THE SKILLMAN FOUNDATION

Kids Matter Here

An Analytic Review of the 10-Year Good Neighborhoods Initiative

This Summary Report is part of a collection of Analytic Review products of the Skillman Foundation's Good Neighborhoods Initiative. The complete collection can be viewed at **www.skillman.org/GNI**.

Kids Matter Here

An Analytic Review of the 10-Year Good Neighborhoods Initiative

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Detroit is my hometown. It is where I have grown and matured. It is where I have learned about community and conflict, resiliency and bleakness, and grandeur and disinvestment. Detroit is a place filled with contradiction. Where some hit cement ceilings and others propel to great heights. Where some dream of escape and others dig in for the long-haul. It is a place where people love hard and can bear an inordinate amount of pain.

I am a long-hauler; one of those Detroiters who has a deep and stubborn love for my city, and a determinedness to see its people thrive.

This determination stems from my grandmother, a neighborhood organizer and activist, whose work, rooted in the gospel, came with great sacrifice and scrutiny. Her example gifted me purpose.

During my childhood, we uprooted and resettled in a spread of Detroit neighborhoods as my mother scrambled to provide for our family. She provided me a sense of stability as we endured the economic volatility and social regression happening in Detroit. Through my mother, I learned persistence, hard work and love.

As a young professional, I was able to put these values and skills to work as the director of Annie E. Casey Foundation's Rebuilding Communities Initiative in Detroit, one of the first comprehensive community initiatives in our country. This work was exciting and powerful. It revealed to me that I wasn't alone. There were thousands of stubborn, long-haul Detroiters willing to work together to restore our communities.

Leading the Skillman Foundation's Good Neighborhoods Initiatives over the past decade, coupled with these experiences, constitutes much of my personal and professional life. It is in this verity that I can declare I have grown up in this work. It has matured me, shaped me and defined me. It's in my DNA. This work isn't just a profession, it's a personal calling.

Now, as the neighborhood initiative concludes, I think about the growth that's taken place within our city, our neighborhoods, our Foundation, and within me. Reflecting on this journey, I'm reminded of Erik Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development. In each stage, new challenges are confronted, resulting in the mastery of a new set of skills, strengths or virtues. Just as this is actualized in individuals, it also has been realized in the many actors and developments of the Good Neighborhoods Initiative.

Trust & Purpose

The first stage is the development of trust in others. Establishing authentic and genuine trust is the first step in any meaningful partnership. It was particularly critical in Detroit as we entered into disinvested communities laden by unjust and racist policies. Thus, our entry began with listening tours with hundreds of residents, hearing their histories and hopes, and privileging their voices and vision. Trust required the Foundation to not only listen, but also to act upon hearing. It resulted in us hiring community members, hosting community conversations, translating our work in four different languages, and investing directly in residents early and often.

Next, is the development of trust in self under the guidance of elders. This stage was a foundational element of the Good Neighborhoods Initiative. It manifested in personal development as well as in the continuous refinement of our strategies. Both professionally and personally, I benefited from the investment, mentorship and sponsorship of so many who generously shared their wisdom. Carol Goss, former Skillman Foundation president, a courageous and beloved mentor, grew my confidence to lead with integrity, grace and love. Omowale Satterwhite, Garland Yates and Prue Brown genially imparted their knowledge, earned through decades of national experience. Others offered gentle affirmations, subtle corrections and wise counsel that resulted in the work being respectful, intentional and effective.

A growing capacity was not just reserved for me. It was an intentional aspect of our strategy, shared by many actors in the Good Neighborhoods work. Nonprofit leaders and partners, neighborhood residents and activists, youth, and the Skillman Foundation team actively worked to increase our competence to work in concert with one another toward a shared vision, driven by data, and an unyielding commitment to improve outcomes for 35,000 children in six Detroit neighborhoods. This era was referred to as the Readiness Phase, which translates into initiative — the third stage in Erikson's framework.

Competence & Fidelity

The fourth stage, competence, is developed through the challenge of learning new skills with the risk of failure. Shortly after the start of the Good Neighborhood Initiative, a series of severe changes occurred in the city. It was 2008. The market crashed and employment opportunities and housing values plummeted. Times were ominous, and I worried that our partners would be discouraged. I was swiftly liberated of this notion and reminded of Detroiters' grit and resilience. At community meetings, people were just as engaged and energetic as before. They said, "It's always been tough and hard. This is nothing new. It won't stop us, it just makes us more determined." The urgency to act, to hold things together for children, pushed us forward and constructed a competence to stay the course during one of Detroit's harshest decades in history.

We not only stayed the course, but we iterated often. The Skillman Foundation became a learning organization, and so did our partners. We constantly assessed and asked, "Do the results of our actions match our intent?" This question regarding fidelity, the fifth stage in Erikson's framework, drove our efforts to use and integrate data and measurements to better understand our work and to inform course adjustments. The Skillman Foundation sought to change itself first before we asked others to adopt new behaviors. So we modeled accountability to the community and to our board of trustees. We were steadfast in our commitment to the community that child well-being outcomes could improve. Thus, our fidelity was to move hard, stubborn numbers, not to be beholden to specific strategies. Additionally, difficult times and eroding conditions didn't deter us or our board, we pressed forward with a culture of constant renewal, learning the value and necessity of being flexible and adaptive.

Love & Care

The sixth virtue is about engaging in long-term commitments and reciprocal relationships. The GNI was one of the longest and largest place-based efforts to improve children's well-being within a single U.S. city. We exceeded our 10-year, $100 million commitment. While we carefully measured our impact along the way, we know the most powerful and lasting investments carry forward through our investment in people. These people continue to lead their neighborhoods and are now leading major efforts in our city's transformation. They are mobilized, engaged and activated for the rest of their lives. And our city is better because of it.

This is especially true for the young people in the neighborhoods. There are numerous shining examples of youth leaders that developed during the work of the Good Neighborhoods Initiative. It has been an extraordinary privilege to see them grow, mature and take ownership of the issues affecting their neighborhoods and generation. These youth represent the Erickson's seventh stage, guiding the next generation.

Elizabeth Morales is an outstanding example of the next generation. She became a part of the Good Neighborhoods work as a student at Cesar Chavez High School through a youth council established by Congress of Communities. Elizabeth is wicked smart and an excellent student. Her youth leadership experience helped her to cultivate a fearless voice, which she used to promote college attendance among immigrant students. Elizabeth and many of her peers relegated their postsecondary dreams to commuter schools. Through mentorship, Elizabeth transferred from a local campus to the University of Michigan. She has since graduated and starts law school in the fall of 2017. She mentored other students from her neighborhood, forming pipeline of youth leaders in both the Latino and Arab-American communities.

This is how she reflects on her experience in the Good Neighborhoods: "There are little gems in Detroit that are so focused on kids. There's a lot of money and people out there who want to see them succeed. If kids knew how many invisible hands are trying to reach out to them, they'd feel like the most special people on earth."

Unlike Elizabeth, Stepha'N Quicksey struggled academically and entered Osborn High School with a 0.9 grade point average. College was never discussed at home, and six of his siblings had already dropped out of high school. He was mentored by teachers and caring adults, and his leadership flourished. He became the student body president for all Detroit Public Schools students. His election is a monumental achievement alone, but the honor was magnified as Stepha'N was the first student from a neighborhood high school elected to be student president in over 20 years. Stepha'N continues to lead. He graduated as salutatorian and as a college student. He formed a support network with other students and encouraged his siblings. "I want to continue contributing to change here, to work and start a family, and send my kids to schools in Detroit," he shared.

Seeing young people like Elizabeth and Stepha'N flourish through this work has been a tremendous experience. Some of them have benefited from improved outcomes and relationships, or resources or programs in schools. Others are now helping to champion community change. They are the legacy of this work.

Wisdom

Through each of these phases, the natural maturation of a decade-long body of work and the rich experiences — including many successes and failures — wisdom was generated. It is in this report that we offer our story and provide retrospection, the final stage in Erikson's framework.

In closing, the Good Neighborhoods Initiative is more than a philanthropic experiment or investment. It is a lesson in co-creation, civic action and collective impact. Its narrative consists of overwhelming difficulties, immense love, resiliency, and hard work on behalf of Detroit's children. It is a story of Detroit, but more significantly, of Detroiters.

Tonya Allen
President & CEO

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D.A.N.C.E. Inc. youth dancers perform in a park cleared of blight in Detroit's Brightmoor neighborhood.

Improving the Places Where Detroit's Kids Live

The year 2016 marked the end of a decade of investment by the Skillman Foundation in a place-based approach that has come to be called the Good Neighborhoods Initiative, or GNI.

When it was introduced in 2006, this initiative marked a dramatic shift in how this Detroit-based foundation with a long-standing commitment to children approached its grantmaking.

Although results have varied across the initiative's four main strategy areas, there is ample evidence that the neighborhood-level work the Foundation supported significantly improved numerous conditions affecting thousands of children living in neighborhoods where investments were concentrated. Similarly, the Foundation's expanded civic leadership role has yielded some notable successes as well as important insights about what is required to play this role effectively. The initiative's achievements, reviewed more fully later in this document, are all the more remarkable in the light of the formidable challenges that Detroit faced over the 10 years in which the Foundation pursued GNI.

WHAT THE SKILLMAN FOUNDATION SOUGHT TO ACHIEVE WITH GNI

Drawing inspiration from other efforts underway in communities across the country, the Foundation chose to redirect a very large share of its annual grantmaking resources toward a more intensive and strategic focus on changing the conditions under which a sizeable number of Detroit's children live and learn. It launched the initiative with a 10-year, $100 million commitment to six neighborhoods where nearly one-third of the city's young people lived at the time. The aim was to ensure that children living in those places were safe, healthy, well educated, and prepared for adulthood. Since 2011, the initiative's strategy has been more sharply focused on achieving an increase in high school graduation rates among schools serving children within GNI neighborhoods.

The initiative's main strategies have encompassed Education, Youth Development, Safety and Community Leadership.

By the end of 2016, the Skillman Foundation channeled more than $122 million in program grant funds into GNI, two-thirds of its total grantmaking during the period.[i] This number is well above the level of funding it originally pledged and indicative of the sustained focus that it brought to this effort. The Foundation estimates that its grants and influence have leveraged over $1.25 billion in additional public and private investments over the 10 years of GNI.[ii] This represents over 10 times the level of its direct dollar investments in GNI neighborhoods. The Foundation's neighborhood-focused work is an excellent example of the distinctive opportunity that "embedded funders" have to operate through multiple relationships and networks to exert influence within a hometown city or region.[iii] And its commitment to GNI now ranks among the largest and longest multi-site place-based efforts to improve children's lives within any single US city.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SKILLMAN FOUNDATION'S GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE

Resident Capacity and Leadership

- **New networks of resident leaders** with increased capacity to influence local conditions on behalf of children.

- **Influential governance groups** are now in place in five GNI neighborhoods.

- **An established small grants program** that has awarded over 800 small grants to community leaders.

Lifting Education

- **High school graduation rates** have increased from 65% to 81% in GNI neighborhoods, a rate of increase greater than for Detroit as a whole.

- **A cross-sector coalition** is now in place and focused on revamping the financial and structural elements of Detroit's education system.

PURPOSE OF THE ANALYTIC REVIEW

In view of the scale and duration of this initiative, the Foundation made a significant additional investment during 2016 in a year-long Analytic Review — a collaborative project to capture how this decade of work has evolved, what it has accomplished and what lessons it offers. The purpose of the Analytic Review is both to inform decisions about the Foundation's work going forward and to build and share relevant knowledge for local and national audiences.

This Summary Report serves as the centerpiece of a suite of Analytic Review products that includes recently completed strategy area evaluations and additional reports and essays that capture different aspects of the Foundation's work. These varied Analytic Review products are intended to be the result of an ongoing exchange among different GNI participants — including Foundation staff,

Trustees, neighborhood representatives, implementing partners, researchers, evaluators and other observers — to "make meaning" of the whole GNI experience. Because the goal of this summary is to offer a synthesis, rather than a comprehensive review of the process, it will necessarily leave out some interesting results and aspects of GNI that are detailed in other written products.[iv] It draws on numerous data sources and includes links to other documents so that interested readers can pursue specific findings in greater depth. Available online at **www.skillman.org/GNI**, they offer a wealth of accumulated knowledge and lessons not just for the Skillman Foundation, but also for its partners, and a broader array of funders, researchers and policy advocates interested in the promise of place-based approaches to improving the lives of urban youth.

Expanding Opportunities for Youth

- **Youth development opportunities** in the neighborhoods have increased, with total youth involvement growing from 10,000 to 14,000 during the period 2010 to 2014.

- **Summer youth employment opportunities** have increased, from approximately 2,500 slots available citywide in 2008 to 8,000 paid jobs with training in 2016, through a broader public-private collaboration the Foundation helped to create.

Safety and Blight Elimination

- **Crime rates declined** by 40% in all GNI neighborhoods over the years from 2009 to 2016.

- **Youth victimization rates are down** by 47% in GNI designated areas during the period from 2009 to 2016.

- **Early support for targeted blight removal** in one GNI neighborhood informed an expanded approach involving 12,000 projects, the most aggressive blight removal effort to date in Detroit.

How GNI Evolved

The story of GNI's progression — from initiative design and framing, neighborhood selection and community engagement and planning, through several years of capacity building, and the shift toward increasingly focused implementation activities — sets the stage for the later sections of this report. This section summarizes how the Foundation navigated its relationships with its community partners and began building the necessary internal and community capacity to take on this work. It notes significant shifts in approach, especially as the initiative's focus shifted more toward implementation after 2010. It highlights how the initiative became more unified around a set of strategies and goals directed toward increasing high school graduation rates among children living in GNI neighborhoods. Finally, it reviews several profound shifts within the wider Detroit context that challenged the Foundation's efforts and affected some of GNI's results.

What GNI Accomplished

This section highlights key GNI's achievements. It first summarizes the types of investments made and results achieved in each of its main strategy areas — Education, Youth Development, Safety and Community Leadership. Then it reviews accomplishments resulting from the Foundation's efforts to exert civic leadership and policy influence and innovative social investments to support its grantmaking activities.

A student at Detroit Edison Public School Academy.

Two girls make crafts at COMPAS, an arts organization in Southwest Detroit.

Youth perform at a community cultural festival on Detroit's Eastside.

