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Teaching and Service Partnerships at the Center for Community Democracy and Democratic Literacy

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Teaching and Service Partnerships at the Center for Community Democracy and Democratic Literacy

Judith Kurland, Center Director

Summary

The initial work of this McCormack Graduate School center

- **focuses on the seven major placed-based initiatives within Boston**
- **creates a Community of Practice** to extend and expand best practices throughout the city
- **provides expert strategic, design, policy and program advice in the creation of the Boston Promise Initiative led by the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI)**, one of the initial twenty-one projects in the nation awarded by the Obama administration

Anticipated Results

The Community of Practice will:

- Develop a common set of indicators to measure progress on the goals shared by the seven initiatives, and additional indicators for those goals unique to a specific initiative
- Identify the data that is critical to measure progress against those benchmarks
- Increase the capacity of the individual initiatives to understand and use data
- Document the effectiveness of place-based strategies to impact public policy and the allocation of public and private resources
- Use the data to improve related neighborhood and citywide service delivery systems

Next Steps

The Boston Community of Practice will pursue four areas of cooperative work:

- the acquisition and use of data for measuring results within and among all participants
- the development of a consistent youth development strategy
- the design and use of a theory of change around place-based initiatives
- the identification and use of successful community economic development tools

Working with the Ford Foundation and film makers, the center will help **promote the documentary *Gaining Ground*** which looks at DSNI's 27-year history of community leadership. The film will be used **as a teaching tool** about the:

- DSNI systems change
- importance of minority voices in the political and public affairs arenas
- transformative powers of partnerships for community, economic, urban, workforce and youth development
- Use of media for community-building and community development.

Partners in the Community of Practice

- Boston Promise Initiative (Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative)
- Boston Rising (Eos Foundation)
- Bromley Health-Jamaica Plain Learning Center Project
- Circle of Promise (City of Boston)
- DotWell
- Higher Ground
- Resilient Families/Resilient Communities (Local Initiatives Support Corporation)

Support for these efforts has come from local philanthropies.



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