

AUDACIOUS THINKING

AN OCCASIONAL
NEWSLETTER

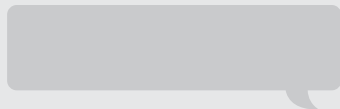
SPRING 2012

#SchoolsNotJails



#LoveNotJails

Youth activists recently took a creative approach to social justice advocacy by turning to their best resources – computers, smartphones, and friends. Read more about how OSI-Baltimore’s grantees are working to stop construction of a new youth jail and keep kids out of the adult criminal justice system.



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SPECIAL INSERT: 2011 DONOR REPORT

HELP US MAKE LASTING CHANGE.

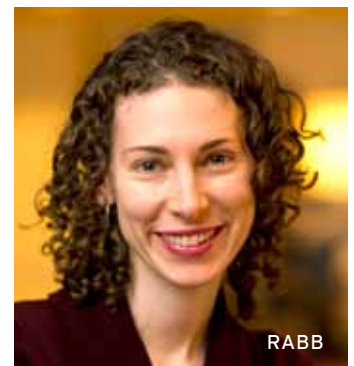
Your financial gift to OSI-Baltimore helps create opportunities, justice, and economic stability for those in our city who need it most. We tackle Baltimore's most challenging issues.

We welcome all gifts of every level. Every dollar given is matched by our founder, George Soros. Our donors share a common goal: to revitalize Baltimore. They realize that, by investing in OSI-Baltimore, they play a vital role in improving our city's future.

 CONTRIBUTE ONLINE AT WWW.AUDACIOUSIDEAS.ORG
OR CALL US AT 443-909-7373.

OSI-BALTIMORE WELCOMES...

OSI-Baltimore welcomes two new members to its Advisory Board. **Veronica Cool**, vice president and principal business relationship manager at Wells Fargo (see story on page 20), and **Muriel Berkeley**, president of the Baltimore Curriculum Project. We also welcome new staff **Rajani Gudlavalleti**, program coordinator, and **Kate Rabb**, part-time research associate.





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Most of us adults recognize that kids in high school, no matter how sophisticated or knowledgeable, are not fully mature. They can look the part but, when it comes down to it, they just don't fully think through their actions or the ramifications of their actions in the larger world. Hence the refrain from adults, "What were you thinking?!" (They weren't.)

Over the last number of years, an astounding amount of brain research has underscored what some of us know intuitively – that maturity comes only when the brain is fully developed. The prefrontal cortex, which governs "executive" functions such as reasoning, advanced thought, and impulse control, is literally the last part of the brain to develop fully. **This development sequence explains why our adolescents do not always make good decisions and often do not understand the consequences of their behavior to themselves and to others.**

This scientific fact is very important when we consider youth in our justice system. Acknowledging that young people are in the process of becoming responsible adults, does not give us reason to ignore bad behavior or excuse serious crime, but it does compel

us to think differently about how to respond to youth who make mistakes in judgment, including very serious mistakes. **With time, our young people will mature and gain the mental capacity to control their impulses and think through the implications of their actions before initiating them.** As adults, we can direct and reinforce this process by giving young people guidance, tools and opportunities to improve their behavior.

Kids caught up in the juvenile justice system in particular will benefit from education programs that allow them to achieve academically and develop strong critical thinking skills, and from social programs that help them explore their feelings and beliefs and develop empathy with others. Giving these young people clear instruction about unacceptable behavior and the resulting consequences is critical. **Equally important is giving these young people the tools, opportunities and encouragement to become caring and productive adults.**

As Americans, we believe in second chances. Indeed, as adults, we regularly summon the patience to guide young people in our families through lapses of judgment and give them the support they need to make better decisions. The same approach should hold for kids caught up in the justice system, who are disproportionately poor kids and kids of color, as the stakes for society may be even higher if these children do not develop the skills to make constructive decisions about their actions as they grow older. We need to consider appropriate ways to treat our youth even when their behavior is senseless and harmful—so they learn and become thoughtful as the prefrontal cortex of their brain develops. **That is why the Open Society Institute-Baltimore believes that youth should never be placed into the adult criminal justice system, which does not offer youth development programming, and why we advocate for substantial changes to our current system.** We've dedicated a section of this newsletter to talk about this complex issue.

Young people are still growing and, if we act like thoughtful adults in tough situations, we can make it much more likely that our kids will develop into adults we can depend on.

DIANA MORRIS, Director of OSI-Baltimore

PROFILE OF AN OSI-BALTIMORE INVESTOR:

MARC BUNTING

Marc G. Bunting grew up in Monkton and spent most of his youth living a staunchly suburban life. He graduated from Dulaney High School and earned his college degree from Villa Julie College—now Stevenson University. After college, he moved to Colorado with the intention of “skiing and working in restaurants for a winter.”

But skiing in Aspen sparked the idea for a small business and, in 1995, the Alpine Bagel Company was born.

Today, Alpine Bagels is one of the leading food service companies in the country, and Bunting—now back in Monkton—has found that his passions really lie in the city.

Bunting remains owner and CFO of Alpine Bagels, is board chair of Civic Works, a Baltimore nonprofit, and serves on the board of several local charities.

Because of his commitment to giving back and his passion for the city, OSI-Baltimore Board Chair William C. Clarke and OSI-Baltimore Director Diana Morris asked Bunting to consider investing in OSI-Baltimore.

Bunting readily agreed, and is now also a member of OSI-Baltimore’s Leadership Council. He enjoys racing and other speed-sports, but bagels? Not so much.



THERE ARE SO MANY WORTHY ORGANIZATIONS IN BALTIMORE. WHY DO YOU GIVE TO OSI-BALTIMORE?

One, because dollars are being matched. It's a big added benefit that I know other smart, wise people are investing in this and wanting to be involved in this. That gives me a real comfort level. Also I think OSI is tackling and facing some really important issues. OSI's focus and mission is definitely aligned with mine, in terms of what I think about what will have the greatest impact on making Baltimore a better community.

IS THERE ONE ISSUE THAT OSI-BALTIMORE FOCUSES ON THAT PARTICULARLY RESONATES WITH YOU?