Broader Observations about the Approach

The GNI experience yielded valuable lessons for the Foundation and its partners — some associated with areas of progress and others arising from recognized missteps and disappointments. This section offers a thematic synthesis of what is now different in Detroit because of GNI, and what the Foundation learned while undertaking this ambitious initiative. It includes reflections on several GNI assumptions and design principles; the Foundation's approach to organizational, neighborhood, system and policy change; working with and building the capacity of neighborhood leaders; investments in data, monitoring, evaluation and planning; and the critical role of organizational culture and values in sustaining good place-based work.

Questions of Continuing Interest

The Foundation's experience with GNI over the past decade contributed greatly to its learning and its priorities for new and continuing strategic investment; however, it also raised questions that remain partly unanswered. A few of these questions — such as how to navigate the transition away from a long-term initiative, how to balance a strong goal focus with demands for continuous adaptation, and how to sustain and deepen the Foundation's capacity for broader civic leadership — all deserve further exploration. These questions are likely to be of interest to others in the field who recognize the promise of comprehensive place-based investing as well as its ongoing challenges.

Children at a community event in Cody Rouge, Detroit.

How the Initiative Evolved

The Foundation began the initiative with an explicit intention to increase opportunities for children through a place-based strategy, in partnership with the communities it selected.

The Foundation's staff and Trustees were aware of the implementation challenges they would likely face and understood that refocusing the Foundation's efforts toward GNI would require ample time and a large shift in how it deployed its grant dollars as well as its human and reputational capital. They knew from the start that in order for this new initiative to be successful, they would have to build new capacity, both internally (restructuring the Foundation's own operations), and externally (in how they worked with grant partners and others). Finally, the Foundation foresaw that navigating the uncertainties involved would require an adaptive learning approach. What follows is an account of GNI's evolution, focusing on key assumptions, working methods, and important inflection points over the decade.

Many critical features of the GNI strategy were determined during 2005 as the Foundation's staff and Trustees prepared for the formal launch of the initiative in 2006. In July 2005, the Trustees approved the selection of six communities to implement a neighborhood development initiative through which it would "concentrate resources into geographically-targeted communities with the intention of transforming them into safe, healthy and nurturing environments for children."

The Foundation clearly understood that to achieve significant results on these different fronts it would have to remain involved with the work for a long time. Its initial commitment to invest at least $100 million in resources over a 10-year-period represented a very substantial share of its annual grant budget. Rather than establish and staff a separate program unit to oversee the effort, or outsource to an external intermediary, the Foundation chose a different path — involving a widespread remodeling of its existing staffing structure to support direct involvement in planning and program implementation, together with a reliance on intermediaries and implementing partners for substantive expertise and technical support to extend its reach.[v]

GNI was envisaged as proceeding in stages: A period of two years of community planning would be needed to build understanding and trust in the target neighborhoods, followed by an additional 3-year readiness phase during which capacity would be built, both internally and in the neighborhoods selected. After that, it anticipated a period of at least five years for implementation and for meaningful results to be achieved.

It also knew that achieving results on children's issues at both the neighborhood and systems levels would involve more than simply a redeployment of grant dollars: The necessary broader role would involve fully exploring a range of other ways of using its influence as a self-described "changemaker."

This would mean making "more concerted use of the non-grantmaking resources at its disposal" to become a more powerful voice for children. By drawing upon and leveraging these resources — its staff and board networks, deep local knowledge, civic reputation, professional expertise, access to national resources, and political capital — it would be better armed to address the urgent challenges facing children and families in Detroit.[vi]

SELECTING NEIGHBORHOODS

Brightmoor

Cody Rouge

Chadsey-Condon

Southwest Detroit

Northend Central

Osborn

The Foundation chose six neighborhoods in which to focus:

Brightmoor, Chadsey-Condon, Cody Rouge, Northend Central, Osborn and Southwest Detroit.

In 2006, these neighborhoods were home to more than 65,000 children, roughly 30% of Detroit's children at that time.[vii]

In determining where to focus the initiative, Foundation staff drew heavily on available data to first define a larger pool of 38 possible neighborhoods and then pare this group down to 14 communities selected based on their large populations of children and levels of need as evidenced by poverty and poor child well-being indicators. These 14 neighborhoods were then further analyzed to determine which offered the best combination of "opportunity, readiness and momentum" to increase the odds for achieving positive outcomes for children. In choosing the final group of six target neighborhoods, the Foundation sought a mix of places with different levels of need and requiring different types of strategy. Guiding this data-informed approach were the principles that large numbers of children ought to benefit from the strategy and that successes achieved should help point the way toward strategies that could be implemented more widely within the city.

Besides selecting its geographic focus, the Foundation also decided to phase neighborhoods into the initiative gradually rather than all at once.[viii] This staged process of neighborhood entry and engagement allowed time to build internal capacity and created opportunities to reflect, learn and modify the planning process as it acquired new knowledge and skills.

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BRINGING ON EARLY
TECHNICAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

Beginning in 2006, the Skillman Foundation engaged partner organizations to serve as intermediaries providing various forms of technical support for its work in the six target communities. It chose the National Community Development Institute (NCDI) to design and lead the community engagement and planning efforts because of their experience in organizing in communities of color. They were engaged through GNI's planning and readiness stages and were critical in helping Foundation staff comprehend the community dynamics at play, supporting community organizers (first called liaisons and then executive directors) and creating the governance groups. It also engaged the University of Michigan School of Social Work to establish a Technical Assistance Center (UM TAC) to provide further support for the planning and engagement work in the six communities. UM TAC's scope of work included **(1)** assessing residents' and other stakeholders' goals, strategies, and priorities and gathering resident perceptions of opportunities and supports needed for their efforts; **(2)** offering various forms of training and technical assistance to Foundation staff and the communities, in the form of events, workshops, coaching, data presentations, cross-neighborhood learning and leadership development; and **(3)** providing communication and information dissemination.

A Community Leadership Summit brings together neighborhood activists to discuss pressing concerns and goals.

COMMUNITY
PLANNING
2006–2009

READINESS &
CAPACITY BUILDING
2008–2011

IMPLEMENTATION
2011–2016

NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT
AND PLANNING

An Osborn resident contributes at a Skillman Foundation community meeting.

At the neighborhood level, the planning process was designed to prepare each neighborhood to establish a community-wide planning body comprised of diverse stakeholder groups interested in building an agenda for children. Working through an existing nonprofit fiscal agent in each neighborhood, the Foundation awarded planning grants and provided on-site technical assistance to develop a community-wide plan and strategies focused on one overarching but achievable goal. Technical assistance was provided in individual, group and cross-group settings. Neighborhood organizers were hired to help each community throughout the planning and capacity-building phases.

Each neighborhood followed a similar planning process that included community engagement meetings, stakeholder meetings, focus groups, and four to six community meetings to identify goals, with the Foundation's guidance that they be related to children. Each neighborhood also established several Action Planning Teams that received help from the UM TAC to develop short- and long-term goals and strategies along with action steps for achieving them. Once goals were established and implementation had begun, UM TAC helped the Teams create a unified community plan. The Foundation also began to convene quarterly meetings of key community members and grant partners to formally facilitate networking and strategic implementation of the locally defined agenda.

In 2005, the Foundation began to make the first in a series of staffing additions to better support the initiative. Its first move was to create a new staff position to oversee the array of evaluation, research and learning activities that GNI would require. Another new position was added the following year to guide its expanded changemaking work. Over this period, the Foundation also developed an expanded external communications strategy to help in presenting the Foundation's new programmatic focus to external partners and the broader public.

Anticipating the transition from neighborhood-focused planning toward a sustained period of internal and external capacity building, it chose a team from the Center for Youth and Communities at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University in 2007 to serve as the initiative's evaluator during the anticipated multi-year

Readiness Phase.[x] The Brandeis team worked with Skillman Foundation staff to clarify assumptions about expected neighborhood change results and created a framework and benchmarks for assessing progress in its capacity-building efforts. A national advisory group was also established and met several times to provide feedback on the framework and progress measures that Brandeis was developing.

Within the Foundation, additional staffing and organizational adjustments were also made to better integrate programmatic support for the Good Neighborhoods Initiative with other program investments, primarily the Good Schools: Making the Grade Initiative which operated from 2005–2010 and the Good Opportunities program, which was created in 2006 as a vehicle for making more concerted use of both grants and non-grantmaking resources to change policies

Skillman Foundation trustees meet with Geoffrey Canada of Harlem Children's Zone.

and systems for the benefit of Detroit's children. It worked with Brandeis University and other consultants to create an initial theory of change[xi] to guide this move toward increased integration; that effort produced specific strategies and outcomes and an evaluation framework to build accountability for progress toward identified readiness indicators.[xii]

Over the period from 2008–2010, the Skillman Foundation moved forward with a multi-dimensional community capacity-building strategy that included intensive engagement, training and leadership development work at the neighborhood level.

The establishment of neighborhood governance boards comprised of residents and nonprofit stakeholders began in 2008 and continued throughout the Readiness Phase. Governance board elections and first board meetings

were held in the fall of 2009. During 2010, those governance boards formally adopted community plans for children and youth in their neighborhoods. In fall 2010, lead agencies were identified to manage board administration and finance. Community liaisons who had worked in the neighborhoods during the planning phase became paid executive directors once the governance group structure was formalized. By 2011, there were executive directors in place to support the governance groups in all six neighborhoods.[xiii]

During the Readiness Phase, the Foundation made the decision to concentrate its youth development grantmaking within the six neighborhoods. It also invested in the creation of a new data center, now called Data Driven Detroit (D3), to make better quality information more widely available for a range of Detroit stakeholders.[xiv]

HOW THE INITIATIVE EVOLVED

Young chess players at Cornerstone Nevada Primary in Osborn, Detroit.

The Creation of Data Driven Detroit (D3) as a New Local Information Resource

Beginning in 2008, the Skillman Foundation worked in partnership with the Kresge Foundation and the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Project to launch an independent locally based data center, Data Driven Detroit (D3) to meet the increasing need for high-quality data and information within Detroit and the region. The Foundation provided a significant share of the operational funding for D3; it established an Advisory Committee of local stakeholders to guide D3's continuing development and expansion into one of the larger and better recognized data centers in the country that serves as a resource for local data-informed decisions.

When the Foundation began to transition from Readiness into Implementation in 2011, it recognized that some shifts in approach were needed. Informing these shifts were observations of its own staff about how the work was proceeding at the neighborhood level, and findings from several evaluative reports it commissioned.[xv]

One significant theme that emerged was the need for more intentional integration and alignment of efforts across strategy areas — this applied to how Foundation staff were working together across programs and also how program activities were being integrated on the ground in neighborhoods.[xvi]

Perhaps just as important was the growing uncertainty and instability that the Foundation and many others were witnessing within local government in the years leading up to Detroit's bankruptcy and financial restructuring.

The Foundation's organizational planning and benchmarking process during the period 2012–2013 led it to reset its course and introduce new areas of emphasis. The main tenets guiding these shifts were: **(1)** more innovation was needed to build on the Foundation's current success and the capacity it had helped establish in the community; **(2)** the "new normal" of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity within the local civic environment required a different approach to strategy and leadership that called for greater nimbleness, adaptability and resilience as well as a focus on large-scale change; **(3)** the Foundation needed to do more to maximize the deployment of its financial, intellectual, social, political and human capital; **(4)** the 2016 goals and strategies previously put in place had to be modified in the light of changed conditions; and **(5)** more work was needed to realign and deepen the Foundation's internal capacity to make it congruent with the problems it was tackling.

During 2014, the Foundation produced an enterprise-wide theory of change, the third iteration in a series of theory of change frameworks developed over the course of the initiative.

(All three theory of change frameworks are included in Attachment B.)

The 2014 framework was instrumental in better aligning the Foundation's work during the remaining two years of the initiative. That reframing process led to a sharpened focus on high school graduation rates as a key marker of progress (see the framing statement below) and to adoption of the "mega-goal" of increasing high school graduation rates to 90% by 2016. At that time the Foundation also elevated a growing array of community safety efforts that had already begun, giving these activities a more prominent role within GNI. The resulting framework spelled out goals within four main areas — Education, Youth Development, Safety, and Community Leadership.

The Skillman Foundation integrates its strategies, and leverages all its capital in partnership with community leaders, to ensure safe neighborhoods with high quality schools and youth development programs, so that more young people achieve meaningful high school graduation.

**From the Skillman Foundation's
2014 Enterprise Theory of Change**

Education

- **Capacity building** to increase school quality

- **Build infrastructure** to support parent and student advocacy on school options

- **Strengthen infrastructure** to identify and scale high-performing school operators

- **Make citywide education investments** to strengthen human capital, broaden advocacy for system change and improve availability and use of data

Youth Development

- **Ensure accountability** and capacity for quality and scale

- **Build public will** for youth development

- **Develop infrastructure** for a coordinated youth development system

Community Leadership

- **Build capacity and infrastructure** to support equitable partnerships

- **Support leadership development** pathways for community residents

- **Facilitate network weaving** and create collaborative platforms

- **Strengthen** critical community assets

Safety

- **Create safe pathways** to schools

- Support more **community embedded policing**

- **Transform community culture** and attitudes around safety

- Support additional **youth violence interventions**

HOW THE INITIATIVE EVOLVED

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The above account of GNI's evolution would be incomplete without acknowledging the effect that a range of profound environmental shifts occurring in Detroit had on conditions within the GNI neighborhoods and on a wider policy front, particularly within the broader education landscape.

Unfortunately, many of these shifts were negative — from changes in demographic, economic and housing market trends affecting Detroit neighborhoods, to worsening political conditions involving both city and state governments, growing fiscal problems affecting municipal agencies and the Detroit public school system, and the weakened organizational capacity of Detroit's nonprofit sector as community and citywide agencies were forced to eliminate or reduce services because of shrinking resources. In addition, the wider economic and social consequences of the Great Recession further increased the challenges that arose over the period in which GNI was implemented, and most certainly diminished the scale of impact of some of the initiative's investments.

Young volunteers demolish an abandoned home on Detroit's Westside.

The following points serve to highlight the scale of these trends:

- **Deep population losses.** Detroit lost nearly 240,000 residents between 2000–2010. Black households, mostly those in the middle and upper-income brackets, accounted for nearly 80% of that decline. Many who left were families with children — between 2000 and 2010, Detroit lost 47% of children ages 5–9. All in all, the population of children under 18 declined by 35%.

- **Unemployment and underemployment rates remained stubbornly high.** Detroit's unemployment rate in 2009 was 25% compared with 14% statewide and near 10% nationally. At that time, Detroit's underemployment rate — individuals unable to find enough work to fulfill their needs — approached 50% of the labor force.

