?). Peter Benson and Search Institute use the term "sparks" to describe those strengths and passions that give life, joy, meaning, and energy to youth. It is, in the age of Marvel comics and movies, their "superpower!" As Paul Arden writes: "Your vision of where or who you want to be is the greatest asset you have. "

What are Examples of Youth Strengths?

Strengths may be talents (piano), causes (the environment), or character traits (empathy). There are as many possibilities as there are people. We may talk precisely about not photography, but nature photography; not biology, but disease prevention; not political activism, but race relations; and not helping others, but mentoring younger children.
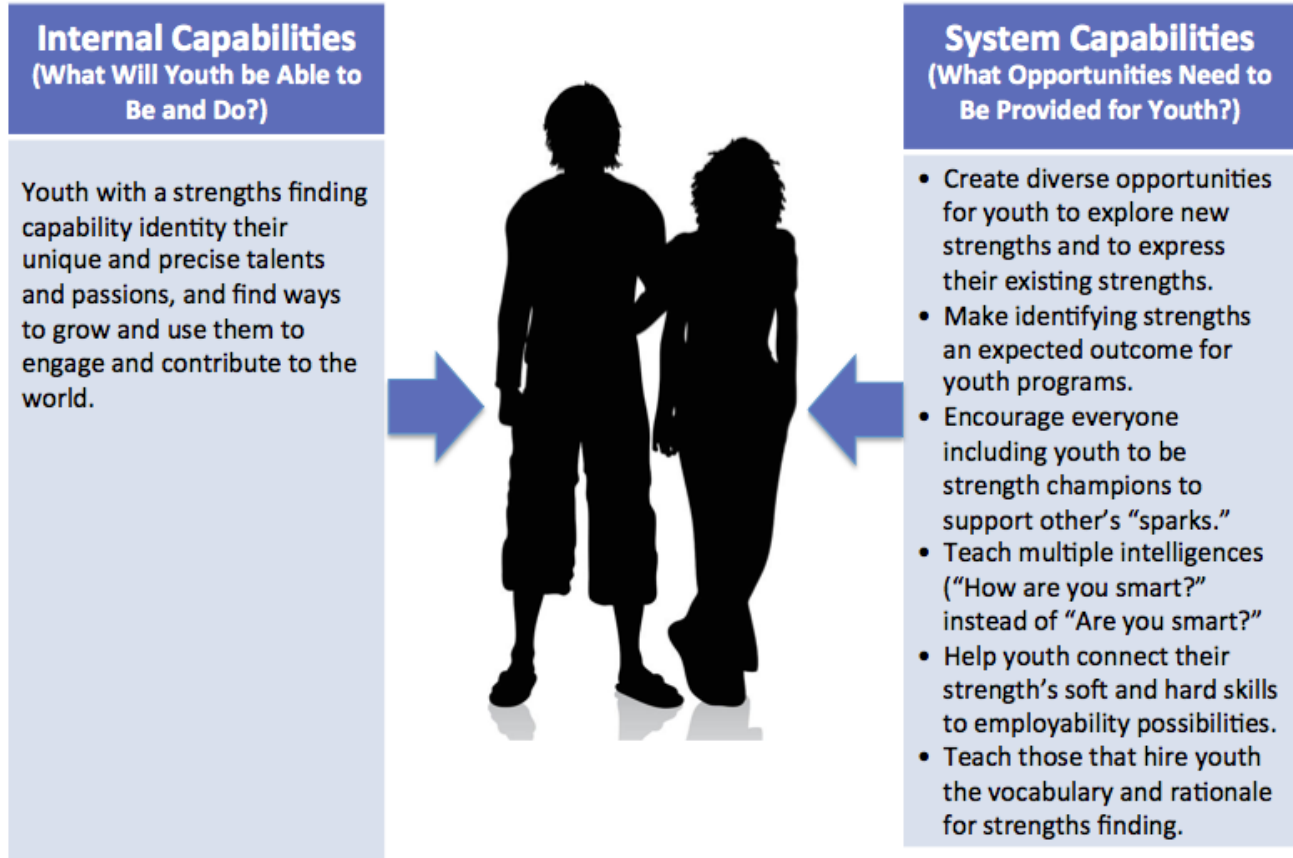
Why is a Strengths Finding Capability Important to Employability?

- **Gallup Strengths Movement:** Over the past two decades the Gallup organization revolutionized how business and leadership people think about professional development. Buckingham (2015) points out the new conventional wisdom: "Find your edge and make it work for you." In a world of global competition, people must know how to identify, grow, and channel their unique strengths.

- **Youth Development and Workforce Preparation:** Search Institute research shows that youth that have identified and started to grow their strengths or sparks (about 67%) score significantly higher on a whole range of positive behaviors that prepare people for the workforce (e.g. grades, school attendance, social competence, health, future hope, volunteerism, and purpose) and significantly lower on several negative behaviors (e.g. depression and acts of violence towards others). (Benson, 2008).

