

Enriching Summer Work:



An Evaluation
of the
Summer
Career
Exploration
Program

A PUBLICATION OF PUBLIC/PRIVATE VENTURES

Wendy S. McClanahan
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Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the effectiveness of social policies and programs. P/PV designs, tests and studies initiatives that increase supports, skills and opportunities of residents of low-income communities; works with policymakers to see that the lessons and evidence produced are reflected in policy; and provides training, technical assistance and learning opportunities to practitioners based on documented effective practices.

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Acknowledgments

This research was made possible with funding from the William Penn Foundation. P/PV would like to thank the foundation for its support and its dedication to Philadelphia and, particularly, to Philadelphia's youth.

The report is the culmination of five years of work by many individuals and organizations. Thanks go to all of the agencies that implemented SCEP in Summer 1999 and those that participated in the implementation study in Summer 1998. In addition to providing a valuable service to Philadelphia youth, these agencies and their staffs endured the demands of the long, in-depth research process. They recruited additional youth, hosted site visits, organized focus groups, implemented random assignments and surveyed youth. Their dedication cannot be underestimated.

The Philadelphia Foundation also played a critical role in the research process. Mark Gifford and his staff managed the sites expertly and provided P/PV with needed support. Branch Associates conducted the implementation study, which provided much of the descriptive information contained in this report. The William Penn Foundation and its staff also provided critical support for P/PV. And Abt Associates implemented the random assignment process and the follow-up surveys.

P/PV staff were also integral to the project. Patricia Ma worked on the project in its early years. Joseph Tierney, former vice president and director of Philadelphia initiatives, also supported our work on the evaluation and reviewed drafts of the report. Karen Walker, Mark Elliott and Jean Grossman all reviewed the report, as did members of P/PV's board of directors. Dr. Alan Krueger gave suggestions for follow-up analyses, and Gary Walker wrote the Executive Summary.

Audrey Walmsley, executive administrative assistant at P/PV, was critical to the project's success. She assured smooth communication between P/PV and the sites, and between P/PV and Abt. Eleanor Hammond and Chrissy Labs were responsible for data management. Sarah Pepper and Shawn Bauldry expertly analyzed the study's data. Jana Moore edited an early version of the report, and Maxine Sherman and Joanne Camas did the final editing and copyediting. Chelsea Farley organized the production of the report, and Malish & Pagonis designed it.

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Introduction

Summer jobs programs were one of our nation's earliest publicly funded attempts to assist youth who live in communities with few economic resources. At their peak, federally funded summer programs provided work for more than 800,000 low-income youth. While other programs to improve the lives of our country's young people have come and gone, summer employment programs for low-income youth have been a mainstay.

In order to fully understand the youth employment movement in the United States, it is essential to explore both the changing nature of the labor market and the research on the benefits and drawbacks of youth employment.

The Changing Labor Market For Youth

Young people today face a particularly challenging labor market. Successful transition to adulthood and an economically sound future requires increasingly sophisticated work skills and often postsecondary education. Basic employability—a minimum level of academic knowledge, willingness to work and take on responsibility, and being adaptable to changing duties and conditions—no longer suffices.

Many manufacturing and semiskilled positions traditionally held by workers without college degrees have disappeared from older urban neighborhoods. Skilled private-sector jobs with long-term career prospects are centered in the downtown areas of cities or in suburbs (Hughes, 1993). The jobs remaining in city neighborhoods are mainly in the service industry and often offer low wages, no benefits and minimal career growth (Hughes, 1993).

Without jobs in their neighborhoods, youth in low-income urban areas may also lack good adult role models for employment (Wilson, 1988; U.S. Department of Labor, 1997). The working adults they do know often earn low wages. Youth in these communities may also have very little information about careers or the connections to help them get the jobs they want.

Because of this, youth in disadvantaged urban areas also often fail to equate scholastic achievement with high-quality, higher-paying jobs (Lerman, 1996), putting them at risk of failing or even dropping out of school (Ogbu, 1987). And even if they do see the

value of college, they may lack good information about how to pursue higher education and obtain financial aid.

The conundrum is classic. Youth need the skills and credentials afforded by a solid education to break into the types of jobs that will assure a strong future. Unfortunately, without solid opportunities and experience, they often cannot see that education and training will help them achieve this goal.

The Interplay of Employment and Education

Since many low-income youth face the prospect of a difficult transition into work or college, constructive labor market experiences can provide great benefits. Besides the income it produces, experience in the labor market can help teens perceive why educational attainment is important—by increasing their interactions with working adults and expanding their aspirations and achievable goals.

Some researchers argue that employment takes youth away from the central developmental tasks of adolescence—schoolwork, socialization with peers and identity exploration. These experts argue that the “youth labor market”—largely low-skilled, low-wage jobs—offers teens few developmental benefits, and may even lead to poorer grades, lower educational aspirations and increased delinquency (Greenberger and Steinberg, 1986).

Others say employment of any kind helps teens establish connections with employers, teaches youth responsibility and can encourage independence and skills development (Chaplin and Hannaway, 1996). Proponents also say work provides teens with positive adult role models and can afford them the opportunity to explore a job and clarify work values and job preferences (Mortimer et al., 1999).

Studies generally have shown that teens benefit from working 20 hours or less a week in high school. Some studies have shown long-term benefits, such as higher wages, for youth who work moderately during high school (Hotz, as reviewed in U.S. Department of Labor, 2000; Ruhm, 1995, as reviewed in U.S. Department of Labor, 2000; Carr et al., 1996).

Research also has shown a connection between moderate employment and higher levels of educational attainment. One study suggests that working even deters teens from dropping out of school (Tienda and Ahituv, 1996; echoed in research by D’Amico, 1984). A 1998 report by the National Research Council concludes that low-intensity employment might bolster secondary education outcomes for youth (in terms of time spent in secondary education).

However, many youth from impoverished urban neighborhoods are unable to find employment of any kind. A 1993 study demonstrated that only one in five eligible youth between the ages of 14 and 17 obtained a summer job (Westat, 1994). Other studies have found that few young people who apply for summer employment actually secure jobs. Therefore, providing entrée to the labor market is critical for these youth.

The History of Youth Employment and Training Programs

Employment programs for low-income youth began in the early 1960s, as a way to enhance the opportunities for these youth to earn money, learn skills and explore careers. They arose as part of the Manpower Development and Training Act to reduce inequality in labor market access and, more generally, to reduce poverty.

Early on, the value of publicly subsidized summer jobs programs was rarely questioned. Funders felt that the programs provided an experience for disadvantaged youth that they would be unlikely to obtain on their own, and that keeping youth employed would keep them out of trouble in the summer. Critics of the programs said they failed to provide an educational focus, which is linked closely with career success. So, in the 1980s, many programs were expanded to include educational programming.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, criticism continued. Detractors said summer jobs programs failed to provide work experience of substance or value, and that the jobs, all in the public and nonprofit sectors, were often poorly planned and supervised—a weak example of work in the real world. These claims were backed by research.

Additional research in the 1980s delivered another blow to the youth employment programming field, demonstrating that while a well-implemented summer jobs program with both educational and life skills components could produce short-term gains in skills, literacy and knowledge, these gains do not endure. Participants in P/PV's Summer Training and Education Program (STEP) did not graduate high school at higher rates, have fewer pregnancies or get better grades (Walker and Vilella-Velez, 1992). The short-term benefits of a summer or two of programming and employment evaporated over the succeeding years. As STEP showed, short-term interventions can help youth by providing them with much-needed experiences, but cannot produce long-term changes without access to complementary opportunities and experiences continuing past the summer.

These findings, combined with the economic boom of the 1990s, further squashed summer youth employment programming. There was little in the way of empirical evidence to justify the expenditure. Summer youth employment programs were not producing measurable benefits for youth. Today, there is no distinct, federally supported summer jobs program; federal funding for summer jobs for youth is allowed only if it is tied to a year-round program.

The Summer Career Exploration Program (SCEP)

Because of their conviction that a distinct summer jobs program had important benefits for youth, several jurisdictions developed their own summer jobs programs, taking into account the criticisms and shortcomings of earlier federal initiatives. Their goal was to extend and complement the reach of the federally funded efforts, and to provide added services and supports for teens. These programs frequently involved the private sector, both as a source of jobs and, in some cases, as designer and financial supporter.

This report presents an evaluation of one local summer jobs program for low-income teens, the Summer Career Exploration Program (SCEP), which has operated in the Philadelphia region for more than 15 years. SCEP was designed to address some of the criticisms levied against earlier youth jobs programs by attempting to enhance teens' understanding of the connection between academic

achievement and career success, providing youth with adult support and offering meaningful career-related jobs in the private sector. SCEP's design addresses many of the criticisms of the original summer jobs model, but notably does not address the program's short duration.

Although P/PV and the funder were aware of the limited potential of short-term programs to produce long-term change in the lives of participants, the program did attempt to provide "intermediate" benefits to teens, such as a stronger orientation toward work, increased work readiness and improved educational planning. The purpose of this study was to document how the program was implemented and both the immediate and intermediate benefits of participation. The study is important because it shows that the potential for short-term jobs and other programs lies in their ability to reach their programmatic goals (i.e., getting jobs), and that, combined with other supports, is what will bring about long-term change.