- **Worsening poverty.** Median household incomes in Detroit were below $26,000 in 2014, compared with nearly $50,000 in Michigan. More than 39% of Detroiters were living in poverty. Rates among children rose as well. By 2014, 62% of kids five years of age and under were living below the poverty line.

- **Public school achievement levels remained low.** In 2015, only 6% of 4th graders were at or above proficient level in reading and just 4% of 8th graders were at or above proficient level in math.[xviii]

These and other trends are more fully described in a separate contextual analysis prepared as part of the Analytic Review.[xix] As that analysis shows, these various negative forces played out in the form of increasingly challenging conditions within the GNI neighborhoods. While some neighborhoods were more resilient in the decline because of existing conditions and thus fared slightly better than others on some measures, all felt the combined effects of population loss, rising poverty and housing market changes throughout the decade.[xx]

Although local government dysfunctions were evident in the years prior to the initiative, these wider forces added to the volatility and uncertainty that accompanied Detroit's worsening municipal finances and ultimately its bankruptcy. Only in the years following the election of a new, results-focused mayor and Detroit's emergence from bankruptcy have some of the most severe financial challenges begun to recede; a range of basic city services, notably street lights and bus services, are now better than before. Along with the new mayoral administration have come increased opportunities for partnership between the Foundation and the public sector in key GNI strategy areas such as youth employment, safety and blight reduction.

In the education arena, the worsening array of fiscal woes confronting the Detroit public schools over the past decade made system-wide educational improvement efforts even more difficult to tackle. Although marked progress has been made recently in raising local and national awareness of Detroit's education crisis, there are still fundamental systemic issues that stymie efforts to improve performance within the Detroit school district.

- **A weaker housing market and high foreclosures.** In 2008–2009, Detroit experienced over 21,500 sales of bank-owned foreclosures compared with just over 1,400 market sales during this period. When bank foreclosures finally began to recede, increasing tax foreclosures followed. There were over 143,000 bank or tax foreclosures between 2008 and 2014. Along with lack of employment, foreclosure trends have taken their toll on efforts by Detroit families to pursue economic and housing mobility. Unfortunately, home foreclosures remain a continuing crisis that is displacing families throughout the city.

- **More vacancies and blight.** As of 2014, nearly 80,000 structures in Detroit were blighted or at risk of becoming blighted. The city now contains nearly 21 square miles of vacant developable land — almost 15% of its total land area. These trends greatly accelerated the decline of many previously stable Detroit neighborhoods.

Graduates from Osborn High School congratulate each other outside of Detroit's Masonic Temple.

What GNI Accomplished

GNI adopted a mega goal of increasing high school graduation rates. From 2007 to 2015, the graduation rate in GNI neighborhood schools rose from 65 to 81%.

Looking back over the decade, there is ample evidence of the type and range of results that GNI achieved. Some achievements relate to the Foundation's place-based investments to strengthen community leadership and bring about educational, youth development, safety and other benefits for children living in the neighborhoods where its investments were concentrated. Others relate to the Foundation's deliberate pursuit of an expanded civic leadership role in order to influence broader changes in public policy, new or expanded partnerships, and better alignment of dollars and talent for the benefit of Detroit's youth.

This section draws from evaluation reports, studies and review essays to highlight what GNI accomplished through its place-based grantmaking, its pursuit of increased civic leadership and influence, and its expanded focus on social innovation investments to complement other program activities.
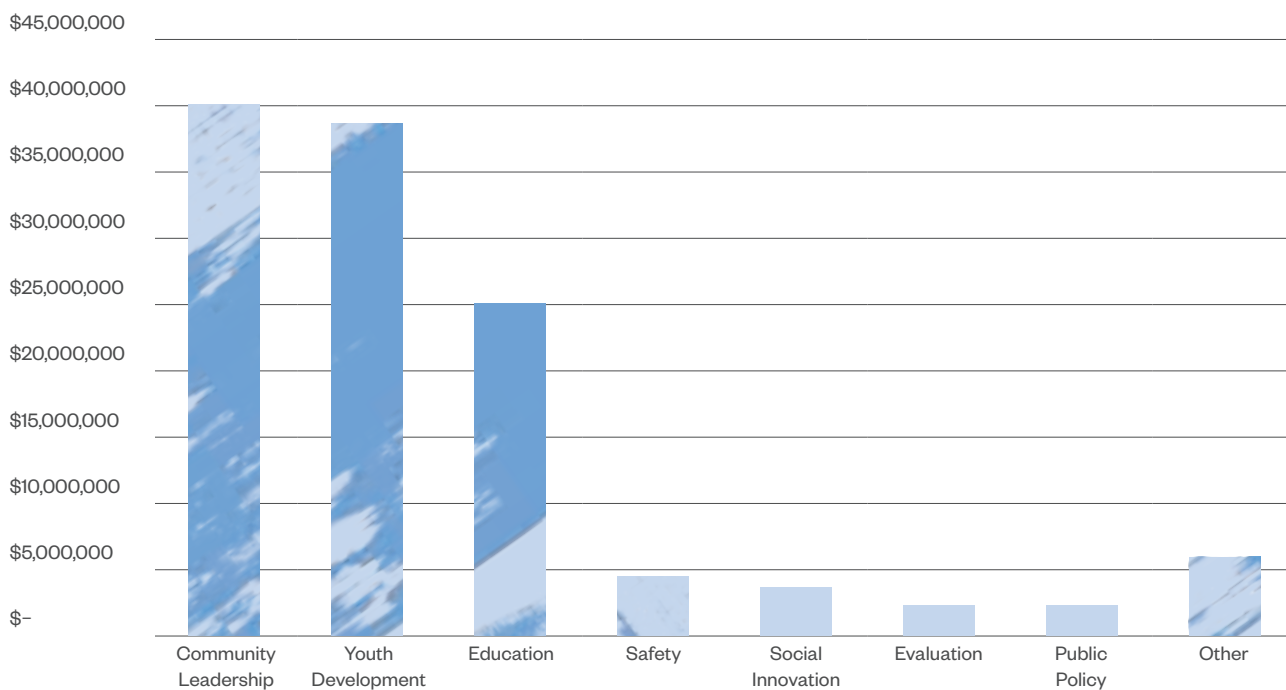
NEIGHBORHOOD AND CITYWIDE INVESTMENTS

Neighborhood and Citywide Investments (2006–2016)

CITYWIDE
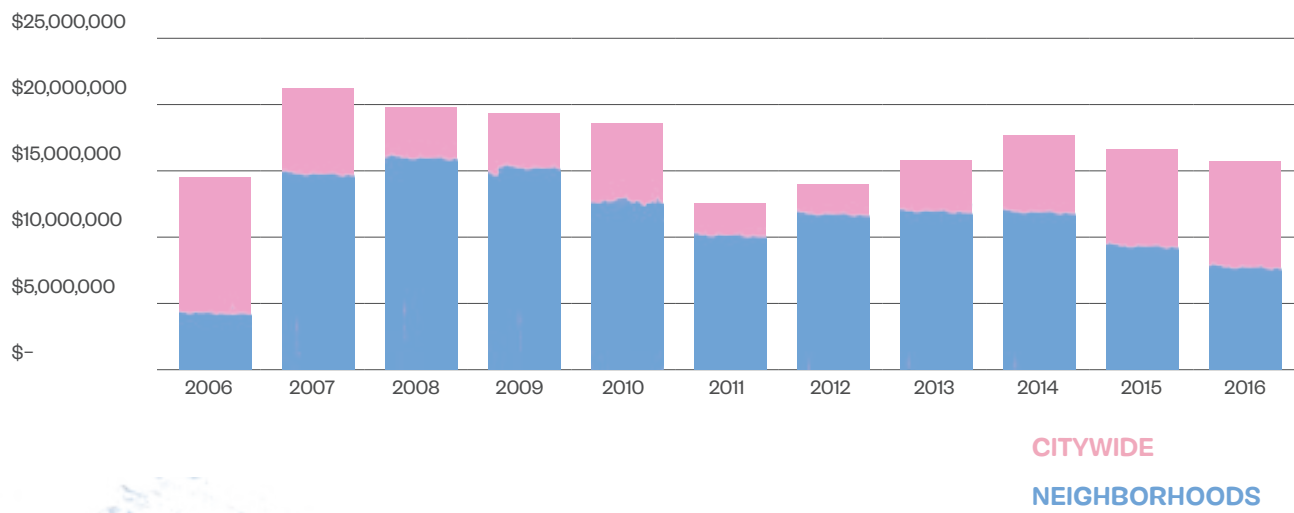
NEIGHBORHOODS

INVESTMENTS BY STRATEGY AREAS

Neighborhood Investments by Strategy Area (2006–2016)

Chart: Neighborhood Investments by Strategy Area (2006–2016)

Strategy Area	Investment
Community Leadership	~$39,000,000
Youth Development	~$38,000,000
Education	~$24,500,000
Safety	~$4,000,000
Social Innovation	~$3,000,000
Evaluation	~$2,000,000
Public Policy	~$2,000,000
Other	~$5,500,000

WHAT GNI ACCOMPLISHED

ADDITIONAL DOLLARS LEVERAGED

Additional dollars leveraged (2007–2016) $1.25 billion
Leverage ratio achieved   10:1

Total Leverage Generated for GNI through Grants and Influence, 2007–2016

$613,140,748	$642,324,510
GRANT LEVERAGE	**INFLUENCE LEVERAGE**

Leverage by Grantmaking: Funds received by a GNI grant partner as a result of — and in addition to — a Skillman Foundation grant.

Leverage by Influence: Funds invested in Skillman neighborhoods that were invested because of the Foundation's efforts to attract others, inspire ideas, influence decisions and promote opinions that advance its agenda for children.

The Foundation pursued an evolving set of grantmaking and changemaking approaches over the GNI timeframe. As often occurs within initiatives of this complexity, the Foundation made numerous adjustments in focus and emphasis as its strategy evolved through trial and error. Nonetheless, the Foundation maintained a strong commitment to tracking progress against a measurable set of 2016 goals; these goals helped to focus efforts within and across different areas of investment.

*(A recent update on progress against 2016 goals is included as Attachment C.)*

Over time, the Foundation's programs and activities became more explicitly clustered within four broad strategy areas — Education, Youth Development, Safety and Community Leadership.

These key areas of investment provide an appropriate framework for reviewing both results and lessons. Although it is beyond the scope of this document to report fully on the wealth of findings presented in other Analytic Review documents, the summary table in Figure 1 provides a more complete summary of the goals, programmatic scope, key results, and related lessons and challenges within each area of strategic investment. As the summary table shows, positive results have been reported across all four areas, and within each strategy area there is considerable diversity among the types of results that are noted. Some are presented as more intermediate improvements in organizational and community capacity, increased levels of participation, or improved access to data or technology for decision making; others are described as measurable changes in outcome indicators such as graduation rates, educational quality improvements, crime trends or statistics. Also, the results noted are not all described as direct impacts of the Foundation's investments, but instead reflect the Foundation's varying levels of influence and contribution within the different settings in which the strategies were executed.

Investing in community leadership creates lifelong advocates for children.

Community safety involves a coordinated effort between neighborhood organizations, residents and police.

22
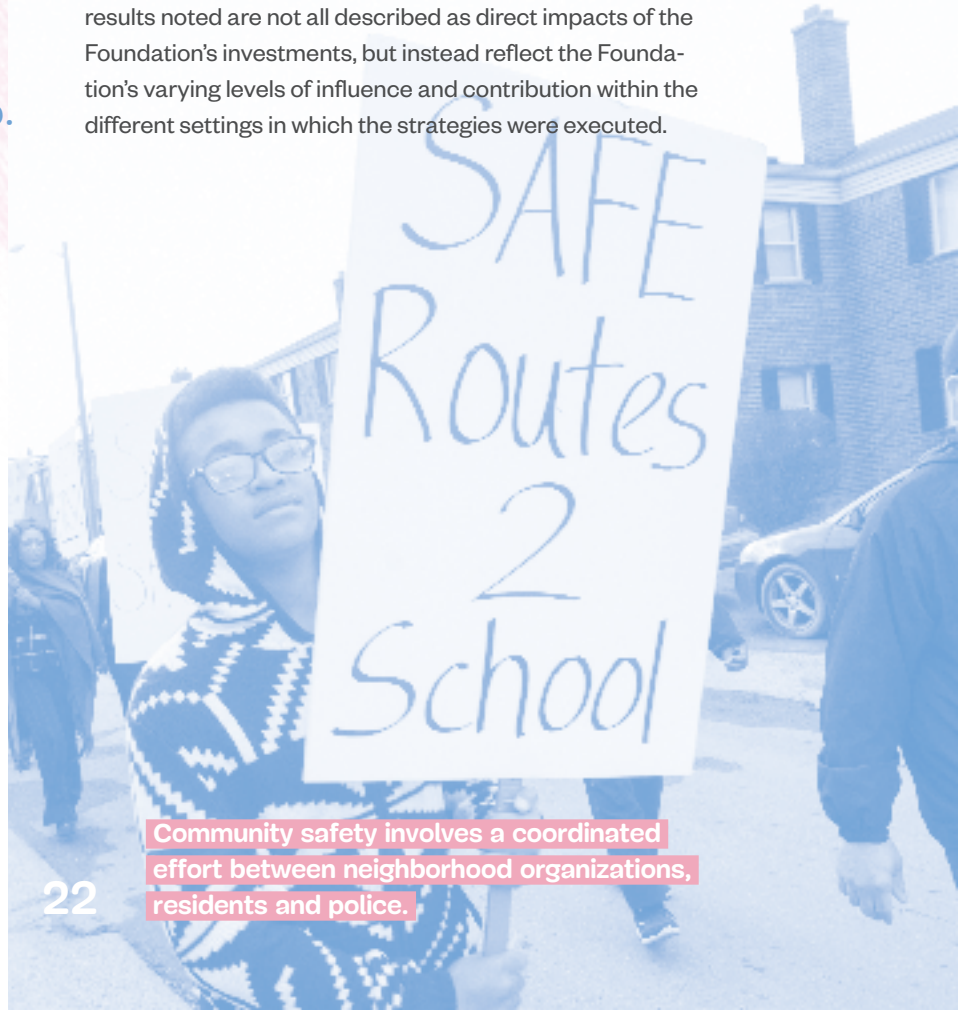
CIVIC LEADERSHIP EFFORTS

As the Foundation moved forward with its neighborhood-focused grantmaking, it also expanded and refined its changemaking role, which it increasingly referred to as **civic leadership** — a strategic approach to using its influence to achieve broader system and policy changes. It intentionally directed a significant share of its energy toward a range of influence and leadership strategies that leveraged new resources and established new partnerships on several fronts to complement its work within the GNI neighborhoods. A recently commissioned essay takes stock of its efforts in these areas.[xxi] It highlights key results from this type of intentional civic influence role and explores what this work suggests for: **(1)** the kind of new capacities the Foundation discovered it needed; and **(2)** the risks and challenges involved in pursuing a more intentional change-maker role.

