CORNWALL REGIONAL REPORT

Growing Leaders to Enhance Civil Society: Assessing the Contributions of Leadership Newark

By Noble S. Lewis

Civic leadership capacity can be enhanced. That is the main finding of a study conducted by the Joseph C. Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies (Rutgers University-Newark), titled Growing Leaders to Enhance Civil Society: Assessing the Contributions of Leadership Newark.

The study, released in January of this year, is based on a representative sampling of Leadership Newark (LN) alumni. The two main stakeholder groups—the Community Leaders and the Community Leadership Initiative Partners—found that Leadership Newark, a nonprofit organization devoted to furthering the economic, social, and political growth of the city of Newark, NJ, has achieved a strong level of success in preparing individuals in the public, private, and non-profit sector for civic leadership.

Leadership Newark, now in its fifteenth year, provides learning opportunities for present and future leaders through a rich program of classroom seminars and real-world professional partnerships. The organization’s two-year fellowship program offers a number of learning opportunities through exchanges with noted policy experts and senior leaders in the public and private sector. The program promotes team building, decision-making, and developing other key skills for civic leadership. Program participants are mainly comprised of individuals who hail from midlevel and senior management in nonprofit and public sector organizations in or surrounding the city of Newark.

“Leadership Newark alumni reported on the survey that ‘deep engagement’ in Newark’s public affairs grew from about 18% before the program to more than 45% after the program,” states Dr. Roland V. Anglin, Director of the Cornwall Center. “Virtually all alumni experienced at least some increase in their knowledge of and engagement with Newark’s public affairs after completing the program.” The Cornwall study, coauthored by Dr. Anglin, Stephen Abbott, and Kimaada Sills, shows that alumni also reported significant increases in their social and cultural engagement within Newark. More than 86% of alumni indicated that their engagement would continue over the next ten years.

“Additionally, alumni reported that they felt a strong level of growth in their leadership ability and skills,” notes Stephen Abbott, research associate at the Cornwall Center. “The most significant area of exposure was in the areas of leadership skills such as decision-making, team building, and developing a shared vision for Newark, which reveal how the fellowship program brings diverse talents together and teaches them to collaborate effectively.”

Continued on Page 4.
Editor’s Notes

Much has happened at the Cornwall Center since the last issue of CRR. Some of the work is featured here, for example in our lead article about the release of our assessment of Leadership Newark. Briefly, the study found that the stakeholders, such as those who have gone through the program and key public, private, and nonprofit leaders concerned with Newark’s affairs, had a positive view of the organization’s work and impact.

Another article features the release of our study looking at the use of the Earned Income Tax Credit in Newark. This data-focused study strengthens an ongoing commitment to presenting spatial analysis of the challenges faced by Newark and its surrounding communities.

Recent additions to our applied research portfolio, such as a contract with the Newark’s Housing Authority to prepare a data analysis of the Dayton Street neighborhood for use in its Choice Neighborhood application, increases our presence and role in data-driven public policy analysis.

The Cornwall Center takes great pride in partnering with a variety of organizations pursuing similar goals. We highlight the work of our partner colleagues in this and future issues of the CRR. In this issue, we highlight the important regional economic development work of the John Watson Institute at Thomas Edison State College.

All good things, and the Center staff thank you for your interest in our activities and work!

The Editors!
Using the Earned Income Tax Credit, as an Economic Development Strategy: An Interview with Jessica Lau and John Manieri

By Noble S. Lewis

NSL: Jessica and John, thanks for agreeing to sit for an interview about the use of the Earned Income Tax Credit in Newark. Both of you are program managers at Cornwall and the principal authors of this EITC study. First things, first: what is the Earned Income Tax Credit or EITC as it is popularly known?

JL: The EITC is what is known as a refundable tax credit. Low income, but working taxpayers receive a refund for the amount of the credit when it exceeds their tax liability. The program was created in 1975 during Gerald Ford’s administration. Many states now have their own EITC that resembles the federal program thereby enhancing the overall returns to the working poor. In order to qualify for both the federal and state EITC programs, New Jersey households must have earned income from employment and must meet certain income and qualifying child guidelines. Low- and moderate-income workers benefit from reduced tax liabilities and receive cash assistance in the event that they owe little or no income tax. The benefits received vary depending on a taxpayer’s filing (marital) status, earnings, adjusted gross income (AGI), and the number of children residing with the taxpayer.