Research Questions

This report addresses four issues:

- How is a privately funded, multi-agency summer jobs program that targets low-income youth designed and implemented? Is it successful in placing young people in jobs? What support services does it provide?
- What kinds of young people participate in SCEP?
- Does SCEP have short-term and intermediate impacts on participants?
- What can we learn from SCEP and its evaluation to improve other summer youth employment efforts?

In 1998, researchers used a qualitative analysis to document the program's implementation and determine whether program operators had reason to believe participants would benefit. Drawing on discussions with agency staff, work-site supervisors and college monitors; interviews and focus groups with participants; and observations of work sites, the implementation analysis concluded that SCEP met its basic operational objectives.

The second research method was a random assignment impact study conducted in 1999 to determine program impacts. Eligible first-year program applicants were assigned, using the equivalent of a lottery, to a group that participated in SCEP or a group expected to find summer employment through other means, including other jobs programs. P/PV collected information from participants and controls through a written survey prior to the program, a phone interview in Fall 1999 that focused on their summer employment experiences and a phone interview in Spring 2000, one year after they applied to SCEP.

Findings

The findings—based on both the qualitative implementation study and the random assignment impact study—indicate that SCEP is a well-implemented summer jobs program that achieves several short-term objectives.¹

- It gets teens jobs, giving them work experience;
- It permits them to earn money and to be productively engaged during their summer-time school break; and
- It provides them with supportive adult contact.

The program is less successful at achieving its intermediate goals:

- Young people who participated in SCEP in 1999 were no more likely to exhibit a stronger orientation toward work and careers than those who did not participate;
- SCEP did not increase employment rates of participants after they left the program; and
- SCEP did not foster a more positive outlook toward academic achievement.

The Structure of this Report

The remainder of this report will address the research questions and findings in more detail.

Chapter II describes the program, discusses the characteristics of youth who participated in the program, assesses the quality of its implementation and presents employment attainment impacts. Chapter III presents the results of the one-year follow-up study, which compares SCEP participants with teens in the control group. Chapter IV makes recommendations for improvements. Chapter V answers the question “What is the potential of summer youth employment programs?”

The Summer Career Exploration Program: Aims and Operations

The Summer Career Exploration Program aims to prepare participants for work; help them explore career and vocational opportunities in the private sector by placing them in a well-supervised, career-related job; and provide them with adult support and guidance throughout their summer employment. Participating agencies, which recruit the employers and young people, are expected to ensure that at least 25 percent of the teens continue working, at the employers' expense, beyond the six-week program. In this chapter, we will describe who participates in SCEP, what types of agencies implement SCEP and how they do it, and the costs associated with implementing the program.

Created in 1983 by the William Penn Foundation as an alternative to government programs in the Philadelphia area, SCEP is one of the oldest and largest private-sector jobs programs in the country. SCEP is supported by a collaborative of foundations, corporations and trusts.

SCEP provides job-related counseling, basic skills training and career exploration to help youth learn more about the world of work, their career interests and the importance of doing well academically and going on to college. Two features set SCEP apart from many other summer youth programs: an emphasis on placing teens in jobs based on career interest, and the use of college students to help the teens reach their potential on the job and in their pursuit of post-secondary education.

SCEP's major programmatic elements involve:

- **Summer work in the private sector.** Although SCEP provides participants with many resources and supports, the work experience is the program's most important element. SCEP makes an effort to match jobs with teens' career interests. In addition, the program places most teens in the private sector because the vast majority of jobs exist there and, the program staff believe, a bottom-line orientation offers higher workplace standards for participants to emulate.
- **Workplace readiness.** Participating agencies are responsible for seeing that students arrive at their work assignments prepared to succeed.

To accomplish this, students participate in preemployment training, culminating in preparation for a job interview.

- **An emphasis on the value of education.** In nearly every aspect of SCEP, participants are reminded that doing well academically and going on to college are prerequisites for success in virtually every career that might interest them. SCEP stresses the value of education through the use of college “monitors” as role models. The program also offers ongoing reminders and encouragement about the importance of school and the relevance of education to the workplace. Finally, the program has formal ties to College Access Centers and encourages participants to learn about the college admission process and the various colleges from which they can choose.
- **Personal support.** Participants receive support from a wide range of individuals. College students act as mentors and play a multifaceted role to ensure that participants have a good work experience. As the embodiment of the program’s key message to its participants, these college student monitors are expected to exhibit suitable work site behavior and provide an appropriate vision of the future. Participants also receive support from work site supervisors, who provide the teens with the instruction and advice needed to help them do their jobs well, as well as advice about succeeding in the work world.

Participants work for 25 hours a week for six weeks during the summer, receiving \$5.15 an hour, or the current minimum wage. A stipend from the Funders’ Collaborative pays for the first 20 hours per week; employers pay for the additional 5 hours.

The Young People in SCEP

Each summer, SCEP places approximately 1,700 youth in jobs in Philadelphia and Delaware counties in Pennsylvania and in Camden, New Jersey. Eligibility is limited to students who:

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of First-Time SCEP Participants

| Characteristic | Percentage of Youth (n=1157) |
|---|------------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 38 |
| Female | 62 |
| Race/Ethnicity | |
| African American | 72 |
| Hispanic | 17 |
| Asian | 5 |
| Caucasian or other race/ethnicity | 6 |
| Grade Completed at Program Application | |
| 10 | 56 |
| 11 | 31 |
| 12 | 14 |

- Come from a family with an income at no more than 150 percent of the federal poverty level; and
- Are enrolled in school and have completed the tenth grade, or have graduated in the previous school year.

Students may participate in the program for up to three summers.

In a typical year, about one third of SCEP participants are returning for their second or third year. In 1999, SCEP accepted 1,157 first-time participants into the program.² Tables 1, 2 and 3 describe the characteristics of these participants:

- They were mostly minority;
- More than half were female;
- A significant minority had never worked for pay; and
- They had a wide variety of career interests.

Table 2
Academic Characteristics of First-Time
SCEP Participants at Baseline

| Participant Characteristic | Percentage of Youth (n=1157) |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Received mostly Bs and Cs or higher on last report card | 69 |
| Planned to attend a four-year college after high school | 64 |
| Planned to take or had already taken SAT or ACT | 72 |
| Believed that she/he could get enough information about college | 86 |
| Had visited a college campus | 59 |

Table 3
Work Orientation and Self-Efficacy of First-Time SCEP
Participants at Baseline

| Participant Characteristic | Percentage of Youth (n=1157) |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Had never worked for pay | 33 |
| Was working at time of application to SCEP | 16 |
| Was interested in a career... | |
| In which they could help others | 58 |
| In sales or public relations | 35 |
| In computer programming | 34 |
| In clerical/secretarial positions | 33 |
| Involving reading/writing | 30 |
| In professional positions | 31 |
| Involving math skills | 20 |
| In scientific positions | 13 |
| In mechanical positions | 13 |
| Self-Efficacy (where 4 is the highest) | |
| Average item score of 3 or higher | 91 |
| Average item score of 3.75 or higher | 40 |
| Work Readiness (where 4 is the highest) | |
| Average item score of 3 or higher | 86 |
| Average item score of 3.75 or higher | 16 |
| Motivation to Do Good Work (where 4 is the highest) | |
| Average item score of 3 or higher | 92 |
| Average item score of 3.75 or higher | 28 |

Implementation: Structure and Agencies

SCEP is administered through the Philadelphia Foundation, a prominent community foundation. The Foundation gives local sponsoring agencies responsibility for recruiting youth, developing summer work placements, managing mentors and providing other services.

In 1998 and 1999, 28 agencies sponsored programs: Twenty-five were in Philadelphia; one in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, serving primarily the city of Chester; and two in Camden, New Jersey. Nineteen agencies belonged to larger umbrella organizations that provided such supports as centralized coordination, proposal writing and program documentation for up to 10 sites.

For 24 sites, Summer 1998 marked the 15th year they had operated SCEP. Two agencies were entering their third year of SCEP operations, and only two sites under one umbrella organization were operating the program for the first time.

The size of the programs varied greatly (see Table 4). The single-entity organizations generally served more youth at their site, while umbrella organizations spread their efforts across several sites to reach youth in different regions of the city. Individual agencies working under umbrella organizations typically served fewer youth.

Different sponsoring agencies tended to recruit youth with somewhat different characteristics (see Table 5). SCEP participants at larger agencies were less likely to plan to attend college and they tended to be older than participants at smaller agencies. Small agencies served more Asian youth, while larger agencies served more African American and Hispanic youth. The racial and ethnic breakdown partly reflected the agencies' missions: two small agencies provided services primarily to the Cambodian and Korean populations in Philadelphia; one large agency focused on Hispanic youth.