- **Growing Strengths-Based Leaders:** Leaders make an outsized impact on profitability and culture. Zenger and Folkman's (2009) groundbreaking research on 20,000 leaders shows that successful leaders are not defined by being competent at many things; they are defined by having one to three extraordinary strengths that can lift up their organizations.

What are the Obstacles to a Strengths Finding Capability?

- **"I Don't Know My Strengths."** Search Institute found that youth intuitively understood the concept of "sparks," but that one-third did not know their own. People generally are much more aware of their weaknesses than their strengths.

- **"I Lack Sparks Champions."** Even if youth know their strengths, they often lack supportive adults. In Search Institute's research, youth were asked what percentage of people in different settings helped them to develop their spark and found this: school (35%), congregations (23%), youth organizations (21%), and neighborhoods (6%).

Growing a Strengths Finding Capability
To Increase Employability Opportunity and Equity

Internal Capabilities
(What Will Youth be Able to Be and Do?)

Youth with a strengths finding capability identify their unique and precise talents and passions, and find ways to grow and use them to engage and contribute to the world.

System Capabilities
(What Opportunities Need to Be Provided for Youth?)

- Create diverse opportunities for youth to explore new strengths and to express their existing strengths.
- Make identifying strengths an expected outcome for youth programs.
- Encourage everyone including youth to be strength champions to support other's "sparks."
- Teach multiple intelligences ("How are you smart?" instead of "Are you smart?"
- Help youth connect their strength's soft and hard skills to employability possibilities.
- Teach those that hire youth the vocabulary and rationale for strengths finding.

Key Resources

Armstrong, T. (2014). *You're Smarter Than You Think: A Kid's Guide to Multiple Intelligences.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Press.

Benson, P. (2008). *Sparks: How Parents Can Help Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Buckingham, M. (2015). *Standout 2.0: Assess Your Strengths. Find Your Edge. Win at Work.* Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.

Robinson, K. & Aronica, L. (2009). *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything.* New York: Viking.

TEDxTC – Peter Benson –*Sparks: How Youth Thrive.*
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqzUHcW58Us

Yamada, K. (2013). *What Do You Do With an Idea?* Seattle, WA: Compendium Press.

Zenger, J. & Folkman, J. (2009). *The Extraordinary Leader: Turning Good Managers Into Great Leaders,* 2nd Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

11.

Growth Mindset Capability
The Importance of Being "Possibility Smart" to Employability

"I don't divide the world into the weak and the strong, or the successes and the failures…
I divide the world into the learners and nonlearners." Benjamin Barber, American sociologist

What is a Growth Mindset Capability?

Stanford psychology professor Carol Dweck's research indicates that the "view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life." Compare Person 1 and 2 below. Dr. Dweck defines Person 1 as having a "fixed mindset" that believes people are born smart, average or slow and stay that way. In contrast, Dweck defines Person 2 as having a "growth mindset" that believes intelligence is a malleable quality that can be developed. Your present ability level is the starting point, not the ending point. Think about how such beliefs might influence every part of a person's life including learning and employability.

Fixed Mindset Beliefs	Growth Mindset Beliefs
You are either born smart or you are not.	Effort and attitude will make you smarter.
When I'm frustrated, I give up.	When I'm frustrated, I persevere.
I don't like to be challenged.	I am inspired by big challenges.
When I get a bad grade, I'm a failure.	When I get a bad grade, I need to work harder
I want people to validate that I'm smart.	It's more important to learn than to look good.
If you succeed, I feel threatened.	If you succeed, I feel inspired.
I conceal mistakes or deficiencies.	I study mistakes and learn from them.

What are Examples of Growth Mindset Capability?