NSL: I have to confess, you lost me on that explanation.

JL: I understand, but to say it simply, the credit constitutes an economic incentive for low-income workers by essentially matching their earnings up to a point (even if they do not pay taxes). This is the reason that it has been called the best antipoverty program we have. It uses the tax code to encourage and reward work. The recipient can use their refund to save, pay for a used car to go to work, or pay off existing debts and hopefully stabilize their households. They make tough economic choices that help build the context for better economic choices, in all aspects of their lives, over time. Bi-partisan support for the program has been steady over the years because it is a transfer program that is squarely within the market context.

NSL: Ok, I think I am getting it, but you are calling it an economic development strategy not personal asset development strategy, why?

JM: The EITC is a rare program that is both an individual and place building strategy. In doing our research for this project, we came across the great work of the Brookings Institute in defining the EITC as a place development strategy. They noted that the EITC totals to individuals in urban areas and strapped older suburbs often dwarfs (by a factor of two) federal support for community and economic development programs. People are going to spend their EITC refunds where they live, so it becomes the start of a multiplier in the local economy. This is why cities like New York, Baltimore and San Antonio and many others work hand in glove with community based organizations to get eligible residents to sign up for the program.

NSL: What does signing up entail?

JL: Many cities, with the help of community-based partners, go as far as to complete the return for eligible residents knowing that the benefits outweigh the costs.

NSL: This study focuses on Newark, what did you find?

Continued on Page 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal EITC benefits in Newark, 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HH Tax Filings (Zip Code)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newark Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Cornwall Center

In the aggregate, 38 percent of total tax returns in Newark are returns claiming the EITC ($18,014,155 out of 105,000). This is more than double the 14 percent of total tax returns in New Jersey that claim the EITC ($549,000 out of 3.9 million). In terms of dollar benefits, Newark makes up 8 percent of the total federal EITC benefits to the State ($96,533,235) and the average credit per EITC filer is $2,499 (compared to $2,100 in the state as a whole). Thus, we conclude that when compared to the rest of the state, Newark benefits disproportionately from the EITC program both in terms of dollar benefits and in terms of the proportion of working poor receiving assistance.
All of these data paint a picture of the LN alumnus as knowledgeable about and engaged in the public, social, and cultural affairs of the city of Newark, and are planning to remain so for the foreseeable future. Cornwall director Roland Anglin remarks, “The findings support the importance of leadership programs – especially for cities facing pressing social and economic challenges. Addressing these challenges require the intentional development of a plural set of leaders who have the skills, know the issues, and most importantly, know each other. We can talk about economic investment, but investment in leadership development is the first step in securing the future of any neighborhood, city and beyond.”

Kimaada Sills, Program Manager at the Cornwall Center, adds: “In conducting the surveys, the Cornwall team also documented the personal stories of many alumni and representative stakeholders. Their personal testimonials are, in effect, the most compelling evidence of the positive and lasting contributions of LN to the city of Newark.” In the words of Mayor Cory Booker, “There is no question that as a city, Newark is in a far better position than it was before Leadership Newark existed, and that is a great testament to the positive influence of the program and its graduates.”
Using the Earned Income Tax Credit

Continued from Page 3

JL: I want put the answer to that question in context. We did not go into the study thinking that we would find a significant divergence in EITC use from comparable cities or even other communities in New Jersey. We actually wanted to do a granular analysis by ward to signal a larger comparative trend in Cornwall’s analysis of Newark going forward. We found that those who use the program are majority non-white, non-English speaking, and single female-headed households with more than one dependent child. The North Ward of Newark benefits most from the program in terms of dollar benefits and the South Ward in terms of the concentration of working poor. In the aggregate, 36 percent of total tax returns in Newark are returns claiming the EITC. In terms of dollar benefits, Newark makes up 8 percent of the total federal EITC benefits to the State and the average credit per EITC filer is $2,500 not far from the state average of $2,100.

NSL: So sum it up for me, what does this all mean?

JM: We think that these findings indicate that the EITC is very important to Newark in a broader effort to reduce poverty and encourage economic development. This latter point is not well known and it should be better understood and appreciated.