I think all of it is important, but I think some of the work they've done around drug rehab and the recidivism rate is very important. And they aren't necessarily the top priorities of other organizations in town. Through my work at Civic Works, I have seen how these issues affect people. People who are going through these programs and served their time, they're still not getting the fair shake from employers. A lot of that is due to where that individual grew up and the circumstances that surrounded him. Without a group like OSI trying to change people's mindsets about how they look at these individuals, I don't know how we can have any impactful change.

IT SOUNDS LIKE, AS A BUSINESS OWNER, YOU HAVE A REAL COMPASSION FOR EVERYDAY WORKERS—AND ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO MAY HAVE CHALLENGING EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUNDS.

There's a certain stigma around people who need a little help. If someone comes in and they have that mark on their record, too many people just naturally exclude them. They forget about when they were young and they made mistakes and they needed a second chance. A lot of times that stigma can be overcome if you get that individual in front of the employer. It takes a group like OSI to see those kinds of things and try to implement the change. That's a big part of why I support OSI, because they support systemic change through policies.

“There are new ways to tackle problems and I think OSI is trying to address them from a different perspective.”

WHAT KEEPS MORE BALTIMOREANS IN POSITIONS SIMILAR TO YOURS FROM INVESTING IN THE CITY'S MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS?

I think it varies. A lot of people have been around for a long time and in their mind nothing's worked, so they may have given up. But I think there are new ways to tackle problems and I think OSI is trying to address them from a different perspective. A lot of people live in the county and don't think it's their problem. I don't live in Baltimore City but anything that happens in Baltimore City certainly affects me. And then there are people out there, with the way the economy's been, they feel the need to give to the soup kitchen and make sure people are getting fed or are kept warm. There's a real benefit to that, but at the same time I would make the argument for supporting groups like OSI. The changes they are trying to make are systemic and will have a long-term impact on society, a much bigger impact on the Baltimore economy and the whole community.

YOU GOT STARTED IN THE BAGEL BUSINESS, AND YET THERE'S NO FABULOUS BAGEL SPOT HERE IN BALTIMORE. HOW DO YOU SLEEP AT NIGHT?

(Laughs.) Let me tell you, I've eaten enough bagels. I only eat English muffins now.

AUDACIOUS INDIVIDUAL

A portrait of Rebecca Coleman, a woman with blonde hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue blazer over a light blue collared shirt and a necklace with several pendants. The background is a wooden panel wall with a flag partially visible on the right.

REBECCA COLEMAN

BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FELLOW

In 2010, Rebecca Coleman, a recent law school graduate from the University of Baltimore, was awarded a community fellowship to help low-income residents who had filed for bankruptcy and were victims of creditor abuse. Not six months later she ran into an unexpected roadblock.

In June, the Supreme Court ruled that bankruptcy courts could no longer take on cases in which debtors made claims against credit collectors. These are the very people Coleman's Baltimore Creditor Abuse Prevention Project was trying to help. When Coleman first heard the news, she was devastated.

"It was a big defeat for consumers in the bankruptcy realm and for our project," she says. The fellowship she had spent months devoting herself to was upended—or so she thought.

"After a week or two I realized I just had to go back to the drawing board and shift gears completely. I thought, 'How can we still help the same group of people who are in terrible debt and whose lives are being completely disrupted by it?'"

Rather than give up on her project altogether, Coleman found she just needed to re-envision certain aspects of it. Her fellowship now works within the jurisdiction of the District Court of Maryland, instead of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, and focuses solely on people who are being sued by third party debt collectors.

"These third party debt collectors buy the right to pursue debt payment from the banks or credit card companies that don't have the time or resources to go after everyone who owes them," Coleman explains. "They buy the debts at pennies to the dollar so, even if they settle one case out of ten, they are still making a profit."

However, these debt collectors often go after their victims without the proper documentation, or on old claims that are no longer valid;

sometimes they even end up trying to collect payments from the entirely wrong person, or from someone who has already settled their debt. With defendants who don't fully understand the charges or don't have the money to hire a lawyer, the debt collectors usually come out on top, leaving already struggling families even deeper in a financial sinkhole.

Coleman's fellowship—now named the Baltimore Consumer Protection Project—is training attorneys and law students about how to best defend against these cases and, in many instances, how to turn the tables on the debt collectors by prosecuting them for illegal practices.

Coleman has started a partnership with the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland and the University of Maryland School of Law Consumer Protection Clinic. "Working with the law school allows us to get students who are going to be attorneys excited about this kind of work and consider a practice they might otherwise never have thought of," Coleman says.

Between changing attorneys' perceptions of debt defense cases, opening the area to future lawyers, and helping people break free of debt and the constant harassment of collection agencies, Coleman now feels the initial set-back has propelled her project to new heights.

"I ended up being more successful than I probably would have been otherwise. The disappointment ended up letting an even better project really flourish."



WHY WE FUND IT

"When laws related to debt, consumer credit, and bankruptcy are not carefully understood, more often than not, low-income people are the ones who suffer. In this case, Rebecca Coleman makes the law not only accessible to people who need to use it, but also makes certain that protections are enforced. By helping families stay economically sound, we can prevent many of the problems that plague our communities."

PAMELA KING, Director of Community Fellowships and Initiatives



IS IT TRUE? DO WE THINK ABOUT RACE WITH AN IMPLICIT BIAS?



Many have used the phrase “post-racial society” since the historic election of President Barack Obama in 2008.

But a recent look by the American Values Institute at volumes of research and data around black men and boys shows that there still exists a kind of racism that perpetuates inequality. Indeed, it is a major factor in our society, putting African American men and boys at a real disadvantage when it comes to education, employment, economics and our criminal justice system.

And, in many cases, those disadvantages stem from something called “implicit bias.” In essence, implicit bias means that, even when our conscious selves feel or want to feel differently, we still feel a bias toward certain people in part because we’ve been bombarded by contrary images and messages.

“In terms of how we consciously think about race, our country has made unbelievable strides in the last half century,” says Rachel Godsil, research director for American Values Institute and a professor of law at Seton Hall University. “The assumption is: now that we have

egalitarian attitudes, we don’t have a racial problem anymore. But there’s a disjuncture between the conscious part of our mind, to which we have access, and the automatic part that does all the work. If we have things in our mind that we expect to see, that’s what we will see.”