Dr. Dweck gave fifth grade students intriguing , fun puzzles that they loved. But when she gave them more difficult problems, the fixed mindset students lost their interest and enjoyment. The growth mindset students, in contrast, "couldn't tear themselves away." The challenging puzzles were their favorites and they wanted to take them home to solve.
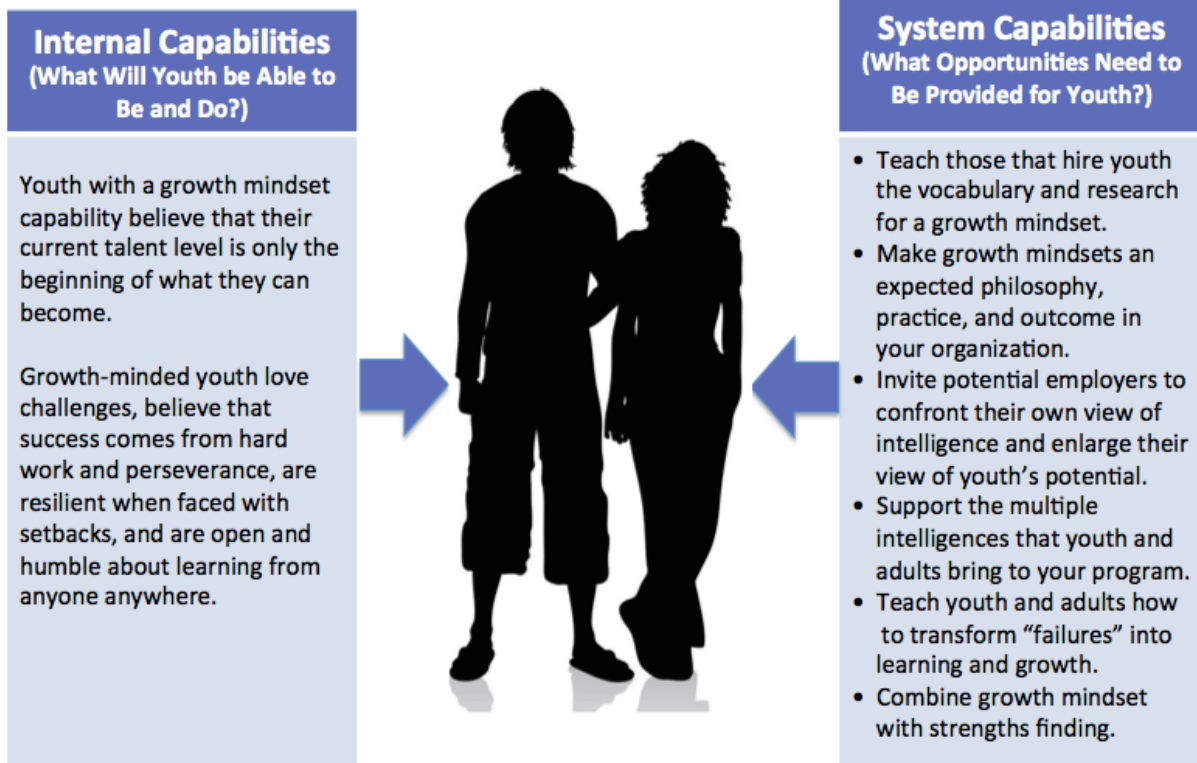
Why is a Growth Mindset Capability Important to Employability?

- **Global Competitiveness:** People and organizations must continually reinvent themselves in the 21st century economy. Those with a growth mindset are much more likely to embrace and enjoy the constant challenges and changes while those with a fixed mindset are more likely to avoid risks to protect their self-image.
- **Feedback**: People with a growth mindset are more likely to thrive in the workplace because they are open and eager to learning from critical feedback.
- **Hiring:** Reed and Stoltz (2011) found that 96% of global businesses said that hiring people with the right mindset was more important than hiring for the right skill set.
- **Employee Value:** Reed and Stoltz also found that top global employers (e.g. Deloitte, Merck) said the a person with the right mindset was seven times more valuable than one with the right skill set. It's easier to teach someone skills than to change their mindset.
- **Better Managers:** Growth-minded managers are more likely to invest in coaching others because they believe people possess great potential to develop. In contrast, fixed mindset managers don't coach as much because they think people can't significantly improve. 12.

What are the Obstacles to a Growth Mindset Capability?

- **"I Have a Limited View of My Future."** Youth's aspirations can be powerfully affected by the context in which they live. Seeing opportunities as viable options and taking advantage of them may be seriously compromised by past discrimination and social interactions.
- **"I Want to Be the Center of Attention."** Dweck compares the success of growth-minded business leaders like Jack Welch (GE) and Lou Gerstner (IBM) with fixed-minded leaders like Ken Lay (Enron) and Lee Iacocca (Chrysler). Fixed minded leaders want more credit than they deserve, need to feel important, are threatened by talented peers, don't want to hear criticism, and seek personal glory over organizational success.
- **"I Underestimate My Potential."** Studies show that people are terrible at estimating their abilities. Moreover, peers, parents, society, school and past experience may may not be much help, giving youth a limited and distorted view of their potential. People often don't realize how far their potential will take them.
- **"I Possess a Limited View of Intelligence."** Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences convincingly shows that intelligence is much broader and diverse than IQ tests results alone (see Armstrong, 2014). Rather than ask: How smart are you?, "ask: "How are you smart? Brilliance comes in many shapes and sizes (sometimes unrecognized by schools).

Cultivating a Growth Mindset Capability
To Increase Employability Opportunity and Equity

Internal Capabilities
(What Will Youth be Able to Be and Do?)

Youth with a growth mindset capability believe that their current talent level is only the beginning of what they can become.

Growth-minded youth love challenges, believe that success comes from hard work and perseverance, are resilient when faced with setbacks, and are open and humble about learning from anyone anywhere.

System Capabilities
(What Opportunities Need to Be Provided for Youth?)

- Teach those that hire youth the vocabulary and research for a growth mindset.
- Make growth mindsets an expected philosophy, practice, and outcome in your organization.
- Invite potential employers to confront their own view of intelligence and enlarge their view of youth's potential.
- Support the multiple intelligences that youth and adults bring to your program.
- Teach youth and adults how to transform "failures" into learning and growth.
- Combine growth mindset with strengths finding.

Key Resources

Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success.* New York: Random House. (See also "Mindset the new psychology of success" on Youtube).

Reed, J. & Stoltz, P. (2011). *Put Your Mindset to Work: The One Asset You Really Need to Win and Keep the Job You Love.* New York: Penguin Group.

Adapted from James Toole, Ph.D. 2010

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