Table 4
The Size of SCEP Agencies

| Size Designation of SCEP Agency | Number of Agencies in Category | Number of Youth Served in SCEP |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Large | 4 | More than 85 youth |
| Medium | 10 | 26 to 85 youth |
| Small | 14 | 25 youth or fewer |

Table 5
Characteristics of Participants by Agency Size at Baseline

| Participant Characteristic | Agency Size ^a | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------|-------|
| | Small | Medium | Large |
| Race/Ethnicity^{***} | | | |
| African American | 66% | 77% | 72% |
| Hispanic | 7% | 12% | 24% |
| Asian | 18% | 3% | 1% |
| Other/Caucasian | 9% | 9% | 3% |
| Grade Completed[*] | | | |
| 10 | 60% | 61% | 52% |
| 11 | 30% | 28% | 34% |
| 12 | 10% | 11% | 13% |
| Plan to attend college after high school [†] | 70% | 64% | 63% |
| Have taken or plan to take the SAT or ACT ^{**} | 77% | 73% | 70% |

t p = .10

* p = .05

** p = .01

*** p = .001

a This table reflects the number of first-time participants in each size category.

SCEP In Operation

Each agency varied slightly in how it implemented the program.

Recruitment and Intake

Agencies implementing SCEP recruited participants from many different sources, including schools, year-round program activities, other local organizations and word of mouth (which agencies often cited as a good source).

Almost all sites required a formal written application that included income information. Some also required copies of school transcripts, and many SCEP sites required applicants to take part in an interview. In some cases, staff members used the interviews to help choose the participants; in others, where staff members handpicked most of the participants, the interview was intended as a learning experience.

Readying Youth for the Workplace

Training and preparation make up a significant portion of the SCEP experience. The bulk of this training focuses on soft skills and how they apply to interviewing for and maintaining a job. Some agencies provided instruction only prior to the actual job placement; others conducted mandatory training sessions throughout the summer. Some participants received limited counseling about career choices and how to think about the tasks they enjoyed and the work environment they preferred.

Participants also learned about job readiness, including hygiene and dress, proper verbal communication and body language, proper attitude, timeliness and how to ask questions. Some agencies provided training on working with supervisors, time management and accepting criticism and feedback, and offered tools to help students think critically about the summer employment experience and how it related to their career and school goals.

Job Development and Placement

In 1999, participants worked at 913 sites. All but 3 percent were private companies, and the remainder were nonprofit organizations that were able to meet the program's requirements.

SCEP coordinators use a variety of techniques to develop jobs, including writing letters to their agencies' board members, colleagues, individuals on agency mailing lists and newly opened businesses in the immediate area. Although the desire for personal familiarity with work sites leads most program coordinators to avoid contacting potential employers without prior correspondence or referral, some of the larger agencies do "cold calling." Once a roster of work sites has been compiled, SCEP coordinators interview representatives at each work site to gauge the safety of the environment and the employer's commitment to the program's goals.

Many coordinators attempt to develop sites near their agency, where most students live. This helps keep students' transportation costs down and reflects the staff's sensitivity to some students' unwillingness to travel outside their own neighborhoods. Coordinators also prefer to work with businesses that they know.

However, some agencies branch out to other areas, particularly Center City Philadelphia, to accommodate students' career interests. One of the largest SCEP agencies—not neighborhood-based—develops jobs throughout the city, but it concentrates in Center City, where many corporations have offices. As a result, this agency has access to a wide range of professional settings and can more easily meet the diverse career interests of students.

Work Site Development Strategies

Researchers noted two distinct work-site development patterns: student-driven and employer-driven.

Although all agencies cultivate employers that hired students in the previous years, student-driven agencies focus on students' career interests very early in the process—they consider both the interests expressed by students in the previous year and the interests of early applicants for the coming year.³ Armed with this information, the agencies often go to great lengths to find new work sites to meet students' wants and needs.

Employer-driven agencies focus their efforts on the work sites, either those located in their neighborhoods or those that have participated previously, particularly those willing to retain students beyond six weeks. Agencies tend to place students

with these companies even if the participants' career interests have shifted. In their interviews with researchers, some program coordinators at employer-driven agencies described the entire job development process with few references to students' career interests. Some actively played down the importance of students' career interests.

Types of Jobs

The job development process produces a variety of jobs. In 1999, participants worked in retail businesses, insurance agencies, real estate agencies, child care centers, health care organizations, law offices, computer service companies, small manufacturers, travel and hotel service providers, restaurants, landscaping companies, the automotive service industry and sales agencies.

Some placements were in large organizations, such as hospitals, and other participants worked in mid-sized organizations, such as retail chains or supermarkets. Some students worked side by side with the owners of firms employing six or fewer workers, learning about running a small business.

The College Monitors

The program expects the college monitors to support teens throughout their summer job experience. Since college attendance is an aspiration that SCEP hopes to instill in participants, agencies hire college students with similar backgrounds to the teens to serve as role models.

In Summer 1998, SCEP program coordinators hired 165 college monitors similar in gender and race to the participants. A third had worked as SCEP monitors previously, and a fifth had participated in the program in high school.

The majority attended local colleges and universities, though some came from schools as distant as Cornell University or the University of Florida. Many attended historically black colleges and universities, including Lincoln University, Howard University and Morehouse College. Although they pursued a variety of majors, including finance, communications, business, biology, chemistry and fine arts, majors in education and the social sciences dominated.

In 1998 and 1999, college monitors served as the line staff for the SCEP program. They became responsible for a good deal of program management and documentation once the program began and students started working. The monitors also ensured that work sites met program requirements and that participants had a good work experience. Most important, the monitors' presence conveyed the program's key messages to participants.

Monitors were expected to encourage participants to do well in school and to pursue college or a similar post-secondary educational experience. SCEP also expected monitors to serve as role models for appropriate workplace behavior, demeanor and dress, and as the first line of defense against all problems at the work site, regardless of their origin—the participant, the work site supervisor, co-workers or material conditions in the work site. Finally, monitors were expected to be entry-level counselors for SCEP participants, providing broad-based academic, career and personal counseling.

Recruitment and Training

Although SCEP competed for monitors in a summer job market that often offered college students better conditions and higher pay, most program coordinators had little trouble recruiting interested college students, and many sponsoring agencies received two to three times as many applications as needed in 1998. Recruitment methods that year included referrals from other monitors, notices in local newspapers, college placement offices, work-study programs and agency newsletters. Word of mouth was a significant factor in recruitment: Participating organizations got referrals from current and former monitors, as well as from other SCEP sites. Some sites drew candidates from groups of young people who had participated in other programs operated by the agency over the years.

SCEP required all monitors to receive at least 8 hours of training but strongly encouraged agencies to provide 16 hours. The training regimen included information about the structure, background and goals of the SCEP program, as well as preparation for their roles as mentors and counselors. Newly hired monitors also attended Monitor Plus, a supplemental training session conducted by some of

SCEP's more experienced program coordinators. Monitor Plus underscored the topics covered at the agency-level sessions.

Trainers instructed monitors to make sure the students had a good experience, completed the program and benefited fully from the opportunity that SCEP presents. The monitors were told that they would make or break the program. As individuals who have successfully confronted issues students were facing, the monitors were asked to be constantly aware of how they looked, spoke and behaved, since participants would rely on them for cues about their own behavior.

The Monitor in Action

Monitors were expected to “shadow” 10 high-school students during their six-week work experience, advocate on their behalf, coach them to succeed and suggest ways to address problems encountered in the workplace. Monitors were told to visit each student twice a week at work to ensure that employers provided students with a well-supervised and safe work experience, and that the students were meeting employers' expectations. Monitors were expected to identify and help resolve potential conflicts by meeting regularly with supervisors and students, and intervening before a problem materialized.

Almost two thirds of first-time SCEP participants in 1999 saw their college monitors at least twice a week. Less than 1 percent of participants said their college monitors did not visit them at all, and the remainder, 37 percent, said monitors visited them at the work site about once a week.

More than 85 percent of participants said they talked with monitors about their relationships with co-workers and their supervisors. Almost as many youth said they discussed post-high-school plans with their college monitors, and about two thirds discussed strategies to develop their work skills and explore their career interests. Youth were least likely to report discussing personal issues with their college monitors (22%).

Monitors also carried out a range of routine administrative duties. They ensured that students' paperwork was complete, collected students' time sheets and ensured that students were paid promptly and that the employers covered any time the teens worked above 20 hours per week. They also collected supervisor evaluation forms. A small number of SCEP agencies asked monitors to develop work sites for teens still unmatched when the college students came aboard. At most SCEP agencies, one or two monitors stayed on to assist program coordinators at the end of the program with final administrative tasks, including the preparation of a final report to the Funders' Collaborative in mid-September.

Monitors were required to keep notes on their interactions with students. In some programs, monitors provided formal reports or log sheets. Other programs required informal notes to assist them in determining and meeting students' individual needs, and some sites required monitors to maintain a personal counseling file for each student.

Promoting Knowledge and Interest in College

SCEP conveys the message that participants can graduate from high school, go to college, have the career of their choice and succeed. SCEP students are first introduced to this theme in the application process. They revisit it in their orientation and training; they hear it as they are coached in résumé writing and interviewing skills; they sample it in their work experience; and they talk about their post-high-school plans during visits with their monitors.