This idea has been highlighted time and again throughout OSI-Baltimore’s “Talking About Race” series—which invites national and local experts to the Enoch Pratt Free Library to address racial topics from different perspectives. The nearly four-year-long series has sparked a citywide dialogue about race and bias.

Implicit bias has serious ramifications.

“This is far more than the slight irritation of having a white lady look away anxiously when she sees a black man,” Godsil says. “Sadly, implicit bias is much farther reaching than that.”

In fact, implicit bias helps contribute to much of the unspoken racism that confounds and stymies black men and boys when it comes to education, employment, financial success and involvement with the criminal justice system.

For example, studies show that police officers are more likely to use excessive force against black men. Black boys often are perceived to be older—and, therefore, scarier—than they actually are. Some judges have given much harsher sentences to black boys for committing the same crime as white boys.

One disturbing study, Godsil noted, showed that men perceived as merely “looking stereotypically black” were more likely to be sentenced to death in murder cases.

Godsil cited one implicit bias study as being particularly troubling: a 2000 look at the percentage of actual arrests of various races of men—including black and Latino men—as compared to the percentage of arrests as depicted on television news programs.

In the two counties studied, black men made up about 20 percent of actual arrests that occurred, but more than 35 percent of arrests shown on the news. Meanwhile, Latinos were shown being arrested a little more than 20 percent on nightly television, but in reality made up more than 45 percent of actual arrests. Godsil said this is a perfect example of how implicit bias comes into play in the real world.

“It creates this climate in which we have an utterly false impression of black criminality,” she says. “This creates a context in which racial

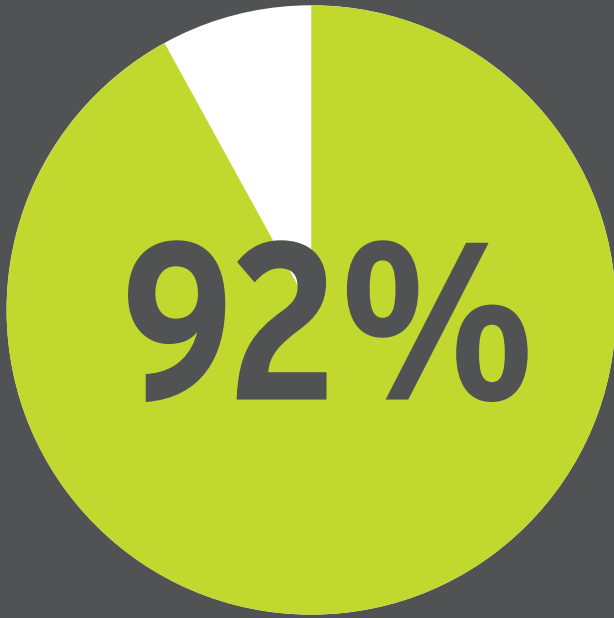
profiling can be seen by some as rational; it affects decisions around hiring; it perpetuates the stereotype in others in positions of power—such as teachers, doctors, police officers—and the cyclical nature of that is quite devastating.”

Godsil’s research also showed that much of the stereotyping about black men and boys in the media is woefully off-the-mark, for example, that black men and boys are in serious trouble. Media often paints a picture of black men and boys dropping out of high school, filling up the prisons, not getting jobs, refusing to commit to their children’s mothers, and unable to be—or not wanting to be—good fathers.

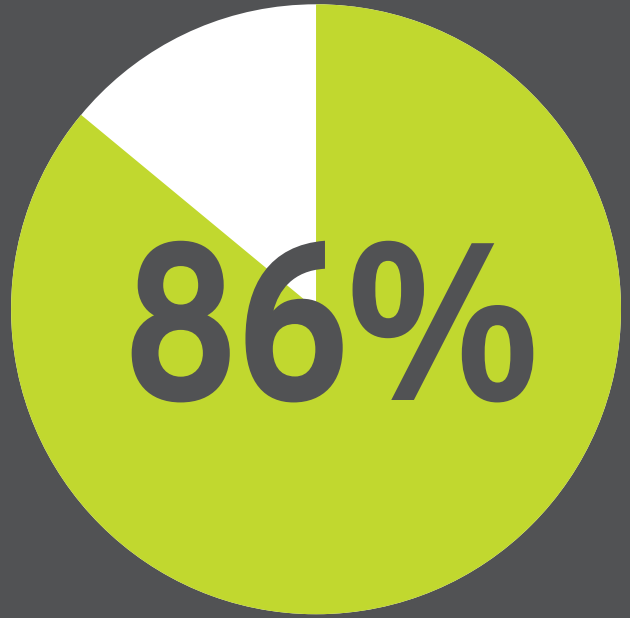
“But what we concluded is that what you see in the media is actually quite misleading,” Godsil says. **“The picture we have of black men and boys is almost entirely negative. It ignores all the men and boys who are working hard to feed their families, who are attending church, who are fighting for their country in the military, who are following societal rules and contributing.”**

“In reality,” Godsil says, “data proves that the majority of black men in America are employed, have never been convicted of a crime, and are involved in their children’s lives. And their sons are in school, behave respectfully, value family and are helpful in the home.”

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of black men with college degrees are employed



with only some college education are employed

Consider just employment figures:

- 92 percent of black men with college degrees are employed.
- 86 percent with only some college education are employed.
- A quarter of employed black men are working in professional careers or in managerial positions.
- 68 percent of all black men are employed.

“I think we have a sense that things have just gotten worse and worse,” Godsil says. **“But there’s vastly more employment among black men in 2011 than there was in the 1950s.”**

Godsil has concluded that implicit bias can be overcome—if truthful data, such as what her research has found, is well-circulated. And behaviors can change when people are aware that everyone is guilty of these unconscious feelings.

“If we’re alerted to the possibility that we may engage in implicit bias—that our behavior might be affected by implicit bias—then we absolutely can correct it,” Godsil’s research says.

Godsil’s work on implicit bias is important, because the media aren’t the only ones perpetuating the downbeat storyline. Many racial justice advocates are unwittingly committing the same offense, she says.

