

Ideas...Policies...Programs.....Solutions

David Rubel Associates

I am pleased to send you a newsletter that describes recent projects of my consultant practice. Over the past five years, much of my work has focused on two areas: helping New York City children receive the education services they are entitled to under the law; developing programs that help adults achieve economic self sufficiency.

The overall goal of my practice remains the same: how to transform ideas into programs that work. The programs begin as well researched concept papers. The concept papers usually have bipartisan appeal; they are well received no matter who is Mayor, Governor or President. They also include recommendations based on better utilization of available dollars instead of having to undertake the burden of raising new dollars.

My approach is rooted in the convergence of social policy and muckraking. I have also learned that connections between seemingly unrelated areas of intervention and need offer us fertile ground for conceiving new programs. Equally important, an analysis of problems and solutions should be conducted within a totality of societal relationships. Finally, all activity must stand up to a measurable test of usefulness and effect. The *ideas policies programs solutions* projects described here have been designed so the practitioners who run community development and human services organizations can plug them into their day to day work.


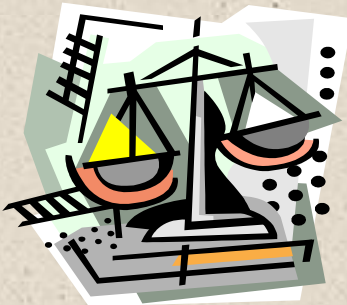
Sincerely,

David Rubel

1. Helping New York City Parentally Placed Children in Private School Students Access the Special Education Services they are Entitled to Under Federal and State Law

<p>Problem</p>	<p>In New York State, children with learning differences attending private schools are entitled to most of the same services as children attending public schools. These publicly funded services can be crucial to helping children reach their academic and independent living skills potential. In New York City, the Department of Education, through the 10 Regional Committees on Special Education (CSE), has the responsibility for assessment and delivery of special education services to parentally placed children in private schools. While overutilization of services is a problem in the public schools, underutilization can be a problem with private school children. Two client organizations, the Sephardic Community Federation (SCF) and the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg (UJO), wanted to know whether or not utilization of special education services was a problem for their school age children. To better understand the problem, the following questions needed to be asked: to what extent are children attending yeshivas and day schools accessing the services? Are the services being accessed in numbers that are close to comparable with other parts of New York State as well as national figures? How do the numbers break down for children with an Individual Education Plan (IEP)? How many children have an IEP but are not receiving services? Are children more likely to receive services during all of 13 years of elementary and secondary education or does utilization of services vary by grade (such as the high school vs middle vs elementary)? Within the day school and yeshiva communities, are all of the groups receiving services in comparable numbers or are there significant differences? In order to answer these questions, the special education student utilization data maintained by the NYC-DOE needed to be made available.</p> 
<p>Solution</p>	<p>On behalf of the SCF and the UJO, and working closely with the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York and Agudath Israel of America, David Rubel Associates (DRA) undertook a protracted effort to have the New York City Department of Education (DOE) release the data showing how many students are receiving NYC-DOE funded special education services by individual private school. In March of 2010, the DOE released the data for all parochial schools including the Catholic, Islamic, Lutheran and Greek Orthodox schools. The data was released for two groups: 1) students with an IEP receiving services and 2) students with an IEP but not receiving services. On behalf of the SCF and the UJO, DRA undertook a thorough analysis of the data. Advocates, school administrators and community leaders were interviewed to get their input. Discussions of the findings were initiated with the DOE. Two separate working reports were prepared. The first report looked at the sharp drop off in service utilization that occurs in the citywide yeshiva community for the high school years. After grade eight, the percentage of children receiving services drops from 10% to less than 3%. Most experts agree that the high school years are actually a time when services can make a large positive difference for a student with learning differences such as dyslexia and ADHD. The second report sought to better understand the very low utilization of DOE services by children attending yeshivas in the Williamsburg community (and to a lesser extent in Boro Park). The DOE data showed that less than 3% in this group were receiving services. This very low number meant between 400 to 600 children are attending mainstream schools and not receiving the services they are entitled to and that the Child Find requirement of the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is not being met.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>Since the NYC-DOE released the data, DRA has been working closely with the NYC-DOE, client organizations and schools to programmatically respond to findings highlighted in the two reports. The UJO of Williamsburg is working with the NYC-DOE on improving Child Find strategies for the 18,000 children that attend yeshivas in Williamsburg. One critical improvement will be to ensure that children with a learning disability can start receiving services in the language they are learning to read in (mainly Yiddish) as early as Kindergarten. The Sephardic Community Federation (SCF) along with the Board of Jewish Education (BJE) is working identifying new ways to encourage parents and their high school children to reconsider using DOE services. The menu of services must be expanded to include academic support skills and transitional planning (how to prepare for adult life, self- advocacy, career development with a focus on college or vocational education). All high school parochial school students with an IEP can benefit from this new approach.</p>

