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# **Responses of Youth to the New Young Americans Project Survey**

**2003**

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# Acknowledgments

This project exists thanks to the work of the attorneys at, and the support of, the Juvenile Justice Center of Suffolk University Law School.

Conducting the New Young Americans survey and analyzing its findings were the result of teamwork beginning in January 2002. Laura John single handedly organized the survey part of the project from its inception and did an outstanding job in locating youth serving organizations and reaching out to them to participate. She also developed with Marjorie Berk Moss, the ice-breaker exercises, and then led a team, including, Cecy Gutierrez and Samantha Kahmvongsa, in surveying over 425 youth between May and August 2002. The enthusiasm and charm of this team led many youth to feel comfortable enough to speak openly and candidly.

The Center also thanks Alice Adams, who inputted the survey data, analyzed it on the SPSS program, and provided us with summaries and analysis presented in this report. We thank Charles Dooley for providing a thoughtful review and edit of the final results of the study.

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## Foreword

This survey on the lives of immigrant youth in the Boston area is a vivid reminder to all of us in this new country of the ongoing vitality of our history and heritage as a nation of immigrants. As the survey makes clear, these new young Americans are an updated version of our ancestors. They are dedicated to their families and to supporting their relatives in the nations where they were from. They do well in school. They serve as family translators, and they care for their younger siblings and grandparents. They believe that a college degree and steady, satisfying work are the most important paths to a better and brighter future. They overwhelmingly think the United States is the best country to live in.

Sadly, the more things change, the more they remain the same. I remember my grandfather in the 1930's pointing to the "Help Wanted" signs in store windows in Boston that said "No Irish Need Apply."

Many of these new young Americans feel that their immigrant status robs them of respect. They face cultural conflicts in school, and adults view them with suspicion. They long for the whole of the American dream, not just material wealth. As adults today, we have a special responsibility to make sure that the rest of the dream can become a reality too, and is not a casualty of the war on terrorism.

America's extraordinary history is built on the success of past immigrants who made so much out of so little, and whose courage and dedication continue to inspire us. Immigrants keep coming to America hoping that the beacon of freedom and opportunity can illuminate their own lives and fulfill their hopes for a better future. If that beacon is extinguished, America will no longer be America.

These immigrant youth are a vital part of our country's future. We are stronger for the pride we take in the diversity of our culture, and wiser for inviting new young Americans to share in the American dream.

Edward M. Kennedy  
January 2004

# Introduction

Since 1999, in the course of representing over 2,000 youth in the Boston Juvenile Court and courts in the Boston area, the Juvenile Justice Center noted an upswing in the number of represented youth who needed translation services or who had *Miranda* issues deriving from translation issues their parents faced. The American Bar Association has, over the last three years, urged attorneys to represent increasing numbers of unaccompanied youth arriving in the U.S. from countries and families torn by strife and crushed by poverty. These factors combined with increases in civil rights injunctions brought by the Attorney General's office against youth for harassing immigrant youth in Boston after September 11, 2001, and the *Boston Globe* coverage of the impacts of federal policies on immigrants living in Massachusetts, led to the creation of the New Young Americans Project (NYAP).

NYAP set out with a simple premise: we don't know enough about the lives and perceptions of immigrant and first generation immigrant youth we represent. We may know something about their parents and how they are treated, but we know very little about the experience of the children and youth of these families.

This survey represents a first, modest step towards better understanding the lives of these youth. Surveyed youth unanimously told us no one had ever asked them these questions before. Understanding how they live, how they navigate their communities, their schools, and the juvenile justice system is increasingly important as the number of immigrant youth in Massachusetts climbs.

It is also important to understand that immigrant youths' issues may derive from their parents' status, but be quite different in nature. Consider these facts:

- Massachusetts is the 7th most popular state for immigrants to settle in and the federal government treats it as a "receiving" state for newcomers;
- A little more than 12% of the Massachusetts population is foreign, about a percentage higher than the national average. By 2015, children of immigrants will constitute 33% of the entire nation's school population;
- Immigrant children and children of immigrants are among the poorest children - in terms of standard of living, health insurance, and health indicators in the Commonwealth and the U.S., in spite of the fact that both parents are likely to work full time.

Consider also the response of Massachusetts to these burgeoning numbers of youth:

- Except for the Massachusetts Department of Education, there is no or little data collected on these youth statewide;
- Existing data collection systems rarely distinguish between white youth and Latino youth;
- When facing severe financial constraints, the state has reduced support to immigrant groups and increasingly relied on federal funds to provide services.

This survey set out to interest youth in helping us fill in a clearer picture of their lives in the domains of family life, participation in the work force, interactions with the police and perceptions of safety in school and in their community, their view of the future and their sense of how they are perceived. A major section of the survey focused on education issues. A description of how the survey was conducted follows in the methodology section.

## Highlights of Survey Results

If one were to paint a portrait in broad brush strokes, the youth surveyed would look something like this:

*The youth are connected to their family, which has suffered major traumas and is generally responsible for supporting relatives back home, and the youth are responsible for helping keep the household going and paying for his/her own needs. Youth believe school is going to be the major pathway to success, not necessarily to a career, but to a job. Youth do not always feel comfortable in confiding in adults in school and sees intercultural strife in schools as insufficiently attended to by school-based adults. MCAS is viewed as an obstacle to success and youth feel it is specifically aimed at them. Boys overwhelmingly feel distrusted and disliked by adults and the police and are often likely to claim discrimination. Girls feel they cause less suspicion and are more comfortable. For these youth, "respect" is central and earning it is often cited as a major achievement. Interactions with police and the juvenile justice system manifest mixed feelings of belief in the protection afforded by both, however, the more involvement the less likely are youth to feel the system is fair. The most beloved institution youth speak about is afterschool programs which are depicted as "safe havens" where youth can feel comfortable expressing their cultural or national identity and where adults can help them interpret American culture and institutions.*

### Family Life

The results of the survey show that there are significant survival pressures on youths' families. One source of pressure is the need to support relatives in their country of origin. Youth are aware of that pressure and support the endeavor by caring for their families (e.g. handling household chores) but do not appear to be pressed into working to help provide remittance support for their families elsewhere. (See also Section I.6 on surveyed youths' responses on employment). All in all, the picture of immigrant family life from surveyed youth - who on average were 15 years old at the time of the survey - depicts interdependent extended family units in which youth consciously perceive themselves as cooperating for the good of the family.

- 85.8% of the surveyed youth live with their mothers, 60% with their fathers, and siblings,
- 59.7% of the surveyed youths' families support relatives in another country, primarily by sending money, but this relationship varied widely as a function of which nationality was involved;
- Approximately 20% of the youths surveyed reported that their family had suffered a major form of trauma - serious illness, death, robberies of adults and children, involvement of DSS officials - since their family had arrived in the U.S.

### Social Values & Expectations for the Future

The consistency with and central significance youth placed on the importance of being respected through friendships and work was notable, especially in view of how far that value placed ahead of making money. The finding that the majority of youth surveyed could not define the term "American dream," suggests an interesting cultural change.

- The strongest correlations between surveyed youths' views were between the need to be respected and the need to find work.
- Of the youth responding to the question about what their life would be like if they had remained in their country of origin, the majority responded that there would be less educational, employment and other opportunities and their lives would be "hard" and "bad".
- Of the 81% of the youth who responded with some idea about what they would be doing 10 years from now, the majority predicted they would have a family and job, be enrolled in higher education, or "successful."



- 30.4% of the youth believe that their future is different from that of American born youth.\*
- In response to the open-ended question, "what worries you about being a new young American,"
  - 10.7% of the youth who responded to the question said "racism and discrimination,"
  - 9.7% cited simply, "the future,"
  - 7.8% cited language and social barriers, and
  - 4.7% said violence;
- When asked to list what confuses them the most about the United States, youth ranked the following issues in this order:
  - racism and inequalities,
  - confusion with the police and laws,
  - foreign policy concerns with government and politics.

### **Youths' Perceptions of Their Status**

The responses to these questions indicate that some youth feel discriminated against, with teachers being the primary group of discriminators and store clerks coming in a close second. There was a strong belief among surveyed youth that Americans "think they are better than people from other countries" and this appeared to pervade youths' sense of discrimination and their own ability to address it, and their confidence that Americans will address it.

- About 62% of the youth stated they agreed a little or strongly to the statement, "There is no better country to live in than the U.S."
- However, 69% of the youth felt that "Americans think they are better than people from other countries."
- 75% of youth said they had been treated differently after September 11, 2001 but few would elaborate on how and there appeared to be no statistically significant relationship between youths' country of origin and the perception that they were treated differently since September 11, 2001.
- About 66% of youth surveyed said there was a "lot of cultural conflict" in the U.S.
- 41.9% of the youth believed that they have been discriminated against; of those who responded to a question asking their explanation for discrimination, the majority cited ethnicity and race.
- Youth were evenly split between whether the discrimination would have any effect on their chances of succeeding.

### **The Role of Community Centers**

The survey results suggest that community centers play a central role in many new young Americans' lives. Data that favor this conclusion is the finding of this survey that those youth who seem to be least engaged in school, are more likely to report being most engaged in community centers. Regardless of school engagement, however, all youth report that without an after school program they would be involved in less constructive activities and would miss the support and haven they have found in these centers. As the following section shows, community centers also represent a major source of employment for youth in a city where youth unemployment is high.

- Over 60% of the youth surveyed report being involved in a community center providing after school educational and recreational services.

*\*The terms American and American-born youth were not defined in the survey nor were youth asked to define them. It is generally assumed that these terms exclude first generation and recently arrived immigrants.*

- 33.7% of the youth surveyed report that they go to their community center everyday; 21.5% go once a week.
- Youths report enjoying what community centers offer including time to be with their friends, receiving support, and being with "people like me," as well as being near adults who can spend time with them, and homework help.
- Without a center, surveyed youth thought they would be doing "nothing productive" including hanging out on the streets and getting into trouble.

## Findings on Youth Employment

Approximately 40% of surveyed youth work and of those who do, the hourly rate they are paid is significantly above minimum wage. The number of hours youth work does not appear exploitative - 12 hours a week - and the fact that a major source of employment appears to be in the very community centers at which the youth were interviewed suggests that the work situations are predominantly nurturing. The extent to which community centers were a major source of protected and supportive work environments constitutes another reason why the centers represent such important institutions in these youths' lives. The youths' reported use of their wages suggests that most of them are not working to help their families make ends meet so much as relieve their families of the need to pay for their personal and recreational needs.

- Of those youth who must choose between work demands and school, the vast majority chose school.
- 49.9% of the surveyed youth use the money they earn for personal expenses; approximately 12% pay for family expenses and another 12% are saving for college.
- Of the 37.3% of the youth who are employed, the majority receive A's and B's; employment did not seem to be a predictor of school failure but rather the opposite.

## Translation Issues

Often, children of immigrants and immigrant youth are able to capitalize on children's ability to learn new languages and acculturate to the language of their new homeland most swiftly. They often learn to speak for themselves, and then youth, especially girls, take responsibility for handling the needs of their nuclear and extended families by speaking for them. The survey also indicates that the majority of children speak a language other than English at home and with their peers. One finding of particular import in the current education debate is youths' reported awareness of being mocked for not speaking English well.

- 87.5% of the youth responded that people in their homes speak a language other than English.
- 73.3% of the youth responded that they speak this language "all the time" or "usually" at home.
- Youth who replied that kids "generally get made fun of for how they speak English" are also more likely to get made fun of themselves; whereas respondents who replied no, "kids generally do not get made fun of" were much less likely to get made fun of themselves, suggesting the strength of discomfort this mocking inspires.
- Data on which youth, by country of origin, indicates that Salvadoran, Cape Verdean, and Asian children (from Vietnam and Cambodia) translate the most for their families.

## Views of Education & Family Support of Education

These results indicate that youth are very attached to school and to the notion of education as the critical path to a successful future. The level of pressure youth feel from their parents to succeed in school is uniformly high; it is much higher than parents' ability to support youth by going to parent/teacher conferences



and helping out with homework. In some of the responses, it appears that there is some conflict between peers' valuation of the importance of education and parents' valuation of it. In addition, there appeared to be a difference between how highly youth value education and how much they think their peers do.

Youth uniformly report that teachers are helpful when they need it, but they also report that they rarely go to principals and teachers as their primary source of assistance and support.

The cultural diversity of schools is not easily navigated by youth. They report that it is hard to hang out with groups other than ones that match their own identity, and that it is hard to make friends from different cultural backgrounds.

- 94.4% of the youth surveyed are in school; of the 5.6% of youth surveyed who are not in school, 90% are boys.
- 88.6% of the youth surveyed "agrees a lot" that it is important for them to get an education; 83.7% of the youth surveyed perceived that schools are better in the U.S. than in their country of origin;
- The level of parental pressure to do well in school was much higher than the level of parental support with homework;
- 65.6% of the youth said it is "very true" that "my parents pressure me to do well in school;"
- only 19.3% of the same group said their parents help them with homework;
- 66.3% of surveyed youth do not believe that the MCAS test is fair.
- Of the 37% who explained why they thought the MCAS is not fair, 17.8% said they felt "one test should not determine their future," and 8.9% thought the test was too hard for ESL students.
- 85.6% of the youth said they cannot make friends with students from different cultural backgrounds.
- 90% of the youth reported that teachers are helpful when they need it and 56.9% reported that principals are helpful.
- About 34% of youth in the survey said youth are made fun of for doing well, but only 18% said they had personally been made fun of.
- School personnel are not perceived to be helpful to youth for handling cultural conflict among peers.

## Perceptions of School Safety

The majority of new young Americans report that they feel safe in school and do not feel they are special targets for abuse, threats, or attacks. That said, a solid 20% have been threatened or attacked in school; of that number, a small percentage have been fearful of returning to school. It would appear that bullies, the bane of all youth, do not specifically focus or target immigrant youth. However, youth report that cultural differences are a major source of conflict among youth and adults are not of assistance in resolving the conflicts. New young Americans report they are most comfortable reporting school safety issues to peers rather than parents or teachers.

- Of the 19.5% of the surveyed youth who had been threatened with a gun, knife, or other weapon, 28.8% were female and 71.2% were male.
- 50.5% of the youth would tell a friend if they got hurt in school by another student, 34% would tell a parent, and 33% would tell a teacher.
- Youth surveyed are about evenly divided about the extent to which cultural differences are the cause of peer fighting.