SCEP participants are asked to visit College Access Centers, which operate free of charge as resource libraries, with information about colleges, careers and financial aid. The centers work with SCEP to orient monitors and work with participants who are at least high-school juniors. SCEP also tries to give participants the opportunity to visit a college campus—the college monitor often coordinates these visits. However, implementation in this area was weak in 1999. Fewer than half of the teens visited a College Access Center during their first summer in the program, and only about one third visited a college campus.

Does SCEP Get Youth Jobs?

SCEP met its main goal of placing youth in summer jobs. Ninety-two percent of the participants worked during Summer 1999, as opposed to only 62 percent of youth in the randomly selected control group (see Table 6).

The jobs that SCEP teens worked differed little from those that nonprogram youth obtained, meaning that SCEP agencies did not succeed in placing youth in jobs measurably better than those they might have obtained on their own.⁴

In order to assess job quality, researchers asked both program youth and members of the control group about the amount and type of training they received; the extent to which their supervisor was responsive to and supportive of them on the job; whether the job was varied and challenging; and their overall satisfaction with the job. Employed SCEP participants and control group members had virtually identical views on all of these aspects. Although both groups received similar training, SCEP participants were more likely to feel they had received “personalized” training than the control group members.

Both groups were equally likely to agree that their supervisors gave clear instructions, were responsive to questions about how to do the work and trusted the teens to do their jobs. Both groups also indicated that their supervisors generally were not overly critical and tended not to expect too much of them. Both SCEP participants and control youth indicated that their jobs gave them a chance to learn new things and helped them learn to work with other people and improve their ability to think and solve problems. Overall, most SCEP participants (83%) and control youth (81%) were satisfied with their summer work experiences.

Working members of the control group received \$5.69 an hour, compared with \$5.30 on average for SCEP, which ties salaries to the minimum wage.⁵ This is not necessarily a reflection of job quality. In the economic conditions that then prevailed, employers, such as McDonald’s, needed to pay more than minimum wage to attract workers, and control group members most likely sought those jobs. However, because more SCEP youth worked than did youth in the control group, across the full sample (those who worked and those who did not), SCEP participants on average earned \$660.85 compared with \$403.52 for control youth.⁶

Table 6
Summer Employment and Earnings Impacts

| Summer Outcome | SCEP Participants (n=1076) | Control Youth (n=498) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Percentage employed over the summer*** | 92% | 62% |
| Average hourly wage at SCEP or main summer job** | \$5.30 | \$5.69 |
| Average summer earnings (both employed and unemployed youth)*** | \$694.87 | \$446.74 |
| Mean total hours worked by those employed | 179 | 173 |

** p = .01

*** p = .001

Summary

SCEP is a well-organized and mature program that successfully targets low-income youth and provides them with a job and other supports. It not only gets youth jobs but gets them jobs of equal quality to work the teens might find on their own. In addition, SCEP also provides participants with the support of a college monitor, though the program achieves less success in exposing participants to college through College Access Centers and visits to campuses.

The finding that SCEP gave teens a 50 percent advantage in obtaining a summer job is critical. The favorable economic climate of 1999 might mask the importance of the figure. In Summer 1999, unemployment totaled about 4 percent in the Philadelphia region (see the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reports). *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Sudarsan, June 13, 1999) reported that the teenage unemployment rate in May 1999 was the lowest since May 1969.⁷ In all probability, many fewer control group members would have secured employment in a tight labor market. Therefore, the impact of a strong labor market on SCEP is likely small. Although jobs were plentiful, SCEP participants were interested in SCEP not only to get a job but to get a *career-related* job. These were youth who were willing to take a job through SCEP despite the fact that they could earn higher wages outside of the program. Furthermore, historically, SCEP is able to place about 85 to 95 percent of its participants, which indicates the labor market has no significant impact on employers' decisions to hire SCEP participants.

In conclusion, SCEP finds jobs for teens, allows them to earn money and gives them experience in the labor market. Furthermore, SCEP occupies youth during the summer in useful activities. Taken together (and without examining the longer-term impact of the program on youth), these findings present a strong argument for SCEP and similar summer youth employment programs. In the next chapter, we investigate if SCEP had any impact on participants after the program ended.

Impacts of SCEP After One Year

Although SCEP's primary goal is to provide youth with good summer jobs and give them an opportunity to explore their career interests, program operators also hope SCEP results in longer-term benefits. In this chapter, we explore whether SCEP has any impacts on participants one year after applying to the program.

A related question also needs to be posed: What range of impacts can reasonably be expected from a program of this kind? Youth employment programs generally produce only limited impacts after the program ends, suggesting that programs of four months or fewer are far less likely to offer longer-term effects than more prolonged efforts.

Researchers compared SCEP participants with a control group of students not allowed to participate in the program but who were free to find summer jobs on their own or through other summer jobs programs. Researchers conducted the follow-up survey one year after all the teens applied to SCEP (control group youth were allowed to participate in the program the next summer).

Description of Impacts

Our analysis focused on four effects derived from the program goals:

- Improved academic outlook and aspirations;
- Stronger orientation toward work;
- Increased awareness of career choice issues; and
- Employment after the program ended.

Improved Academic Outlook and Aspirations

SCEP directly links its focus on fostering students' career goals to education. By providing youth with career-oriented employment, program staff expect students to see more clearly the connection between their career goals and the need for higher education. Staff want participants to leave SCEP with a sense that attending college will lead to rewarding careers in their adult life. They also hope students understand that success in school leads to success in the workplace. Staff emphasize that educational attainment is not only desirable but attainable, and necessary for obtaining a good job. The academic impacts of SCEP are presented in Table 7, on the next page.

Table 7
Select Academic Impacts One Year
After Applying to SCEP

| Academic Impact | SCEP Participants | Control Youth |
|--|-------------------|---------------|
| Plan to attend college | 78% | 81% |
| Sample Size | 994 | 461 |
| Have taken/plan to take SAT or ACT | 81% | 82% |
| Sample Size | 1027 | 472 |
| Enrolled in “college prep” curriculum** | 12% | 8% |
| Sample Size | 958 | 452 |
| Won an award during school year 1999-2000 | 42% | 38% |
| Sample Size | 973 | 454 |
| Visited a college campus during school year 1999-2000 | 45% | 42% |
| Sample Size | 1026 | 472 |
| Visited a College Access Center during school year 1999-2000*** | 44% | 30% |
| Sample Size | 1020 | 469 |
| Discussed college applications/financial aid with an adult | 84% | 84% |
| Sample Size | 1026 | 472 |
| Have sufficient information about college | 84% | 85% |
| Sample Size | 1022 | 471 |
| Participated in an honor society | 12% | 10% |
| Sample Size | 1027 | 472 |

** p = .01
 *** p = .001

Commitment to Academics

In general, one summer’s participation in SCEP had little impact on participants’ academic achievement or school behavior. Participation in SCEP did not significantly improve youth’s grades or the effort they put into classes. Youth who participated in SCEP did not alter the courses they elected to take in high school, nor did it make them more likely to graduate.

Plans to Attend College

Participation in SCEP had little impact on youth’s plans for college. The vast majority of both participants and nonparticipants planned to attend college following high-school graduation.

Participants were also no more likely to have taken or planned to take college entrance exams, such as the SAT and ACT. Participants and control group youth were equally likely to have visited a college campus and to have consulted adults about college applications and financial aid. Both were also equally likely to have applied for financial aid for college in the year following their application to the SCEP program.

Researchers did observe small impacts in two areas related to college planning. First, although the overwhelming majority of both SCEP participants and control group youth were enrolled in a “general” high-school curriculum, significantly more SCEP participants than nonparticipants reported that they were enrolled in a college preparatory or specialized academic program (12 percent of SCEP participants reported that they were enrolled in college preparatory or specialized academic programs compared with 8 percent of the control group).⁸

Second, although similar numbers in both groups reported discussing their college plans with adults, significantly more SCEP participants than control group members visited a College Access Center during the year following the program. Many of the SCEP participants learned about the centers from their college monitors and continued visiting the centers after leaving the program. Although control youth were less likely to visit the centers, they were equally likely as participants to believe they had obtained as much information as they needed about college. Nonparticipants may have received information about college from alternative sources or may have simply been unaware of the information available at the centers.

School-to-Work Connection

SCEP did not make its participants more able to see the connection between school and work, as program planners had hoped. One possible explanation is that SCEP and its employers did not help participants see how schooling was related to work or their job.

Table 8
Orientation Toward Work Impacts One Year After Applying to SCEP

| Orientation Impacts | SCEP Participants | Control Youth |
|--|-------------------|---------------|
| Mean Score "Attitude Toward Work" (from 1, low, to 4, high) | 3.36 | 3.43 |
| Sample Size | 976 | 121 |
| Mean Score "Work Readiness" (from 1, low, to 4, high) | 3.51 | 3.51 |
| Sample Size | 975 | 120 |
| Mean Score "Self-Efficacy" (from 1, low, to 4, high) | 3.51 | 3.50 |
| Sample Size | 1,001 | 123 |

Stronger Orientation Toward Work

In general, teens in both groups entered the program with very positive attitudes toward work, high work-readiness skills and a strong belief in their ability to get a job done, leaving little room for improvement because of the program (see Table 8). The attitudes toward work of both groups remained high a year after their initial application to SCEP; they scored comparably on work readiness, and both groups continued to score highly on the self-efficacy measure.