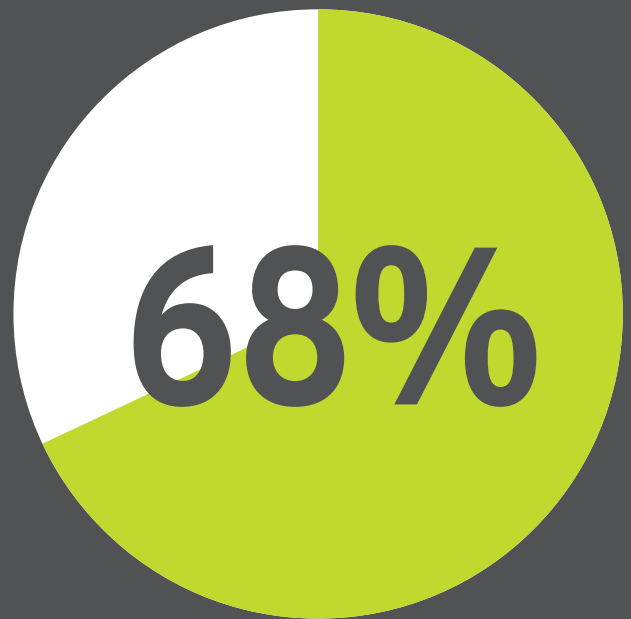
Say, for example, a well-meaning group wants to focus attention on the drop-out rate of black boys to mobilize funders and community members to help more stay in school and graduate.

In campaign literature and other documents, the advocacy group might lament the fact that 33 percent of black boys nationwide never get their high school diplomas.

“If 33% aren’t graduating, that means 66% of black boys do graduate



of employed black men are working in professional careers or in managerial positions



of all black men are employed

from high school—which, in fact, is the case,” Godsil says. “It’s important to present the positive picture,” she goes on to say. “We don’t want to hide the challenges. But racial justice advocates often assume, if we present the disparities, then it will create a sense of moral urgency to create programs and policies that will alleviate those disparities. But that presumption is false.”

Instead, advocates—even when they cite facts and statistics—can unintentionally confirm negative stereotypes and feed their audience’s implicit bias. “We should be talking more broadly, being clear that we’re talking about everybody,” she says. “If we’re talking about the poverty rate, for example, that it’s higher among African Americans, we should recognize that—because white people far outnumber African Americans in this country—the number of white

people who are poor is still huge. So we’re actually talking about members of every racial group.”

“It’s not that we should ignore the specific conditions that are uniquely hard for a certain community,” she continues. “But we need to ensure that we do not inadvertently pathologize any community. We must help people recognize that members of every group experience poverty, unemployment, and other challenges. We are all vulnerable—and we are part of a broader community which should work to ensure opportunities for everyone to achieve and be included. If you emphasize that your commitments do go beyond a certain group, you’re much more likely to keep people engaged and have them want to go along with you.” ❏



NEW INITIATIVE EXPANDS SCHOOL DAY AND EXPANDS ENRICHED LEARNING

It's 4 p.m. at Hilton Elementary School in West Baltimore—well after the end of the traditional school day—but the school is buzzing. In one room, kids are hunkered down over chess boards; down the hall, some students are practicing karate kicks while others are playing lacrosse under the eye of a former star collegiate player.

By the time they leave for home at 5:30 p.m., these Hilton students will have had three extra hours in the school day: a full extra hour of academic classroom instruction, an hour devoted to cultural or recreational activities, and help with their homework and a healthy snack and supper.

The additional hours give kids the full array of activities that all parents would like for their children but that many families can't afford.

The longer school day at Hilton is part of the national Expanded Schools initiative, a community-based approach to extending the learning day developed by TASC, The After-School Corporation, a New York City nonprofit. With major support from Open Society Foundations, six Expanded Schools opened last fall—three in Baltimore and three in New Orleans—building on a successful pilot in New York.

In the Expanded Schools approach, a school partners with a high-caliber community-based organization to create a school day that is roughly three hours longer. In this model, the community partner works hand-in-hand with the school team to reimagine the school day and ensure that activities that generally take place after the usual 3 p.m. closing time are integrated into the entire school day.

“This approach is making up what used to be a central part of the school day but is often lost now, It serves as a vehicle for all the enrichment activities that we know keep kids engaged in school and expand their horizons.”

“This approach is making up what used to be a central part of the school day but is often lost now,” says Jane Sundius, director of the Education and Youth Development Program at OSI-Baltimore, who will oversee the implementation of the national Open Society grant. “It serves as a vehicle for all the enrichment activities that we know keep kids engaged in school and expand their horizons.”

U.S. Programs of the Open Society Foundations has long supported TASC, beginning with a \$125 million grant to launch after-school programming in New York City—a grant that generated more than three hundred million in matching contributions. Open Society Foundations has committed \$3.5 million to the ExpandedED Schools project over three years, along with major support from the Wallace Foundation.

In Baltimore, ExpandedED Schools are administered through the Family League of Baltimore City, in partnership with the Baltimore City Public Schools. The ExpandedED Schools partnerships include: Hilton Elementary with Child First





WHY WE FUND IT

“At OSI-Baltimore we know we really need to connect kids firmly to school. One way to do that is to have enriching activities throughout the school day. We want kids from families living in poverty to have the same opportunities to engage in things like art, music, social studies and physical education as kids from more affluent families.”

JANE SUNDIUS, Director of the Education and Youth Development Program

Authority, George Washington Elementary with the Y of Central Maryland and Harlem Park Elementary/Middle with Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL).

“We’re bringing in some great community organizations as partners so the students have these new opportunities to take part in high-quality activities,” says Carol Reckling, executive director of Child First Authority. “By the time our students leave, they have had more instruction in the classroom, a chance to explore something they love, like music or art, and time to get started on homework. Every kid in the city could benefit from this kind of program.”

ExpandedED Schools is one of several approaches to extended learning that are gaining new attention and support, including from U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

“Our children spend over a month less in school than children in South Korea every year. That’s no way to prepare them to compete in the 21st Century economy,” Duncan said in support of the ExpandedED Schools launch late last year. “Expanding learning time can accelerate student achievement, particularly in high-poverty schools where students don’t always have as much outside support or resources.”

TASC will carefully monitor the results at ExpandedED Schools, but earlier research has shown that high-quality after-school programs can generate strong benefits.

“What we see is that kids who attend programs like this have better attendance and fewer disciplinary problems,” Sundius says.