The Foundation recognized that its own capacity needs included: **(1)** strengthening its **internal culture** to help it connect more effectively with leaders and organizations within its six target neighborhoods; **(2)** building more **communications/media capacity** to support expanded efforts to build public and private will; and **(3)** growing its **public policy capacity** by adding staff with public policy experience and expanding its grantmaking to include funding of advocacy and reform organizations.

An important part of the Foundation's effort to strengthen its capacity for civic leadership involved becoming increasingly intentional and strategic about building relationships, whether within the six target neighborhoods, or with local government and business leaders, or all the way to the White House.

The Foundation's leadership understood that its targeted neighborhood work depended on staff getting to know, and building respectful and more trusting interactions with, community residents. Foundation Trustees also became critical players in this relationship building process, so board meetings and site visits incorporated more opportunities for trustees to learn about the conditions facing neighborhood residents. Staff expanded their critical connections to influential people and institutions outside of the GNI neighborhoods, and expanded their visibility as key speakers, panelists, and planning committee members at both local and national conferences and meetings.

High-quality education should be delivered to all children, regardless of zip code.

Youth Development lets kids explore their interests and abilities, with the guidance of adult mentors.

SUMMARY OF GNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS
BY STRATEGY AREA

	Safety	Community Leadership
STRATEGY	• Work with GNI neighborhood leaders and civic institutions such as the Detroit Police Department to increase children's real and perceived safety, particularly around schools and youth development hubs.	• Develop, connect and focus GNI neighborhood leaders and organizations around a children's agenda that promotes high school graduation and a thriving adulthood.
PRINCIPAL GNI INVESTMENTS	• Create safe pathways for students traveling to and from school. • Advance community-embedded policing to ensure well-equipped and connected neighborhood police officers and increased use of CompStat data. • Transform community culture through restorative practices training, and citywide and neighborhood safety committees. • Curb youth violence through the Youth Violence Prevention Program, Operation CeaseFire, anti-gang activities, and school discipline policy reform.	• Build data-focused capacity and infrastructure for parents and residents. • Support leadership development pathways for youth, residents, and neighborhood stakeholders. • Fund a small grants program for natural community leaders and nonprofits. • Facilitate networks and collaborations to leverage the power of individual and organizational expertise and relationships. • Strengthen critical community assets that help sustain the continued advancement of an agenda for children.
RESULTS ACHIEVED	• Violent and property crime rates decreased in GNI neighborhoods, outpacing citywide declines. • More youth report feeling safer and having increased access to caring adults. • Residents are more engaged in safety activities. • Better access to new technology and increased use of crime data have made targeted safety efforts more effective. • Blight removal has been well concentrated and beneficial in improving safety around neighborhood schools and other focus areas.	• There are community-led governance groups supported by full-time staff that plan and advocate for children in 5 of 6 neighborhoods. • The Community Connections small grants program has funded some 800 innovative, youth-focused projects across GNI sites. • Community leaders have effectively mobilized over 10% of residents in leadership development activities. • Community leaders have created pathways to leadership for youth.
CHALLENGES AND LESSONS	• The GNI safety model is working but significantly more resources are needed to expand upon on the progress made. • Neighborhood-level alignment and coordination may wane without continuing support.	• The financial stability of the governance groups and other neighborhood anchor organizations continues to pose a threat to the scaling and continuation of this work. • The levels of engagement of both adult and youth residents will require a longer-term approach to maintaining the localized infrastructure and capacity that has been created.

	Education	Youth Development
STRATEGY	• Expand high-quality educational opportunities for children in GNI neighborhoods – working across grade levels and governance models to build capacity, empower parents and students, seed innovations and replicate best practices.	• Increase the scale and quality of youth programming in the six neighborhoods to ensure young people have access to the necessary support to meaningfully graduate from high school ready for college, career and life.
PRINCIPAL GNI INVESTMENTS	• Convene, recognize and support teachers and leaders. • Make investments in natural groupings of schools. • Support coalitions of schools and educators around shared levels of accomplishment (e.g., Making the Grade and Champion Schools). • Build financial commitments for higher performing charter schools. • Bring technical assistance providers together to focus on literacy/math, personalization and connection. • Fund intermediaries like Excellent Schools Detroit. • Provide leadership and support for the Coalition for the Future of Detroit's School Children. • Fund technical assistance providers such as Good Schools Resource Center. • Initiate partnerships with national intermediaries around specific investments.	• Sustain youth development program support through the Youth Development Fund. • Provide funding for summer youth employment. • Support youth nonprofits to administer re-grants to neighborhood providers. • Provide infrastructure and coordination support for high-quality youth programs. • Support neighborhood learning networks with technical assistance and training for youth workers. • Establish Youth Development Resource Center to increase quality and provide proof points (standards, common metrics, data capacity). • Plan for a citywide youth development system based on GNI lessons and results.
RESULTS ACHIEVED	• High school graduation rates have risen from 65% to 81% in traditional GNI neighborhood schools over the five years from 2007 to 2015; this is much greater than increases in other Detroit schools over the same period. • Some individual schools do show improvements in educational quality. • Foundation-supported intermediaries have enriched Detroit's educational environment but not produced to date the measurable gains initially expected. • State of Michigan approved $667 million to address the fiscal health of Detroit Public Schools.	• An estimated 15,000 neighborhood youth served annually through several different Foundation-funded programs. • Program quality results and youth outcomes have been generally positive for youth served. • Efforts to establish a shared youth development framework with strong neighborhood provider networks and clear quality standards have contributed to the positive results achieved. • Lessons from the youth development system building work in the neighborhoods provide a springboard for a citywide system.
CHALLENGES AND LESSONS	• Increased recognition of higher performance did not compel poorer performing schools to improve or better performing schools to achieve more. • No high schools (other than those able to select their students based on performance) achieved the minimum level of quality desired. • The level of disorder that persists within Detroit's education ecosystem makes it impossible to sustain improvements made.	• The multi-organizational implementation structure has not progressed seamlessly: work might have moved forward more quickly and steadily had activities all been within one organization, or had there been a clearer division of labor. • There remain issues of sustainability without additional public funding.

TABLE 1

The Foundation also sharpened its ability to determine when it was appropriate for it to lead and when it made more sense to step back — either encouraging others to lead or waiting for others to gain sufficient capacity to lead. It also expanded its work with the City of Detroit when it found opportunities to align its own priorities with the interests of elected officials. And it assisted the City in building an appropriate grant infrastructure to access and deploy more federal and state funding. Many of its civic investments involved improving agency capacities to use technology and data, especially data created or consumed by neighborhood residents.

What the Foundation refers to as "civic tech" investments were instrumental in building the capacity of institutions such as the Detroit Police Department to better serve residents in attracting outside resources to the City, and in expanding Detroit's blight removal efforts.

Finally, the Foundation came to better understand how civic leadership work puts a foundation's political and reputational capital on the line in ways seldom encountered in more traditional grantmaking. It learned that civic leadership is highly context-specific and that contextual factors can change rapidly. It discovered that civic leadership entails thoughtful choices about where to invest time and resources to build and sustain relationships, even though it is impossible to know when or if any particular relationship will pay off. It found there are advantages in spreading responsibilities for maintaining a wide network of relationships among staff. Equally important, the Foundation observed that increasing its visible civic leadership changes a foundation's public profile, so that others are more likely to hold it accountable when things go wrong – even in relation to issues that are largely outside of its immediate control.

A community safety event on Detroit's Eastside.

NEW SOCIAL INNOVATION INVESTMENTS

Beginning in 2013, the Foundation chose to add another approach to the way in which it was working. Called "social innovation," it involves the use of innovative financial tools and expanded relationships with the private sector to further support the programmatic goals driving the Foundation's grantmaking. By using its capital in new ways, it hoped to catalyze new ideas, partners and strategies for improving the lives of Detroit's children. Initially a new staff unit was established and charged with developing strategies for program-related investments (PRIs) and mission-related investments (MRIs), and launching a social venture fund to provide capital and operating support to partners aligned with the Foundation's mission. In principle, these efforts would introduce innovative business models and practices that advanced a social purpose and required less philanthropic subsidy.

A review of these social investment activities from 2013–2016 describes the rationale for the creation of this new investment area, documents accomplishments to date, and highlights key challenges that accompanied this new form of work.[xxii] The essay highlights emerging areas of focus, such as charter school financing, blight elimination and other targeted project investments in GNI neighborhoods, supporting safe routes to schools, and organizational capacity investments in the Foundation's core partners. Thus far, investments have totaled about $4 million, of which 80% have been mainly capacity-building and seeding grants, with the remaining 20% comprised of small PRIs.

A few examples of the approach include: **(1)** a grant to bring together Data Driven Detroit (D3) with Loveland Technologies, a private firm, to introduce smartphone-based data gathering and mapping technology first used to complete a parcel survey in Brightmoor that drove targeted blight removal efforts there and later became the model for a comprehensive citywide blight survey; **(2)** assistance to D3 in transitioning from a nonprofit into a low-profit, mission-focused (LC3) business able to seek both private investment and grants from foundations; and **(3)** launching of the Detroit Children's Fund as a separate organization able to receive outside donations for work directed toward improving the lives of children in Detroit. Organizations receiving support from the social innovation group claim this approach has enabled them to take new steps toward their own sustainability while contributing to the neighborhoods in which the Foundation has long invested.

However, the process of introducing the social innovation approach has not been without difficulty. This way of working placed new demands on the Foundation, required new types of relationships with organizations it had not worked with in the past, and raised questions of how best to integrate these new investments with traditional grantmaking, especially in view of the Foundation's relatively modest size. The challenges that emerged were both cultural and technical, mirroring the tensions that often arise between the for-profit and nonprofit worlds. Looking ahead, the Foundation anticipates that its social innovation investments will continue, but as a more integrated part of its program division rather than as a separate organizational unit.

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First-grade students at the Academy of Americas in Southwest Detroit.

Broader Observations about the GNI Approach

There are numerous higher-level lessons to be drawn from a long-term initiative of this complexity. Some relate to the benefits that a place-based strategy like GNI can produce; others pertain to the unique execution challenges that accompany this type of multi-dimensional approach.

First, we look at some of the initiative's key achievements and the issues that arose along the way, offering some perspective on the challenges that can accompany such an approach. Then we highlight several additional considerations — normative, organizational, political, and others — that funders considering this type of approach may want to anticipate and plan for.

THE VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF GNI
AS A PLACE-BASED STRATEGY

Among the many areas of accomplishment and learning that could be highlighted, we have chosen five particular areas in which positive results have been achieved and significant lessons have been learned. In each accomplishment area, we review the available evidence and note key issues and challenges as well as lessons learned.

1 The Skillman Foundation's decade-long investment in resident participation and leadership has expanded and better connected the cadre of caring adults working on behalf of Detroit's children, and resulted in viable governance structures in five of the six GNI neighborhoods.

The Foundation's deep neighborhood engagement focused on identifying, nurturing and developing a diverse network of community leaders and building resident-led neighborhood planning and advocacy bodies. Its investments in these varied leadership development strategies are estimated at over $60 million, representing the largest share of GNI dollars spent.

Among several studies of the Foundation's strategic investments in community leadership is a retrospective review that examined how community and organizational leaders worked to improve conditions for children living in GNI neighborhoods.[xxiii] One of that review's principal findings is that local governance groups are now functioning in five of the six neighborhoods. These bodies are guided by full-time paid staff with deep roots in the community and have elected board members, by-laws and committee structures, as well task forces, alliances, and block clubs focused on improving conditions for children. All these governance groups include formal structures for engaging and mentoring youth.

However, leadership investments have encompassed more than enhanced neighborhood governance capacity. One GNI priority has been in strengthening skills and opportunities for increasing youth leadership. Through positions on youth councils, youth committees, and governance groups, younger residents with community leadership interests have been able to advance their leadership skills and experience. Community leaders have also leveraged existing networks and partnerships within and outside of the community to increase social and political capital and gain access to new resources. These networks have also helped grow residents' voices over time, resulting in increased visibility, a greater role in planning, and greater influence over neighborhood and city conditions for children. Available evidence confirms

Family event in Southwest Detroit.

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Chadsey-Condon Community Organization Youth Committee members.

that these varied efforts to strengthen resident leadership have been far-reaching. Leadership data from four of the GNI communities shows that a significant share of neighborhood residents — estimated at over 10% — participated in one or more leadership development activities such as serving on governance groups, attending neighborhood meetings, voting in governance elections, and participating in the Community Connections Small Grants Program.

A recent evaluation of that program found that it has increased the leadership experience of approximately 1,500 people across the Skillman neighborhoods and provided caring adult relationships and positive developmental experiences for over 2,700 youth per year.[xxiv] An additional essay co-authored by resident leaders working with Community Connections staff offers examples of how project funding and leadership development support worked together to build grant partner skills while also connecting them with peers working in other settings throughout the country.[xxv] Finally, a recently completed essay prepared with the input of resident leaders in Detroit's Southwest and Cody Rouge neighborhoods describes the evolution of resident-led safety and blight removal efforts that were sustained through the Foundation's consistent and flexible grant support.[xxvi]

Despite the favorable results reported, there have been challenges in implementing the GNI community leadership strategy. The process of defining target neighborhoods, forming resident-led governance bodies and then finding ways for Foundation staff and community leaders to work together effectively was more difficult than initially anticipated. Foundation staff now believe that the neighborhoods selected were geographically too large — making it more difficult to engage residents, strengthen social networks and grow new leadership capacity. The issue of geographic scale also confounded efforts to strengthen coordination among different agencies working at the neighborhood level; as a result, they were not able to fully realize the potential for synergy among different programmatic investments.

Detroit youth get hands-on instruction at an afterschool robotics program.

Participants at a male teen summit in Osborn, Detroit.