Increased Awareness of Career Choice Issues

Program staff expected SCEP youth to have a clearer idea about careers that interested them and how to pursue them. However, participants and nonparticipants felt equally capable of making decisions about their careers and reaching their goals. Both groups received the same level of support in career planning. Virtually all the teens discussed their career plans with an adult, and similar numbers discussed their career plans with parents, friends, teachers and counselors.

Some differences existed in the teens' confidence to do certain types of jobs well. The confidence of SCEP participants in their ability to teach or hold a job that requires reading and writing was significantly higher after SCEP than for the control group.

Table 9
Impacts of SCEP on Employment One Year After Applying to SCEP

| Employment Impacts | SCEP Participants | Control Youth |
|--|-------------------|----------------|
| Percentage who worked during school year 1999-2000 | 60% | 61% |
| Sample Size | 1027 | 471 |
| Percentage who worked for their summer employer during the school year*** | 32% | 45% |
| Sample Size | 566 | 200 |
| Average hourly wage earned at school-year job | \$6.12 | \$6.13 |
| Sample Size | 605 | 277 |
| Average earnings of employed youth during school year 1999-2000 | \$2,647 | \$2,526 |
| Sample Size | 509 | 251 |

*** p = .001

Employment During the School Year

SCEP's impacts on employment (one year after applying to the program) are presented in Table 9. About 60 percent of both groups continued working when school resumed, meaning that participation in SCEP held no advantage. Also, in contrast with program goals, just 32 percent of SCEP participants who received a job during the program stayed with the same employer, compared with 45 percent of the control group who worked in Summer 1999. One year after applying to SCEP for the first time, about one fifth of both groups continued working.

Both groups earned about the same hourly wage at their school-year job: \$6.12 an hour. Girls in SCEP earned more than the control group, but the boys earned less.⁹ The working SCEP participants earned an average of \$2,647 and nonparticipants earned an average of \$2,526 during the school year. Both groups worked an average of 18 to 19 weeks from September to June, at an average of about 23 hours per week.

Unemployment insurance records for both groups during the 18 months after the program also revealed no statistically significant differences. The analysis showed only that older youth in the overall sample were likely to earn more than younger youth, that youth without clear college attendance plans earned more and that youth who worked for a larger number of employers earned more. None of these findings, however, reflected treatment-control differences.

Involvement in Crime

Because SCEP aims to keep youth out of trouble and prior research indicates a potential link between teen work and reduced delinquency, P/PV tested whether SCEP had an impact on the criminal involvement of its participants. Criminal records for both treatment and control groups were collected 18 months after the 1999 summer ended to determine if SCEP kept youth out of trouble with law enforcement. Analyses revealed that SCEP did not produce a reduction in criminal or delinquent activity. In fact, very few SCEP or control group youth were ever arrested.

Interpreting the Findings

Two main explanations exist for why some potential impacts of SCEP may not have been observed.

SCEP's Short Duration

The program's short duration—150 hours over six weeks—offers the most obvious and plausible explanation for the lack of program impact. The likelihood of changing youth's attitudes and behaviors over such a short period is small (Walker and Vilella-Velez, 1992).

Adolescents are undergoing tremendous changes in their lives and are subject to numerous sources of influence. The teens analyzed most likely spent considerably more time with their peers, relatives and adults outside of work than they did with their work supervisors, co-workers and college monitors. If the outside influences worked at odds with SCEP's goals, the extraneous factors most likely eclipsed the program's messages.

Since the data indicates SCEP provides few benefits other than giving teens an immediate advantage in the work world, the program may hold the most promise as an important element in a series of healthy developmental experiences for youth. As noted in Chapter I, evidence shows that working as a teenager can help teens make the transition to adulthood. SCEP contributes directly to the pool of work available for youth in the summer months and, therefore, can serve as a stepping-stone to additional work, as well as to a broader awareness of the value of education.

Who SCEP Targets

Many evaluations tend to show the biggest effects on higher-risk youth, who have more potential to benefit from programs. However, the students SCEP now attracts are, for the most part, highly motivated: They are reasonably good students, and a significant percentage have plans to go to college. Their baseline scores left little room for improvement, most likely setting them apart from teens not applying to SCEP.

In addition, SCEP put applicants through a more rigorous application and screening process than most other summer jobs programs. Many agency staff sought highly motivated youth, and several agencies took school attendance into consideration in the belief that it foretells a teen's success in a career-oriented summer position.

To determine whether SCEP may have helped higher-risk youth more than the average sample member, researchers examined results for subgroups: those who had previous work experience versus those who did not; youth who had plans to go to college before applying to the program versus those who did not; and youth who were performing poorly, average or better in school when they applied to the program.

Limited findings emerged. Youth who were doing poorly in school when they entered SCEP fared better than their control group counterparts on only one outcome examined—they were less likely than control youth to be suspended from school during the following year.

Table 10
Impacts of SCEP on the Least and Most Employable Participants (T) and Controls (C)

| Likelihood of Gaining Summer Employment Without SCEP | Number in Group | | Percentage Who Had Summer Job | | Percentage Who Were Employed During the School Year or After | |
|--|-----------------|----|-------------------------------|-----|--|-----|
| | T | C | T | C | T | C |
| Very Low (0 to .52) | 387 | 49 | 83% | 47% | 49% | 56% |
| Low (.53 to .66) | 386 | 62 | 94% | 52% | 60% | 57% |
| High (.67 to .77) | 387 | 82 | 93% | 75% | 60% | 68% |
| Very High (.78 to 1.0) | 386 | 80 | 97% | 82% | 68% | 70% |

Researchers also found no impact on youth not planning to attend college at the time of their SCEP application. However, data indicates that SCEP participation helped solidify plans of those already hoping to attend college: They were even more likely to report college plans than the control group, and less inclined to work full time after high school. The college-bound SCEP participants also worked less during the school year, possibly indicating a focus toward education over work.

Researchers found no differences in program impacts between participants with a work history and those working for the first time in SCEP.

Researchers also divided the SCEP participants according to their likelihood of gaining employment in the absence of the program (see Table 10).¹⁰ SCEP did provide the least employable youth with an immediate advantage, finding jobs for 83 percent of SCEP youth in the lowest quarter of employability versus only 47 percent of the lowest quarter of control group youth finding jobs. This makes sense: The program pays 80 percent of SCEP participants’ wages, so employers are more likely to hire youth they would not normally employ.

The teens who usually experienced difficulty finding work might be expected to stay at their jobs after the program ended. However, these SCEP youth were no more likely to keep their jobs or work during the school year than their counterparts. SCEP employment afforded no long-term advantage to the most

at-risk youth. Without participating in SCEP, only about half can probably be expected to find employment in subsequent summers on their own. Overall, these analyses counter the argument that SCEP is most effective for higher-risk youth.

Summary

Although SCEP increases participants’ employment rates by 50 percent, a significant figure in the robust economy of 1999, the program falls short of meeting its longer-term goals: making youth’s attitudes toward work more positive, increasing “soft” work skills and helping youth see the importance of doing well academically and pursuing post-secondary education. One year after applying to the program, SCEP youth did not have higher grades; were no more likely to plan to attend college or to have applied to college; did not see the connection between school and work more clearly; did not have higher school-year employment rates or earn higher wages; and did not have higher levels of self-efficacy or work readiness.

These results fall in line with previous research regarding short-term programs. A substantial body of research indicates that youth employment programs produce measurable results in the short term, but few, if any, over the long term.

One alternative explanation for the lack of longer-term impacts is whom SCEP targets. Many evaluations tend to show the biggest effects on higher-risk youth, who have more potential to benefit from

programs. But SCEP did not attract youth who were at high risk for academic or employment failure.

It is also important to remember that this study did not measure the benefits of SCEP in comparison to not working at all. Many of the outcomes of interest to SCEP—work readiness and orientation toward work, obtaining later employment, even understanding the connection between education and work—could as easily be obtained through working in any job, not just in a career-related one.

To increase the chances of achieving its intermediate goals, SCEP would have to make significant program modifications. In the next chapter, P/PV presents recommendations on steps that SCEP—and other youth employment programs—could take to strengthen impacts.

Strengthening the SCEP Experience

One implication that can be drawn from the findings of this evaluation is that SCEP is not worth the effort and resources it absorbs, and that they should be redirected toward programs with greater effectiveness. An alternate implication is that the program should be strengthened to increase its impacts. SCEP has a long history and strong support, and tackles areas of programming—teens, work experience, career exploration and college access—that are poorly supported by public dollars.

With this in mind and based on P/PV's experience with other programs and program evaluations, this chapter addresses the key ways that SCEP could be improved to increase the likelihood of having positive, lasting impacts on participants.

Program Enrichment

Previous evaluations of social programs are consistent in showing how quickly the effects of short-term programs fade. Increasing the reach of the college monitors SCEP now employs or adding career mentoring, interspersing activities throughout the year and increasing the quality of the job experience may remedy some of the program's shortcomings.