“What we see is that kids who attend programs like this have better attendance and fewer disciplinary problems”

“And we’ve seen that kids improve their school attendance over the course of the program.”

Sundius expects ExpandedED Schools to lead to more integration of traditional school-day and after-school programs. “Our hope with this initiative is that it helps out-of-school-time providers and the school system here to work more closely together,” she says. “We think it will build demand among school staff and parents for the kinds of enriched learning programs a longer day allows.”

Bringing ExpandedED Schools to Baltimore—which includes new funding for programming, support from TASC and the chance to learn from other sites in a national pilot program—demonstrates the value of having an Open Society office in Baltimore.

“We’re able to take advantage of some of the national initiatives and bring them to Baltimore,” Sundius says. “Because of the extensive education work OSI-Baltimore has conducted in the city, Open Society Foundations chose Baltimore as one of three cities to expand this initiative beyond New York. The grant provides additional resources and expertise we can use to improve things in Baltimore.” ❄

MAKING CHANGE WITH PRAGMATIC SOLUTIONS:

YOUTH ARE NOT ADULTS
AND THEY SHOULDN'T
EVER BE AUTOMATICALLY
CONSIDERED TO BE

EXPERTS AND ADVOCATES AGREE: YOUTH SHOULD NOT BE IN THE ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Growing evidence shows that tough-on-crime policies are failing to address public safety concerns and are often counter-productive. Yet, too many youth in Maryland charged with a “serious” crime are prosecuted as adults and held in adult jails while awaiting trial.

A group of OSI-Baltimore grantees have been working to show policymakers and the greater community that there are alternatives to charging youth as adults.

“People would be surprised to learn that, in Maryland and nationally, most youth who are charged as adults do not belong in the adult criminal system in the first place,” says Community Law in Action’s Executive Director Terry Hickey.

According to research commissioned last year by OSI-Baltimore, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, more than 60 percent of youth who are charged as adults and held at the Baltimore City Detention Center—an adult jail—have their cases sent to the juvenile justice system, have their charges dismissed outright, or are released to the community pending their trial dates.

“This suggests that these youth do not pose a serious threat to public safety and are still amenable to rehabilitation,” Hickey says.

“This means their cases should have originated in the juvenile justice system, which is designed to provide rigorous rehabilitative services and treatment to youth who are charged with and convicted of crimes, so that they do not re-offend. The adult criminal justice system is not designed to offer rehabilitation. Its focus is punishment and public safety, nothing more.”

That’s why Community Law in Action and the Public Justice Center, two grantees of OSI-Baltimore, have come together to form the Just Kids Partnership to End the Automatic Prosecution of Youth as Adults. As part of the effort, both have been working with an alliance of more than 30 organizations that are fighting to stop the construction of a new jail for youth charged as adults, which could cost the state about \$100 million to build.

“Instead of investing in more jails for our children, we should be investing in concrete opportunities for our communities like libraries, recreation centers, schools, youth jobs and housing,” says Camilla

“The research is clear that charging youth as adults and housing them in adult jails does not reduce crime...”

Roberson, an attorney at the Public Justice Center who works with the Just Kids Partnership. The Alliance has recommended the state do just that—reallocate money for the new jail to facilities that offer opportunities for Baltimore City youth.

In addition, the alliance delivered an alternative action plan to Governor O’Malley and other policy makers last August detailing policy changes that can be undertaken to eradicate the need for the jail altogether. The action plan includes policy changes such as: housing youth charged as adults in juvenile detention centers (a policy adopted by neighboring states Virginia and Pennsylvania) and ending the practice of automatically charging youth as adults.

“There is a growing trend across the nation to treat youth as youth, not adults,” Roberson says. “Studies from multiple states show that prosecuting youth in the adult criminal system and jailing them with adults does not make communities safer or deter crime over the long run. Youth warehoused in adult jails are at extremely high risk of

being physically or sexually assaulted or committing suicide. They are simply better off in a juvenile justice system where they will be held accountable for their actions and will receive the services they need.”

Some argue that Maryland’s juvenile detention centers often operate at capacity and could not accommodate the 40 or so youth who are charged as adults on any given day—a number that has been steadily decreasing over the years. Not so, if the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) would also adopt some key policy changes, Hickey says.

“We need to revisit the mission of DJS, specifically what types of kids should be confined in secure facilities,” Hickey says. “Currently, we’re housing large numbers of the ‘wrong’ kids. Everything has been bumped up a level: kids who should never see the inside of a jail cell for minor offenses are being arrested and detained. Kids who should receive DJS support in the community are being detained long-term, and kids who really need help are being sent off to adult jail.”

“If DJS were able to place the youth in its detention facilities



HICKEY



ROBERSON

into treatment programs more expeditiously or serve them in the community," Hickey continues, "then the kids who are charged as adults could be detained in the juvenile facilities and get a jump start on the treatment they need."

Ultimately, advocacy organizations and OSI-Baltimore are urging state officials to end the practice of automatically charging youth as adults—which is why OSI-Baltimore is supporting the efforts of nonprofit organizations and state agency officials to understand the

outcome of cases involving youth charged as adults and to develop alternatives that deliver better results.

"The research is clear that charging youth as adults and housing them in adult jails does not reduce crime, because these youth are more likely to be hardened by the experience and consequently commit more crimes," says Monique L. Dixon, director of OSI-Baltimore's Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program. "Maryland has a system designed to address youth crime—it's called the juvenile justice system." ❏



WHY WE FUND IT

"There is a growing national trend to end the prosecution of youth as adults, which has proven to be a failed practice. Therefore, we are supporting local efforts to remove youth from the adult criminal justice system and to advance proven strategies for improving and expanding services offered to these youth in the community and in the juvenile justice system."

MONIQUE DIXON, Director of the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program

OSI-BALTIMORE GRANTEES AND AN ALLIANCE OF ORGANIZATIONS SUCCESSFULLY DELAY A NEW JAIL FOR YOUTH CHARGED AS ADULTS

In 2007, Maryland's Governor and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services planned to spend over \$100 million to build a 180-bed jail for youth charged as adults who are typically held at the antiquated Baltimore City Detention Center, an adult jail. The construction of the jail was scheduled to occur in the fall of 2010. Recognizing that the proposed jail was too large (the number of youth charged as adults had been falling since 2006) and costly, OSI-Baltimore funded several non-profit organizations to develop alternatives to building the proposed jail.