2. Community Planning Studies Result in New Action Strategies for Human Services Organizations

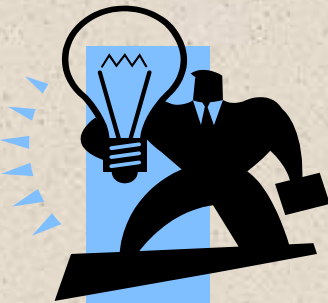
<p>Problem</p>	<p>How do neighborhood service providers make decisions about which needs are greatest, identify strengths, weaknesses, and under utilized Resources. How are connections made between different areas of neighborhood service delivery and the needs of consumers? Are there untested strategies that could make a significant difference? Is your community getting its fair share of resources?</p> 
<p>Solution</p>	 <p>In 1990, the first edition of "<i>How to Conduct a Needs Assessment Study of Your Community A Research, Planning and Advocacy Manual for New York City Community Leaders and Human Service Staff</i>" was prepared (it was funded by the NYC-Community Development Agency). The Manual describes a methodology for systematically assessing neighborhood needs and resources. It shows, step by step, how data can be transformed into arguments that warrant community change. 10 different types of arguments and 16 different types of recommendations that can be used by practitioners are identified. The manual can be used to study any area of intervention from child and youth services to housing and economic development. Every two years, the manual is revised and updated. The appendix includes rankings of the 59 Community Districts for 17 different social indicators. The manual has been used in hundreds of needs and resources assessment training workshops.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>The <i>How to Conduct a Needs Assessment Study of Your Community A Research, Planning and Advocacy Manual for New York City Community Leaders and Human Service Staff</i> is the primary planning tool used for conducting client sponsored studies. Past community studies undertaken include Washington Heights-Inwood, Bushwick, Lower East Side and Crown Heights. Recent studies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2000, a comprehensive needs assessment study of the northwest Queens neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Woodside, Long Island City, Astoria and Elmhurst was completed. The sponsor of the study is Sunnyside Community Services, Inc (SCS). The Study presented 15 main findings and 17 action strategy recommendations for human service practitioners and their organizations. - In 2003, a study on the workforce development needs and resources of the South Williamsburg area was undertaken. This study was sponsored by the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) and the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg. The study has attracted significant philanthropic interest and funds have been made available to implement the recommendations. 2008: An update to the study was prepared for Met Council on Jewish Poverty and UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies in 2008. The updated study showed how government funding for workforce development and adult education are not being equitably distributed to the Williamsburg Chassidic community. Despite generating these dollars, being eligible to receive them, and needing them to cover the cost of career development and vocational skills training programs, none end up serving the Chassidic community. - In 2006, a needs and resources study of the HIV-AIDS programs and services in the Bronx was conducted for the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Four of the study recommendations are being implemented by CAB in 2007 (CAB is now known as Bronx Works).