Moving Beyond Monitoring

Healthy youth development hinges on adult support and guidance. The SCEP monitors offered only limited support; most did meet regularly with participants, but the meetings often focused solely on work problems and administrative issues, such as payroll.

Programs like SCEP may find benefit in taking monitoring a step further. Research supports one-on-one mentoring as an effective tool (Tierney and Grossman, 1995), and career mentoring programs for older teens can teach youth about careers and work (McClanahan, 1998). However, for concrete benefits to result, mentors need proper training and screening and must spend a significant amount of time with teens—and over a longer period than the six weeks that SCEP allows.

A year-round career mentor, a working professional in the field that interests the teen, represents one option for youth employment programs. A mentor

would serve as a career guide and professional role model, and could help with course selection and the college application process. By providing support for the participant year-round, the career mentor could reinforce the skills, career exploration and college focus of SCEP or other youth employment programs.

Mentors would need to commit at least a year to the relationship, meet with students regularly, and engage them in both social and career-related activities. Mentors would discuss the teens' summer jobs and how they were meeting expectations regarding a career-related position. They would also help teens examine whether they wanted to pursue the careers they originally chose. During the year, the mentor might set up job-shadowing opportunities or simply connect students with professionals to discuss their jobs. The mentors could also discuss the teens' education and plans for college.¹¹

In addition, mentors might work with program staff during the spring to identify summer jobs that best fit with students' career interests and build on their experiences.

Interspersing Activities Throughout the Year

The outcomes for youth may be bolstered if SCEP, and programs like SCEP, introduced a substantial year-round component to their programming or linked more fully to year-round components already in place. Year-round programming could involve part-time employment, career mentoring, or skills, employment or educational training.

Programs could build the component around career mentors, who would be well positioned to assess the participants' education and employment goals and assist in developing extended programming for them. In addition, sponsoring agencies might establish career days especially for SCEP participants, bringing in professionals to talk with youth about opportunities in a given field. The meetings might highlight different professions each month during the school year. Speakers would be expected not only to discuss their own backgrounds and specific positions but also to stress the steps needed to find employment within that field.

Although making these changes will not guarantee that teens will benefit, P/PV views these steps as critical to the success of the program in delivering more to youth than just a summer job.

Increasing the Quality of the Job Experience

A job becomes a good developmental opportunity only when teens receive support and guidance from adults at work. While SCEP does work with supervisors, the program could do much to bolster this critical component.

Although supervisors are uniquely positioned to play a meaningful role in youth development, few supervisors receive youth development training, leaving them unprepared to help teens make the most of their early work experiences. Many supervisors of young workers readily admit that they could benefit from specialized training in youth communication and supervision. Training would help supervisors develop coaching and mentoring skills, such as listening and observing, asking questions and providing feedback, motivating young employees, and helping youth improve their skills, performance and productivity. Training could also help supervisors develop strategies that would offer teens a richer and more interesting job, as well as help them explore the career more deeply.

Youth employment programs could also enhance the summer job experience by organizing enrichment sessions with groups of teens, offering them an opportunity to share their experiences. A discussion about responsibilities and the skills involved in various jobs might help teens understand that certain skills are important to all jobs and could provide them with language to describe their new abilities. These sessions would encourage youth to work in teams, develop communication and problem-solving skills, and foster personal and professional growth through guided reflection on their employment experiences.

As noted, several SCEP sites focused more on employers than on participants' interests in developing job opportunities. To meet the varied career interests of participants, SCEP and other programs should emphasize career-related placements instead. More rigorous career assessments, as well

as sharing by sponsoring agencies of both work sites and teens, could also help strengthen the program.

Another approach would involve additional career counseling. Although no one would expect a teen to identify a career and stick with it throughout their life, additional counseling before placement may help participants develop clarity about the types of careers that interest them and the employment settings that could help them explore these interests.

A centralized SCEP development effort would also widen the job choices for teens. Currently, each sponsoring agency develops its own job sites, many in their own neighborhoods. A wider effort, particularly in Center City Philadelphia, would undoubtedly enlist employers never approached—SCEP employers said they knew of others that would likely participate if they knew about the program. Reaching a greater number of employers would probably require a year-round effort.

A centralized development office would supplement, not replace, agency efforts by providing jobs unavailable on a local level. This addition might also mean that program operators would need to challenge some youth's reluctance to leave their neighborhoods, but it could reinforce SCEP's goal of career exploration and broadening participants' horizons. Lifting the restriction against public sector or nonprofit jobs might also result in a richer variety of job placements.

Another strategy to bolster the quality of SCEP jobs is to revisit the wage subsidy. Subsidizing wages has ensured a reliable number of jobs for participants; reducing the subsidy may result in higher-quality jobs for participants. Currently, because they pay little for labor, employers may have less interest in ensuring that the participants get an authentic, long-lasting and meaningful work experience.

As an alternative, some publicly funded on-the-job training programs offer employers a 50 percent wage subsidy over a limited period of time in exchange for providing training or exposing workers to multiple facets of a workplace. A similar approach would help guarantee a greater investment in SCEP and its participants by employers, and would reduce the risk

of young people having a work experience that did not adequately reflect the demands and challenges inherent in the private sector.

Moving Forward

SCEP leaders will need to decide what makes the most sense: making program alterations to try to achieve intended intermediate impacts, or keeping the program as it is, knowing that it provides teens with only one key developmental ingredient.

In Chapter III, we presented findings that showed that SCEP was no more effective at achieving its intermediate impacts with more at-risk youth. This is not a surprising finding: With its current design as a six-week intervention, it was unlikely that we would find lasting impacts on any participant, let alone those who need the most support and help. However, if SCEP evolves into a longer-term program and continues to aim to improve participants' academic outlook and aspirations and orientation toward work, it will also have to target youth who have low academic aspirations and a weak work orientation to achieve desired benefits. SCEP may also want to consider providing the program to youth who most need support in finding a good job. As results from this study showed, the youth least likely to become employed on their own were helped the most by SCEP's job placement services.

Summary

There are many ways SCEP and other summer youth employment programs can bolster their effects. The most critical perhaps is increasing the duration of the intervention. Indeed, under the Workforce Investment Act, the federal government has made it a requirement that summer jobs programs have a school-year component. Increased adult support from career mentors or college monitors, as well as high-quality jobs and work environments, may also improve the program in ways originally sought by funders. Also, if SCEP and other programs hope to have impacts on academics or attitudes toward work, they should target youth who need help in these areas.

What is the Potential of Summer Youth Employment Programs?

SCEP addresses important needs among a low-income population and produces solid benefits in the form of job placements and income at a comparatively modest cost. Although P/PV did not conduct a thorough cost study as part of its investigation of SCEP, a rough analysis of program expenditures in 1998 showed that SCEP costs about \$950 per youth: two thirds of that went to participants in wages, and the remainder supported administrative costs at the sites, including work-site development, college monitors, participant recruitment and training. Twenty-eight organizations were awarded grants totaling \$1,624,936 to operate SCEP in 1998 and \$1,712,422 in 1999.¹² The money donated by the Funders' Collaborative in 1998 provided jobs for 1,709 youth; 1,633 youth received jobs in 1999.

So, even without the ability to create lasting benefits to participants, are summer employment programs worthwhile investments? The answer is yes. This study of SCEP shows that well-implemented summer employment programs get teens jobs and expose them to skills adults need in the workplace. Funders and programmers need to recognize that the potential for short-term jobs and other programs lies in their ability to reach their programmatic goals, and that, combined with other supports, is what can bring long-term change.

Based on this study and studies of other short-term programs, it is best to view SCEP as one part of a larger mosaic of supports, programs and opportunities necessary for young people. The greatest benefit of the current model will be if young participants can find additional enrichments that build on and reinforce what they derive from SCEP and other similar short-term efforts.

However, if summer youth employment programs such as SCEP want to broaden their benefits, they will need to develop longer programs with more supports (or collaborate with other programs that provide these services) and target the youth that need help. The field is already moving in this direction. Youth in employment programs need to have challenging jobs, adult support and guidance, decision-making power, access to leadership opportunities, assistance in planning for their education and careers, and opportunities to explore jobs and roles. These improvements may not yield a program with abundant long-term impacts—that would be an

unrealistic expectation. They will, however, produce a program of greater effectiveness and with more payoffs for young people.

Good summer employment programs like SCEP are a critical part of our commitment to youth. Teens need jobs—they need work experience and they may need to earn money. Even in a labor market where jobs are plentiful, young people will always struggle to get employment, especially in the summer. Programs like SCEP, though their aims and effects may be limited, are an important building block and need to be part of a broader array of opportunities and supports to help young people make a successful transition to the workplace.