## Immigrant Youth And The Juvenile Justice System

The results of the survey regarding youths' sense of safety in their neighborhoods, their sense that they are viewed as "good" or "bad" kids, and their comprehension of their rights in the juvenile justice system mirror the experience and perceptions of most youth in the Commonwealth but include some striking differences. First, the low prevalence of surveyed youths' involvement in court systems is contrasted by the relatively high prevalence of surveyed youths' friends and families' involvement in courts. A correlated finding of interest is the direct and negative impact that involvement has on perceptions of the "system's" fairness and the notion of discrimination. Second, there appears to be a high correlation between being male, perceiving that you are disliked by adults, and being stopped by police, all leading to the perception of being singled out or discriminated against. Third, the level of "gang" involvement, defined by youth as either a group of friends or a group that "expresses violence," was fractional.

- 31.4% of males have been approached by the police when they were standing alone.
- 83.5% of youth say they are not part of a "gang."
- Male new young Americans are much more likely to believe that police officers view them as trouble-makers than females are. Females are also more likely to believe that police officers view them as "good" kids.
- Youth who believed that adults view them as trouble-makers were also likely to believe that police had a similar impression. Those youth who believed that adults view them as good kids were also likely to believe that police perceived them similarly.
- 9.9% of the youth have been arrested; the top five countries of origin for those who have been arrested are Vietnam, Haiti, Cape Verde, China, and Cambodia.
- 86.7% of those who have been arrested are male and 13.3% of those who have been arrested are female.
- 63.7% of the youth who responded thought they had a right to an attorney and 87% thought judges could help them in juvenile court.
- 32.2% of the youth believed that when someone is arrested they immediately go to jail.
- 42.7% of the youth replied that when a child is arrested they have no rights or the same rights as adults.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Policy Implications

The implications of these findings suggest the importance of immigrant youths' attachment and sense of obligation to an extended family, including family living in their country of origin. The centrality of school may not be unique to New Young Americans, but the implicit sense of responsibility youth reflected in valuing education, was impressive. The feelings of discrimination, cultural strife, and alienation were most troubling and suggest that existing programming and initiatives by schools, after school programs, the police, and other youth-serving institutions, have more work to do.

The overall picture of these youth, therefore, could be called a reflection of the American Dream of what a youth should be: respectful of school, dedicated and responsible to their family, focused on being economically independent, keeping an eye to meeting future obligations, and trying to stay out of trouble the best they can. The road these youth report choosing to achieve respect appears exactly along the lines of what we would direct all American youth to follow.

That said, some of the survey results suggest implications for institutional and policy consideration which

should include a better understanding of these youth and a greater effort to embrace them as our own.

Some specific suggestions are:

- sustaining and expanding community centers, especially those with a cultural approach, even in times of state fiscal austerity;
- outreach to male youth by male police officers, male employees of schools, and male youth service programs, appears necessary to take away the edge of distrust that fosters reflections of alienation that permeate boys' responses to this survey;
- increased school-based efforts to understand the sources of intercultural conflict among peers and better, more explicit efforts to address it;
- increased teaching of immigrant youths' legal rights in arrest situations, which could be implemented through expansion of the "Know The Law" workshops currently provided by the Youth Advocacy Project of the Committee for Public Counsel Services;\*
- more opportunities for immigrant to share their experiences and their bicultural view with their peers as a source of gaining respect.

In conclusion, let us imagine for a moment that new young Americans understand the American dream as something they must embrace through hard work, perseverance, and good values. As we face history now as responsible adults, we must ask what kind of embrace does the U.S. extend to those youth in return? Are our arms outstretched or akimbo? Is our gaze direct or suspicious? Is the American dream only for some Americans?

These tough questions must be asked today because the policies we make impact these youths' futures as surely as they impact ours. As Mary Pipher wrote in her book *The Middle of Everywhere*, "Many of us are better than our institutions." The challenge before policymakers is to ensure that youth-serving institutions embrace new young Americans who bring a wealth of many of the values of American extol. We are, after all, a nation of immigrants.

\*YAP offers "Know the Law" (KTL) workshops on criminal and juvenile law to youth, youth workers, and parents. These workshops are designed to enhance individual decision making by providing basic information about criminal law, civil rights, and the workings of the criminal justice system. The EdLaw Project, a partnership between YAP and the Children's Law Center of Massachusetts, provides KTL workshops on education and special education rights. The goal of these workshops is to empower youth and their families to successfully advocate within the school system for the appropriate quality education to which every child is entitled by law.

# Methodology

## Methodology of Survey Development and Administration

The Juvenile Justice Center developed the survey included in Appendix A to assess quality of life and youths' perceptions of the juvenile justice and education systems which they navigate. To facilitate responses, the survey used a mixture of question formats:

- Fill in the answer
- Choose from a series of categories (most agree to least agree)
- Ranking

The survey was field tested with youth and was revised to decrease its length.

To administer the survey the Center compiled a list of 125 youth-serving organizations. These organizations were chosen as a function of their geographical location in areas known to be densely populated by immigrant groups, their focus on serving youth of a particular cultural or national identity, and their renown for working with immigrant groups. This effort was greatly aided by a listing provided to us by the Multi Cultural Affairs Department of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health which listed by cultural categories many of the programs serving youth in the state.

The Center systematically called each of the organizations in the Boston area, and focused on several Boston middle and high schools, as well as programs extending north to Lowell and south to New Bedford. Center staff requested to meet with program directors. At this meeting, the Center explained the goals of the project, showed the questionnaire and where possible arranged to return to interview youth at a later date.

This effort was unsuccessful with many organizations because the directors did not want their youth interviewed and/or were unable to attract sufficient youth to be interviewed.

For the 27 organizations, schools, and churches that permitted their youth to participate in the survey, the Center arranged to administer the survey after school and on weekends. Center staff brought pizza and soda to each survey site. While youth ate, Center staff explained the goals of the project and emphasized that by completing the survey, youth would have their voices heard.

Center staff then played an icebreaker game involving M&Ms and sheets of colored paper each of which had a question printed on it. In this game, if a youth holding a green M&M had volunteered to hold a green piece of paper, that youth would have to respond to the question on the paper. Those questions and topics were:

- *green*: tell us something about your culture of which you are proud
- *red*: tell us something about your school you wish you could change
- *yellow*: tell us something about your life your parents don't understand
- *blue*: tell us something in your life you wish you could change
- *orange*: tell us something you like about living in America
- *brown*: tell us something you wish were different about America

While one youth would answer the question, many others would join in and typically a good conversation was going by the time Center staff would ask youth to turn their attention to the survey where similar questions were asked in much greater detail.

The survey was read aloud by Center staff. While Center staff read aloud, the other staffers walked around and helped kids interpret the questions by re-reading them and explaining the system for answering the questions.

When youth had completed the survey, Center staff ended the session by playing a game of telephone. In this game, the Center staffer would ask 10 youth to take specific roles, including youth, teacher, principal, mayor,



and state senator. The Center staffer would give the first youth a message. The entire group would watch the message be whispered up the chain of power. This message was complicated:

“Three things I wish were different are: 1) I wish the police didn’t stop me when I am just walking down the street. 2) I wish that kids wouldn’t make fun of my accent. 3) I wish that my teachers didn’t give me lower grades because I don’t understand English so well.”

When the message reached the end of the line, the “Mayor” and “Senator” were asked to state what they had heard. There was a major difference between what the first youth said and what the “Mayor” and “Senator” ultimately heard. This was used to illustrate to youth the importance of speaking directly to policy-makers, as well as the value of participating in the Center’s survey to get youths’ message across to adults generally and policymakers specifically. Appendix B contains instructions for administering the survey.

## **Statistical Analysis & Methodology**

The results of the survey were reviewed extensively. As a basis of this review, it was decided that of the 425 surveys received, only 303 were sufficiently completed to be useful for purposes of statistical analysis. The results of these 303 surveys were entered into an SPSS database. Summaries of responses were prepared as well as preliminary correlations, cross-tabulations and regression analyses. The raw data - e.g. summaries - is offered here to permit readers other analyses.

This preliminary statistical analysis of the results of the NYAP survey requires note on some of the limitations of the analysis.

One limitation is that the sample of new young Americans was not randomized. In view of the specific nature of the sample, namely new young Americans in the Boston area, a convenience sample was necessary in order to survey this particular group of youth. Budget constraints made a convenience sample necessary.

The sample size of 303 participants was smaller than intended due to the fact that many of the surveyed respondents did not speak English and were unable to fully complete the questionnaire. Although removal of cases is often debatable, it was decided that it was best to remove some from the sample, in large part because the sample is a convenience sample and there were no sampling and precision concerns that one would encounter with case removal in a randomized sample.

Similarly, because of the sample size some questions were problematic due to small sample respondent rates, especially analysis involving countries of origin due to the fact that some countries were more represented than others.

The results of the survey should be viewed with caution because many of the surveyed youth are new to the U.S. and are still learning English. Many may also be new to data collection which, although a growing trend worldwide, is very much a uniquely American approach to information gathering. Therefore, it must be considered that some questions were misunderstood or interpreted differently than intended. For example, the term “gang” was found to have a variety of meanings among new young Americans ranging from a violent group to a group of friends who hang out together. This term has been placed in parenthesis in the report in order to emphasize that there are a variety of meanings behind it.

There is a tendency among youth to agree, regardless of what they may be agreeing to, in order to please the researcher. Although this occurrence did not appear to be prominent in the New Young Americans Project, the questions regarding the American dream may have reflected this phenomenon of responding or agreeing as the respondent perceives what the interviewer would like to hear.

# I. An Overview of the Circumstances of New Young Americans' Lives

## Basic Demographic Findings of Surveyed Youth

The average age of the 303 youth surveyed was a little over 15 years old. Slightly more than half of the youth responding to the survey are male. The majority of the youth who responded to the survey came from Haiti, Cape Verde, Somalia, Vietnam and China. The regional differences were as follows:

Central and South America:	33.8-34.8%
Africa:	28.6-29.6%
Asia:	26.1-27.1%
Eastern Europe:	4.1-5.1%
South Asia:	0.5-1.5%

These responses generally reflect recent trends in Massachusetts immigration numbers which show the highest numbers of immigrants arriving from Central America (El Salvador and Honduras) and West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Cameroon).

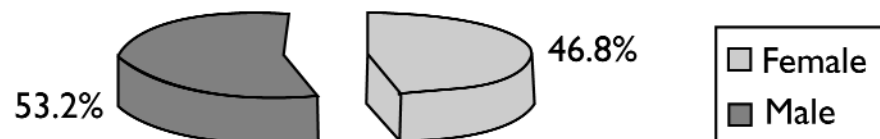
Approximately half had been born outside the U.S. and half were born inside the U.S. and were "first generation Americans." The variation in percentage of youth born inside or outside the country differed dramatically by nation and it was hard to establish any regional pattern. Some of these variations may reflect where the survey was conducted. However, the incidence of immigrant youth from Sierra Leone and Nigeria surveyed here who were born in their country of origin probably reflects recent emigration due to political upheaval in those countries.

**The mean age for the sample of youth surveyed was 15.36 years old.**

- The age range was 10 to 20 years old.

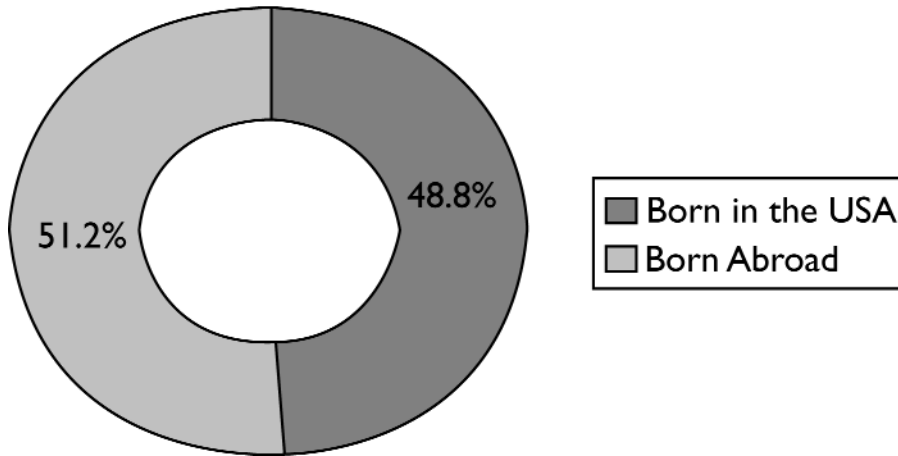
**The gender composition of the sample was 53.2% male and 46.8% female.**

## Gender Distribution of the Sample



*In the sample 48.8% were born in the USA and 51.2% were born in a foreign country.*

## **Birth Place of New Young Americans**



### Place of Birth by Nationality of Youth Surveyed:

Country	Born in Country of Origin	Born in USA
Cambodia	14 <sup>1</sup> %	87%
Cape Verde	74	27
China	4 <sup>2</sup>	70
Colombia	50	50
Dominican Republic	60	40
El Salvador	12	87
France	25	75
Guatemala	50	50
Haiti	30	68
Hong Kong	66 <sup>3</sup>	
India	50	50
Puerto Rico	28	71
Russia	70	30
Somalia	82	15
Sudan	80	20
Vietnam	53	47

### The Surveyed Youth Who Were Born Outside of the U.S. Came From These Countries:

Angola  
Belarus  
Congo  
Costa Rica  
Ghana  
Honduras  
Malaysia  
Sierra Leone  
Taiwan  
Tibet  
Trinidad  
Uzbekistan



**The principle countries of origin in the sample are Haiti, Cape Verde, Somalia, Vietnam, and China.**

**Top 15 Surveyed Youths'**

<b>Countries of Origin</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Haiti	14.5%
2. Cape Verde	12.9
3. Somalia	10.9
4. Vietnam	10.6
5. China	7.6
6. Puerto Rico	7.5
7. Dominican Republic	5.0
8. Cambodia	4.6
9. Russia	3.3
10. El Salvador	2.6

**Central and South America**

Dominican Republic	5.0%
Caribbean	1.3
Honduras	0.3
Guatemala	0.7
Haiti	14.5
Trinidad	1.0
Multi-nation Latin	0.7
Costa Rica	0.3
Puerto Rico	7.2
El Salvador	2.6
Colombia	0.7
<b>Total:</b>	<b>34.3</b>

**Africa**

Cape Verde	12.9%
Angola	1.0
Sudan	1.7
Congo	0.3
Sierra Leone	0.7
Somalia	10.9
Ghana	0.3
Nigeria	1.3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>29.1</b>

**Asia**

Taiwan	0.3%
Philippines	1.0
Multi-nation Asian	1.3
Hong-Kong	0.9



Malaysia	0.3
Vietnam	10.6
Cambodia	4.6
China	7.6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>26.6</b>

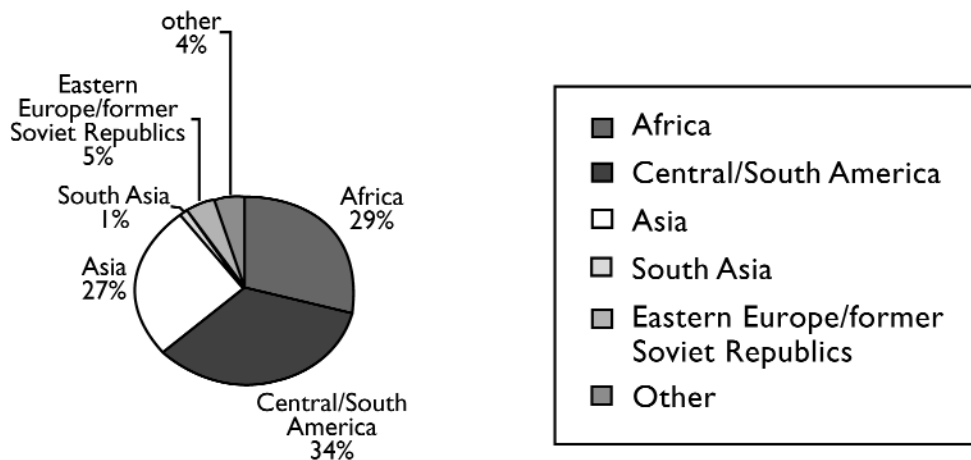
**Eastern Europe/ former Soviet Republics**

Russia	3.3%
Uzbekistan	0.3
Belarus	0.7
Ukraine	0.3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4.6</b>

**South Asia**

India	0.7%
Tibet	0.3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1.0</b>

**Regional Distribution of Country That Child or Parents Were Born In**



The regional distribution of children’s country of origin from the NYAP survey generally reflects U.S. Census data with three exceptions: 1) immigrants of European origin were more represented in census data than in the NYAP survey, 2) West Africans were less represented in the census than they are in the NYAP survey, and 3) immigrants from central and Latin America were under-represented in the NYAP survey.