One grantee, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, worked with the Department to complete a new population projection. The report, funded by the Department, OSI-Baltimore and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, was released in May 2011 and stated that the bed need for youth charged as adults would not exceed 117 and would likely be lower. It also suggested some policy changes that would eliminate the need from the jail.

Funded by OSI-Baltimore, the Morton K. and Jane Blaustein Foundation, and the Krieger Fund, a group of grantees including Public

Justice Center, Community Law in Action, the Baltimore Algebra Project, and an alliance of over 30 organizations developed an action plan based on the Council's recommended policy changes. These grantees and the alliance engaged in community organizing and a public education campaign to solicit support for its action plan and the reallocation of the funding to develop facilities that offer youth opportunities, such as schools and recreational centers.

Thanks to the work of OSI-Baltimore's grantees and the alliance of organizations, in December 2011 the state revised its plan, scaling back the size of the proposed jail to accommodate 120 young people. But youth advocates continue to advocate for no jail.

"There's still a lot of concern about why we need 120 beds when this year there's only 40 kids being charged as adults and held at the Baltimore City Detention Center," said Kara Aanenson, an organizer with Community Law in Action.

Learn more: To view the alliance's action plan visit its website: www.stopbaltimoreyouthjail.com

SPEAKING OUT:

DWAYNE BETTS SHARES HIS STORY



An author, poet, and national spokesperson for the Campaign for Youth Justice, R. Dwayne Betts was selected as a Soros Justice Fellow of the Open Society Foundations in 2010 to write *The Circumference of a Prison*, a book about the ways crime and mass incarceration affect the families of those incarcerated as well as victims and their families, social workers, teachers, and others who will never see the inside of a jail cell.

Betts was 16, a good student from a lower-middle-class family, when he and a friend carjacked a man. Although he had never held a gun before, he was arrested and charged with six felonies. Carjacking in the state of Virginia is a “certifiable” offense, meaning that Betts would automatically be charged as an adult. He served six of his nine-year sentence in some of the worst adult prisons in the state. (The state of Virginia now houses youth in juvenile facilities regardless of how they are charged.)

After he was released, Betts earned a BA in English from the University of Maryland and is now pursuing his MFA in Poetry from Warren Wilson College, where he received the Holden Fellowship. A frequent lecturer and commentator, he was nominated for the 2008 Pushcart Award for Poetry, was a finalist for the 2007 Ruth Lily Fellowship in Poetry, and was a Cave Canem Fellow in 2006 and 2007.

Betts’s 2009 memoir, *A Question of Freedom*, was recently honored by the NAACP’s 2010 Image Awards as “Outstanding Literary Work” by a debut author.

In addition to his writing and speaking, Betts is also a committed educator, having served as the Program Director for the DC Creative Writing Workshop since 2006. In 2011, Betts was awarded a Radcliffe Fellowship to Harvard University’s Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Studies.

The morning I was arrested, the *Washington Post* ran a story about President Clinton’s then Chief of Staff, Leon E. Panetta. A dozen years later, I sat on the main stage at the University of Maryland’s graduation with now Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta two seats away from me. That night he would be called on to give the main address to the 2009 graduating class; I would have the honor of giving the student commencement speech moments before his address. Though I did not know Mr. Panetta that night, and do not know him still, I know what a rarity it is to share a stage with someone that accomplished. I understand why no one expected me to make it to that stage from the cells I called home, and that hard settled truth is why I now maintain that a prison cell must always be a last resort.

It has been 15 years since I awakened a man asleep in his car with the tap of a pistol. Fifteen years since handcuffs were first placed around my wrists and I pled guilty, at 16 years old, to the terrible offense. It has been six years since I was released from prison. When I walked out of a prison cell for the final time I knew that I’d wasted my youth, knew that I’d been confined for a third of my young life. I am familiar with handcuffs, have been familiar with them since before I was old enough to vote. This is what I’m an expert in. And yet, truly, my familiarity is such a common occurrence that now

“The citizens of Baltimore should ask themselves exactly what it means to build another jail.”

Baltimore proposes to build a 100 million dollar jail for juveniles who are only charged (not convicted) as adults.

Most people look with surprise and concern when they learn that youth are sent to adult prisons. My arrest was shocking to my family, but more shocking was my transfer to the county jail, an adult facility. They were devastated, and in that devastation learned that there exists a contingent of families, a group of people who live in a parallel universe where every decision seems to defy logic.

What followed my arrest was what can, in many cases, be expected. There were the nine days I spent in solitary confinement as they waited for a cell to open on the juvenile wing; they released me to the adult population when it no longer made sense to the powers that be to maintain a juvenile wing. It was difficult for me to resolve myself to follow rules that made little sense, and there was an inability to deal with the anger that comes from spending hours locked in a cell. As the story goes, I ended up in solitary confinement. Not one time, not two times, but three times within my first three years of incarceration. Twice for six month stretches. I had no champions. I was 16 years old, surrounded by men with sentences ranging from a few months to a lifetime.

I had no champions inside the system because, apparently, it is easier to imagine that a young person can never change. And a prison creates conditions that make it easier for us to believe this. Ask most of the guards, wardens, and other administrative staff of any prison I served time in and they likely would have had little positive to say about me. Circumstance allowed them to see me in only one way. When you build a prison for young people, reasons are found to lock young people up there—and once a young person is in prison the labeling begins. Some mornings I look into the mirror and wonder if I am that different from the 16-year-old kid who went to prison. I realize that the reason few expected success from me was both because my crime showed me



grossly incapable of making the proper decisions and the place where I served my time, those prisons, were not designed to encourage hope.