Endnotes

- 1 Only the Job Corps has produced consistent long-term impacts on participants. Most other programs that have been evaluated do not produce impacts or produce only short-term effects that decay within 18 to 24 months.
- 2 In addition to youth who were accepted as SCEP participants, another 551 youth who met SCEP eligibility criteria were assigned to the control group as part of the research design. An additional 476 students returned for a second or third summer of participation; they did not participate in the research.
- 3 They also incorporate their own appreciation of participants' preferences. While they have seen changes in students' career interests, there is also a core of careers—medicine, law, building trades, engineering and computer science—that continue to be of great interest to participants.
- 4 Unfortunately, P/PV was unable to investigate if the quality of the jobs varied by the method that the agencies used to match participants with jobs (i.e., employer-driven versus participant-driven job identification). This site-level data was not collected as part of the random assignment study, and the implementation study only investigated a subset of the SCEP agencies.
- 5 \$5.15 per hour during Summer 1999.
- 6 These figures include income from one or more jobs, including their SCEP job if they had one. Total earnings of \$0 for youth who did not work are included in these estimates.
- 7 For more information on unemployment rates, go to www.bls.gov.
- 8 Nonparticipants, in contrast, were more likely to be enrolled in a vocational or trade certificate program than were SCEP participants.
- 9 $P=.063$. This was the only significant finding by gender.
- 10 This grouping was established by using the actual employment results among controls to establish a predictive measure for employment likelihood among treatments. Analytically, this was done by regressing the overall characteristics of control group members on their employment outcome (which was either 0 or 1). This analysis produced a series of predictive weights, which could in turn be used to assess the likelihood of employment (absent the program) among treatment youth.
- 11 For more information on career mentoring, see McClanahan, 1998.
- 12 The figure for 1998 program costs does not include in-kind donations made by agencies, such as additional staff time and space. SCEP costs of \$950 per youth reflect an increase in funding granted to agencies to defray the additional costs of implementing random assignment. Specifically, agencies needed to recruit about one fifth more participants in order to fill their job slots through random assignment.

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Appendix A

An Overview of Agencies Implementing SCEP

| Agency | Number of Youth Placed in 1998 | Number of Youth Placed in 1999 |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Allegheny West | 40 | 39 |
| Aspira | 150 | 150 |
| Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia | | |
| Bridesburg Unit | 18 | 18 |
| Frankford Unit | 23 | 20 |
| Germantown Unit | 30 | 19 |
| Nicetown Unit | 14 | 14 |
| West Kensington Unit | 16 | 14 |
| Wissahickon Unit | 34 | 34 |
| Cambodian Association | 20 | 20 |
| Camden O.E.O. | 118 | 101 |
| Community Action Agency | 113 | 115 |
| Crime Prevention Association | | |
| R.W. Brown Community Center | 44 | 45 |
| West Philadelphia | 40 | 39 |
| Winnet/South Philadelphia | 39 | 43 |
| Greater Philadelphia Federation of Settlements | | |
| Cunningham Community Center | 20 | 20 |
| Frankford Group Ministry | 46 | 50 |
| Friends Neighborhood Guild | 47 | 43 |
| Intercultural Family Services | 22 | 23 |
| Lutheran Social Mission | 19 | 16 |
| North Light Community Center | 51 | 46 |
| Parkside Association | 50 | 47 |
| Southwest Community Services | 17 | 19 |
| The Lighthouse | 62 | 52 |
| United Communities of South Philadelphia | 34 | 28 |
| Greater Philadelphia Urban Action Coalition | 424 | 421 |
| Impact Services Corporation | 91 | 76 |
| Korean Association | 30 | 30 |
| Respond, Inc. | 97 | 91 |
| Total | 1,709 | 1,633 |

Appendix B

Funders of 1998 and/or 1999 Summer Career Exploration Program

1957 Charity Trust
Anonymous Foundation**
Anonymous Fund**
ARCO Chemical Company*
Auerbach Family Foundation*
Barra Foundation
Campbell Soup Company
Claniel Foundation
Connelly Foundation
Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation
Alfred and Mary Douty Foundation
Ethel Foundation**
Samuel S. Fels Fund
Fourjay Foundation
Elise Lee Garthwaite Memorial
Henrieta Tower Wurtz Memorial*
Allen Hilles Fund
Independence Foundation
Leo Model Fund*
MCM Anonymous Fund*
Nelson Foundation
The Philadelphia Foundation
*The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News***
PNC Bank
Provincial Foundation**
Prudential Foundation
Rittenhouse Foundation
Rosenberg Foundation
Sergent Clark Smith Foundation*
Seybert Institution
Simpson Trust*
Joseph K. Skilling Trust*
Sun Company
Union Benevolent Association
Vanguard Foundation*
Western Association*
William Penn Foundation

* Indicates that the funder provided funds only for the 1998 program.

** Indicates that the funder provided funds only for the 1999 program.

Appendix C Study Methods

This appendix presents details on the outcome measures we used and how we estimated the impact of the program on these outcome measures. It first presents the specific measures in each of the outcome areas—academic, work orientation, career decision-making and employment after SCEP. It then provides psychometric properties of the scales in our surveys. Next, it describes the administration of the baseline and follow-up surveys. Finally, it describes the estimation techniques used to infer the program’s impacts.

Outcome Measures

After determining the outcome areas potentially affected by participation in SCEP, we reviewed the existing measures of those outcomes and used the ones that seemed appropriate for our study population. When existing measures were unavailable or inadequate, we developed our own. Table A.1 lists the measures included on the follow-up questionnaires. We also collected baseline measures of many of these constructs and collected demographic information on the study sample at baseline.

Reliabilities

We have reevaluated the internal consistency reliabilities of each scale for our study sample, both at baseline and follow-up, to help assess whether the scales “worked” as measures of specific outcomes for the SCEP sample.

The reliability of a scale refers to its stability: how consistently the scale measures an underlying construct. Coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) is a statistic used to assess internal consistency reliability, the degree to which each scale item measures a common underlying attribute. Values of alpha range from 0 (the items have nothing in common) to 1 (each item is perfectly correlated with the scale as a whole).

Alpha values were calculated for all of the scales used as outcome measures in this study. They are reported in Table A.2. Internal consistencies ranged from .56 to .80. Only one scale, “undermine (getting a good education),” had a reliability at baseline that was below an acceptable level of .60.

Survey Administration And Random Assignment

Design Strategy

This study consisted of two components: an initial implementation study of 15 agencies implementing SCEP in 1998 and a random assignment impact study conducted in 1999. The impact evaluation utilized an experimental design. The impact of participating in SCEP for the first time was estimated by studying two randomly assigned groups of eligible SCEP applicants. One group of applicants, the randomly selected control group, was not permitted to participate in SCEP in 1999 but was permitted to participate in another summer jobs program or to find employment on their own. Youth randomly assigned to the treatment group were enrolled in the SCEP program in 1999.

This design was chosen because it was the only way to reach definitive conclusions about the impact of participating in SCEP. This random assignment design ensures the two groups being compared are equal, statistically speaking, on all characteristics except program participation. Therefore, any differences at follow-up can be attributed to program participation.

All of the youth who were applying to SCEP for the first time in 1999 had to participate in the random assignment selection as a condition of their participation. Youth who were applying for a second or third year of participation in SCEP were excluded from the random assignment process. Agencies were permitted to reserve up to 5 percent of their SCEP slots for hardship cases, which could be first-year applicants. Additionally, our analysis of the baseline interviews revealed that 10 percent of treatment youth and 11 percent of control youth had some amount of participation in the SCEP program in a previous summer.

From March 1999 through July 15, 1999, 1,708 first-year SCEP applicants—all of whom completed a baseline questionnaire—were randomly assigned to either the treatment or control group. For every three youth who were accepted into SCEP in 1999, one was assigned to the control group and two to the treatment group. Overall, 551 youth were assigned to the control group and 1,157 to the treatment group. Youth and their parents were told that random assignment was a program requirement for the 1999 summer program only, and many agencies told the parents and applicants that youth assigned to the control group would be given preference for the 2000 program.

Baseline Survey Administration

The baseline survey was a paper and pencil questionnaire administered by SCEP staff. During the intake process, SCEP staff explained to the youth and their parents that completing the survey and participating in the random assignment process were conditions of their participation in the program and that failure to sign the consent form or complete the baseline interview would cause the agency to stop processing their application. Because completing the survey was a condition of the application process, 100 percent of the sample completed the baseline questionnaire.

Three-Month and One-Year Follow-Up Interview Administrations

The three-month follow-up interview was administered as a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview. Phone contact was attempted with every sample member for both interviews. Field interviewers were used to administer the interview when the youth could not be reached by phone or they or their parents were reluctant to participate in the interview. Youth who participated in the three-month follow-up interview were paid an incentive of \$10.

From September through December 1999, the three-month follow-up interview was attempted with all youth who completed baseline interviews to capture their summer employment history and experiences with SCEP; 93 percent of the original sample successfully completed the three-month follow-up interview.

From March through July 2000, the one-year follow-up interview was attempted with all youth who completed the baseline interview. Since both control and treatment youth were permitted to participate in SCEP during Summer 2000, the one-year follow-up interview was conducted prior to the start of the 2000 program. Youth who participated in the one-year follow-up were given a \$20 incentive; 89 percent of the original sample completed the one-year follow-up interview.

The Analysis Sample

Seventeen cases were omitted from the analysis because information from the three-month follow-up interview revealed that their control status had been compromised: That is, 17 youth assigned to the control group were actually placed in a SCEP summer job. Additionally, while 78 percent of treatment youth did find employment through the program, another 22 percent were unable or unwilling to take a SCEP job. Many of these treatment youth found employment through their own resources (14%). Eight percent were unable to find employment through SCEP or other means. All treatment group members, regardless of their summer employment situation, were included in the analysis.