<b>Region Of Origin</b>	<b>U.S. Census Findings<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>MIRA Findings<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>NYAP Findings</b>
Asia	26.4%	26.1%	27.0%
Latin America	51.7	30.0	34.0
Africa	2.8	6.2	29.0
Europe	15.8	32.2	5.0
North America	2.7	5.3	0.0
Oceania	0.5%	0.3	0.0
South Asia	0.0%	0.0	4.0
Other	0.0%	0.0	1.0

However, the NYAP survey results correspond closely with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition’s (MIRA) conclusions based on studies conducted in Massachusetts, most notably in the realm of central and Latin American representation. While the NYAP sample had a proportionally large number of youth from Africa, this may reflect recent emigration patterns that were not reflected in the U.S. Census or the studies on which MIRA relied.

## **Family Life for Surveyed Youth**

Literature, autobiographies and certainly sociological data paint a portrait of immigrant youth families that is rife with conflict and contradictions, with youth trying to leave behind families struggling with OWS (old world syndrome) to youth finding a great source of pride and identity in their family’s struggles – and most youth trying to achieve some kind of balance between, and comfort in, both worlds.

This survey attempted to understand the material circumstances of youths’ lives and how they affected their choices and chances. The survey also attempted to plumb the depth of family commitments to better understand what kinds of supports and strengths immigrant families offer youth that make so many New Young American youth so successful in traditional terms. Part of the survey attempted to gauge the level of economic pressures on immigrant families and how that spilled over to immigrant children and affected their use of time and array of choices.

The results of the survey show that there is a significant level of pressure on families to survive as well as to support relatives. Youth are aware of those pressures and support their families by caring for their families (e.g. handling household chores) but do not appear to be pressed into working to help provide remittance support for their families elsewhere. (See also Section 1.6 on surveyed youths’ responses on employment). Youth also reported a reliance on their families for help in sorting out problems. All in all, the picture of immigrant family life from surveyed youth – who on average were 15 years old at the time of the survey – depicts interdependent extended family units composed of family members who collaborate for the good of the family.



## Who Do New Young Americans Live With?

- 85.8% of the surveyed youth live with their mothers, 60% with their fathers.<sup>6</sup>
- 76.9% of the surveyed youth live with their siblings.
- The main responsibilities at home for surveyed youth include cleaning, doing the dishes, laundry, cooking and grocery shopping.
- 37.3% of the youth provide care for other family members, primarily by babysitting.

## Pressures on Families

- 59.7% of the surveyed youths' families support relatives in another country, primarily by sending money but this relationship varied widely; a function of which nationality was involved.
- Approximately 20% of the youths surveyed reported that their family had suffered a major form of trauma – serious illness, death, robberies of adults and children, involvement of DSS officials – that had occurred since their family had arrived in the U.S.
- Surveyed youth relied heavily on parents, siblings and relatives to discuss problems, which may indicate the primary role family plays in the lives of new Young Americans.

The chart below describes the predominant countries of origin for youths whose families are most likely to maintain economic and familial ties with relatives still residing there.

Country of Origin	Yes	No	No Response
Cape Verde	84.6%	10.3%	5.1%
Haiti	79.5	15.9	4.5
El Salvador	75.0	25.0	0.0
Russia	70.0	30.0	0.0
Dominican Republic	66.7	26.7	6.7
Somalia	66.7	18.2	15.2
Vietnam	62.5	34.4	3.1
China	43.5	52.2	4.3
Cambodia	35.7	64.3	0.0
Puerto Rico	23.8	76.2	0.0

## Summaries of Survey Responses

### Who do you live with?

“mother”	85.8%
“siblings”	76.9
“father”	60.7
“grandparents”	12.5
“other relatives”	15.5
“teen parent program”	0.6
“uncle”	0.3
“aunt”	0.7
“cousins”	0.3
“Godfather”	0.3
“other”	8.3



### **Does your family support family in another country?**

“yes”	59.7%
“no”	35.6
left blank	4.6

### **How does your family support them?**

*Of the 54.8% surveyed youth who responded to the question,*

“sending money”	48.8%
“clothes and money”	3.0
“sending clothes”	1.3
“things”	1.3
“sending medicine”	0.3

### **What are your responsibilities at home?**

“cleaning”	72.9%
“doing dishes”	64.3
“laundry”	42.0
“cooking”	30.7
“grocery shopping”	19.8
“caring for others’ health needs”	13.0
“paying bills”	8.3
none	3.0
“other”	11.2

### **Do you take care of brothers, sisters, anyone else?**

“yes”	37.3%
“no”	56.8
left blank	5.9

### **What do you do to take care of others?**

*Of the 34% surveyed youth who responded to the question,*

“babysit”	21.8%
“feed/cook for them”	4.6
“tutor/help with homework”	2.6
“anything they need/general”	1.7
“care for an elderly grandparent”	1.0
“control them”	1.0
“help with bills”	0.7
“care for others’ health needs”	0.7

### **Who do you speak to when you have a problem?**

“Friend”	65.6%
“Parent”	41.9%
“Sibling”	33.0%
“Relative”	15.8%



“Teacher”	9.2%
“Community center counselor”	4.7%
“boyfriend/girlfriend”	0.9%
“therapist”	0.3%
“gang member”	0.3%
other	9.9%

**Since living in the US have you or your family experienced any of the following?**

“sickness”	43.9%
“death of family member”	32.7%
“family member was robbed”	25.4%
“family been on welfare”	22.5%
“family member beaten up”	21.7%
“child robbed”	12.9%
“child beaten up”	12.6%
“family member killed”	11.9%
“DSS Intervention”	10.4%
“homelessness”	4.0%
other	3.2%

**New Young Americans’ Everyday Lives, Values & Expectations of the Future**

One of the goals of the NYAP survey was to attempt a snapshot of what youths’ lives are like: how does a typical day proceed? Do they go to school? What do they do after school? Who do they hang out with? What role does their family play? What views pervade their lives? What are they thinking about life in America?

The results of these survey questions suggests youth feel a general optimism about their chances of success and the likelihood that ten years from now they will be enjoying a lifestyle of their choosing. A central value and concern of youth is that they be respected: it bears further investigation to see whether this is simply a reflection of their development (peer pressure and peer esteem being a notable concern among all adolescents) or if it is particular and peculiar to new young Americans and reflects feelings of marginalization.

As striking as it was that most surveyed youth could not define the term “American dream,” it is also striking what a low value is given to making money. That value ranked almost as low as living with one’s parents.

The majority of youth appear solidly grounded in wanting respect and hoping that the road to it is through being valued by friends and work. What that work would be was not clarified by the youth, but a sizable number perceived higher education to be the route to achieve it. That presumption is troubling in view of the increasing limits on accessibility to higher education.

**A Day in the Life Of New Young Americans**

- Includes playing sports either socially or on a team for 72% of the surveyed youth;
- Means participating in a religious group for 37.3% of the youth surveyed.



## Some Concerns of New Young Americans:

- In response to the open ended question, “what worries you about being a new young American,”
  - > 10.7% of the youth who responded to the question said “racism and discrimination,”
  - > 9.7% cited simply, “the future,”
  - > 7.8% cited language and social barriers, and
  - > 4.7% said violence;
- When asked to rank order a list of items that youth consider important in the future, most surveyed youth made the following rankings:
  - > Most Important: being respected by others, friendship, and getting a good education.
  - > Moderately Important: Satisfying work and finding steady work
  - > Least Important: Living close to parents and relatives and having money.
- The strongest correlations between surveyed youths’ views were between the need to be respected and the need to find work.
  - > Of the youth responding to the question about what their life would be like if they had remained in their country of origin, the majority responded that there would be less educational, employment and other opportunities and their lives would be “hard” and “bad.”
- When asked to list what confuses them the most about the United States, youth ranked the following issues in this order:
  - > racism and inequalities,
  - > confusion with the police and laws,
  - > foreign policy concerns with government and politics.

## American Dream?

- 50.5% of the youth who responded to the question responded that they would like to achieve the American dream and 48.2% believe that they are capable of achieving it.
- However, more than 80% of the youth struggled to define “American dream.”
- Of the 81% of the youth who responded with some idea about what they would be doing 10 years from now, the majority predicted they would be at work with children, enrolled in higher education, or “successful.”
- Having a steady job that provides satisfying work and being respected were the most highly prized among youth surveyed.
- 30.4% of the youth believe that their future is different from that of American born.
- Analysis of the responses failed to find a single strong correlation between earning a lot of money and any other value.

**Differences in Length of Time Spent In the U.S. & Youths’ Perception of Their Future As Different From American-born Youth.** The less time youth had spent in the U.S., the more likely they were to believe that their future is different from that of American born youth.

## Of the 23.4% of youth who have lived here “All of His Or Her Life”:

- “Yes, future is different” 18.3%
- “No, it’s not” 66.2%



**Of the 8.9% of youth who have lived here “Over 10 Years”:**

- “Yes, future is different” 29.6%
- “No, it’s not” 51.9%

**Of the 16.5% of youth who have lived here “5-10 Years”:**

- “Yes, future is different” 34.0%
- “No, it’s not” 44.0%

**Of the 16.5% of youth who have lived here “2-5 years”:**

- “Yes, future is different” 38.0%
- “No, it’s not” 46.0%

**Of the 8.9% of youth who have lived here “Less Than 2 Years”:**

- “Yes, future is different” 40.7%
- “No, it’s not” 29.6%

**Understanding Correlations:**

*These positive correlations indicate that respondents were more likely to endorse both of these opinions than they were to endorse only one. The higher the number, the more positive or stronger the correlation.*

**CORRELATIONS MANIFESTING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS:**

- **It Will Be Harder For Me To Succeed Because Of How People Think Of Me & I Feel Frustrated Because I Think I Will Have Fewer Opportunities Than Other Kids**  
*Of the 273 responses, a strong relationship was found between these two views.<sup>8</sup>*
- **The Importance Of Doing Work That Is Satisfying & Being Able to Find Steady Work**  
*Of the 271 responses, a strong relationship was found between these two views.<sup>9</sup>*
- **The Importance Of Doing Work That Is Satisfying & Having Strong Friendships In The Future**  
*Of the 272 responses, there was a strong relationship between these views.<sup>10</sup>*
- **Importance Of Being Able to Find Steady Work & Being Respected In the Future**  
*Of the 267 responses, there was a strong relationship between these views.<sup>11</sup>*
- **Importance Of Doing Work That Is Satisfying & Being Respected In The Future**  
*Of the 269 responses, there was a strong relationship between these views.<sup>12</sup>*
- **The Importance Of Being Respected By Others & Having Strong Friendships In The Future**  
*Of the 269 responses, there was a strong relationship between these views.<sup>13</sup>*

**CORRELATIONS MANIFESTING MODERATELY STRONG RELATIONSHIPS:**

- **The Importance Of Having A Lot Of Money & Being Able to Find Steady Work In The Future**  
*Of the 272 responses, there was a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>14</sup>*
- **The Importance Of Having A Lot Of Money & Getting A Good Education In The Future**  
*Of the 270 responses, there was a moderate relationship between these two views.<sup>15</sup>*
- **The Importance Of Being Able to Find Steady Work & Living Close To Parents And Relatives In The Future**  
*Of the 270 responses, there was a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>16</sup>*
- **The Importance Of Having A lot of Money & Doing Work That Is Satisfying In The Future**  
*Of the 272 responses, there was a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>17</sup>*



- **Importance Of Being Respected & Living Close To Parents And Relatives In The Future**  
*Of the 267 responses, there was a moderate relationship between these two views.<sup>18</sup>*
- **It Will Be Harder For Me to Succeed & Americans Think They Are Better Than People From Other Countries**  
*Of the 271 responses, there was a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>19</sup>*
- **The Importance Of Living Close to Parents and Relatives & Having Strong Friendships In The Future**  
*Of the 270 responses, there was a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>20</sup>*
- **I Feel Frustrated Because I feel that I Will Have Fewer Opportunities & Americans Think They Are Better Than People From Other Countries**  
*Of the 269 responses, there was a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>21</sup>*

## Summaries of Survey Responses

### Do you play sports?

- “yes” 71.9%
- “no” 23.8%
- left blank 4.3%

### If yes, with friends or on a team?

*Of the 66.3% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “friends” 38.9%
- “team” 12.5%
- “both” 14.9%

### Are you involved in a religious group?

- “yes” 37.3%
- “no” 56.4%
- left blank 6.2%

### If yes, are the people in the religious group mostly from the country you are from?

*Of the 37.6% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “yes” 28.7%
- “no” 8.9%