In terms of the relative share of taxpayers who are EITC benefit recipients, the South Ward has the highest percentage of working poor. This is followed by the Central Ward, the North and West wards (roughly the same), and finally, the East Ward.
Cornwall Assists Newark Housing Authority Prepare for Choice Neighborhoods Application

By Noble S. Lewis

Recently, the Newark Housing Authority selected the Joseph C. Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies to assist in preparation of their application for a Choice Neighborhoods implementation grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Cornwall’s role is to collect data on the Seth Boyden neighborhood and residents of the public housing that lived in those homes before they were closed. Dr. Roland V. Anglin, director of the Cornwall Center described this project in a recent interview.

NSL: Welcome Dr. Anglin, let’s get right to it. What is the Choice Neighborhoods program?

RVA: The Choice Neighborhoods program is an effort by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to revitalize what is termed severely distressed public housing along with the neighborhood in which such housing is located. I should add that the implementation program coordinates various services to public housing residents to increase family stability, employment and eventually building assets. Notice I said implementation. There are two phases of the program, a planning grant, for which the Newark Housing Authority has obtained an implementation grant that supports the results of the planning phase.

NSL: So Newark will get a grant for the implementation phase?

RVA: Nothing is guaranteed Noble and I think the Newark Housing Authority is trying mightily to put Newark in a position to be very competitive.

NSL: Talk some about the target community and the Seth Boyden homes.

RVA: Briefly, the Seth Boyden homes are located in the Weequahic neighborhood. They were built in 1941. Similar to other public housing across the country, the homes and surrounding neighborhood went into decline. The reasons are myriad, but by the time the homes were closed, many residents were concerned for their personal safety and the concentration of poverty palpable. Let me say this, though: I have participated in a number of community meetings for this project. What struck me is the intense feeling of resident’s desire to balance the prevailing view of Seth Boyden as a crime ridden hovel with their view that for many years this was home to many stable, working families. You have to respect that.

NSL: In your opinion, will a program such as Choice Neighborhoods help restore the luster of public housing here in Newark and the United States?

RVA: I would not want to rest such responsibility on one program that has yet to be implemented. I will say two things: first, public housing in the United States did not deteriorate in a short period of time. It took decades and in some instances, institutional neglect of the physical infrastructure hastened the negative impact on families from the massive loss of low skilled jobs in cities post World War II. It will take years for any intervention to change the reality and image that public housing can succeed. This brings me to my second point: employment is a deciding force in the health of public housing going forward. Such housing was never meant to be permanent housing, rather a temporary boost as people worked and saved toward jump-starting upward mobility. The real question is what is the national policy encompassing economic mobility and housing given the changed employment structure in American cities? This is not an easy question.

NSL: Returning to the project, though, what is Cornwall’s role?

RVA: We have assembled demographic data on the surrounding community and we are finishing up a survey of former Seth Boyden residents. This data will be used to ground the planning process for preparing the implementation grant application to HUD.

NSL: Did Cornwall learn anything with this project and how does it fit in with the larger mission?

RVA: Let me answer the latter part of your question first. This project fits centrally with our mission of service, through applied research, to the Newark community and beyond. What we learned is tremendous. This relatively small project has forced me to reevaluate the supposed consensus that public housing failed in Newark and the nation. It is a much more nuanced story that has not been explored fully. The academic and popular narrative centers on the perceived failure of the now demolished Pruitt-Igoe homes in St. Louis. While scale (too large and sprawling) may have been a problem in that instance, we need to go beyond the negative narrative that documents the real challenges of public housing in the latter half of the 20th century to one that also appreciates periods of stability before that decline really took hold. If our readers can get a hold of it, the documentary The Pruitt-Igoe Myth: An Urban History is a good elaboration on my point.
The New Jersey Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: An Interview with Barbara George Johnson

By Noble S. Lewis

Periodically, the Cornwall Center highlights the important work of colleagues and partners central to the mission of the Cornwall Center. The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy at Thomas Edison State College is one such partner. The Institute is well recognized for its work in enhancing the strength of New Jersey cities. Cornwall is playing a supporting role in the Watson Institute’s efforts in building a regional economic development platform encompassing the state’s urban areas. Our guest interview is the Executive Director of the Institute, Barbara George Johnson MPH, JD.

NSL: Barbara George Johnson, thank you for sitting for this interview.

BGJ: My pleasure. Thank you for the opportunity.

NSL: Could you provide some background on the Watson Institute?