The citizens of Baltimore should ask themselves exactly what it means to build another jail. The jail is a monument to failure, and I can't imagine how anyone would not want to strongly consider if this is the appropriate move, especially given that it would be designed for juveniles. This isn't about me advocating for the coddling of young people who commit crimes, heinous or otherwise. I hold no illusions—I know that my crime warranted punishment. Yet, many years ago **Frederick Douglass wrote, “It's easier to raise strong children than to repair broken men.” Once you place a juvenile in prison, the only guarantee is that they will be broken, and that breaking will never serve Baltimore's youth well.** ❏

**“RETWEET TO RAISE AWARENESS:”
YOUTH ACTIVISTS ENCOURAGE TWITTER
USERS TO STOP THE YOUTH JAIL**

Youth activists recently took a creative approach to social justice advocacy by turning to their best resources—computers, smartphones, and friends. To raise awareness about the state’s plan to build a jail for youth prosecuted as adults, OSI-Baltimore grantees, Community Law in Action and Baltimore Algebra Project, designed a Twitter campaign for the Valentine’s Day holiday. Starting at 2 p.m. on February 14th, youth activists and allied organizations blasted their Twitter accounts with the following message, “Baltimore youth are my valentines. Stop the youth jail. #lovenotjails #schoolsnotjails Retweet to raise awareness.”

The Valentine’s Day campaign captured the top two trending topics and the hottest topic in Baltimore that day. The youth organizers achieved this success by utilizing the clever and easy process of repeatedly tweeting the same message throughout the day, garnering the attention of Baltimore’s Twitter community.

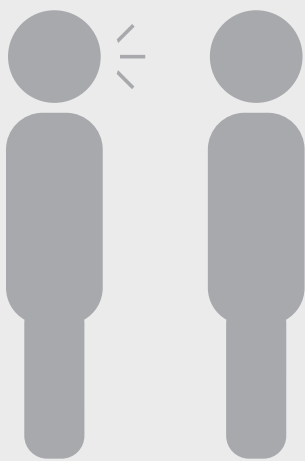
Twitter is much like a megaphone at a demonstration—it is a reliable tool to increase momentum in a social justice movement by allowing individuals to hear, repeat, and rally around a shared message. With 85 percent of 18-24 year-olds on Twitter following friends,* messages tweeted by youth and young adults are shared to vast networks. Knowing this, the youth organizers successfully utilized Twitter as a tool to increase public awareness around stopping the youth jail and investing in other options for Baltimore kids. And they taught us a lesson on the powers of social networking!

*“Inter-net-action: How Different Age Groups are Interacting Online.” August 2011.

Retrieved from: <http://roymorejon.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/social-media-interaction-infographic.jpg>

FORUM SERIES

The Burden Of Bail: Will The Right To Counsel At Bail Hearings Reduce The Jail Populations In Maryland?



OSI-Baltimore is hosting a two-part forum series on the issue of providing adequate legal representation to poor defendants during the initial stages of the criminal justice process. The issue received more exposure following a January ruling by the Maryland Court of Appeals that poor defendants must be provided legal representation at bail hearings, and Maryland's Office of the Public Defender should provide this representation. Maryland policy makers are in the process of determining how this right to counsel at bail hearings will be funded.

Advocates for bail reform have long pushed to have attorneys present at bail hearings. Without legal representation, poor defendants are at a higher risk of having a high bail set, precluding them from being released from jail pending their trials. In Baltimore City, for example, 90 percent of people held at the Baltimore City jail are awaiting trial and more than one-third of those incarcerated are behind bars due to an inability to post bail, with many held on bail amounts of \$5,000 or less.

At the first event on April 12, **Douglas Colbert, Professor of Law at the University of Maryland School of Law**, who has written extensively about improving states' pretrial release systems and the right to counsel at bail hearings, and **Timothy Murray, Executive Director of the Pretrial Justice Institute**, discussed promising pre-trial release service programs and bail reform efforts.

On May 16, speakers will be **Paul DeWolfe, Maryland's Public Defender**, who will discuss the steps his office is taking to comply with the court's order and any new legislation, and **Norman Reimer, executive director of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers**, who will share best practices for managing the demand for indigent defense of individuals at initial court appearances and bail hearings.

*If you're interested in attending, please RSVP at www.osi-baltimore.org

A CONVERSATION WITH AN OSI-BALTIMORE BOARD MEMBER

A portrait of Veronica Cool, a woman with dark, wavy hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark top and a gold earring. The background is a solid blue color.

VERONICA COOL

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Baltimore's white and black populations are shrinking, and its Asian and Hispanic populations are growing. Baltimore County is now home to the state's third-largest Hispanic community—and the city isn't far behind.

The challenges of that growing Hispanic population are a key focus of one of the newest members of the OSI-Baltimore Advisory Board—business woman and community leader, Veronica Cool.

Cool, vice president and principal business banker at Wells Fargo Bank, has more than 17 years of experience in business banking, financial analysis and sales management, and has collected a number of awards documenting her contributions to the business community, the city and the

state. She is chairwoman of the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and, in 2010, was named the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce National Latina Leader in the corporate services category. She was named Wachovia's top business banker in the nation for 2007 and 2008. She also was appointed to the Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs and has been recognized by Michelle Obama for her mentoring efforts.

Cool was born in the Dominican Republic and migrated to New York when she was 10. She is a graduate of Kutztown University in Pennsylvania and also holds a Master of Science in Finance degree from Loyola University Maryland. She lives northwest of Baltimore with her husband and two children.



HOW DID YOU GET CONNECTED TO OSI-BALTIMORE?

I am involved in many things in the community that are enjoyable but time-consuming. So I've learned to be very judicious and to say, "No, thank you," to some opportunities. That's why, when I first was approached about OSI-Baltimore, my initial reaction was "No, thanks." But based on feedback and research—I met with some amazing board members who are wildly successful "rock stars"—I wanted to learn more. And I thought, "There's nobody representing a hugely growing segment of the population: Hispanics." When I really got a broader understanding of all the things OSI-Baltimore does in the community, I thought, "Here's an opportunity for us to improve and fix things." It's phenomenal to have all these brilliant social thinkers together strategizing and I get to participate, and add input and feedback. Very exciting!

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO THE CITY OF BALTIMORE?

The assimilation of a very large population of marginalized people. Baltimore is composed of many people of different backgrounds who are unconnected, disconnected. We need to find a way to engage them and fold them into our daily living and society, whether they are Hispanic or African American. There is huge value to strengthening our city, educating our youngsters and providing them tools to ensure they become productive members of our city.

HOW DOES THIS CITY COMPARE TO OTHER PLACES YOU'VE LIVED—AND WHAT LESSONS DO YOU BRING HERE FROM ELSEWHERE?