### If yes, what language do you speak at the religious group?

*Of the 35% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “English” 6.6%
- “other language” 23.8%
- “both” 4.6%



## **What worries you most about being a new young American?**

*Of the 59.7% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “racism/discrimination” 10.7%
- “the future” 9.7%
- “language and social barriers” 7.8%
- “fear of violence” 4.7%
- “don’t know/not sure” 1.7%
- “other” 10.2%

## **How do you see yourself in 10 years?**

*Of the 80.9% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “working and family;  
specific career aspirations” 47.1%
- “a good job/working” 18.8%
- “higher education” 26.0%
- “successful” 13.2%
- “armed services” 1.0%
- “dead” 1.0%
- “don’t know” 7.2%
- “other” 2.4%

## **What is the American dream?**

*Of the 79.2% of the youth who responded to the question,*

### **Top 5 Responses:**

- “nice house, car, two kids,  
good job” 9.4%
- “wealth” 5.9%
- “freedom” 4.7%
- “turn dreams into reality” 3.4%
- “don’t know” 3.0%

## **Is the American Dream something you want to achieve?**

*Of the 64.7% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “yes” 50.5%
- “no” 13.2%
- “not sure” 1.0%

## **Do you think you can achieve the American Dream?**

*Of the 63.4% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “yes” 48.2%
- “no” 15.2%



## **Do you feel your future is different from that of American-born children?**

*Of the 81.2% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “yes” 30.4%
- “no” 50.8%

### **If yes, how?**

#### **Top 3 Responses:**

- “they have more privileges” 4.1%
- “more successful” 1.9%
- “we would be treated better” 1.2%

## **How do you think your future would be different if you were in the country where you or your parents were born?**

*Of the 51.6% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “living a hard/bad life” 7.5%
- “less opportunity” 6.9%
- “different/bad/less education” 5.9%
- “not different” 4.7%
- “I would get more respect” 3.4%

## **How important are each of the following to your future?**

### **Having a lot of money.**

*Of the 89.8% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “not important” 10.2%
- “somewhat important” 35.6%
- “very important” 43.9%

### **Having strong friendships.**

*Of the 89.8% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “not important” 5.6%
- “somewhat important” 12.9%
- “very important” 71.3%

### **Doing work that is satisfying.**

*Of the 90.1% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “not important” 6.6%
- “somewhat important” 15.2%
- “very important” 68.3%

### **Being able to find steady work.**

*Of the 89.4% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “not important” 6.6%
- “somewhat important” 19.1%
- “very important” 63.7%



### **Living close to parents and relatives.**

*Of the 89.4% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “not important” 8.9%
- “somewhat important” 33.0%
- “very important” 47.5%

### **Getting a good education.**

*Of the 89.4% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “not important” 5.0%
- “somewhat important” 13.5%
- “very important” 71.0%

### **Being respected by others.**

*Of the 88.8% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “not important” 6.6%
- “somewhat important” 10.2%
- “very important” 71.9%

### **One thing about the United States that confuses me is:**

- Issues pertaining to racism/inequalities 14.6%
- Cops and laws 10.6%
- Foreign policy concerns with the government/politics 9.0%
- Nothing/don't know 8.3%
- Confusion with everyday life in the US and the American systems 7.9%
- Issues pertaining to the justice system and court 1.0%

### **Youths' Perceptions of Their Status**

The survey tried in a cursory and rudimentary way to ascertain how youth perceive they are treated and if they believe they are being discriminated against. The shortcoming of the survey was its failure to ask in great detail what “discrimination” means to youth; we leave that to another survey. It is clear that the youth who responded to the subset of questions of why they were discriminated against asserted that their “race/ ethnicity” was the cause.

The responses to these questions indicate that some youth feel discriminated against. Of those youth, teachers are the primary group of discriminators, with store clerks coming in a close second. As noted in Section IV many of the surveyed youth think adults and police perceive them in a negative light; notably about 41.5% of the boys thought policemen and adults who did not know them would immediately assume they were “troublemakers” if they saw them on the street. These two sets of data strongly suggest that many of the New Young American youth surveyed feel distrusted, at a disadvantage, and like outsiders. For boys these feelings predominate. Equally impressive is the acceptance and passivity; few youth suggested any kind of tack or plan of action for handling discriminatory treatment beyond acceptance.



## Where Youth Live

- 37.3% of youth surveyed live in neighborhoods which are “mixed,” i.e. no national or cultural group predominates.
- 30% live in neighborhoods which have predominantly immigrant populations. Interestingly, about a fifth of the youth responding could not characterize who lived in their neighborhoods.
- About 62% of the youth stated they agreed a little or strongly to the statement, “There is no better country to live in than the U.S.”
- However, 69% of the youth felt that “Americans think they are better than people from other countries.”

## Cultural Conflict Where Youth Live

- 75% of youth said they had been treated differently after September 11th but few would elaborate on how and there appeared to be no statistically significant relationship between youths’ country of original and the perception that they were treated differently since September 11, 2001.
- About 66% of youth surveyed said there was a “lot of cultural conflict” in the U.S.
- 69% of youth agreed with the proposition that “there is conflict between different cultural groups in the U.S.,” found a strong relationship between perception of American superiority and fights between cultural groups in schools.<sup>22</sup>

## Youths’ Perceptions of Discrimination

- 41.9% of the youth believed that they have been discriminated against;
- 18.2% of those youth believed they had been discriminated against at school;
- 10.9% of those youth believed they had been discriminated against in stores.
- Of those who responded to a question asking their explanation for discrimination, the majority cited ethnicity and race.
- The majority of youth perceive that store clerks treat them politely, while a smaller group feels that store clerks distrust them;
- Males are more likely than females to believe that store clerks distrust them.

## Effects of Youths’ Experience of Discrimination

- 45.5% of youth agreed with the proposition that it will be harder to succeed in the U.S. because of how they are perceived; 45.9% disagreed with the proposition.
- 49.5% of youth agreed with the proposition that they feel frustrated that they will have fewer opportunities than American born youth; 41.2% did not agree with that proposition.
- A regression analysis of what factors influence surveyed youths’ belief that “it will be harder for me to succeed because of how people think of me” found a strong relationship between that view and youths’ who stated that they “get frustrated because they feel they have fewer opportunities.”<sup>23</sup>

## Youth Who Feel They Have Experienced Discrimination & Whether Youth Feel Their Future Is Different From American-Born Youth:

Whether or not youth have experienced discrimination does not appear to play a large role as to whether or not a child feels his or her future is different from that of American-born youth.



*Of the 41.9% of youth who feel that he or she has been discriminated against:*

- 52.8% do not feel that his or her youth is different from American-born youth
- 37.8% feels that his or her future is different from American-born youth
- 9.5% did not respond

*Of the 49.8% of youth who do not feel that they have been discriminated against:*

- 56.3% do not believe that their future is different from American-born youth
- 29.1% believe that their future is different from American-born youth
- 14.6% did not respond

Notably, there was no significant relationship established through cross-tabulation between surveyed youths' reports on store clerks' treatment of them and their country of origin.

## **Summaries of Survey Responses**

**Are most people in your neighborhood from the country you were born in?**

*Of the 90.1% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- "yes" 30.4%
- "no" 37.3%
- "don't know" 22.4%

**Do you feel you have ever been discriminated against?**

*Of the 91.7% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- "yes" 41.9%
- "no" 49.8%

**If yes, where have you felt most discriminated against?**

*Of the 41.3% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- "school" 18.2%
- "at stores" 10.9%
- "everywhere" 6.6%
- "walking down the street" 2.6%
- "by police" 0.7%
- "other" 1.0%

**When you are shopping how do the store clerks react to you; watch every step you take, ignore you, or they are polite and helpful?**

*Of the 94.1% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- "they are polite and helpful" 51.8%
- "watch every step I take" 28.1%
- "ignore me" 13.9%
- "depends" 0.3%



**What do you think is the main reason for discrimination against you?**

*Of the 38.3% of the surveyed youth who responded to the question, analysis of their responses is based on the highest frequency of responses to the question, as listed below:*

- “my ethnicity/race” 24.7%
- “I am different” 3.6%
- “the way I dress/look” 2.0%
- “uneducated people/ignorance” 2.0%

**How does that make you feel?**

*Of the 36.6% of the surveyed youth who responded to the question, analysis of their responses is based on the highest frequency of responses to the question as listed below:*

- “negative emotions” 29.7%
- “angry” 16.5%
- “sad” 6.9%
- “positive emotions” 0.3%
  - > “proud of my culture”
- “ignore them” 0.3%
- “personalized/internalized emotions” 2.3%
  - > “makes me hate myself”
  - > “like I want to cry and hurt them”
  - > “like I need to change”
- “I feel sorry for them” 0.7%
- “don’t know/don’t care” 2.6%

**What do you think should be done about it?**

*Of the 28.4% of surveyed youth who responded to the question, the following top six responses were the most frequently invoked:*

- “nothing/passive resistance” 7.8%
- “appeal to a higher authority” 4.6%
- “education” 4.4%
- “change in attitude” 4.1%
- “speak out/discriminate back” 3.2%
- “violent response” 2.6%

**It will be harder for me to succeed because of how people think of me.**

*Of the 91.4% of the youth surveyed who responded to the question,*

- “agree a lot” 17.8%
- “agree a little” 27.7%
- “disagree a little” 19.5%
- “disagree a lot” 26.4%



**I feel frustrated because I think I will have fewer opportunities than other kids.**

*Of the 90.8% of the youth surveyed who responded to the question,*

- “agree a lot” 17.2%
- “agree a little” 32.3%
- “disagree a little” 19.1%
- “disagree a lot” 22.1%

**There is much conflict between different cultural groups in the US.**

*Of the 91.4% of the youth surveyed who responded to the question,*

- “agree a lot” 34.0%
- “agree a little” 32.0%
- “disagree a little” 16.2%
- “disagree a lot” 9.2%

**There is no better country to live in than the US.**

*Of the 92.7% of the surveyed youth who responded to the question,*

- “agree a lot” 28.7%
- “agree a little” 33.0%
- “disagree a little” 21.1%
- “disagree a lot” 9.9%

**Americans think they are better than people from other countries.**

*Of the 91.7% of the surveyed youth who responded to the question,*

- “agree a lot” 39.9%
- “agree a little” 30.0%
- “disagree a little” 13.9%
- “disagree a lot” 7.9%

**Why is there or is there not cultural conflict between different groups in the US?**

*Of the 25.7% of the surveyed youth who responded to the question,*

- “cultural differences” 10.6%
- “racism” 4.4%
- “lack of knowledge/ignorance” 3.7%
- “other” 5.2%

**Have you been treated differently since September 11, 2003?**

*Of the 84.5% of the youth surveyed who responded to the question,*

- 10.2% responded “yes”
- 74.3% responded “no”

**If yes, how have you been treated differently?**

*Of the 6.9% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “more restrictions” 1.3%
- “nicer/more friendly” 1.3%



- “people are meaning/insults” 1.0%
- “race profiled” 1.0%
- “seen more as a foreigner” 1.0%
- “police/government is bad with immigrants” 0.3%
- “people think my clothing is strange” 0.3%

## Community Center Survey Findings

The results of the survey on the importance of community centers are skewed somewhat by virtue of the fact that the surveys were conducted at and through community centers. The results suggest that community centers play a central role in many new young Americans’ lives.

Two data that favor this conclusion are the findings of this survey that those youth who seem to be least engaged with school – they report lower grades and attendance and report participation in a gang, which is correlated with lower school attendance – are more likely to report being most engaged in community centers. Uniformly, however, all youth report that without an after school program they would be involved in less constructive efforts and would miss the support and haven they have found in these centers. As the following section shows, community centers also represent a major source of employment for youth in a city where youth unemployment is high.

## Level of Youth Involvement in Community Centers

- Over 60% of the youth surveyed report being involved in a community center providing after school educational and recreational services.
- 33.7% of the youth surveyed report that they go to their community center everyday; 21.5% go once a week.
- There is a higher likelihood that new young Americans who are not in school belong to a community center than those new young Americans who are in school.
- The lower a student’s grades, the higher the likelihood that the student is involved with a community center.
- There is some indication that the small number of surveyed youth who report participating in a “gang” are more likely to be involved in a community center. This initial finding suggests future research should be directed to this area.

## Role of Community Center in Youths’ Lives

- Youths report enjoying what community centers offer in the way of time to be with their friends, receiving support, and being with “people like me,” as well as being near adults who can spend time with them, and homework help.
- Of those youth who responded to these questions, 24.8% of the surveyed youth thought they would be doing “nothing productive” in they had no center to go to; 8.9% thought they would be hanging out on the streets, and 4.3% thought they would be getting into trouble.



## School Status and Involvement in Community Centers

### Most youth who report community center involvement are in school:

- 95.3% are in school
- 4.2% are not in school
- 0.5% did not respond

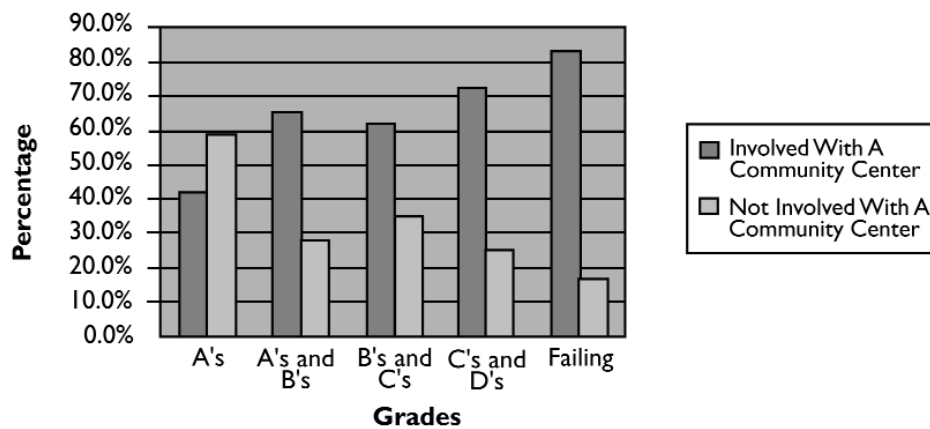
### Of surveyed youth who are not involved in a community center:

- 94.9% are in school
- 1.0% are not in school
- 4.1% did not respond

## Youths' Grades and Involvement In A Community Center

There may be an inverse relationship between strong grades and youths' community center involvement. The lower a student's grades, the higher the likelihood that the student is involved with a community center.