BGJ: The Watson Institute began in 1991 as the Trenton Office of Policy Studies as an applied research support organization to assist with Trenton’s public policy needs. It was later renamed in 1997 in honor of Assemblyman John S. Watson who served with distinction for many years in the New Jersey Assembly. The Institute has over six centers that either examine policies such as education, the environment and health or provide technical assistance to improve effective practice in city government and nonprofit operations.

NSL: You have a special relationship with New Jersey’s urban mayors, correct?

BGJ: The Watson Institute serves as the convener and administrator for the Urban Mayors Association, and it grew out of our work and experience with the Trenton Office of Policy Studies. We now provide critical organizing capacity to work collaboratively toward raising issues critical to the social and economic health of the state’s urban areas.

NSL: The Watson Institute is organizing a regional economic development planning effort that is quite unique. Could you talk about the effort?

BGJ: Absolutely. When I took over leadership of the Watson Institute some five years ago, we began to look at our existing work with the goal of enhancing our effectiveness and focusing on supporting the work of the urban mayors.

What became clear is that New Jersey could increase its draw on federal resources, such as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies process (CEDS is a part of the Economic Development Administration), to enhance the economic base of its urban communities. At that time, there was no existing CEDS process in the state, so we talked and listened to urban mayors and their staffs about best practices in local economic development and how they wanted to enhance their local economies if we were to pursue such an opportunity. We also built bridges to the regional administrators from the Economic Development Administration to find out what other communities across the country were accomplishing.

We then used this information to submit an application for a regional planning grant to support a New Jersey CEDS process that would encompass many of the state’s counties. The preliminary analysis is complete and we have been able to assemble data laying out possibilities for joint economic development planning and cooperation among some of the state’s cities and counties. We have assembled a steering committee composed of diverse sectors that will help us develop the plan for the next phase of this process with the EDA.

NSL: What specifically is the task of the steering committee?

BGJ: The process is unfolding as we speak, but the group of knowledgeable stakeholders are concerned with the systematic creation of jobs. I don’t hear much of the usual reliance on projects that are short term and often producing limited jobs. I hear the desire for a more comprehensive view of planning that recognizes that we need to acknowledge and address chronic unemployment in a more coordinated and thoughtful way. I should say that this effort is not about producing a plan without acknowledging that there are other planning efforts that we must work with to accomplish the goal of helping to reduce chronic unemployment.

NSL: Thank you Barbara George Johnson. Please come back and keep us informed on this important initiative.

BGJ: Thank you.

For additional information about the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy please go to its website http://www.tesc.edu/watson/institute/.
Short Takes: Michael Simmons, the program manager responsible for our neighborhood security research, helped plan and execute a December cross-site convening of our New Jersey Youth Build Initiative, which is supported by the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General. The initiative supports and evaluates four replication sites (new sites) and three innovation sites (established sites supported to enhance a new or distinct feature of their programming). The innovation sites are located in Newark, Trenton, Paterson and Camden. Replication sites are located in Elizabeth, Atlantic City, and Vineland. Michael observed, “This was not the normal cross-site sharing meeting where we brought together experts to share best practices on youth development and crime prevention. For the first time we brought the youth together from the various programs to talk about their experiences and how the public systems that impact them can be improved to help them stay on the right path. The key thing that made this more than a feel-good convening was the presence of policy makers from various state agencies who were invited to hear the conversation. The goal was to then use the experiences of the youth and the administrators who heard them to build a cross-agency conversation on better coordinating services for at-risk youth in the state.” CRR will keep you updated as the conversation unfolds.

The Cornwall Center was recently awarded a grant by the Strong Healthy Communities Initiative (SHCI), which is funded by the Living Cities group of national foundations. The grant sees the Cornwall Center establishing a data platform that tracks the SHCI’s work in four Newark neighborhoods. Cornwall will also be the evaluator for the SHCI. Early work on this project is about to be released in a study called “Barriers to Upward Mobility: A Spatial Analysis of Newark and Challenges to Human Development.”

On April 24, Lyra D. Monteiro, an assistant professor in the Department of History (Newark), presented her work on public art to a packed house. Dr. Anglin described the presentation as “simply fabulous. Professor Monteiro’s presentation highlighted how curated public art can critically examine contemporary and historical events in ways only limited by our imagination.” For more information on Dr. Monteiro’s topic and presentation, please see http://www.themuseumonline.com/book.