As often happens in place-based initiatives, governance council leaders have periodically expressed frustration with the Foundation's shifting directions, inconsistencies in communications, and the Foundation's expectation that its priorities should take precedence over their own. These and similar issues complicated efforts to build a respectful and productive working relationship. Both staff and neighborhood representatives readily acknowledge the difficulties involved in working through competing priorities and building a solid basis for funder-neighborhood collaboration. Nonetheless, Foundation staff, grant partners and resident leaders generally agree that the benefits of the Foundation's investments in community leadership have outweighed the negatives and that communications have become better over time.

2 **Because of GNI, more Detroit kids are now served by a continuum of higher quality, better coordinated neighborhood youth programs, an expanded and more effective youth employment system, and more opportunities and supports for young men and boys of color.**

The Foundation's youth development work within GNI built on previous efforts stretching back several decades.[xxvii] Early in GNI, the Foundation intentionally chose to concentrate its youth development grantmaking within the six Skillman neighborhoods. It focused on: **(1)** creating a collaborative structure to coordinate youth development work;[xxviii] **(2)** institutionalizing a common conceptual framework and quality standards; **(3)** supporting the facilitation of neighborhood learning networks along with TA and professional development training to frontline youth workers; and **(4)** establishing the Youth Development Resource Center to lead the development of quality standards, common metrics and increased capacity to use data for program improvement.

One of the key findings of an independent evaluation of the youth development strategy is that youth outcomes have been mostly positive for the approximately 15,000 neighborhood youth served through different Foundation-funded programs.[xxix] The study concluded that efforts to establish a shared youth development framework, strong neighborhood provider networks and clear quality standards have functioned as unifying forces in the emerging youth development system, contributing to the positive results achieved. At the same time, the evaluation found that the multi-organizational implementation structure created to execute the strategy has not worked seamlessly. Building strong working relationships among multiple youth development intermediaries proved particularly difficult, suggesting the need for a more unified structure and a clearer division of labor.[xxx]

Youth soccer program in Chadsey-Condon.

3 The Skillman Foundation's community partners have achieved better results when strategies and activities have been intentionally aligned within smaller geographies – but numerous opportunities were missed to encourage closer programmatic coordination on the ground within the GNI neighborhoods.

In addition to the neighborhood-based youth development coordination efforts described above, over the past decade the Foundation has also provided significant grant support and visible civic leadership toward the steady expansion of Detroit's summer youth employment system.[xxxi] In its most recent form, this citywide effort, *Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT),* helps ensure that a growing number of Detroit's youth have access to summer jobs and work readiness activities. With continuing support from the Foundation, the Mayor's Office, the corporate sector and other partners, this program led the resurgence in citywide summer youth employment opportunities, expanding employment and training opportunities from approximately 2,500 slots available citywide in 2008 to 8,000 jobs in 2016. This successful collaboration is widely viewed as benefiting from the Foundation's sustained investment in both program and infrastructure costs, along with its strong leadership in building public will and partnership.

Finally, Detroit's youth have benefited from the Foundation's early attention to the challenges facing boys and young men of color. Working in partnership with the national Campaign for Black Male Achievement and Detroit's mayor and other civic and business leadership, the Foundation catalyzed local support for the Obama Administration's My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Initiative, a national effort to dramatically improve life outcomes for this segment of the youth population. Although the Detroit MBK effort has not yet been fully evaluated, many of its specific components have engaged stakeholders from government, business, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors to develop action plans and sponsor activities to improve outcomes for the city's young men of color.

There are varied examples from across GNI strategy areas to support the claim that place-based investments have much greater potential to achieve hoped-for synergies when they are more intensely concentrated in smaller areas, involve residents and other stakeholders in very intentional planning and programmatic coordination around well-defined priorities and goals, and are reinforced by high-quality data and measurement approaches.

In community safety for example, available statistics show that while crime rates have declined citywide, reductions in GNI neighborhoods have slightly outpaced citywide declines. More significantly, better results have occurred when crime reduction efforts have been concentrated around schools and in other well-defined focus areas. In neighborhoods where safe routes to schools and blight reduction work has progressed the farthest, higher percentages of students report feeling safer. In the Osborn neighborhood, a deep dive analysis of available data shows the strong positive results achieved when safe routes to school were maintained for students travelling to and from the local elementary, middle school and high school.[xxxii]

Similarly, in the education and youth development arenas, similar positive effects resulted when multiple programmatic efforts such as credit recovery were pursued together. There is also anecdotal evidence that programs involving long-term consistent contact with youth yielded better graduation results.

In several instances in which Foundation investments were directed over a protracted period toward support of resident-defined priorities — such as safety in Southwest and safety and blight reduction in Cody Rouge[xxxiii] — the consistent involvement of resident leaders aided efforts to maintain coordination across different programmatic efforts. Recently prepared case studies of "durable" youth-focused Community Connections projects in four GNI neighborhoods provide additional qualitative evidence that participating neighborhood youth were doing better in school and life because of their positive experiences in programs operated by highly networked grassroots organizations and leaders in those communities.[xxxiv]

These positive examples of intentional concentration and alignment of efforts do need to be weighed against a likely larger number of instances in which opportunities for integration were only partly realized or missed entirely. Factors that worked against this synergy included the large size of the GNI neighborhoods, as noted previously, and the tendency for many programs and projects to operate in silos without sufficient coordination among them. Another set of contributing factors relate to the high demands on and turnover among the Foundation's program staff, which limited follow-through in maintaining and building on promising early projects. With hindsight, the Foundation was often quite successful in adding to the array of opportunities available within GNI neighborhoods; but it was less successful in realizing the multiplier effects that accompany higher levels of local integration within and across strategy areas. These limitations reduced the scale of community impacts resulting from the Foundation's neighborhood-focused investments.

Community blight removal efforts in Osborn (left) and Cody Rouge (right).

4 Over the decade, the Skillman Foundation has assumed an increasingly powerful citywide education leadership role that has led to significantly higher graduation rates in GNI neighborhood schools and has influenced the broader education landscape as well. These efforts, however, fell short when it came to overcoming implementation challenges and bringing about significant improvements in educational quality.

The Foundation's educational investments have been well-recognized within local philanthropy and among Detroit's community and civic leaders, and confirmed by the results of the Center for Effective Philanthropy's most recent survey of perceptions of other stakeholders in the Detroit area. These investments have included: **(1)** locally-focused investments in individual schools and clusters of schools encompassing different grade levels and governance models; **(2)** efforts to empower parents and students; **(3)** seeding of innovations and replicating best practices; **(4)** support for technical assistance providers such as Good Schools Resource Center and partnerships with national organizations like Teach for America; **(5)** consulting with and supporting the governor's staff and the Detroit Public Schools Emergency Manager in creating the Education Achievement Authority (EAA) — a vehicle to turn around the lowest performing public schools in the state, beginning in Detroit;[xxxv] **(6)** investments in new intermediaries like Excellent Schools Detroit; and **(7)** exerting policy and system change leadership through efforts such as the Detroit education coalition, as described earlier.[xxxvi]

A multi-year evaluation of the Foundation's education strategy provides evidence of positive trends associated with its investments in the numbers of quality education seats available to elementary and middle students in Skillman neighborhood schools, where quality is defined by literacy and math performance, attendance and student learning experience. Results also indicate meaningful improvement in literacy in middle grades. Eleven schools serving GNI neighborhoods were designated as Learning from Success sites; these schools have either progressed to or maintained higher quality ratings over a 3-year period.[xxxvii]

At the high school level, the most striking trend reported is a steady increase in high school graduation rates among traditional GNI neighborhood schools — from 65% to 81% over the period from 2007 to 2015. The increase was greater and more consistent than in the rest of Detroit's traditional public schools over this period. The Foundation's support for closing severely underperforming high schools and creating new smaller high schools contributed to these positive trends.

However, despite increasing graduation rates and strong or very strong ratings by several high schools on "holding power" (a measure of attendance and graduation rates), academic quality in these same schools is still rated as weak or marginal based on test score results and students' reports of effective instructional practices.[xxxviii] Low academic quality is most evident in the rates of math proficiency, with no charter or public high school in GNI having greater than 10% of their students proficient or college-ready in math.

Within this aggregate pattern, some individual high schools do show improvements in overall educational quality; but only from weak to marginal.[xxxix] Three high schools showed a 90% or better graduation rate with high or very high concentrations of students with learning challenges.

Although the Foundation's investments in improving the education landscape have been thoughtful and well-informed, they have all encountered very significant and varied implementation challenges. These included frequent changes in educational leadership at the school, district, city and state levels; seismic legislative actions such as removing the cap on numbers of charter schools without setting standards for their work;[xl] and the negative impact of these kinds of events on educators' spirit and willingness to change. As the most recent education evaluation notes, increased recognition of higher performing schools did not compel poorer performing schools to improve or better performing schools to achieve more. Nor were any high schools serving the GNI areas successful in achieving the academic minimum level of quality desired.[xli] Despite the

successes that did occur, the strategies that the Foundation pursued did not prove stronger than the combined effects of demographic shifts, instability in the education sector and public policy decisions made at the state level.

While the Foundation's multi-year support for Excellent Schools Detroit (ESD) did enrich the educational environment, this new citywide intermediary struggled to build its organizational capacity and acquire a sufficiently broad funding base to sustain its mission. ESD's strategy for change, like others preceding it, encountered profound barriers. As noted in the most recent evaluation of the Foundation's education work, "A combination of uncertainty and wavering commitment among Detroit's education leaders, practitioners and funders has exacerbated the challenges of getting schools and district administrators to engage with them in improvement efforts." Besides bureaucratic and financial constraints at the district level, other powerful factors have also come into play — such as demographic shifts in student populations and concentrations of students with learning challenges.

More recently, the Foundation played a central role in forging a cross-sector coalition, the Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren, to revamp the financial and structural elements of Detroit's education system. This unprecedented commitment of financial and institutional capital resulted in numerous policy and system changes and could result in much-needed new investments into Detroit's public schools. As GNI concludes, there can be little doubt that much more is required to fix Detroit's still broken public school system.

Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren co-chairs launch their recommendations to improve Detroit schools. March 30, 2015.

5 The Skillman Foundation's dual approach that combines deep engagement in neighborhoods with broader policy and systems change investments has improved results at both levels.

A consistent theme emerges among several of the independent strategy area assessments and the perspectives of Foundation staff, community grant partners and other implementing partners: The strategy of combining its community-level investments with a broader focus on achieving policy and system change has amplified the results achieved at both levels. In numerous ways, the work on the ground undertaken in partnership with community organizations and leaders has informed and lent credibility and legitimacy to the Foundation's broader advocacy and policy improvement initiatives. Likewise, there have been tangible benefits within GNI communities stemming from the Foundation's leadership in encouraging policy improvements and expanded resources across an array of strategic fronts — most notably in education, youth development and employment, safety and blight.

In the **EDUCATION** strategy area, the Foundation's close-in work with national and local partners on the front line of school improvement helped inform its decisions on where to focus its system-wide improvement strategies. Low academic performance and student survey results revealing a scarcity of effective instructional practices resulted in bringing more qualified teachers to Detroit and helping current teachers to improve their practice. Disturbingly poor graduation and attendance rates supported the closure of severely underperforming high schools and the creation of new smaller high schools designed to improve these critical outcomes. And, in the Osborn neighborhood, the Foundation's intensive work with a cluster of schools resulted in quality improvements in those schools while also informing its district-level policy change initiatives. Conversely, the Foundation's policy leadership in improving the fiscal health of Detroit's troubled public school system should ultimately translate into quality improvements in public schools serving students in GNI neighborhoods. The increased support provided in 2016 by the state legislature ($667 million) to address the fiscal health of Detroit's public school system — widely acknowledged to be a consequence of the Foundation's leadership in establishing the Coalition for the Future of Detroit's Schoolchildren (CFDSC) — could translate into new infrastructure and program investments among public schools serving Detroit's children, provided additional state legislative and policy actions do not introduce further obstacles.[xlii]

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In **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**, the positive results of Skillman-funded efforts to establish a common framework and increase coordination among youth development programs helped lay the foundation for potential future investments by the Skillman Foundation and others in a more integrated citywide system. The evaluation of the Foundation's youth development strategy suggests that the implementation lessons learned within the Skillman neighborhoods provide practical guidance for such an expansion. If subsequent efforts to build on this experience proceed, then the Foundation's neighborhood-centered youth development investments over the past decade will have contributed directly toward the citywide system.

In the arena of **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**, the Skillman Foundation began working in 2008 with the Youth Development Commission and other partner organizations to create a pilot project that initially funded 300 jobs in the six GNI neighborhoods. The learning community that emerged successfully persuaded the City of Detroit and Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Growth to join and commit resources to what became the Youth Employment Consortium (YEC), a public-private partnership committed to expanding summer and year-round employment opportunities for youth aged 14–18. Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan drew on this experience to expand the approach into the Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT) initiative described earlier.

In the areas of **SAFETY AND BLIGHT**, similar synergies have also emerged between the Foundation's neighborhood and citywide investments. Its civic leadership related to neighborhood policing practices, data availability and technology helped the GNI community leaders to engage residents and build local ownership for safety priorities that have been translated into closer working relationships with neighborhood police officers. These improved working relationships likely account for the improved crime trends in GNI neighborhoods compared with citywide statistics.[xliii] Similarly, Skillman-funded work that began as a pilot approach to remove nonstructural blight to improve students' safety traveling to and from schools in Brightmoor led first to a grant to support the Detroit Blight Authority with funding to tear down 71 blighted houses in Brightmoor. This eventually expanded into a targeted total blight elimination approach adopted by the Detroit Blight Task Force, which subsequently removed a total of 12,000 blighted properties in the city.[xliv]

There have also been broader citywide benefits to the Foundation's sustained neighborhood investments. Although more difficult to measure, the increased visibility of those places within the broader Detroit environment has been a consequence of the Foundation's decision to target its resources to specific geographies and to the development of resident leadership within them. With increased visibility, the neighborhoods targeted for GNI have attracted increased philanthropic and public investment, helping to shift the civic narrative about "investment-ready" neighborhoods in Detroit.[xlv]

GENERAL LESSONS FOR PHILANTHROPY

The Foundation's experience with GNI also suggests some potentially broader lessons for philanthropy. These relate to how the Foundation progressively adapted its place-based approach to encompass much more than targeted grantmaking, what it discovered about the importance of organizational culture factors in sustaining a long-term initiative, the types of organizational capacity that are most needed to support broader civic leadership, the value of investments in data and metrics in supporting adaptive learning, and the role that a funder can play in strengthening accountability throughout the sectors in which it is investing.