### Grades and Involvement In A Community Center



### Of the 13.5% of the youth who reported they mostly receive A's:

- 41.5% are involved with a community center
- 58.5% are not involved with a community center

### Of the 36% of youth who reported they mostly receive A's and B's:

- 65.1% are involved with a community center
- 27.5% are not involved with a community center

### Of the 27.8% of youth who receive B's and C's:

- 62.1% are involved with a community center
- 34.5% are not involved with a community center

### Of the 10.6% of youth who receive C's and D's:

- 71.9% are involved with a community center
- 25% are not involved with a community center



## Summaries of Survey Responses

### Are you involved in a community youth center?

- “yes” 62.7%
- “no” 32.3%
- left blank 5.0%

### If yes, what community center?

*Of the 61.1% of the youth surveyed who responded to the question,*

- Work Force 16.5%
- Boston Asian Youth Essential Services 7.3%
- MAPS 5.9%
- Other 5.6%
- Somali Development Center 3.0%
- CAPAY 2.6%
- Dorchester House 2.3%
- DYC 2.3%
- CMAA 2.3%
- Jewish Community Center 2.0%
- VACA 1.7%
- Somali Youth Group 1.7%
- AHORA 1.7%
- Acre Youth Center 1.7%
- La Alianza 1.3%
- Boy and Girls Club 1.3%
- Gately 0.7%

### If yes, how often do you go to the Community Youth center?

*Of the 58.7% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “everyday” 33.7%
- “one a week” 21.5%
- “once a month/special occasions” 3.6%

### What do you like about the community center?

*Of the 48.8% of the youth who responded to the question,*

#### Top 10 categories:

- “friends” 7.9%
- “place to have fun” 6.9%
- “support” 5.3%
- “counselors/people to talk to about problems” 5.3%
- “activities” 4.3%
- “spending time with people like me” 2.6%
- “center that helps the community” 2.3%



- “the people” 2.0%
- “weight machines/sport activities” 2.0%
- “making money/ I get paid” 1.7%

**What is beneficial about the community center?**

*Of the 41.9% of the youth who responded to the question,*

**Top 10 responses:**

- “helps me with my homework” 8.6%
- “helps me choose a path to success” 5.6%
- “gives kids a place to hang out other than the streets” 4.0%
- “keep me out of trouble” 3.6%
- “people to answer my questions/talk to” 3.3%
- “helps me find a job” 2.0%
- “allows me to experience things I would not normally” 2.0%
- “guidance” 1.3%
- “education” 1.3%
- “I learn about my community” 1.0%
- “It helps me with sports” 1.0%
- “Establishes ties to my culture” 1.0%

**What do you think you would be doing if you did not have a community center?**

*Of the 47.2% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “nothing productive/home sleeping/doing nothing” 24.8%
- “hanging on the street with friends” 8.9%
- “getting into trouble” 4.3%
- “Playing games/sport/computer” 2.3%
- “working” 2.0%
- “gang” 1.3%
- “I would not be on a successful path and taking SAT” 1.0%
- “studying” 1.0%
- “chillin” 0.7%
- “trying to get help” 0.3%
- “dead” 0.3%
- “babysitting” 0.3%



## Findings on Youth Employment

Approximately 40% of surveyed youth work and of those who do, the hourly rate they are paid is significantly above minimum wage. The number of hours youth work does not appear exploitative – 12 hours a week – and the fact that a major source of employment appears to be in the very community centers at which the youth were interviewed suggests that the work situations are predominantly nurturing. The extent to which community centers offer youth protected and supportive work environments signals another reason why the centers represent such important institutions in these youths' lives. The youths' reported use of their wages suggests that most of them are not working to help their families make ends meet so much as to relieve their families of the need to pay for their personal and recreational needs.

## NYAP Survey Responses to Level of Employment

- 37.3% of the youth surveyed are employed.
- The average wage is \$7.21 per hour, which is significantly higher than \$5.15, the minimum wage.
- The average hours worked per week is 12.26 hours.
- Of those youth who must choose between work demands and school, the vast majority prioritized school.
- Among those youth who work, 30.4% responded that school is more important than work.
- 49.9% of the surveyed youth use the money they earn for personal expenses; approximately 12% pay for family expenses and another 12% are saving for college.
- Many students appear to have jobs in community centers working with other youth.

## Grades and Employment

The following response demonstrates youths' reported grades and participation in the work force. Strikingly, while there is great variation in youths' reported grades, each "grade grouping" shows similar rates of youth being employed:

### **37.3% of the youth are employed:**

*Of the 13.5% of youth who receive mostly A's:*

- 39% employed
- 61% not employed

*Of the 36% of youth who receive mostly A's and B's:*

- 38.5% employed
- 57.8% not employed

*Of the 27.8% of youth who receive B's and C's:*

- 39.1% employed
- 57.5% not employed

*Of the 10.6% of youth who get C's and D's:*

- 31.3% employed
- 68.8% not employed



*Of the 4% of youth who are failing:*

- 16.7% employed
- 83.3% not employed

## **Summaries of Survey Responses**

### **Do you work?**

- “yes” 37.3%
- “no” 59.7%
- blank 3.0%

### **What is your job?**

- “peer leader” 6.6%
- “Work Force job”\* 6.6%
- “office job” 4.0%
- “retail” 3.3%
- “babysitting” 3.9%

### **How much do you get paid an hour?**

- Mean \$7.21

### **How many hours do you work per week?**

- Mean 12.26 hours

### **What do you do with the money you earn?**

*Of the 35% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “pay for clothes, movies, etc.” 22.8%
- “go out with friends” 18.8%
- “save money for college” 12.5%
- “help with family” 12.8%
- “pay personal bills” 8.3%
- “save” 0.7%
- “other” 4.7%

### **Are you glad to be working?**

*Of the 34.3% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “yes” 33.7%
- “no” 0.7%

### **When you have to choose, which is more important, school or work?**

*Of the 34% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- “School” 30.4%
- “Work” 3.6%

\*This is the name of an afterschool program offered by the Cambridge Housing Authority.



### Who else in your household works?

- “mother” 70.6%
- “father” 57.1%
- “sisters” 36.0%
- “brothers” 30.6%
- “other”<sup>24</sup> 15.3%

## Findings on Translation Issues

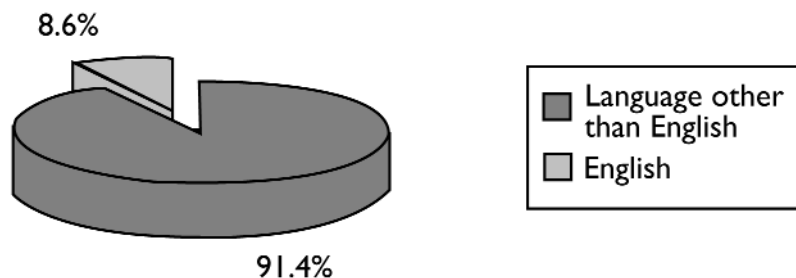
Often, children of immigrants are able to capitalize on children’s ability to learn new languages and acculturate to the language of their new homeland most swiftly. They often learn to speak for themselves, and then cope with the needs of their families – their parents and grandparents – by speaking for them. Some youth must speak for their parents and other family members in situations critical to their families’ welfare and often with little in the way of adult guidance in navigating the situations.

The survey shows that it is girls who predominantly take on this responsibility in the group of nearly 60% of youth surveyed who serve as their families’ translators. The survey also indicates that many children speak a language other than English at home and with their peers. One finding of particular import in the current education debate is youths’ reported awareness of being mocked for not speaking English well. These findings have implications for a range of issues, including how English is taught in public schools and how important cultural centers are to youths’ sense of comfort and safety.

### Families’ Use of Languages Other than English

- 87.5% of the youth responded that people in their homes speak a language other than English.<sup>25</sup>
- 73.3% of the youth responded that they speak this language “all the time” or “usually” at home.
- 56.1% of the youth act as a translator for their families.
- Among new young Americans, girls are more likely to translate for their families than boys.

## What Language is Spoken at Home?



### Peer Use of Languages Other than English

- 52.1% of the youth responded that they enjoy speaking both English and another language.
- 69% of the youth sometime speak a language other than English with their friends.
- As the amount of time that the child has lived in the United States increases, the likelihood that the child will use a language other than English when speaking with friends decreases.

- Youth who replied that kids “generally get made fun of for how they speak English” are also more likely to get made fun of themselves; whereas respondents who replied “no, kids generally do not get made fun of” reported that they did not get made fun of themselves.

### Country Of Origin and Translation Duties:

Of the youth surveyed, 56.1% responded that they act as translator for their families. The data below cites the highest percentages of youth serving as translators by country of origin. E.g. of all Cape Verdean youth surveyed, 74.4% of them report serving as translators for their families.

<b>County of Origin</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
-------------------------	-------------------

**Central & Latin America**

- |                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| • El Salvador        | 87.5% |
| • Dominican Republic | 46.7  |
| • Puerto Rico        | 38.1  |

**Asia**

- |                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| • Vietnam            | 75.0 |
| • Multi-nation Asian | 75.0 |
| • Cambodia           | 74.4 |
| • China              | 65.2 |

**Other**

- |                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| • Cape Verde      | 74.4 |
| • Haiti           | 50.0 |
| • Somalia         | 48.5 |
| • Russia, Belarus | 50.0 |

### Summaries of Survey Responses

**Do you speak another language at home? If yes, how often do people in your home speak this language?**

*Of the 84.8% of the youth who responded to the question,*

- |                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| • “all the time” | 42.9% |
| • “usually”      | 30.4% |
| • “sometimes”    | 10.6% |
| • “rarely”       | 1.0%  |

**If yes, what is the language spoken at home?**

*Of the 82.5% of the youth who responded to the question,*

**The top ten most frequent responses are presented below:**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Haitian Creole	19.8%
Spanish	16.5
Cantonese/ Chinese Dialects	10.6
Vietnamese	10.2
Somali	6.6
Cape Verdian	5.3



Khmer/Cambodian	4.6
Russian	4.3
Filipino	1.0
Tibetan	0.7%

**If yes, how well do you know the language spoken at home?**

*Of the 85.1% of the youth who responded, youth reported their facility in the language of origin as follows:*

• “Child speaks, reads, and/or writes <u>fluently</u> ”	33.3%
• “Child speaks, reads, and/or writes <u>most</u> of the language”	20.8%
• “Child speaks, reads, and/or writes a <u>little</u> ”	25.4%
• “Child does not speak, read, and/or write at all”	4.0%
• “Speak fluently, write a little”	1.7%

**If you are bilingual, which language do you prefer speaking?**

*Of the 83.2% of the youth who responded to the question,*

• “Both (one at home, one out of home)”	52.1%
• “English”	23.8%
• “Other language”	7.3%

**Do you often have to act as a translator for your family?**

*Of the 92.1% of the youth who responded to the question,*

• “yes”	56.1%
• “no”	36.0%

**Who do you act as a translator for?**

• “mother”	39.0%
• “father”	29.7%
• “grandparents”	16.6%
• “friends”	7.6%
• “siblings”	5.9%
• “other”	3.7%

**If yes, which of these best describes how translating for them makes you feel:**

*Of the 52.5% of the youth who responded to the question,*

• “happy to be translating”	33.3%
• “frustrated they do not speak English”	11.2%
• “embarrassed they do not speak English”	4.3%

**When you are speaking with your friends, do you sometimes use a language other than English?**

*Of the 93.4% of the youth who responded to the question,*

• “yes”	69.0%
• “no”	24.4%



**If yes, what language do you speak?**

*Of the 64% of the youth who responded to the question,*

<b>Language</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
"Creole"	15.2%
"Spanish"	14.9
"Vietnamese"	8.3
"Somali"	5.6
"Cantonese"	4.0
"Cape Verdean"	4.0
"Khmer/Cambodian"	3.6
"Chinese"	3.3
"Russian"	3.0
"Swahili"	0.7
"Tibetan"	0.7
"Bengali"	0.3
"Twi"	0.3

**Do kids ever get made fun of for their accents or how they speak English?**

• "yes"	75.6%
• "no"	23.1%
• "I don't know"	0.3%

**Do you get made fun of for your accent or how you speak English?**

• "yes"	28.1%
• "no"	69.3%

**If yes, who makes fun of you for how you speak English?**

• "students"	18.8%
• "students born in the same country as the child"	9.3%
• "teachers"	2.0%
• "others"	2.0%
• "friends"	1.3%
• "blacks/whites"	0.3%
• "black students"	0.6%
• "principal"	0.3%

**What people say when making fun of how child speaks English**

• "degrading comments"	9.0%
• "mimicking/teasing"	7.6%
• "mocking Asian accents"	1.6%
• "language correction"	0.7%



## II. New Young Americans and their Experiences in Public Education

These results indicate that youth are very attached to school and to the notion of education as the critical path to a successful future. The level of pressure youth feel from their parents to succeed in school is uniformly high; it is much higher than parents' ability to support youth by going to parent/teacher conferences and helping out with homework.

In some of these responses it appears that there is peer pressure to value education less than a youth might choose to do so individually, and there is some appearance of conflict between peers' valuation of the importance of education and parents' valuation of it. Adults play a limited role in supporting youth. About 47% of youth reported that it was "somewhat true" and "very true" that their parents help them with their homework; about half that number reported that their parents go to parent/teacher conferences. Youth uniformly report that teachers are helpful when they need it, but youth also report that they rarely choose principals and teachers as their primary source of assistance and support.

The cultural diversity of schools is not easily navigated by youth. They report that it is hard to "hang out" with groups other than ones that match their own identity, and that it is hard to make friends from different cultural backgrounds. (See, too, in the section on school safety, students' belief that strife breaks out most among different cultural groups.)

### New Young Americans' Views of Education & Family Support of Education

- 94.4% of the youth surveyed are in school;
- Of those students, 48.3% were female and 50.7% were male, which represent the overall gender distribution of the youth surveyed.
- Of the 5.6% of youth surveyed who are not in school, 90% are boys.
- 88.6% of the youth surveyed "agrees a lot" that it is important for them to get an education;
- The level of parental pressure to do well in school is much higher than the level of parental support with homework:
  - > 65.6% of the youth said it is "very true" that "my parents pressure me to do well in school"
  - > 19.3% of the same group said their parents help them with homework;
  - > 23.6% of the same group said their parents go to parent-teacher conferences.

### Current Experience in School

- 83.7% of the youth surveyed perceived that schools are better in the U.S. than in their country of origin.
- 66.3% of the sample does not believe that the MCAS test is fair.
- Of the 37% who explained why they thought the MCAS is not fair, 17.8% said they felt "one test should not determine their future," and 8.9% thought the test was too hard for ESL students.
- 70.3% of the youth surveyed responded that schoolwork is "at the right pace."
- 26% of the youth surveyed reported that they study less than one hour on a typical weekday and 39% reported studying 1-2 hours on a typical weekday.
- 69.6% of the youth believes that teachers treat some students better than others and that smart students (24.8%) and white students (8.9%) are better treated.
- 85.6% of the youth said they cannot make friends with students from different cultural backgrounds.