Cornwall was asked to participate in two conferences assessing the long-term impact of Hurricane Sandy in New Jersey. Dr. Anglin presented earlier research on post-disaster rebuilding in the Gulf region after the storms Katrina and Rita at “Climate Change in New Jersey: Leading Practices and Policy Priorities,” sponsored by the New Jersey Climate Change Adaption Alliance at Rutgers University.

On June 10, 2013, Dr. Anglin moderated the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers (CNJG) plenary session of “Our Shared Road Ahead: Sandy and Beyond.” Dr. Anglin remarked, “It was great to play a part in both conferences. It is clear from the core substance of both events that the policy and philanthropic communities are grappling with the possibility of abnormal weather patterns becoming the norm in the state. What to do about extreme weather and rising sea levels remains the challenge ahead. Nonetheless, we are starting to grapple with this challenge as a state.”

The Cornwall Center collaborated with the Rutgers University Law School (Newark) and the Institute on Educational Law and Policy to host a talk by Professor Elise Boddie (soon to take up residency at the Law School) entitled “Revisiting the Question of Affirmative Action in Higher Education.” Professor Boddie’s talk previewed the Supreme Court decision on Fisher v. The University of Texas and provided nuance and context to this latest case on affirmative action in higher education. Professor Boddie’s experience in this area of the law is expansive; she has taught at New York Law School and Fordham University Law School. Her most recent position before joining Rutgers University Law School (Newark) was Special Counsel to the Legal Defense Fund.

Lastly, this was the inaugural season for our film series on urban and metropolitan challenges facing global society. Please look for next year’s schedule in early fall.
Books Received

On occasion, The Cornwall Center receives books from publishers for review. We make mention of them here.


The authors hold that conditions that cause homelessness and poverty today have deep historical roots. They explore the world of New York’s poor children and families, from the era of European settlements to the present day. This comprehensive history examines the successes and failures of past efforts to reduce poverty and homelessness, providing the historical context that is often lacking in contemporary policy debates.


The authors argue that a “metropolitan revolution” is taking root nationwide: in New York City, where efforts are under way to diversify the city’s vast economy; in Portland, Oregon, which is selling the “sustainability” solutions it has perfected to other cities around the world; in Northeast Ohio, where groups are using Industrial Age skills to invent new twenty-first-century materials, tools, and processes; in Houston, where a modern settlement house helps immigrants climb the employment ladder; in Miami, where innovators are forging strong ties with Brazil and other nations; in Denver and Los Angeles, where leaders are breaking political barriers and building world-class metropolises; and in Boston and Detroit, where innovation districts are producing ideas to power these economies for the next century.


Wasem’s book reminds us of a time when full employment was a legitimate and worthy policy goal. The author employs a mix of legislative historical analysis along with the use of a multivariate analysis of historical economic and public opinion data. The combination provides the contemporary reader with a rare and nuanced look at the politics of public policy without the limitations of standard institutional analysis. This book is an important resource for students of employment policy, and a great guide for policy makers looking to understand standard challenges to putting people back to work.
The Joseph C. Cornwall Center is an urban and metropolitan research center at Rutgers Newark. The Center is a part of the School of Public Affairs and Administration. We act as a portal linking the university to its community, bringing together stakeholders from public, private, and nonprofit sectors to produce usable knowledge and foster cross system collaboration. The Cornwall Center focuses on these key areas:

- Promoting and conducting scholarly research on the evolution of cities and metropolitan places
- Encouraging applied research that will improve public policies in the areas of economic development, health, education and neighborhood security resulting in expanded opportunity for communities and people in the region
- Sharing knowledge and facilitating the exchange of ideas among all stakeholders
- Encouraging informed community voice in shaping public policy
- Working with our colleagues throughout the Rutgers University system to harness the institution’s rich experience, scholarship and commitment in service of urban and metropolitan communities

These focus areas are accomplished through:

**Urban and Metropolitan Research:** The Cornwall Center engages in basic trend research for Newark, as well as the region in which it is embedded. By brokering research projects that involve faculty, or supporting faculty papers that have an urban or regional focus, the Cornwall Center acts as a portal between faculty and the community.

**Demonstration Projects:** The Cornwall Center partners with foundations and the public sector to host and manage projects designed to improve the implementation and management of key public policies.

**Knowledge and Learning Hub:** The Cornwall Center plan events, talks, and symposia that lift up the urban and or regional focus. The Center develops event programming involving the community, Rutgers faculty and others with an informed voice on urban and regional issues.