1 Place-based work requires that philanthropic investors be ready to use a broad range of changemaking assets to complement what can be accomplished with grant dollars.

Comprehensive and targeted community investing is not just enhanced by, but *depends upon,* a commitment to moving beyond traditional grantmaking to embrace a broader changemaking approach. Throughout the decade, the Foundation's staff leadership and board explored how to better use the full range of resources at their disposal to make a difference in the lives of Detroit's children. It relied on various forms of political and institutional leverage to expand its influence on government, other local and non-local philanthropic and nonprofit partners, and the private sector. These strategies included the creation of new intermediaries, the formation of shared investment vehicles, attracting additional partners to join it making targeted neighborhood investments, employing coalitions and campaigns to press for legislative actions, and partnering with local government on citywide public-private funding strategies. As noted earlier, it also more recently began to expand its use of innovative financial tools like PRIs, loan guarantees and equity investments as useful complements to its grantmaking. Especially for small to mid-sized foundations operating as embedded funders, the key lesson that GNI offers is that the financial leverage and programmatic results described earlier could not have occurred without the Foundation's determination to adopt an intentionally more far-reaching changemaking role that drew on all of its available avenues of influence.

Residents and police officers take part in a Peace Walk in Detroit's Cody Rouge neighborhood.

BROADER OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE GNI APPROACH

2 Sustaining complex multi-year initiatives like GNI calls for recognizing, reinforcing and renewing the Foundation's cultural values and norms guiding the work.

The Skillman Foundation learned over the past decade that effective leadership of longer term initiatives requires significant attention not only to programmatic refinements but also to the attributes of organizational culture that help in maintaining a shared sense of what matters about how the work is focused and conducted. With GNI, these have included a widely-shared set of values that inform not only strategic priorities but also the norms guiding how the Foundation interacts with community stakeholders and other key partners. For example, one such norm is a strong commitment to valuing neighborhood voice, which has translated into practices like ensuring that Foundation staff at all levels are accessible to, and check in regularly with, community partners, bringing neighborhood grant partners and others into trustee meetings, and seeking ways to engage neighborhood leaders as authors or co-authors of written products. A second norm has been about continually working to align staff efforts around the Foundation's intended outcomes for Detroit's children. This has prompted the Foundation to invest in several theory of change iterations as well as an overall theory of philanthropy that brings different strategic investments together at the enterprise level. A third norm relates to continually improving staff capacity to articulate and focus on desired results — a commitment that led to the adoption of decision-making routines and tools such as the results-based leadership (RBL) approach originally developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Because of their important role in creating stability and maintaining focus, these value-related attributes of organizational culture require constant renewal. This is particularly true when initiatives extend over longer time periods during which there will likely be turnover at both the staff and board levels. The Skillman Foundation has found that having a consistent, widely shared set of norms and values has helped make staff and board transitions easier to manage — both internally and in their effects on grant partners, community representatives and others.

Occasions arise that prompt a review and adjustment of established norms, such as when they appear inconsistent with desired shifts in strategy or practice. Or, alternatively, it may be necessary to reassess the worth and feasibility of an approach that appears to conflict with prevailing values. One recent example was when the Foundation moved toward an expanded focus on social innovation investments. This shift not only required a reexamination of long-established investment priorities, but also highlighted challenges in how a different, more "private sector" paradigm of assessing financial risks and returns meshed with the dominant grantmaking culture. It prompted a reexamination of investment priorities and a clarification of norms guiding future investment practices.

Two additional examples both involved significant grant requests that were initially viewed as falling outside the Foundation's mission-related grantmaking guidelines — which strongly focus on investments that benefit children living in Detroit. The first involved the Foundation's assessment of whether it would participate with other local and national funders in the Grand Bargain that was reached in 2014 to preserve key Detroit cultural assets and protect pension funds for City workers as part of Detroit's bankruptcy plan. The Foundation agreed to join other philanthropic partners in this effort only after ensuring that its contribution would be directed toward preserving pension funds, a move that benefited Detroit working families and their children. A more recent example involved the Foundation's decision to participate in a philanthropic collaboration announced in May 2016 to respond to the Flint water crisis; in that case, the Foundation joined the funder partnership only after ensuring that its support would be directed toward investments in civic capacity, childhood health and nutrition, and childhood literacy.

Youth perform at a parade in Osborn.

3 Civic leadership can be powerful in supporting a funder's mission and goals, but requires a unique set of skills, and can be challenging and time intensive.

Much good has come from the Foundation's increasing commitment to using all its available assets to influence broader policies and systems for the benefit of Detroit's children. But it is also clear that a greater emphasis on changemaking work comes with the potential for increased exposure to reputational risks. Often it will require the deployment of valuable political capital. And it can entail an enormous commitment of senior staff time to building and managing external relationships. It is therefore critical that there be both staff and board recognition of the potential for new and unfamiliar organizational stresses, making for an informed buy-in to what this type of civic leadership work will entail.

The Foundation's experience with civic leadership efforts in GNI also reveals there is both art and nuance involved in this often-difficult work — becoming adept at navigating a complex landscape of civic relationships takes both time and practice. This approach involves assessing the terrain and discerning possible pathways forward. It requires identifying who else could, or should, be involved, what their respective goals and expectations are, how the perceived risks might differ, and where there is a realistic potential for discovering and building on common ground. An excellent example of this type of stewardship is the progression of the blight work that began as a small Skillman-funded pilot in Brightmoor and eventually attracted additional investors, evolving into the citywide blight coalition that oversaw one of the largest citywide blight elimination efforts in the country.

Other aspects of civic leadership work require understanding what kind of leadership role is needed or likely to be effective. One of the lessons from the Skillman Foundation's experience in navigating within the broader civic arena involves determining when conditions and timing are right for moving on an issue collaboratively. Funders who venture into this changemaking approach must resist the temptation to take on more than is appropriate. Over time, Skillman Foundation staff have come to learn that this sometimes requires a willingness to exercise restraint and simply seek to hold a table together for long enough to allow someone else to become ready to take on a shared issue. In the end, effective civic leadership involves learning the difference between serving as one of many civic leaders vs. attempting to take on more than is required, desired, or feasible.

4 All aspects of strategy and execution can be greatly improved through smart investments in data and measurement — not only within philanthropy but also in relation to the expanded capacity of grant partners and others to access and utilize data in practice.

One of the most important takeaways from the Foundation's evolving investments in data and metrics is that these investments have resulted in exponential increases in its own capacity to acquire, use and understand data for advocacy, monitoring, evaluation and learning. Looking beyond the Foundation's internal capacity gains, there are numerous examples of relatively modest data investments that led to highly impactful shifts in the capacity of key initiative partners — such as the use by the Detroit Police Department of CompStat data, the extensive mapping of blight conditions through the Motor City Mapping project, and the gathering and sharing of school performance data by Excellent Schools Detroit.

The GNI experience has also shown that there is considerable complexity and political nuance associated with issues of data use. Although there have been several examples of these investments producing recognized benefits — such as in relation to policing and blight removal — not all the

Foundation's investments in improving access to and quality of data have led to improved capacity and alignment of effort among participating partners. This suggests there are still unresolved issues and lessons to be learned about which measurement data matters most, how to forge broader agreement about the intended results of investments being made, and how to ensure accountability for following through on implementation of data-related investment strategies. These more challenging aspects of data investment and use require continuing attention and discipline.

Increased investments in data and measurement require philosophical decisions about the value and significance of different investment approaches — which might include a combination of long-term and intermediate outcomes and relevant leading indicators and a process for winnowing those down to a manageable and compelling number that Foundation staff and partners will actually use in their work. Just as important, such a strategy requires a clear framework for matching new capacity investments, whether within a Foundation or among a group of grant partners, to the key priorities chosen. This requires not only an understanding of what capacity is needed within an internal evaluation unit in the Foundation or in a Foundation partner, but also an assessment of what external data resources are needed to supplement those established internally. Finally, the development of data-related capacity requires a willingness both to invest significantly in making data more widely available to grant partners with varying data-related skills, and to consistently support their ability to learn how to make use of appropriate data for measurement, planning and management.

5 Foundations have both an opportunity and responsibility to create more accountability for performance and results throughout the sectors in which they choose to invest.

A Detroit youth with the city's financial core in the distance.

Issues of transparency and accountability are increasingly topics of discussion across all sectors, but take on heightened significance with philanthropy, a sector that has come under escalated scrutiny from within and without. There are growing and still unresolved questions about how much and what kind of transparency, openness, or disclosure should be required of philanthropic enterprises.[xlvi] The Skillman Foundation approached GNI with a strong commitment to data and measurement, but also as an opportunity to be explicit about its goals, and progress being made toward them. Some examples of how it advanced this more explicit focus on defining and measuring results include the development of the Foundation's GNI dashboard, the decision to reveal to its partners and the wider public where it stood in achieving its 2016 goals, and its investment in the year-long GNI Analytic Review process.

Although not described in this way at the onset, the Foundation's leadership has come to see its emphasis on assessing and documenting the initiative results as an important way to achieve greater transparency and accountability for its own decisions. As the initiative proceeded, the Foundation shared data with residents, grant partners, and trustees via reports, data walks and social media, and reported emerging lessons at conferences and in journal articles. By making a range of information about results more open to discussion and review, it modelled an approach to transparency and accountability not yet widely present within the nonprofit sector.

A student at Chrysler Elementary School on Detroit's Eastside.

Questions of Continuing Interest

Although the Foundation's experience with GNI over the past decade contributed greatly to its learning and its priorities for new and continuing strategic investment, it has also raised several questions that remain partly unanswered.

In this brief concluding section, three such questions are noted as areas of continuing inquiry for the Foundation as it refines how it will build on its place-based work.

It is widely understood that funders who invest deeply in place-based initiatives will eventually struggle with the dilemmas associated with "closing out" or "exiting" a longstanding set of working relationships with community representatives. Regardless of how well defined the terms of engagement between funder and community were at the start, it is during the final stage of an intentionally time-limited initiative that concerns will surface about how to preserve and sustain whatever gains have been made — whether these involve improvements in organizational capacity or continuity in programs and services that have been introduced. These times of transition often raise questions involving how the working relationship between funder and community actors will change, including what responsibilities fall to the partners, both individually and together, to build upon the range of assets they have helped to develop.

The Skillman Foundation does not think about the transition from GNI as exiting in the sense of leaving everything behind. It is not a full stop in the way that others may view an exit. As an embedded funder, it does not intend to leave town or end the relationships it has formed. However, it is changing course, and this involves an active period of transition and redefinition of many existing relationships in anticipation of new work that advances the Foundation's focus on kids in Detroit. Its goal continues to be helping these young people drive up high school graduation rates and get ready for college, career and life. The Foundation's means to this end are shifting — and much of the investment it has made in building the capacity of local leaders and organizations, and in the relationships it has developed, remains very relevant to its goal. So, it is important to state that the Foundation

is not leaving the work; rather, it views this transition as an opportunity to engage with grant partners and an array of other stakeholders to ensure that their capacities get used in new ways.

In addition, the Foundation recognizes that its strong connection to the GNI neighborhoods over such a long period has become an essential part of the platform on which its broader civic leadership strategy has been built. The place-based focus that the Foundation adopted in 2006 has enhanced and in some ways changed its brand. Its stature as a funder and civic leader now involves not only a recognition that it cares about Detroit kids but also about the quality of the specific places where so many of them live.

This connection to the GNI neighborhoods has enabled the Foundation to speak with a different voice on a whole range of civic issues — in education, youth development, crime and safety/blight, and so on.

As the Foundation defines its future program strategies and civic leadership role, it will likely do so with an appreciation of how its commitment to place-based work has become a new asset to build upon.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED
ABOUT ADAPTIVE CAPACITY?

Over the course of GNI, the Skillman Foundation has come to appreciate the tensions that arise in balancing the objective of framing well-defined goals and results with the equally important objective of maintaining sufficient scope for "emergent learning" that leads to the adaptation of goals and strategies. With hindsight, the complex place-based and civic leadership approach that the Foundation took on revealed numerous questions about how to manage this tension and how to define and measure success. One clear measure of success involves assessing progress in relation to one or a few meta-goals — such as increasing high school graduation rates. Another measure is how agile the Foundation was in pursuing newly emergent opportunities, including those which may appear somewhat far afield from its declared strategies. These two different kinds of goals meant that the Foundation had to regularly confront the question of when the adaptation of strategies and actions constitutes a demonstration of flexibility and agility and when it crosses over into behaviors that look to be insuffi-ciently focused and consistent.

Practically, this suggests that funders who choose to take on this work need to become more comfortable with the notion that the frameworks, tools and strategies they invest in and rely upon are simply constructs that require continuous review and refinement.

If it is true that funders engaging in complex initiatives like GNI often do so under continually changing conditions, then perhaps it is appropriate to focus less on activities and benchmarks and more on the continuous review of the risks and potential impacts of the strategies they choose. This might mean becoming more courageous in setting aside timeframes and schedules when necessary, more trusting of real-time evidence that things are not proceeding as expected, more comfortable with a "fail fast" approach, and more disciplined in gathering the information required to determine whether a strategic pivot is called for.

Youth dance at a Hmong cultural festival in Osborn, Detroit.

A young resident of Osborn, Detroit speaks at a Skillman Foundation community meeting.

HOW TO STRENGTHEN CAPACITY TO
EXECUTE A CIVIC LEADERSHIP AGENDA

The Foundation's civic leadership experience within GNI raises the question of how embedded funders can strengthen their hands in exerting the forms of change-making influence they wish to have. The achievements highlighted earlier would not have happened without the Foundation's increasing effectiveness in civic leadership.

One of the most important ways in which the Foundation changed was in learning how to "stand with the community" and replace the arrogance that is so often associated with funders who have power and resources with a commitment to action that opens new opportunities for engagement.

This began by having staff spend time in the neighborhoods, listening, learning, demonstrating that they wanted to hear from residents directly rather than filtered through neighborhood nonprofits and other stakeholders. This accrual of trust and respect and its deep roots in the community gave the Foundation the standing and leverage to influence other people and organizations with the power to improve systems and opportunities for children. And its solid connections to the community were invaluable in mitigating the potential for reputational damage resulting from occasional missteps.