## **Relations With School Staff & Peers**

- 64.7% of the youth reported that it was partly or very true that their parents looked up to school teachers and principals;
- 67% of the youth reported that it was partly or very true that they looked up to school teachers and principals;
- 90% of the youth reported that teachers are helpful when they need it and 56.9% reported that principals are helpful.
- About 34% of youth in the survey said youth are made fun of for doing well, but only 18% said they had personally been made fun of;
- School personnel are not perceived to be helpful to youth for handling cultural conflict among peers.

## **Grades and View of Difficulty of Schoolwork**

About 49.5% of the youth surveyed reported they receive A and B grades while 38.4% reported receiving B,C, and D grades. Remarkably, the majority of students in each grade category seemed to think the work was “at the right pace.”

*Of the 13.5% of youth who receive mostly A’s:*

- 17.1% “too easy”
- 12.2% “too hard”
- 70.7% “at the right pace”

*Of the 36% of youth who receive A’s and B’s:*

- 9.2% “too easy”
- 14.7% “too hard”
- 75.2% “at the right pace”

*Of the 27.8% of youth who receive B’s and C’s:*

- 12.6% “too easy”
- 17.2% “too hard”
- 70.1% “at the right pace”

*Of the 10.6% of youth who receive C’s and D’s:*

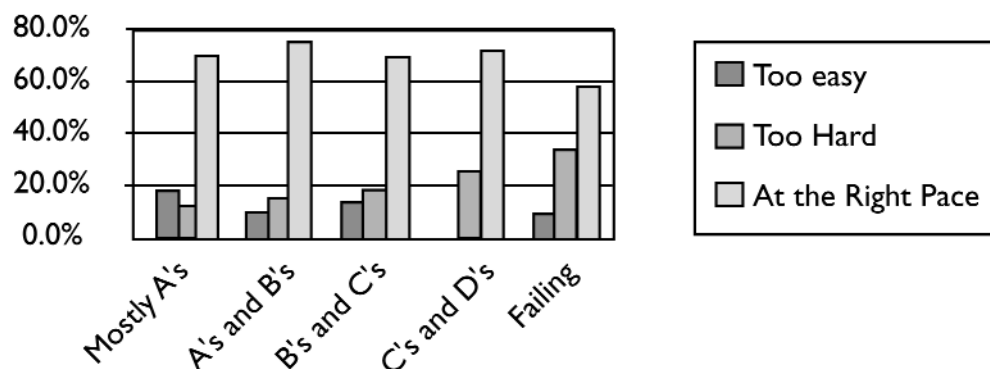
- 0% “too easy”
- 25.0% “too hard”
- 71.9% “at the right pace”

*Of the 4% of youth who are failing:*

- 8.3% “too easy”
- 33.3% “too hard”
- 58.3% “at the right pace”



## Grades and Perceived Level of School Difficulty



### Child Belongs To A “Gang” and School Status

Youth claiming gang membership are less likely to be attending school.

*Of the 8.9% of the youth who reported that they are in a “gang:”*

- 92.6% are in school
- 7.4% are not in school

### My Parents Help Me With My Homework & My Parents Pressure Me To Do Well In School

A constant theme among these responses is that parents pressure youth to do well in school—even if parents cannot help their children, through homework support.

**Of the 65.6% of youth who said it was “very true, my parents help me with my homework:”**

- 77.6% also said it was “very true my parents pressure me to do well in school”
- 15.5% also said it was “partly true my parents pressure me to do well in school”
- 6.9% also said it was “not true at all, my parents do not pressure me to do well in school”

**Of the 27.4% of the youth who responded “partly true, my parents help me with my homework”**

- 61.9% also said it was “very true, my parents pressure me to do well in school”
- 33.3% also said it was “partly true, my parents pressure me to do well in school”
- 3.6% also said it was “not true at all, my parents do not pressure me to do well in school”

**Of the 7% of the youth who responded “not true at all, my parents do not help me with my homework:**

- 62.7% also said it was “very true, my parents pressure me to do well in school.
- 28.5% also said it was “partly true, my parents pressure me to do well in school.
- 8.2% also said it was “not true at all, my parents do not pressure me to do well in school



### **Understanding Correlations:**

*These positive correlations indicate that respondents were more likely to endorse both of these opinions than they were to endorse only one. The higher the number, the more positive or stronger the correlation.*

#### **CORRELATIONS MANIFESTING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS**

• **My Parents Go To Parent Teacher Conferences & My Parents Help Me With My Homework**  
*Of the 297 youths responding, a strong relationship was found between these views.<sup>26</sup>*

• **I Look Up to My Teachers And School Officials & My Teachers Are Helpful When I Need Help**  
*Of the 296 youths responding, a strong relationship was found between these views.<sup>27</sup>*

#### **CORRELATIONS MANIFESTING MODERATE RELATIONSHIPS**

• **My Principal Is Helpful When I Need Help & My Teachers Are Helpful When I Need Help**  
*Of the 268 youth responding, a moderate relationship was found between these views.<sup>28</sup>*

• **My Friends Think School Is Important & Most Kids Think Education Is Important**  
*Of the 292 youth responding, a moderate relationship was found between these views.<sup>29</sup>*

• **I Will Get A Job From Being Educated & It Is Important For Me To Get An Education**  
*Of the 295 youth responding, there is a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>30</sup>*

• **My Teachers Are Helpful When I Need Help & My Parents Help Me With My Homework**  
*Of the 298 youth responding, there is a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>31</sup>*

• **I Look Up To My Teachers And School Officials & My Parents Go To Parent Teacher Conferences**  
*Of the 293 youth responding, there is a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>32</sup>*

• **Most Kids Think I Care Too Much About Education & It Is Important For Me To Get An Education**  
*Of the 292 youth responding, there is a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>33</sup>*

• **I Look Up to My Teachers And School Officials & My Principal Is Helpful When I Need Help**  
*Of the 266 youth responding, there is a moderate relationship between these views.<sup>34</sup>*

### **Summaries of Survey Responses**

#### **Are you in school?**

- |           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| • Yes     | 94.4% |
| • No      | 3.3%  |
| • Unknown | 2.3%  |

#### **Why are you not in school?**

*Of the 2.3% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| • "The teachers were rude and misjudging" | 0.7% |
|---|------|



- “Graduated” 0.7%
- “Received GED” 0.3%
- “Discharged” 0.3%
- “I was lazy” 0.3%

**Did you ever attend school?**

*Of the 3.3% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- yes 3.3%

**If yes, why did you stop going to school?**

*Of the 3% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “Lack of attendance” 0.7%
- “Graduated” 0.7%
- “Didn’t like teachers and other students” 0.3%
- “Needed to work” 0.3%
- “Court discharged” 0.3%
- “I was lazy” 0.3%
- “Tired of being neglected” 0.3%

**Up to what point did you go?**

*Of the 1.7% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “Quit before high school” 0.3%
- 9th grade 0.3%
- 10th grade 1.0%

**Do you have plans to get more education?**

*Of the 3.3% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 3.0%
- “no” 0.3%

**What are your goals for education?**

*Of the 3.3% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “college” 1.7%
- “learn life skills” 1.0%
- “alternative school” 0.3%
- “masters degree” 0.3%

**School is better in the US than where I am from.**

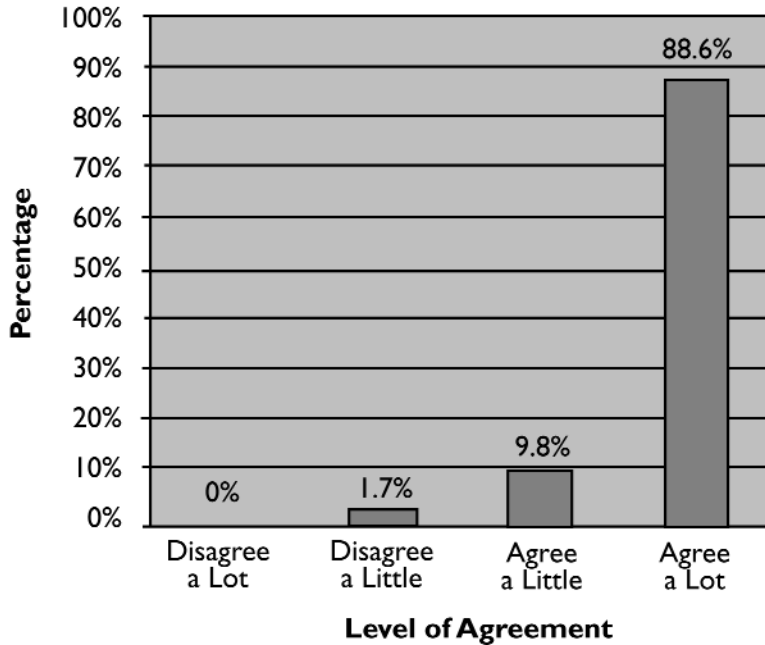
- “Disagree a lot” 8.4%
- “Disagree a little” 7.9%
- “Agree a little” 31.7%
- “Agree a lot” 52.0%



**It is important for me to get an education.**

- “Disagree a lot” 0%
- “Disagree a little” 1.7%
- “Agree a little” 9.8%
- “Agree a lot” 88.6%

**It is Important for Me to Get an Education**



**Most kids think education is important.**

- “Disagree a lot” 4.7%
- “Disagree a little” 20.7%
- “Agree a little” 39.0%
- “Agree a lot” 35.6%

**Most kids think I care too much about an education.**

- “Disagree a lot” 17.7%
- “Disagree a little” 27.0%
- “Agree a little” 31.7%
- “Agree a lot” 23.5%

**I will get a job from being educated.**

- “Disagree a lot” 2.7%
- “Disagree a little” 2.7%
- “Agree a little” 12.8%
- “Agree a lot” 81.8%



**Kind of grades child is receiving?**

• “Mostly A’s”	13.5%
• “A’s and B’s”	36.0%
• “B’s and C’s”	27.8%
• “C’s and D’s”	10.6%
• “Failing”	4.0%
• “Don’t know”	3.0%
• “School does not use grades”	1.7%
• “Varies”	0.7%
• “unknown”	2.0%

**I think school work is:**

• “too easy”	10.9%
• “too hard”	17.2%
• “at the right pace”	70.3%
• “unknown”	1.7%

**Do kids get made fun of for doing well in school?**

• “yes”	33.7%
• “no”	63.7%
• “unknown”	2.6%

**Do you get made fun of for doing well in school?**

• “yes”	18.5%
• “no”	78.9%
• “unknown”	2.6%

**My friends think school is important.**

• “not true at all”	5.7%
• “partly true”	48.7%
• “very true”	45.6%

**My parents pressure me to do well in school.**

• “not true at all”	7.0%
• “partly true”	27.4%
• very true”	65.6%

**My parents help me with my homework.**

• “not true at all”	52.7%
• “partly true”	28.0%
• “very true”	19.3%

**My parents go to parent-teacher conferences.**

• “not true at all”	43.4%
• “partly true”	33.0%
• “very true”	23.6%



**My parents look up to my teachers and school officials.**

- “not true at all” 35.3%
- “partly true” 34.9%
- “very true” 29.8%

**I look up to my teachers and school officials.**

- “not true at all” 33.0%
- “partly true” 37.4%
- “very true” 29.6%

**My teachers are helpful when I need help.**

- “not true at all” 10.0%
- “partly true” 41.8%
- “very true” 48.2%

**My principal is helpful when I need help.**

- “not true at all” 43.1%
- “partly true” 30.5%
- “very true” 26.4%

**One thing that I wished was different about school:**

**Top Responses:**

- “teachers were more helpful/ attentive” 7.3%
- “no/less homework” 5.9%
- “lunch/longer lunch” 5.3%
- “No MCAS” 5.0%
- “Later start time” 4.0%
- “More leisure time” 3.3%
- “Students attitudes/more friendly” 3.0%

**There are many groups at school that hang out only with each other.**

- “Disagree a lot” 5.3%
- “Disagree a little” 9.9%
- “Agree a little” 33.7%
- “Agree a lot” 51.1%

**I make friends with students from different cultural backgrounds.**

- “Disagree a lot” 63.0%
- “Disagree a little” 22.6%
- “Agree a little” 6.1%
- “Agree a lot” 6.8%



**Hallways breaks are a good time to hang out with friends.**

- “Disagree a lot” 7.7%
- “Disagree a little” 18.2%
- “Agree a little” 26.3%
- “Agree a lot” 47.7%

**Do you think the teachers treat some students better than others?**

- “yes” 69.6%
- “no” 27.4%
- blank 3.0%

**Which types of students are treated better?**

- “smart students” 24.8%
- “white students” 8.9%
- “girls” 4.6%
- “well-behaved students” 3.6%
- “teachers pets” 3.6%
- “students who are the same color” 3.3%

**During a typical week day, how many hours do you spend studying or doing homework?**

- Less than one hour 26.4%
- One to two hours 39.0%
- Two to four hours 18.4%
- More than four hours 9.6%

**Do you think that the MCAS test is fair?**

- “no” 66.3%
- “yes” 26.1%
- “not sure” 0.3%
- blank 7.3%

**Why is MCAS not fair?**

- “the test should not determine my future” 17.8%
- “unfair to ESL students” 8.9%
- “too hard” 5.6%
- “knowledge should not be based on a test” 5.3%

**Why is MCAS fair?**

- “tests your level of education” 6.9%



## Perceptions of School Safety

The majority of new young Americans feel safe in school and do not feel they are special targets for abuse, threats, or attacks. That said, a solid 20% have been threatened or attacked in school; of that number, a small percentage have been fearful of returning to school. It would appear that bullies, the bane of all school systems, do not specifically focus or target immigrant youth. However, cultural differences are a major source of conflict among youth and adults are not sources of assistance in resolving the conflicts. New young Americans report they are most comfortable reporting school safety issues to peers rather than parents or teachers.

## Perceptions of School Safety & Experiences of Violence in School

- 70.3% of the youth agree that there are kids who pick on other kids in their schools.
- 70.5% of the youth agree to some extent that they feel safe at school; these same youth had a lower incidence of reported threats or attacks.
- Of the 19.5% of the surveyed youth who had been threatened with a gun, knife, or other weapon, 28.8% were female and 71.2% were male.
- 86.8% of the youth have not missed school because they were afraid; for those youth who had missed school because they were afraid, the incidence of being threatened or attacked was higher.
- 50.5% of the youth would tell a friend if they got hurt in school by another student, 34% would tell a parent, and 33% would tell a teacher.