3. New York City NCLB Eligible Private School Students Will Now Benefit from \$17 Million Dollars in Services Annually

<p>Problem</p>	<p>The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires a local school district (New York City Department of Education) to use a Federal Education Department approved formula for distributing funds to public and private school students on an equitable basis. The Title I and Title III programs both must comply with this regulation. Title I covers the cost of providing remedial education in reading, writing and math. Title III is for helping Limited English Proficient students improve their English language skills. The New York State Education Department is responsible for providing oversight to ensure that local school districts use an equitable funding formula. If a funding formula is not equitable, it could mean that children attending private or public school are not receiving the funding for services they are entitled to under the Federal NCLB law. In New York City, with 20% of all school age children attending parochial and private independent schools, the issue of equitable formulas is very important. An error in the actual funding formula or the administration of the funding formula could translate into millions of dollars.</p> 
<p>Solution</p>	<p>Title III Limited English Proficiency: During the 2007 and 2008, under the sponsorship of the Sephardic Community Federation, David Rubel Associates (DRA) conducted a thorough analysis of the distribution of Title III funds for New York City public and private school students. The investigation uncovered that a public school child was receiving \$64 more than a private school child each year. In 2007-08, there were 32,595 Limited English Proficient children attending private schools. The findings were presented to the New York City Standing Committee of Religious and Independent Schools. The Standing Committee gave the findings to the New York City Department of Education (the Committee includes representatives from the Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, Islamic and Greek schools).</p> <p>Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act- Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged: During the Summer and Fall of 2008, under the sponsorship of the Sephardic Community Federation, David Rubel Associates (DRA) conducted a thorough analysis of the system used to count children for the Title I Generating Funds Survey (also known as the Poverty Survey). The analysis uncovered a reporting system in place that was failing to count 10,000 nonpublic school children even though the schools entered these children as meeting the Title I Poverty criteria (participating or eligible to participate in the School Free Lunch Program) for generating funds. DRA prepared submitted a written analysis of findings of this highly inequitable situation to the NYC-Department of Education. DRA lead the efforts to change the reporting system to ensure that all eligible children would be counted for generating Title I dollars in 2009 and future years.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>Since these two formulas were corrected by the Department of Education, the nonpublic schools are now receiving more than \$15 million in Title I funds and \$2.5 million in Title III new funds annually. The increase in funding has allowed for the implementation of a larger menu of services provided to eligible children (all of these services are already part of the Title I menu for NYC public school children as well in practice in hundreds of school districts across the country). As the Title I menu offers new opportunities, more children will be able to benefit from the services they are entitled to under the law.</p> 

4. Northern Brooklyn Small Business Incubator for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

<p>Problem</p>	<p>What do Bill Gates, Steven Jobs and Thomas Edison have in common with millions of other successful business start ups. They launched their businesses and inventions in less than 500 square feet of space. One of the biggest problems for aspiring entrepreneurs in North Brooklyn is finding a small space to grow their business in. The "garage or spare room capitalism" model that is practiced throughout the country is very challenging here with one of the highest overcrowding rates in the City. No one has a spare room or garage to create, launch and build their business in. Compounding this problem is that almost all State and City financed incubators are industry specific with most geared to high tech enterprises. Left out are the thousands of small entrepreneurs who have identified a niche to build their business in. The aspiring entrepreneurs from the Latino, African American, Chassidic and other communities of North Brooklyn (Greenpoint, Williamsburg, Bushwick and Bedford Stuyvesant) have the potential to be a large job creation machine. The missing piece is the public policy recognition that incubators are also needed for small businesses (covering a range of industry sectors including wholesale, importing, light manufacturing, apparel, accessories, technology, food and services) and deserve capital financing with public dollars. Over \$1 billion in State and City public dollars has been used to fund the development of high tech research centers and incubators. Public dollars should also be used for an incubator for the small business start up sector.</p>
<p>Solution</p>	<p>The Broadway Triangle Urban Renewal Area covers 50 acres of a mix of private and city owned land. The Urban Renewal Area is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). The United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg (UJO), Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Center (RBSCC) and Greenpoint Manufacturing Design Center (GMDC) have jointly put together a proposal for a 100,000 square feet business incubator and training center. The business incubator project will be targeted to aspiring entrepreneurs with promising business plans, fledgling businesses, and existing businesses affected by rezoning plan. Both incubator tenants and other small and fledgling businesses will benefit from the volunteer services of industry experts, business building and management workshops, financial advice and help with access to credit. Partnerships with local business schools will be developed to provide onsite classes. Customized employment training will also be provided to match local job seekers to job opportunities offered by incubator tenants.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>The United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg (UJO), Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Center (RBSCC) and Greenpoint Manufacturing Design Center (GMDC) have presented a proposal for a 100,000 square feet business incubator and training center to the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and his staff. The Small Business Incubator Projects has received strong support from local elected officials across North Brooklyn as well as the New York City Economic Development Corporation and Department of Housing Preservation and Development.</p>



5. \$50 Million Per Year Unspent in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I Funds for Remedial Education Services for NYC Yeshiva School Children