Outside of the Dominican Republic, I have lived in New York City and Philadelphia, and the biggest difference is the small town feel of Baltimore. I love that we have all the perks of a large city, including culture, entertainment, diversity and variety, yet the sprawling and quaint feel of a village. One opportunity I see for Baltimore is the need to accept more diversity, whether that's socioeconomic or racial. Baltimore stands to gain a lot by welcoming the talent and treasures of its population.

HOW DO YOU THINK OSI-BALTIMORE WILL CHANGE WITH THE GROWTH OF THE HISPANIC POPULATION IN THE CITY?

I think OSI responds to matters that are most visible, most pressing. As data becomes more readily available, it'll start swaying the need for change. The numbers will change; the focus will change. Already, there's a huge Salvadorian population here. You're seeing more folks from Guatemala and Mexico. These first generation kids are growing up in Baltimore, some without resources or direction, and get discouraged by the lack of opportunities. And unfortunately, gangs are a very active part of city life, recruiting these youngsters. OSI has a huge opportunity to reduce the number of cases of youth crime by impacting change, whether through the Community Fellows or funding more agencies that provide services to Hispanics. We need to dedicate attention and resources to creating alternatives. I'm the poster child for what can happen when you get an education and an opportunity. I'm proud to be on the board and to be a conduit to the Hispanic population.

WHAT SKILLS AND TALENTS ARE YOU BRINGING TO THE BOARD?

I'm so glad you asked that question! Banking and finance expertise, procurement and certification knowledge, and being a working Latina mother. I also bring a grass-roots perspective. Many people have held the door open for me and helped me when they did not have to; because of the opportunities that I've had, I feel the need to give back. I am driven by the idea of improvement. I'm a social thinker and a changer. I'm passionate about providing solutions and being effective to provide sustainable improvement.

WHAT CAN YOUR FELLOW BOARD MEMBERS EXPECT FROM YOU?

Passion, enthusiasm, curiosity. I believe I bring a different perspective, a grass-roots perspective, seeing firsthand the power of education and community strength. I want to improve the world for my kids and my community, so I will ask questions and share the feedback, stories, and experiences of my life in hopes of driving change and improvement.

A close-up portrait of Shantel Randolph, a young Black woman with shoulder-length brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark blazer. The background is a blurred red and white pattern.

AUDACIOUS INDIVIDUAL

SHANTEL RANDOLPH

BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FELLOW ALUMNA

Since her community fellowship in 2007, Shantel Randolph has been singularly focused on helping youth in foster care, and those transitioning out of foster care, to prepare for adult life.

She's been teaching them skills, such as how to balance a budget, how to fill out an application for an apartment and what it means to have—and maintain—good credit. As director of Youth Advocacy and Education at the Maryland Foster Youth Resource Center for the last two years, Randolph has been working on a curriculum that will provide youth in foster care with tools and training to successfully age out of the foster care system.

So, she was disappointed to learn from recent data that, within six months to a year of aging out of foster care, 80 to 90 percent of youth end up homeless or in some sort of unstable housing.

"I think people would be surprised that the number is that high," Randolph says. "They're not sleeping under bridges; they're not out on the street peddling for money, so you wouldn't recognize that they're homeless unless you ask. And when you do, you find a lot of them are couch-surfing, temporarily staying with friends or extended family, or they're living in overcrowded houses, apartments or wherever they can find a spot."

Homelessness is such a problem among this population that, in her role at the Maryland Foster Youth Resource Center, Randolph is now building partnerships with landlords in the community who are willing to house youth transitioning out of foster care. The Maryland Foster Youth Resource Center provides qualified youth tenants and, in exchange, landlords lower their rents so that the youth can afford the housing and participate in the program.

"We've been fortunate that the landlords really have been supportive of the work we're trying to do," Randolph says. "A lot of it has to do with just educating them about this population. People in the community are just unaware of the homelessness issue with this population of young people. And also with this economy, it's a good time to start this. We have a housing crisis and a homelessness crisis. So we can help them fill their empty houses and at the same time house our clients."

Randolph also says that the homelessness problem has pointed out an area in need of improvement in her own work.

Youth aging out of foster care are asked to complete "transition plans" detailing next steps after leaving the system. But many of the plans, she says, are more "idea-based," not always realistic, and lack details about implementation.

"At age 21, they're told, 'You are a legal adult. The system is no longer responsible for your care.' But we really feel like someone should be responsible. We just cut the umbilical cord and say, 'You're on your own and have a nice life.' It's not fair. Once they age out, no one wants to touch them. They're thinking: Where do I go? Whom do I rely on? There's no safety net. They're like fresh fish out of water."

Randolph wants to see transition plans improve for youth in foster care so that red flags will fly, for example, when someone says she's going to college, but hasn't applied for financial aid; or, if someone indicates he's planning to rent an apartment for \$900 a month, but has only recently secured a job earning \$8 an hour.

And she wants foster parents and families to be provided better support and training around how to help the youth develop these plans and then follow-through.

"Sometimes you just need to help them to identify those barriers and roadblocks. If you help them, they have a much better chance; and even if they do mess up, they can quickly bounce back," Randolph says. "And believe me, when you help them, the young people are extremely grateful that somebody is taking a chance on them. Just having somebody to help them get on their feet is so critical and so important because nine times out of ten, they don't have that."



WHY WE FUND IT

"Homelessness is a problem not just for youth aging out of foster care, but for many other underserved populations as well. If our society invested more in the areas most in need of attention in our city—making addiction easily accessible, reducing the high rates of incarceration that destabilize so many families and communities, offering support services at schools—for many, homelessness would be all but wiped out. By helping this small population, Shantel Randolph is ensuring that they will, one day, be able to help others or advocate for even greater change."

PAMELA KING, Director of Community Fellowships and Initiatives



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OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BALTIMORE focuses on the root causes of three intertwined problems in our city and state: drug addiction, an over-reliance on incarceration, and obstacles that impede youth in succeeding inside and out of the classroom. We also support a growing corps of social entrepreneurs committed to underserved populations in Baltimore. Before we make a single grant, we analyze the root causes of a problem, cull research and examine current practices. Because we aim for lasting sustainable solutions, we engage public and private partners from the start. It is only then, with a clear picture of the problem, that we begin to focus our approach and diligently craft a roadmap for change.