## Cultural Trends in School-Based Conflict

- Youth surveyed are about evenly divided about the extent to which cultural differences are the cause of peer fighting.
- Of the 44% of the youth surveyed who answered a question about who bullies who, only 4.7% thought that youth are bullied as a function of their ethnic or immigrant status.
- Only 13.2% of the youth described who they had been threatened by; of those youth, youth of other cultural groups or “strangers” made the threats.

## Youth Who Had Been Threatened With A Gun, Knife, Or Other Weapon And Youths’ Perceptions of School Safety

*Of the 19.5% of youth who have been threatened with a gun, knife or other weapon:*

- 25.5% disagree a lot that they feel safe in school
- 21.8% disagree a little that they feel safe in school
- 34.5% agree a little that they feel safe in school
- 18.2% agree a lot that they feel safe in school

*Of those 80.5% of youth who had not been threatened:*

- 8.2% disagree a lot that they feel safe in school
- 17.6% disagree a little that they feel safe in school
- 36.5% agree a little that they feel safe in school
- 37.8% agree a lot that they feel safe in school.



## Summaries of Survey Responses

### Are there kids who pick on other kids at your school?

- “yes” 70.3%
- “no” 24.4%
- “blank” 5.3%

### Who picks on who?

*Of the 44.4% of the surveyed youth who responded:*

- school bullies pick on those who are weaker, poorer, less popular, ugly, etc. 27.5%
- kids of different ethnic groups and nationalities 4.7%
- everyone is picked on 2.5%
- boys pick on girls 2.5%
- “gangs” 1.2%
- other 0.6%

### I feel safe at school.

- “Disagree a lot” 11.3%
- “Disagree a little” 18.2%
- “Agree a little” 36.3%
- “Agree a lot” 34.2%

### Have you ever been threatened with a gun, knife, or other weapon?

- “yes” 19.5%
- “no” 78.5%
- unknown 2.0%

### If yes, who threatened you?

*Of the 13.2% of the surveyed youth who responded to this question, the top responses were:*

- “students from a different cultural background at school” 4.0%
- “friends” 1.6%
- “teens from the street” 1.3%
- “gang bangers” 1.3%
- “boy” 1.3%
- “stranger” 1.0%
- “students at school from same cultural background at school” 1.0%

### Did you ever miss school because you were afraid?

- “yes” 7.3%
- “no” 86.8%
- “sometimes” 0.3%
- unknown 5.6%

### If you got hurt in school by another student, who would you tell?\*



- 50.5% would tell a friend
- 34.0% would tell a parent
- 33.0% would tell a teacher
- 16.8% security guard
- 17.2% school counselor
- 12.5% would tell nobody
- 12.9% would tell someone else
- 20.8% would tell the principal

*\*We invited youth to check off their choices.*

**Fights often break out between different cultural groups at school.**

- |                       |       |
|-----------------------|-------|
| • “Disagree a lot”    | 27.0% |
| • “Disagree a little” | 24.9% |
| • “Agree a little”    | 30.2% |
| • “Agree a lot”       | 17.9% |



### III. Immigrant Youth And The Juvenile Justice System

The results of the survey regarding youths' sense of safety in their neighborhoods, their sense that they are viewed as "good" or "bad" kids, and their comprehension of their rights in the juvenile justice system in many ways mirror the experience and perceptions of many youth in the Commonwealth.

There a couple of striking responses. First, the low prevalence of surveyed youths' involvement in court systems is contrasted by the relatively high prevalence of the surveyed youths' friends and families' involvement in courts. (Those youth reporting family involvement reported that it was primarily their siblings who were involved in criminal, traffic, and family matters – not immigration matters). A correlated finding of interest is the direct and negative impact that involvement has on perceptions of the "system's" fairness and the notion of discrimination. Second, there appears to be a high correlation between being male, perceiving that you are disliked by adults, and being stopped by police, all leading to the perception of being singled out or discriminated against. Based on the results of this survey alone, understanding how youth come to these conclusions is clearly worth exploration. Third, the level of "gang" involvement, defined by youth as either a group of friends or a group that "expresses violence," was fractional. Most interestingly, of those youth claiming participation in a "gang", the level of participation in school was lower and arrests were higher.

#### **NYAP Surveyed Youths' Court Involvement**

- 9.9% of the surveyed youth have been arrested.
- 86.7% of those who have been arrested are male and 13.3% are female.
- 63.7% of the youth who responded thought they had a right to an attorney.
- A third of the youth responding to the survey indicated they had no knowledge of their rights; 22% indicated some knowledge of *Miranda* rights.
- 87% thought judges could help them in juvenile court.
- The top five countries of origin for those whom have been arrested are Vietnam, Haiti, Cape Verde, China, and Cambodia.
- Youth who have had contact with the courts, personally or through friends and family, are more likely to believe that the juvenile justice system is unfair. In addition, they are more likely to believe that they have been discriminated against.

#### **NYAP Surveyed Youths', Family & Friends' Court Involvement**

- 41.3% of youth have a family member who has been to court.
- 38% of youth have friends who have been to court.

#### **NYAP Surveyed Youths' Police Interactions**

- 31.4% of males have been approached by the police when they were standing alone.
- 73.9% of youth reported feeling safe in their neighborhoods.
- Youth are more likely to believe that they have been discriminated against when they had been approached by a police officer while standing alone.
- Male new young Americans are much more likely to believe that police officers view them as trouble-makers than females are. Females are also more likely to believe that police officers view them as "good kids."



- Youth who believed that adults view them as trouble-makers were also likely to believe that police had a similar impression. Those youth who believed that adults view them as good kids were also likely to believe that police perceived them similarly.
- Those new young Americans who do not feel safe in their neighborhoods reported seeing more police in their neighborhoods than those who reported feeling safe in their neighborhoods.

### **Youths' Understanding of How the Juvenile Justice System Works**

- 31% of the youth reported that a child could be arrested for committing a crime, 12.5% for disobeying the law, and 5.9% for doing something wrong.
- 32.2% of the youth believed that when someone is arrested they immediately go to jail.
- 42.7% of the youth replied that when a youth is arrested they have no rights or the same rights as adults.
- 63.7% of the youth believed that a youth can have a lawyer if they are arrested.

### **Surveyed Youth and “Gang” Involvement**

- Youth surveyed provided the typical range of responses to define, “What is a gang?” The responses ranged from a “group of people who express violence, start trouble, or fight” to “a group of friends or people who hang out.”
- 8.9% of the youth responded that they are active in a “gang.” Those youth who reported participation in a “gang” are more likely to lead to arrest than non-gang members.
- 52.8% of the youth responded that there are “gangs” in their schools.

### **The Juvenile Justice System Is Fair and Child Has Been Arrested**

Youth who had been arrested were much less likely to find the juvenile justice system fair than those who had not been arrested.

*Of the 20.8% of the youth who believe that the juvenile justice system is fair:*

- 9.5% have been arrested
- 84.1% have not been arrested
- 6.3% did not respond to the question

*Of the 13.5% of the youth who find the juvenile justice system is not fair:*

- 26.8% have been arrested
- 68.3% have not been arrested
- 4.9% did not respond

### **Juvenile Justice System Is Fair and Someone in Child’s Family Had Been To Court**

There is an association between whether a family member has been to court and youths’ beliefs that the court system is fair.

*Of the 20.8% of the youth who responded “yes, the juvenile justice system is fair”:*

- 47.6% had a family member involved with the courts
- 52.4% did not have a family member involved with the courts



*Of the 13.5% of the youth who responded, “the juvenile justice system is not fair”:*

- 51.2% had a family member involved with the courts
- 48.8% did not have a family member involved with the courts

*Of the 54.1% of the youth who responded that they do not know if the juvenile justice system is fair:*

- 43.9% had a family member involved with the courts
- 54.3% did not have a family member involved with the courts
- 1.8% did not respond to the question

### **Juvenile Justice System Is Fair and Child’s Friends Have Been To Court**

Surveyed youth who had friends who had been to court are more likely to believe that the juvenile justice system is unfair, while those who had not had friends involved in the juvenile justice court system were more likely to believe that the juvenile justice system is fair.

*Of the 20.8% who responded “Yes, the juvenile justice system is fair”:*

- 33.3% have friends who have been to court
- 66.7% do not have friends who have been to court

*Of the 13.5% who responded “No, the juvenile justice system is not fair”:*

- 53.7% have friends who have been to court
- 46.3% do not have friends who have been to court

*Of the 54.1% who responded they don’t know if the juvenile justice system is fair:*

- 42.1% have friends who had been to court
- 54.3% did not have friends who had been to court

### **The Juvenile Justice System Is Fair and Child Feels He Or She Has Been Discriminated Against**

Surveyed youth who believe that the juvenile justice system is unfair, are also more likely to perceive they have been discriminated against than new young Americans who believe that the Juvenile Justice System is fair.

- 42.9% felt that they have been discriminated against
- 54% do not feel that they have been discriminated against
- 3.2% did not respond

*Of the 13.5% who replied “No, the juvenile justice system is not fair”:*

- 68.3% felt that they have been discriminated against
- 31.7% do not feel that they have been discriminated against

*Of the 54.1% who responded that they do not know if the juvenile justice system is fair:*

- 42.7% feel that they have been discriminated against
- 56.1% do not feel that they have been discriminated against



**Distribution of Arrests by Country of Origin of Youth Surveyed**

Of the 9.9% of the youth who had been arrested, the percentages below demonstrate their country of origin. Of the 303 youth surveyed, 26.7% of the arrested youth identified themselves as being from Vietnam.

Country	Percentage
Vietnam	26.7%
Haiti	13.3
Cape Verde	10.0
China	10.0
Caribbean	6.7
Cambodia	6.7
India	3.3
Philippines	3.3
Somalia	3.3
Multi-Nation (Latin American)	3.3
Ghana	3.3
America	3.3
Puerto Rico	3.3
Unknown	3.3

**Police Approach Youth When Standing Alone and Gender of Youth**

Surveyed youth reported that males are more likely to be approached by police when standing alone than are females.

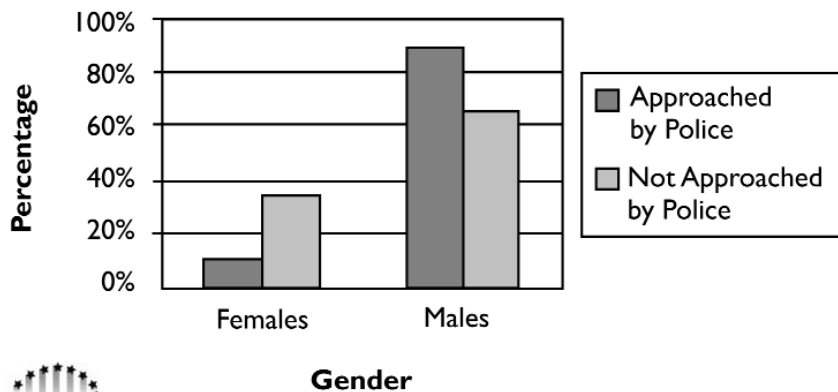
**Out of all of the females in the survey:**

- 9.3% of females had been approached by the police when they were standing alone
- 82.9% of females had not been approached
- 7.9% of females did not respond to this question

**Out of all the males in the survey:**

- 31.4% of males have been approached by the police when they were standing alone
- 61.6% of males have not been approached by the police when they were standing alone
- 6.9% of males did not respond to this question.

**Gender Distribution of Being Approached by the Police**



## **Police Approach Youth Standing Alone and Youth Perceives Self to be Target of Discrimination**

Of the new young Americans surveyed, those who had been stopped by police when they were standing alone were more likely to also believe that they had been discriminated against.

*Of the 21.1% of the youth who have been approached by police standing alone:*

- 56.3% feel that he or she has been discriminated against
- 39.1% do not feel that they have been discriminated against
- 4.7% did not respond

*Of the 71.3% of the youth who have not been approached by police standing alone:*

- 38.0% feel that he or she have been discriminated against
- 56.9% do not feel that they have been discriminated against
- 5.1% did not respond

## **Youths' Perception of How They are Viewed by the Police and Gender of Youth**

Male youth surveyed are more likely to believe that police officers view them as trouble-makers than females are. Females are also more likely to believe that police officers view them as "good kids."

*Of the 95% of females who responded:*

- 13.6% believed that police officers view them as trouble-makers.
- 77.1% believed that police officers view them as good kids.
- 3.6% were neutral.
- 0.7% believed that they are viewed as both.

*Of the 92.6% of males who responded:*

- 41.5% believed that police officers view them as trouble-makers.
- 52.2% believed that police officers view them as good kids.
- 2.5% were neutral.

## **Youth Feel Safe In Their Neighborhood and Youth See Many Police In Their Neighborhood**

The youth surveyed who reported not feeling safe in their neighborhoods also reported seeing more police in their neighborhoods than those youth who feel safe in their neighborhoods.

*Of the 73.9% of the youth who replied yes, that they feel safe in their neighborhoods:*

- 54% stated "yes" they see many police in their neighborhoods
- 45.1% stated "no" they do not see many police in their neighborhoods
- 0.4% stated "sometimes" they see police in their neighborhoods
- 0.4% did not respond

*Of the 40.9% of the youth who replied no, that they do not feel safe in their neighborhoods:*

- 62.5% stated "yes" they see many police in their neighborhoods
- 34.4% stated "not" they do not see many police in their neighborhoods
- 1.6% stated that they did not notice
- 1.6% did not respond



## **Youths' Perceptions Of How Adults View Them & Youths'**

### **Perception Of How Police Views Them**

Surveyed youth who believed that adults view them as trouble-makers were also likely to believe that police had a similar impression. Those youth who believed that adults view them as a "good" kid were also likely to believe that police perceived them similarly.

*Of the 73.6% of the youth who replied that adults view them as a "good" kid:*

- 22.9% believed that the police view them as trouble-makers.
- 74.0% believed that the police view them as good kids.
- 1.8% stated "both."

*Of the 13.9% of the youth who replied that adult's view them as trouble-makers:*

- 69.0% believed that police view them as a trouble-maker.
- 26.2% believed that police view them as a good kid.
- 2.4% stated "both."

### **Youth Report on "Gang" Involvement and School Status**

Surveyed youth who report participating in a gang report a lower level of school attendance and participation than youth who report that they are not in a "gang."