Analytic Strategies

Before conducting any analyses, comparability of the treatment and control groups was assessed. Given the nature of the random assignment procedures, it was expected that the two groups would be comparable. T-tests were used to compare means for the treatment and control groups at baseline on outcome, demographic and descriptive variables. As displayed in Table A.3, no systematic differences between the two groups were found, indicating that random assignment produced two statistically identical groups and that the estimated coefficient on treatment group assignment (T) is an unbiased estimate of the program's impact.

Estimation of the Model

Estimation of the impact of participation in SCEP relied heavily on multivariate analysis. In general, the multivariate model used to estimate the impact of SCEP on various outcome measures took the following form:

$$(1) \quad Y_2 = a + b_1Y_1 + b_2X + b_3T + e_i$$

where: Y_2 = the follow-up value of the variable of interest
 Y_1 = the baseline value of the variable to interest
 X = a vector of the explanatory variables
 T = whether the youth received the SCEP treatment
 a, b_i = coefficients
 e_i = a stochastic disturbance term with a mean of zero and a constant variance

The explanatory variables (X) included in the model were demographic variables—gender, race and grade in school, as well as whether the youth had previously held a job—and baseline scores on the career decision-making scale and the work readiness scale.

Although we used multivariate analyses to determine the impact of SCEP on the desired outcomes, in order to make the results more understandable to the non-research-trained reader, we report the difference in the means between the treatment and control youth of the variables of interest at follow-up. Since there were no differences in the two samples on any of the major control variables we measured, the difference in means provides an accurate estimate of the program's impact.

In addition to estimating the overall effect of the program using equation (1), a series of subgroup-treatment interaction variables were used to estimate the effects of SCEP on subgroups, including those with college plans, academic achievement and previous work experience. We also estimated the impact of SCEP on youth of different

racial/ethnic groups and genders. The results of these analyses are not included in this report as there were few effects of SCEP and when there were effects of the program that differed by subgroup, they were inconsistent. (A summary of these subgroup analyses appears at the end of this appendix.)

Equation (1) was modified as follows:

$$(2) \quad Y_2 = a + b_1Y_1 + b_2X + b_3T + c_1TQ + e_i$$

where: Q = a dummy variable that equals 1 for a subgroup of youth (for example males or those who planned to go to college at baseline)

C_i = coefficients

The use of ordinary least squares (OLS) was not warranted when the dependent variable was dichotomous, such as whether a study participant was employed during Summer 1999. In such cases, logistic regression analysis, using maximum likelihood estimation, was used to estimate the treatment impact by specifying a linear function for the logit (the logarithm of the odds) of having a positive response (e.g., getting a job):

$$(3) \quad \text{Log} (p/[1-p]) = a + b_2X + b_3T + e_1$$

where: p = the probability that $Y_2 = 1$
 $1-p$ = the probability that $Y_2 = 0$
 a, b_i, T and e_i are defined as in equation (1) but on a logit scale

As in the OLS models, explanatory variables controlling for preexisting differences among the youth are included in the logit models. And subgroup-treatment interaction variables are included in the models estimating impacts for subgroups.

The key finding of the analysis is whether SCEP had an effect on various outcome measures. In the discussion of the results, we indicate whether an impact is statistically different from zero by labeling non-zero estimates as "significant." In this report, this term is reserved for estimates that were not equal or zero at a 0.10 or greater level of confidence using a 2-tailed t-test. These "significant" impacts are indicated in the tables with asterisks (*).

In summary, a variety of analytic strategies were used to evaluate the impact of participation in SCEP. The fundamental approach used a dummy variable (indicating treatment or control group status) in an OLS regression. Other analyses, such as logit analysis, were used where the assumptions of the OLS model were likely to be violated, such as when the outcome variable was dichotomous.

Summary of Subgroup Analyses

Male and female treatment youth were both significantly more likely to be employed than their control counterparts during Summer 1999. Although the employment rates varied by racial/ethnic group, for all groups, treatment youth were more likely to be employed than control youth. (Among treatment youth, 94% of African Americans, 88% of Hispanics and 82% of Asians were employed compared with control youth: 65% of African Americans, 53% of Hispanics and 40% of Asians.)

Regardless of gender or racial/ethnic group, treatment youth earned more during Summer 1999 than did their control group counterparts. Similarly, employment rates and earnings were higher among treatment youth than among control youth, regardless of whether they were exiting tenth- or eleventh-graders or new high-school graduates.

Other outcomes examined for gender, racial/ethnic and grade-level subgroups mirrored those reported in the main text of this report. In general, none of the subgroup analyses suggests that SCEP was either more or less effective for any group of participants based on gender, race/ethnicity or grade completed.

Table A.1
Outcome Measures

| Three-Month Follow-up | |
|--|--|
| <p>Summer Employment Experience</p> <p>Employed during the summer</p> <p>How found summer job</p> <p>Number of summer jobs</p> <p>Wages at start of summer job</p> <p>Wages at end of summer job</p> <p>Hours at summer job</p> <p>Weeks worked at summer job</p> <p>Currently working at time of survey</p> <p>Reason left summer job</p> <p>Type of work</p> <p>Business of employer</p> <p>Reason for not working</p> <p>Length of commute to primary employer</p> <p>Satisfaction with most recent job (single item)</p> <p>Satisfaction with performance at most recent job</p> <p>Intrinsic job features</p> <p>Type of job training (scale developed for this survey)</p> <p>Supervisor support (subscale from Insel and Moos, 1974)</p> | <p>SCEP Experience</p> <p>Frequency of meetings with college monitor</p> <p>Location of interactions with college monitor</p> <p>Content of interactions with college monitor</p> <p>Visit College Access Center</p> <p>Visit college campus</p> <p>Future Planning</p> <p>With whom discuss career plans</p> <p>Discusses college planning with adult (single item)</p> <p>Feel that they have adequate information about college</p> <p>Current career interests</p> <p>Satisfaction with school achievement</p> <p>Satisfaction with future job opportunities (single item)</p> <p>Satisfaction with prospects of getting a good job and moving up (single item)</p> <p>Self-evaluation</p> <p>Satisfaction with job performance, job prospects, school achievement and job opportunities</p> |

One-Year Follow-up

Academic Outlook

Commitment to academics

- Enrolled in school during past school year
- Grades in school
- Motivation to do well in classes (NELS 1988)
- Promote (education)
- Undermine (education)
- Course selection (single items, NELS 1988, modified)
- High-school graduation (single item)
- Negative school behaviors (single items, NELS 1988)
- Positive school behaviors (single items, NELS 1988)
- Satisfaction with school achievements

Plans to attend college

- Plans to attend college after high school (single item)
- Plans after high school
- Enrolled in college (single item)
- Applied to college (single item)
- Plans to take or has taken college entrance and AP exams (single items)
- High-school curriculum—technical, general high school, college prep (single item)
- Visited College Access Center in past school year (single item)
- Talked with adults about college in past year (single item)
- Talked with adults about financial aid in past year (single item)
- Visited a college campus during past school year (single item)
- Feel that they have as much information as they need about college (single item)

School to work connection

- Positive school connection

Orientation Toward Work

- Motivation to do good work (scale adapted from Youth and Society, 12/90)
- Work readiness (scale adapted from Attitude Inventory)
- Self-efficacy to get a job done

Career Choice

- Career decision scale (scale adapted from Career Development Scale)
- Career planning support from adults (single items)
- Confidence in ability to do job requiring specific skills well (single items)
- Satisfaction with future job opportunities (single item)
- Satisfaction with prospects of getting a good job and moving up (single item)
- Career interests (single item—multiple responses)

Post-SCEP Employment

- Employed during the past school year
- Wages at school-year job
- Hours at school-year job
- Weeks worked
- Currently working at time of survey
- Type of work
- Business of employer
- Reason for not working
- Satisfaction with job search (single item)
- Satisfaction with most recent job (single item)

Table A.2
Reliability of Scales

| Measure | Alpha Coefficient |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Promote (education) | .61 |
| Undermine (education) | .56 |
| Motivation to do good work | .68 |
| Work readiness | .73 |
| Self-efficacy | .69 |
| Career decision-making | .80 |

Table A.3
Comparison of Treatment and Control Youth on Selected Variables

| Variable | Treatment | Control |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 38% | 37% |
| Race | | |
| African American | 72% | 71% |
| Hispanic | 17% | 19% |
| Asian | 5% | 5% |
| White and Other | 6% | 5% |
| Mean grade completed | 10.6 | 10.5 |
| Average grades (0 = mostly Ds and Fs; 7 = mostly As) | 4.2 | 4.3 |
| Currently working | 15% | 15% |
| Promote (getting an education) | 3.76 | 3.77 |
| Undermine (getting an education) | 1.34 | 1.37 |
| Career decision-making | 1.94 | 1.93 |
| Motivation to do good work | 3.51 | 3.49 |
| Work readiness | 3.36 | 3.35 |
| Self-efficacy | 3.51 | 3.50 |

Note: No differences are statistically significant.



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