Other changes eventually followed, particularly in improving communications and managing a wider range of relationships, as the Foundation gained experience and confidence in flexing its civic leadership muscle on various policy and system change fronts. Yet that same experience also made clear that navigating the civic arena is seldom easy and there is no playbook to refer to. The Foundation plans to continue building its civic leadership capacity, but it will do so recognizing that this approach will present additional strategic and practical choices. Some of these have to do with: **(1)** deciding when to take the lead on a role or activity and when to encourage another community actor to do so; **(2)** choosing when and how to proceed collaboratively with other actors who may have somewhat different goals; **(3)** determining when to invest in the long-term strategy of building others' capacities even though the process will inevitably take longer; **(4)** choosing how to manage the dynamics of allocating credit and control and becoming more skilled in branding and social marketing; and **(5)** developing more clarity about how intermediaries can be used most effectively for initiative management, extending capacity and reach in relation to particular goals, or creating a permanent asset within a local landscape.

The above questions are posed on the assumption that they will be of interest to other embedded funders working within city or regional contexts, as well as to others interested in the potential and challenges associated with comprehensive place-based approaches such as GNI.

Youth perform in an Osborn neighborhood parade.

Closing Thoughts

There are many reasons for the Skillman Foundation and its partners to feel proud about the progress made in this initiative, especially given the dramatic changes and intense new challenges for Detroit in the years following GNI's launch in 2006.

As this Summary has shown, the initiative led to specific improvements in the areas of education, youth development, community leadership and safety, all of which benefited Detroit's youth. Neighborhood identities and resident leadership capacities are generally stronger than 10 years ago. Not only are there many functioning resident leadership groups in the neighborhoods, but more residents from these neighborhoods are running for elected office and involved with citywide boards. Skillman Foundation grantmaking leveraged many times more in funds committed to neighborhood improvement by others. As a result of GNI, many more Detroit youth are now prepared to contribute to Detroit's rebirth.

A youth parade on Detroit's Eastside.

At the same time, GNI also experienced disappointments. Clearly, not all the neighborhoods it originally chose for investment are stabilizing and in some instances, strong countervailing trends have made conditions worse. There have been human capital improvements but the Foundation did not see all of what it hoped for. Some of these disappointments might have been at least partially remedied by selecting smaller neighborhoods and connecting the four program strategies more intentionally and effectively within the Foundation as well as on the ground.

As GNI concludes, there are now many new assets to build on. Internally, the Foundation's board and staff remained true to its core values while building new capacities and a stronger platform for working on behalf of Detroit's youth. The Foundation has become more savvy and effective in its changemaking work, better at attracting and tracking leveraged corporate investments, and more skilled in employing social innovation financial tools. The new networks of relationships and increased reservoir of social capital accrued through GNI have opened doors to new forms of collaboration with the mayor's office, with the governor's staff, and with other funders investing in Detroit. Through GNI, the Foundation learned how to hear and champion diverse voices and lift up community leaders so that their knowledge and perspective were included in conversations at the city, state, and national levels.

The local context is now very different from 2006, when the initiative began, and very different from 2011 when the city was under such extreme stress. Given these shifts, the Foundation will be thinking in new ways about the systems that impact youth and families and the neighborhoods in which they live. Looking forward, the Foundation is well positioned to take on new civic leadership roles and strategies to ensure that the city's recovery is equitable — that youth are benefiting from, as well as leading and contributing to, the reshaping of the city.

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A youth plays basketball outside of a community center in Cody Rouge.

THE SKILLMAN FOUNDATION'S GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE TIMELINE 2006–2016

	PLANNING PHASE		**READINESS PHASE**		
	New Place-Based Approach **2006**	Boys of Color Focus **2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
Community Leadership	Small grants program begins	Community meetings & action planning starts		Governance groups and executive directors established	
Education	**GOOD SCHOOLS (MAKING THE GRADE-CITYWIDE)**				
				Excellent Schools Detroit forms	
Youth Development	**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FUNDED IN SGNs**				
				Youth Employment Consortium begins	Youth Development Alliance forms
Safety					
Detroit Context		Mayor Kilpatrick leaves office	National Recession, Foreclosure Crisis	GM/ Chrysler bankruptcy	

Good Neighborhoods, Good Schools, Good Opportunities

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

2011	2012	Strategic Refresh 2013	2014	2015	2016
		Tiered neighborhood strategy begins			

N'HOOD SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY		EDUCATOR CAPACITY-BUILDING NETWORKS			
Education Achievement Authority launches		Charter quality strategy begins		Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren forms	

		YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUND (ACT FRAMEWORK)			
		Youth Development Resource Center forms			

		SAFETY (FORMALIZED INVESTMENT STRATEGY)			
		Blight Pilot CompStat introduced			
		City of Detroit Files for bankruptcy		Mayor Duggan elected	

Unveiling of a community mural in Brightmoor, Detroit.

Education, Community Leadership, Youth Development, Safety, Social Innovation

System of Supports and Opportunities

OUTCOME	INDICATORS

A foundation plan for a coordinated, accessible, system of supports & opportunities for children & youth connected to the neighborhood goals exists in each neighborhood	• Assessment of resources, gaps and quality in the system of supports & opportunities for children and youth and initial support to address these gaps and opportunities, including transportation. The characteristics of a strong system of support and opportunities for youth are:
	
	  ◦ Accessible (no geographical, financial, scheduling barriers)
	
	  ◦ High quality
	
	  ◦ Responsive to child, youth, and family developmental needs, preferences, and cultural backgrounds with particular attention to opportunities that strengthen outcomes for African American & Hispanic boys in neighborhoods & schools
	
	  ◦ Coordinated (operating well as a system)
	
	  ◦ Comprehensive (no significant gaps)
	
	  ◦ Known about and used by children, youth, and families
	
	  ◦ Operating at significant scale (reaching a significant proportion of children and youth)
	
	  ◦ Sustainable
	
	• A data-informed grantmaking plan & initial actions (e.g., youth development intermediaries) that are directly connected to 2016 goals & how the Foundation operates that promote development of a system of supports and opportunities that includes services, programs, and relationships that are delivered by nonprofits, schools, government agencies, families and informal groups.
	
	• More effective community organizations serving the community

Visible results in the form of physical improvements or other tangible changes directly linked to GN/GS long-term goals	• Community arts projects • Leveraged resources for improvements to school buildings & facilities • Leveraged resources for improvements to residential and commercial areas • Improvements to neighborhood parks • Signature project identified for each neighborhood

Neighborhood Capacities

OUTCOME	INDICATORS

Neighborhood infrastructure & systems with capacity & resources to implement a community-owned community plan to improve child & youth outcomes	• Community plan directly connected to GN/GS long-term goals; vetted by residents, key neighborhood organizations & other stakeholders, & supported by outside organizations working in the neighborhoods
	
	• Nonprofit capacity to support implementation of the community plan
	
	• Resident & stakeholder leadership to support implementation of the community plan including engagement in policy agenda development & advocacy
	
	• Effective structure in the neighborhoods for decision-making, management, and accountability
	  ◦ Ability to govern, set & implement goals, track progress, establish & manage accountability system, work through challenges, & learn while doing (capacity for self-evaluation)
	  ◦ Ability to connect with & make the case for the community plan & leverage relationships with institutions & resources (time, knowledge, and money) both within & outside of the neighborhoods
	  ◦ Effective vehicle for communication in each neighborhood
	
	• Increasing number and representation of residents including youth involved in creating & sustaining the community plan
	
	• Strengthened set of community networks & working relationships among cultural identity groups

System Reform & Neighborhood Schools

OUTCOME	INDICATORS
A citywide birth-to-college "technical assistance" infrastructure and systems with capacity and resources to implement a reform agenda for Detroit education.	• "Technical assistance" resources for implementation and support for high quality early care and education, and elementary, middle and high schools. • External accountability system for the infrastructures. • Reliable, independent data used to inform education decisions. • Portfolio of organizations that link to public policy at local, state and federal levels. • Capacity for developing and sustaining public will focused on academic achievement.
Diverse public, private and corporate leaders are engaged in and accountable for implementing the vision of the education infrastructure.	• Public, private and corporate leaders are identified as educational champions • Champions are knowledgeable and engaged in implementing the vision
Opinion leaders take a positive public stand on the unified vision for standards and accountability for the education infrastructure.	• Mayor and other public leaders make a strong, positive public statement about the vision for high quality schools for every child and youth

Systems and Policies

OUTCOME	INDICATORS
Significant external investments (Champions)	• An investment pipeline in each of the neighborhoods • New Economy Initiative funds invested in neighborhoods & with low-wealth families • Champions engaged in three neighborhoods and second cohort identified • Cohesive plan with multiple, including regional, funders to support good schools & sustain existing partnerships in schools • Two national foundations invest in GN/GS
Policies and practices changed or advanced **Increased public awareness of GN/GS efforts (Influence)**	• A formal policy agenda & plan for intended changes • Vehicles for influencing policy decisions activated • Champions increase the public discourse on issues related to Skillman's policy agenda • The policy agenda has been advanced. • Supporting communication strategy for change making, grant making, leverage & scaling efforts • Disseminate lessons in local, regional & national venues, including philanthropic media • Publish reports, articles, op eds, etc. that promote the children's agenda • New website launched • Print & media partnerships • Publish a state of the children indicators report annually • The Foundation's agenda for children is recognized as part of a larger regional discussion
Strategic partners (Leverage)	• Increased collaboration and alignment among strategic partners • Increased level of financial, in-kind, and human resources donated by partners and foundations
Plan for scaling GN/GS efforts (Scale)	• Formal plan that identifies public & private resources for scaling up • Increased knowledge about & connections to public officials and potential resources

Results Oriented Learning Organization

OUTCOME	INDICATORS

TSF is opportunistic, entrepreneurial & nimble & focused on long-term outcomes	• Evidence of alignment and synergy among GN, GS, CM, GM, and KM efforts
	
	• Foundation staff, partners, residents, neighborhood teams, & stakeholders:
	  ◦ have a shared vision
	  ◦ own a feasible plan for the overall Readiness Phase & for each partner
	  ◦ have the knowledge, skills & abilities to catalyze & manage change
	  ◦ demonstrate continuous improvement & alignment of theory of change, strategies & outcomes
	  ◦ have resources (including time) required to implement the community plan
	  ◦ use evaluation as a management & learning tool
	  ◦ have and use accountability mechanisms
	
	• Consistent use of an "opportunities" decision making process
	
	• CEP surveys of Trustees, staff, grantees & stakeholders used for learning & improvement
	
	• Foundation policies & practices that lead to high performance & support new ways of working
	
	• Evaluation is used as a management and learning tool
	
	• Feasible community data management system secured & initial baseline established
	
	• Foundation tracking mechanism to capture leverage data established
	
	• Implementation and outcomes evaluations conducted

2010 THEORY OF CHANGE
AND ECOLOGICAL MODEL

Young people are more likely to be safe, healthy, well educated and prepared for adulthood **(1)** when they are embedded in a strong system of supports and opportunities, **(2)** when they attend high quality schools, **(3)** when their neighborhoods have the capacities and resources to support youth and families, and **(4)** when broader systems and policies create conditions under which youth can thrive.

This ecological model, created by the Center for Youth and Communities — Heller School for Social Policy and Management, reflects the 2016 goals the Skillman Foundation has established for the Good Neighborhoods and Schools initiative. The model also recognizes that the Foundation's work exists in a larger political, economic and social context that impacts the way the strategies are translated into practical, feasible tactics.

SYSTEMS & POLICY[4]

- Other Funders
- Private Sector
- School Systems
- Post-secondary Institutions
- Local, State and Federal Government Agencies
- Citywide Organizations
- State Legislature and Congress
- Mayor and City Council
- Media

NEIGHBORHOOD[3]

- Investment Pipeline
- Community-based Anchor Organizations
- Ability to Influence Policies & Resources
- Engaged Residents, Stakeholders, Youth
- Culture that Values Academic Achievement
- Leadership Capacity
- Self-determining Planning & Advocacy Body

SOSO[2]

- Hubs
- College & Career Exposure & Access
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Youth Employment Preparation & Work Experience
- Youth Development Programs
- Drop-in Centers
- Basic Services

SHEP[1]

KIDS

SYSTEM REFORM & NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS
- Citywide master education plan
- Small high schools
- Network of education intermediaries
- Education report card
- High-performing neighborhood schools
- Information to choose best schools
- College enrollment & financing vehicles
- Early care & education

1   **SHEP** = Long-term youth outcomes: Safe and Healthy, Educated, and Prepared for Adulthood
2   **SOSO** = System of Supports and Opportunities
3   **Neighborhood Capacities**
4   **Broader Systems & Policy** = Strategies permeate each circle and include both intentional and opportunistic activities

PROGRESS SUMMARY OF 2016 GNI GOALS

Skillman Foundation 2016 Goals Status Rating

Safety Goals

GOAL	DATA	RATING
Incidents of youth victimization in target areas is reduced by 40%.	2015 vs. 2007: -51%	100%
Property and violent crimes are reduced by 40% in the target neighborhoods.	2015 vs. 2007: -50%	100%
90% of young people feel safe inside school.	2013: 79% 2014: 79% 2015: 78%	80% – 99%
90% of young people feel safe on their way to and from school.	2013: 61% 2014: 64% 2015: 68%	51% – 79%
100% of dangerous buildings along safe routes to schools will be eliminated, by boarding up or demolition.	Elimination of dangerous buildings keeping pace with continuous housing deterioration along target safe routes.	≤ 50%

2015 Status Rating Key*

% OF GOAL	100%	80% – 99%	51% – 79%	≤ 50%
STATUS	**Met Goal**	**Approaching**	**Progressing**	**Far from Goal**

Youth Development Goals

GOAL	DATA	RATING
Youth employment preparation/employment opportunities exist to serve 40% of 14–18 year olds (6,173 youth).	2010: 16% 2012: 18% 2014: 36%	80% – 99%
40% of neighborhood youth development program staff are on a pathway to youth worker certification (855 full and part time staff and volunteers).	2014: 32%	80% – 99%
In each target neighborhood there is a comprehensive range of high quality youth activities that advance development or academic gains to serve 75% of the 11–18 year olds (17,681 youth).	2010: 46% 2012: 48% 2014: 59%	51% – 79%
An evidence-based, sustainable, system of youth development programs exists with multiple funding partners, including public support.	N'hood networks exist with beginnings of city wide expansion. Funding sources in development.	51% – 79%
Safe places where youth can "drop" in that serve 20% of 14–18 year olds (3,086 youth).	2010: 19% 2012: 20% 2014: 7%	≤ 50%

2015 Status Rating Key*

% OF GOAL	100%	80% – 99%	51% – 79%	≤ 50%
STATUS	**Met Goal**	**Approaching**	**Progressing**	**Far from Goal**