*Of the 8.9% of the youth who are in a gang:*

- 92.6% are in school
- 7.4% are not in school

*Of those youth who are not in a gang:*

- 95.3% are in school
- 3.2% are not in school
- 1.6% did not respond

*Of the 8.9% of the youth who reported participating in a "gang":*

- 29.6% have been arrested
- 63% have not been arrested
- 7.4% are unknown

*Of the 83.5% of the youth who are not in a "gang":*

- 8.3% have been arrested
- 84.6% have not been arrested
- 7.1% are unknown



### **Understanding Correlations:**

*These positive correlations indicate that respondents were more likely to endorse both of these opinions than they were to endorse only one. The higher the number, the more positive or stronger the correlation.*

#### **CORRELATIONS MANIFESTING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS:**

- Parents would be “mad” and “disappointed” if youth was arrested.<sup>35</sup>
- Friends would not care and would think it cool if youth was arrested.<sup>36</sup>

#### **CORRELATIONS MANIFESTING MODERATE RELATIONSHIPS:**

- Parents and friend would be disappointed if youth was arrested.<sup>37</sup>
- Parents would be mad and friends would be disappointed if youth was arrested.<sup>38</sup>

### **Summaries of Survey Responses**

#### **Do you feel safe in your neighborhood?**

*Of the 95% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 73.9%
- “no” 21.1%

#### **Do you see many police in your neighborhood?**

*Of the 96% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 54.5%
- “no” 40.9%
- “sometimes” 0.3%
- “don’t notice” 0.3%

#### **How do you feel when you see police?**

*Of the 96% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “don’t really care” 52.5%
- “safe” 24.4%
- “nervous” 13.9%
- “angry” 5.3%

#### **How do you think a police officer views you?**

*Of the 95% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “good kid” 63.4%
- “trouble-maker” 28.7%
- “neutral” 3.0%
- “both” 0.3%

#### **Do police ever approach you when you are standing or walking alone?**

*Of the 92.4% of youth who responded to the question,*

- “yes” 21.1%
- “no” 71.3%



**If yes, what were you doing when they stopped you?**  
*Of the 16.8% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “walking home/walking” 10.9%
- “nothing” 1.7%
- “sitting on my friend’s stoop” 1.0%
- “smoking a cigarette” 0.7%
- “I don’t really care,  
I don’t really like them” 0.3%
- “at the train station” 0.3%
- “police offices was a friend” 0.3%
- “being myself” 0.3%
- “waiting for the bus” 0.3%
- “walking away from a fight” 0.3%
- “trespassing” 0.3%
- “loitering” 0.3%

**When you are standing with your friends, how often does a police officer approach you?**  
*Of the 96% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “never” 51.8%
- “sometimes” 15.5%
- “rarely” 14.5%
- “depends on who I am  
standing with” 11.9%
- “all the time” 2.3%

**Do you wish there were more police in your neighborhood?**  
*Of the 93% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 28.4%
- “no” 64.4%
- “doesn’t matter” 0.7%

**How do other adults view you, as a trouble-maker or as a good kid?**  
*Of the 96% of youth who responded to this question*

- “trouble-maker” 13.9%
- “good kid” 73.6%
- “don’t know” 7.6%
- “depends” 0.7%

**Has anyone in your family been to court?**  
*Of the 90% of youth who responded to this question*

- “yes” 41.3%
- “no” 48.5%



**If yes, who?**

*Of the 36% of youth who responded to this question*

• “sibling”	8.3%
• “father”	6.6%
• “mother”	6.3%
• “cousin”	5.9%
• “aunts and uncles”	3.6%
• “several family members”	2.3%
• “both parents”	2.0%
• “self”	0.3%
• “grandmother”	0.3%
• “step-parents”	0.3%

**If yes, why was he/she in court?**

*Of the 21.8% of the youth who responded to the question,*

• “criminal charges”	8.7%
• “family issues or problems”	5.9%
• “traffic violations”	6.9%
• “jury duty/witness”	1.2%
• “citizenship/immigration”	0.6%
• “other/don’t know”	5.6%

**If yes, how many times has he/she been involved with the courts?**

*Of the 31% of the youth who responded to the question,*

• “1-2”	11.6%
• “2-5”	8.9%
• “many”	5.0%
• “10”	0.3%
• “don’t know”	5.3%

**If yes, what did he/she say about the experience?**

*Of the 22% of youth who responded to this question,*

• “bad”	9.2%
• “nothing”	6.9%
• “scary/nervous”	1.0%
• “regrets it”	0.7%
• “good- they won”	0.7%
• “cool”	0.7%
• “too long”	0.7%
• “language barrier was difficult”	0.7%
• “confusing/intimidating”	0.7%
• “unfair sentence”	0.3%
• “other”	0.3%



**Have any of your friends been to court?**

*Of the 89% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 38.0%
- “no” 51.2%

**If yes, how many of your friends have been to court?**

*Of the 32% of youth who responded to this question,*

- 1 friend 6.3%
- 2 friends 7.3%
- 3 friends 2.6%
- several friends 15.2%
- “don't know” 1.0%

**If yes, why were they in court?**

*Of the 27% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “fighting/violence” 8.7%
- “misdemeanors” 6.2%
- “school issues” 4.7%
- “general” 3.1%
- “don't know” 2.2%
- “drugs” 1.3%
- “family problems” 0.6%
- “sexual crimes” 0.3%

**If yes, what did they say about the experience?**

*Of the 19% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “negative descriptions of the experience” 9.7%
- “nothing/don't care” 5.3%
- “alright/cool” 1.6%
- “racist cops” 0.9%

**Have you ever been arrested?**

*Of the 89% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 9.9%
- “no” 79.5%



**Why were you arrested?**

*Of the 8.6% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “fighting” 3.0%
- “trespassing” 1.3%
- “stealing/shoplifting” 1.3%
- “domestic violence” 1.0%
- “several arrests” 1.0%
- “shooting” 0.3%
- “armed robbery” 0.3%
- “disobeying the law” 0.3%

**Describe what happened when you were arrested.**

*Of the 7% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “I was handcuffed roughly” 1.3%
- “read my rights and cuffed me” 1.0%
- “people jumped me” 0.7%
- “jail” 0.7%
- “court” 0.7%
- “I ran” 0.7%
- “I was angry” 0.3%
- “put in a room and questioned” 0.3%
- “I stayed calm” 0.3%
- “called parent” 0.3%
- “I was scared” 0.3%
- “I was put in a cell” 0.3%

**What was the charge?**

*Of the 8% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “assault and battery” 2.0%
- “trespassing” 1.3%
- “assault with a deadly weapon” 1.0%
- “several charges” 0.7%
- “shoplifting” 0.7%
- “none” 0.7%
- “can’t say” 0.3%
- “armed robbery” 0.3%
- “obstruction” 0.3%
- “harassment” 0.3%
- “attempted murder” 0.3%

**Was this your first arrest?**

*Of the 9% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 7.3%
- “no” 1.7%



**Where you treated fairly by the officers?**

*Of the 8.6% of youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 4.3%
- “no” 4.3%

**Why were you not treated fairly?**

*Of the 4% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “the officers wouldn’t listen to me” 1.7%
- “my ethnicity/skin color” 1.3%
- “my looks” 0.3%
- “I don’t know” 0.7%

**What happened in court?**

*Of the 4.3% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “charges dropped” 1.0%
- “gave me probation officer” 0.7%
- “they did not lower my bail because I am poor” 0.3%
- “big argument” 0.3%
- “they continued for one year” 0.3%
- “I was discriminated against” 0.3%
- “I got screwed” 0.3%
- “juvenile hall” 0.3%
- “community service” 0.3%
- “none” 0.3%

**What was the outcome of your case?**

*Of the 6.9% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “probation” 3.6%
- “charges dropped” 1.7%
- “community service” 1.0%
- “don’t know” 0.3%
- “juvenile hall” 0.3%

**Why would a kid be arrested?**

*Of the 69% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “committing a crime” 31.0%
- “disobeying the law” 12.5%
- “for many things” 6.3%
- “doing something bad/misbehavior” 5.9%
- “being a trouble maker” 3.0%
- “stealing” 2.3%
- “discrimination/stereotyped as a trouble maker” 2.0%
- “drugs, murder” 1.3%



- “cop hating” 1.0%
- “don’t know” 1.0%
- “does drugs” 1.0%
- “hanging in the wrong place” 0.7%
- “using a gun” 0.3%
- “wrongly accused of crime” 0.3%

**What happens when a kid is arrested?**

*Of the 73% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “they get put in jail” 21.5%
- “juvenile hall” 10.2%
- “they go to court” 9.9%
- “parent called, kid taken to station, parent comes or lock up” 6.3%
- “don’t know” 4.0%
- “they go to the police station” 3.3%
- “get a record” 3.0%
- “probation” 2.0%
- “he cries/gets scared./doesn’t cooperate” 2.3%
- “get in trouble” 1.7%
- “they get harassed” 1.7%
- “deportation” 0.7%
- “nothing much” 0.7%
- “brought to jail and have to be bailed out” 0.7%
- “stripped of rights” 0.7%
- “get punished” 0.7%
- “parents are disappointed, lose trust” 0.7%
- “go in cop car” 0.7%
- “they get charged or set free” 0.7%
- “trial by jury” 0.3%
- “juvenile or foster home” 0.3%
- “DYS” 0.3%
- “If convicted, you go to jail” 0.3%
- “put in handcuffs and brought to their home for questioning” 0.3%
- “parents take the fault” 0.3%
- “they will be better” 0.3%

**If I was arrested, “My parents would be disappointed.”**

*Of the 85% of the youth responding,*

- “true” 78.2%
- “somewhat true” 3.3%
- “not true” 3.0%



**If I was arrested, “My parents would be mad.”**

*Of the 85% of the youth responding,*

- “true” 75.6%
- “not true” 1.7%

**If I was arrested, “My friends would be disappointed.”**

*Of the 83% of the youth responding,*

- “true” 40.9%
- “somewhat true” 28.4%
- “not true” 13.9%

**If I was arrested, “My friends wouldn’t care.”**

*Of the 84% of the youth responding,*

- “true” 14.9%
- “somewhat true” 19.1%
- “not true” 49.5%

**If I was arrested, “My friends would think it’s cool.”**

*Of the 84% of the youth responding,*

- “true” 7.9%
- “somewhat true” 18.5%
- “not true” 57.8%

**What rights do kids have when they are arrested?**

**Top 4 Responses:**

- “don’t know”/ “none” 32.7%
- indicated knowledge of *Miranda* rights 22.0%
- same as adults” 5.0%
- “depends on the crime” 4.3%

**Can a kid have a lawyer?**

*Of the 90% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 63.7%
- “no” 4.3%
- “not sure” 22.1%

**Can a Judge help a kid?**

*Of the 87% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “yes” 63.4%
- “no” 19.8%
- “don’t know” 4.0%



**If a kid is found guilty, what happens to him or her?**

*Of the 76% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “get convicted and sentenced” 22.8%
- “juvenile hall” 19.1%
- “depends on the crime” 12.5%
- “don’t know” 9.9%

**Do you think the juvenile justice system is a fair system?**

*Of the 88% of the youth who sample responded to this question,*

- “yes” 20.8%
- “no” 13.5%
- “don’t know” 54.1%

**Why or why not?**

**Yes it is a fair system.**

- “it stops the crime/ makes kids responsible for crime” 3.3%
- “you gotta pay for what you did” 2.0%
- “helps kids” 1.7%
- “it’s not biased” 1.7%
- “because it’s only for kids” 1.3%
- “kids who do something won’t do it again” 0.9%
- “it has to be fair in order to be a system” 0.7%
- “keeps the country safe” 0.7%
- “it’s not too harsh, but strict” 0.6%

**No it is not a fair system.**

- “judges people” 4.3%
- “unfair to kids/ rights are not clear” 2.7%
- “not the best method of discipline” 0.9%
- “other” 0.9%

**What is a “gang”?**

*Of the 84% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “a group of people who express violence start trouble or fight” 46.9%
- “a group of friends or people who hang out” 26.1%
- “a group that could be good or bad” 7.3%
- “I don’t know” 3.3%

**Are there “gangs” at your school?**

- “yes” 52.8%
- “no” 38.3%
- “don’t know” 2.3%
- left blank 6.6%



**Do you belong to a “gang”?**

- “yes” 8.9%
- “no” 83.5%
- left blank 7.6%

**If yes, who is in your “gang”?**

*Of the 9% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “friends” 6.6%
- “people at my community center” 1.0%
- “Tiger Society” 0.3%
- “really big people” 0.3%
- “Rip” 0.3%

**If yes, what does your “gang” do?**

*Of the 8% of the youth who responded to this question,*

- “hang out” 5.0%
- “illegal activities” 1.0%
- “study” 0.7%
- “money, territory, respect” 0.3%
- “fight for our rights” 0.3%
- “work out” 0.3%
- “shoot people” 0.3%



# Endnotes

1. 7.1% were actually born in Thailand and 7.1 were born in the Philippines probably reflecting a stay in refugee camps in those countries.
2. An additional 21.7% reported being born in China.
3. 33% reported being born in Canada.
4. U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.
5. Compiled by Lea Crusey, "Bay State Immigrant Facts and Stats, 2002," MIRA Coalition, Boston, MA, 2.
6. Due to poor question structure, it is unclear how many of the responding youth live with both parents.
7. This association is statistically significant and the Chi-Square value is more than that of the  $\chi^2$  critical indicating that we can reject the null hypothesis and assert that this relationship exists in the population from which the sample was drawn ( $\chi^2=25.02$ ,  $df=15$ ,  $p=.05$ ).
8. .471
9. .671
10. .576
11. .562
12. .549
13. .546
14. .392
15. .373
16. .336
17. .298
18. .287
19. .279
20. .273
21. .232
22. A regression analysis was conducted to determine the relative strengths of association of two beliefs: 1) "there is much conflict between different cultural groups in the US" and "Americans think they are better than people from other countries." This analysis found a **strong** relationship between the two beliefs.
23. A regression analysis was conducted to determine the relative strengths of association of two beliefs: 1) "it will be harder for me to succeed because of how people think of me" among new young Americans and 2) "I get frustrated because I feel I have fewer opportunities" and found a **strong** relationship between the two beliefs.
24. This response included aunts, uncles, grandparents and roommates.
25. Interestingly, there was not statistically significant relationship established by comparing the length of time youth lived in the U.S. and the amount of time a language other than English is spoken in the youth's home.
26. .432
27. .411
28. .390
29. .368
30. .298
31. .294
32. .293
33. .261
34. .215
35. Strong positive relationship of .576
36. Strong positive relationship of .413.
37. Moderate, positive relationship of .349.
38. Moderate, positive relationship of .314.