Community Leadership Goals

GOAL	DATA	RATING
2% of residents — youth and adults — and stakeholders are engaged in leadership activities including formal training to build sustained youth and adult leadership (1,958 residents ages 14+).	2015: 2%+	100%
10% of residents — youth and adult — are engaged in GN activities such as neighborhood meeting or summit attendance, governance group membership, voting in governance elections and/or small grants activities (14,312 residents).	14,000 signed Children's Agenda, over 7,000 unduplicated residents in leadership database, 3,000 attending community meetings.	100%
There are 3–5 effective, financially stable community-based anchor organizations in each neighborhood with the expertise to advance the neighborhood agenda for children.	19 effective organizations.	100%
	Financially stable (unavailable).	51% – 79%
An effective and sustainable planning and advocacy body of residents and stakeholder that improves conditions for children exists in each target neighborhood.	5 neighborhoods have a planning and advocacy body of residents.	80% – 99%
80% of youth in each target neighborhood report high quality supports from neighborhood adults in achieving academic and personal success.	2013: 49% 2014: 47% 2015: 48%	≤ 50%

Education Goals

GOAL	DATA	RATING
In or near each target neighborhood, there is a sufficient number of high-quality and promising schools to serve at least 51% of the neighborhood school-age youth in: a) grades K–5 (8,636 children), b) grades 6–8 (4,190 youth) c) 9–12 (6,215 youth).	Grades K–5: 2013/14 -55%	100%
	Grades 6–8: 2013/14 -35%	51% – 79%
	Grades 9–12: 2013/14 -6%	≤ 50%
A sustainable network of education intermediaries exists in Detroit that is supporting key conditions of reform critical to success of K–12 education. Conditions include public policy, human capital, accountability and innovation.	ESD, MFS, A-Net, TFA, DPN, 482Forward, EdFuel, and TNTP Michigan Teacher Corps and WSU Teach Detroit	80% – 99%
In or near each target neighborhood there is a sufficient number of high-quality early care and education experiences to serve at least 51% of neighborhood children ages 3–4 (2,600 children).	1,000+ enrolled in Head Start 3000+ Quality Slots [Break down by age unavailable]	51% – 79%
75% of young people in target neighborhoods schools have college-going supports (9,178 youth).	2014: 50% FASA completion	51% – 79%
75% of parents are actively choosing their child's school.	n/a	—

2015 Status Rating Key*

% OF GOAL	100%	80% – 99%	51% – 79%	≤ 50%
STATUS	**Met Goal**	**Approaching**	**Progressing**	**Far from Goal**

Measuring the 2016 Goals

Over the course of the 10-year initiative, the Foundation's use of data and analytics has become more routine and sophisticated as access to data and technology has expanded. When the work began, neighborhood-level data was not available. The Skillman and Kresge Foundations took a risk and joined together to create Data Driven Detroit to inform and monitor neighborhood revitalization efforts. Over time, the Foundation has partnered with many experts to gather, create and analyze a variety of data to inform its work. The Foundation has had to push to obtain administrative data sets for education and safety, implement its own surveys and provide funding for the development of rigorous predictive metrics.

Some of the sources of data for the current 2016 goals update include:

- Michigan Department of Education, analyzed by the Institute for Research and Reform in Education

- City of Detroit Police Department, analyzed by Wayne State University's Center for Urban Studies

- Three rounds of a survey on youth development programs, conducted for the Foundation by Wayne State University and analyzed by Learning for Action

- Three rounds of a survey of students in Detroit schools, created by the University of Chicago and analyzed by the Institute for Research and Reform in Education

- Interviews and data collected by the Curtis Center at the University of Michigan

- Parcel surveys conducted by Data Driven Detroit and Loveland Technology

- Early Childhood Education Data collected by Excellent Schools Detroit

While the breadth of the data that is used to measure the 2016 Goals is fairly expansive, it is not possible to rigorously assess every goal — both because of the cost and the limitations of social science research. The Foundation has used all available information, including staff and partners' knowledge of current conditions. The data has been reviewed and analyzed by the Foundation's evaluation and data consultants, staff and community partners over the past several months.

Improving the Places Where Detroit's Kids Live

How the Initiative Evolved

i This grant total includes schools funding that was targeted to Skillman neighborhoods following the Foundation's initial commitment to GNI; it does not include an estimated $28 million in additional citywide or neighborhood-focused funding to support a broad range of policy-related and system-change work to complement efforts at the neighborhood level.

ii The Foundation's method for estimating leverage includes measurement of funds received by a GNI grantee as a result of — and in addition to — a Skillman grant, and measurement of funds invested in Skillman neighborhoods that were invested because of the Foundation's efforts to attract others, inspire ideas, sway decisions and promote opinions that advance its agenda for children.

iii See "Embedded Philanthropy and Community Change" Mikael Karlstrom, Prudence Brown, Robert Chaskin and Harold Richman, Issue Brief, Chapin Hall Center for Children, 2007. (http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/publications/ChapinHallDocument_2.pdf)

iv These products include an array of new evaluation reports completed during 2016 on GNI's key strategy areas (education, youth development, safety, and community leadership); a group of evaluations undertaken during the transition from Readiness to Implementation; several new essays that address critical aspects of the work; and accounts of additional learning exchanges that have drawn staff, partners, neighborhood leaders and other stakeholders together to reflect on the Initiative approach and accomplishments. All these materials have been designed to share with both internal and external audiences and are available for download on the Skillman Foundation website.

v In 2006, the Foundation created two new internal staff positions and launched an intentional staff transition process that extended through the planning and readiness phases and well into implementation.

vi For a more complete discussion of this role and the broader lessons to be derived from the Foundation's experience, see "Changemaking: Building Strategic Competence." Prudence Brown, Foundation Review, Volume 4:1 (2012).

vii For an analysis of the demographic and other characteristics that informed the selection of these six neighborhoods, and of the changes that have occurred in key indicators over time, see *Skillman Good Neighborhoods: 10 Years of Change*, prepared by Data Driven Detroit.

viii From January to July 2006, community engagement meetings occurred and community goals were developed with the first cohort of four sites — Brightmoor, Osborn, Southwest and Chadsey-Condon (Vernor); action planning teams were then formed and began working on implementation of strategies in those neighborhoods from January to September of 2007. The second cohort of sites — Cody Rouge and Northend – were engaged and goals were developed beginning in September 2007 and action planning teams began working on strategy implementation in early 2008.

ix A 2016 evaluation report prepared by the University of Michigan's Curtis Center provides a thorough description of this process; see *Community leadership and the Good Neighborhoods Initiative: Findings from the Curtis Center Evaluation,* University of Michigan Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group, 2016.

X   The Brandeis team was chosen for this work in part because it had worked with the Foundation several years previously in the evaluation of its youth development investments.

XI   The theory of change framework that was developed during the Readiness Phase is fully described in a compilation report prepared by the Brandeis evaluation team; see *Resilience, Resolve, Results — Overview of the Readiness Phase of the Skillman Foundation's Good Neighborhoods and Good Schools Initiative*, Center for Youth and Communities, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, November 2011.

XII   Additional materials related to the readiness phase evaluation framework and related findings and lessons are available on the Skillman Foundation's website; see, for example, *Changing the Odds for Kids: What Capacity do the Supports and Opportunities in the Six Good Neighborhoods Provide for Young People and what Characteristics of a System are in Place?*, October 2011; and *From Tower to Ground: Systems and Policy Change in the Good Neighborhoods and Good Schools Initiative*, November 2011.

XIII   The total number of EDs was reduced to four in 2012–13 with the termination of positions in Northend and Chadsey-Condon; an ED position was recently reestablished in Chadsey-Condon, bringing the current total of EDs to five.

XIV   The results and lessons from these efforts during the readiness phase of GNI were published by Prue Brown, Marie Columbo and Della Hughes in a 2009 *Foundation Review* article, "Foundation Readiness for Community Transformation: Learning in Real Time."

XV   Among these reports was a topline analysis of findings culled from 10 evaluation reports that cover the first five years of Good Neighborhoods' and an analytical review of its Good Schools program; see *Good Neighborhoods, Good Schools and the Foundation's Strategy for Place-Based Change*, Leila Fiester, Independent Consultant, 2011.

XVI   One of its early steps toward increased integration was a 2011 decision to invite youth development and educational partners into quarterly neighborhood partner meetings.

XVII   The sharpening of the mega-goal and target-setting work undertaken at that time was a result of the Foundation's desire to strengthen the results-orientation through Results-Based Leadership work it undertook in consultation with the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

XVIII   These figures are drawn from the National Center for Education Statistics District Profiles dataset.

XIX   That report examines the major demographic, political, economic, and social factors and trends that affected Detroit both before and during GNI, and presents data showing how those broader trends played out in each of the six target neighborhoods. In addition to reviewing some of the new challenges that emerged after GNI got underway, the report examines how significant longer-term changes in population and the economic landscape that began decades earlier have strongly affected both the overall health of Detroit and conditions within the six GNI Neighborhoods. It focuses on factors of population growth, suburban expansion and decline, the national recession and foreclosure crisis that reached its height during the GNI years.

XX   Since no formal evaluation has been undertaken of how demographic and market trends within the six GNI neighborhoods over the decade compare with those of other city neighborhoods over the same period, it is difficult to assess whether the Foundation's targeted investments have enabled these neighborhoods to perform better than others on key indicators such as population change, household income or employment.

What GNI Accomplished

Broader Observations about the GNI Approach

xxi See *Creating Change through Civic Leadership: The Skillman Foundation Example*, Mark A Lelle, March 2017.

xxii See *Accomplishments and Early Lessons Related to The Foundation's Introduction of "Social Innovation" Investing*, Susan Parker, March 2017.

xxiii That review focused on the development of neighborhood profiles to: **(1)** document the development of community leadership at the individual and organizational levels, and **(2)** report on the attainment of 2016 Community Leadership indicators. The evaluators relied on existing documents, updated leadership data with prior collection protocols, and collected some new data to document self-assessment of governance group status.

xxiv See *The Added Value of Long-Term Investments in Neighborhoods; Two Case Studies from the Good Neighborhoods Initiative*, David Scheie, March 2017.

xxv See *How to Grow Grassroots Leaders*, by Mohammad Dawood, Jerry Ann Hebron, Lisa Luevanos, Mary Luevanos and Victor Robinson, with Roque Barros, Janis Foster Richardson, Lisa Leverette and Deborah Meehan, June 2016.

xxvi See *The Added Value of Long-Term Investment in Neighborhoods: Two Case Studies from the Skillman Foundation's Good Neighborhoods Initiative*, David Scheie, David Scheie, March 2017.

xxvii For a review of The Foundation's prior youth development efforts, please see "From Citywide to Neighborhood-Based: Two Decades of Learning, Prioritization, and Strategic Action to Build the Skillman Foundation's Youth-Development Systems." Della Hughes, Maire Colombo, Laura Hughes, Sara Plachta Elliott, and Andrew Schneider-Munoz, *The Foundation Review,* Volume 6:2, Article 9 (201c).

xxviii This arrangement brought three organizations together as part of a *Youth Development Alliance* (YDA) that worked in partnership with the *Youth Development Resource Center*.

xxix The 3-year evaluation began in 2014 and will continue through early 2017.

XXX The evaluators note that a close working relationship among the implementing partners has been important for creating the conditions for a more coherent system that includes a clear framework, a focus on program quality, and increased data usage.

XXXI The development of this partnership is described in *Creating Change through Civic Leadership: The Skillman Foundation Example*, Mark A Lelle, March 2017.

XXXII Add citation to the deep dive analysis of Osborn.

XXXIII See *The Added Value of Long-Term Investment in Neighborhoods: Two Case Studies from the Skillman Foundation's Good Neighborhoods Initiative*, David Scheie, David Scheie, March 2017.

XXXIV For more detail on the study findings, see *Strengthening Grassroots Leadership in Detroit; Evaluation Report on the Community Connections Small Grants Program, 2006–2015*, David Scheie with Lisa Leverette, Inetta Mims and Jessica Brooke Williams, July 2016.

XXXV More than half the schools included in this effort were in the Skillman GNI neighborhoods.

XXXVI The Foundation's role in the Coalition involved not only financial and infrastructure support but also an unprecedented level of investment of political capital, particularly involving the intense commitment of time of Skillman Foundation CEO Tonya Allen. In the end, the Michigan Legislature passed and Governor Snyder signed into law a package of legislation that achieved some variation of most of the Coalition's major recommendations. For an account of the Foundation's role in this system change effort, see *Creating Change through Civic Leadership: The Skillman Foundation Example*, Mark A Lelle, March 2017.

XXXVII This evaluation, conducted by the Institute for Research and Reform in Education (IRRE), follows an earlier IRRE evaluation of the Foundation's education strategy and investments in 2011; both are available as part of the suite of Analytic Review products.

XXXVIII One possible exception is an improvement in middle grade students' proficiency in literacy, which increased from 30% to 38% over the period from 2010 through 2014 (although it fell significantly in 2015).

XXXIX These measures include: **(1)** overall quality; **(2)** holding power in high schools with high levels of challenge; **(3)** academic quality as measured by test scores and instructional quality; and **(4)** personalized learning experiences that include such things as safety and trust in teachers.

XL This policy has resulted in the significant growth over the past decade in the percentage of Detroit students attending charter rather than public schools and further eroded financial support for the Detroit Public Schools.

XLI For further analysis in support of this finding and those immediately below, see *Investing in Education Quality for Detroit Youth: The Skillman Foundation's Efforts to Improve Education Quality in Detroit,* Institute for Research and Reform in Education, November 2016.

XLII For an account of the Foundation's role in this bold system change effort, see *Creating Change through Civic Leadership: The Skillman Foundation Example*, Mark A Lelle, March 2017.

XLIII For further background on the safety strategy and results, see the evaluation by JFM Consulting.

XLIV For a more complete description of the Foundation's civic leadership role in addressing blight, see the essay *Creating Change through Civic Leadership: The Skillman Foundation Example*, Mark A Lelle, March 2017.

XLV These perceptions are supported by responses received to several relevant questions included in the CEP survey, and reinforced by several recently completed neighborhood impact statements created by neighborhood governance groups with assistance from the University of Michigan Technical Assistance Center.

XLVI For a thoughtful discussion of these issues, see the 2013 article in the Philanthropy Roundtable by John Tyler, "Transparency in Philanthropy; An Analysis of Transparency, Fallacy and Voluntarism."

Many of the reports cited can be found on the Skillman Foundation website at **www.skillman.org/reports**.