<p>Problem</p>	<p>The Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I program pays for tutoring services in reading, writing and math skills as well as counseling for children who are struggling to keep up with their classmates. There are 90,000 students attending Yeshivas and Jewish day schools in New York City. At least half of them participate in the Federal School Free Lunch Program and come from low income families. However, since NCLB was enacted in 2001, only a small number of Yeshiva school children are receiving services from this important resource each year. In the 2005-06 school year, only 1,895 children attending Yeshivas received Title I funded remedial education services. The NYC-Department of Education (DOE) receives close to \$1 billion in Title One dollars each year. According to Federal regulations, a child generates Title I funding if they meet a poverty and residence criteria. Both public and nonpublic school children must meet these same eligibility rules. Title I funds are to be distributed between the public and nonpublic schools on an equitable dollar per child basis. The big questions that had never been answered were how many children attending yeshivas generate Title I funds, how many are eligible to receive Title I services and how can new delivery of service models be employed to ensure that children benefit.</p> <p>The NCLB Title I program also requires the NYC-DOE to consult with all nonpublic schools and closely work with them on implementing the Title I. Yet, prior to 2007, in Williamsburg alone, with a total yeshiva student enrollment of over 17,000, not a single yeshiva ever received a phone call from the DOE on why their schools were not participating in Title I. Across the country, in other large cities, yeshiva schools have successfully accessed the Title I program with very good results.</p>
<p>Solution</p>	<p>In 2006, under the sponsorship of the Sephardic Community Federation (SCF) and the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg (UJO), a 28 page investigation was conducted of the Federal, State and City NCLB Title I funding formulas and how funds were actually allocated to eligible students attending New York City Yeshivas. The report also looked at comparable situations with Yeshivas and nonpublic schools in other cities including Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Miami. The main findings of the report included: at least 30,000 children attending Yeshivas generate Title I funding. Using the 2007-08 NYC Department of Education (NYC-DOE) Title I per student of \$1,665 (for Brooklyn), at least \$50,000,000 should be available to spend on academically needy mostly Brooklyn yeshiva students. In most large cities, the local school district contracts out the provision of Title I services to the nonpublic schools through Third Party Providers (educational companies and organizations).</p> 
<p>Results</p>	<p>The SCF Report was presented to the New York City Deputy Mayor for Education Dennis Walcott in February of 2007. The Report served as the basis for negotiating with the City. The SCF and the UJO were appointed by Mayor Bloomberg to become members of the New York City Standing Committee of Religious and Independent Schools. As members of the Standing Committee, the SCF and UJO are now fully participating in the NCLB mandated annual Consultation Process between the DOE and the nonpublic schools. For the 2007-08 Consultation Process, the SCF and UJO prepared a list of recommendations and worked closely with other members of the parochial school community on negotiating structural program changes with the DOE. In March of 2008, the DOE made an official announcement that it will be implementing the main recommendations of the Standing Committee. These recommendations include the option of using a Third Party Vendor for provision of Title I services, restructuring of Title II Part A to allow schools to have more choice for professional development. In school year 2009-2010, 42 yeshivas began receiving Title I services through a third party vendor.</p>

6. Community Based Workforce Development Strategies to Reduce Chronic Under-Employment and Poverty in the Chassidic Jewish Communities of Williamsburg and Crown Heights

<p>Problem</p>	<p>The Chassidic communities of Williamsburg and Crown Heights have very large concentrations of families struggling to make ends meet. In both communities, around 70% of families manage with incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. As the regional economy continues to change, and old industries can no longer be relied upon for large employment, new strategies for family self sufficiency are very much needed. Most important, new career paths must be created that can lead to well paying jobs (and do not required a four year college degree). Williamsburg and Crown Heights are well situated across the bridge from the largest concentration of corporate jobs and wealth in the world. However, with thousands of new immigrants arriving every year to stake their fortune, the job market remains highly competitive. Young people launching a career or starting a business as well as older adults looking for a career change or a second job need help deciding what kind of training is the best fit for them. Training classes must show a strong connection to employer demand. Two different models were created for two different communities facing the same problem- <i>how to help adults get the skills they need to get a job and become economically independent</i>. The challenge is how to identify a training program that can prepare the labor pool in Williamsburg for careers in Manhattan.</p>
<p>Solution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Career Track in Computer Systems (CTICS): A new program to create a career track in Information Technology (IT) - the sector of the economy with the greatest unmet need for skilled labor. Two career tracks were developed: Microsoft Windows NT computer networking operating systems and SQL Server database administration. These career tracks are based on the participants passing a certification exam offered through the Microsoft Corporation. Professional class instruction was provided in Williamsburg by Baruch College-CUNY. This program received a contract from the New York City Department of Employment to operate for 18 months beginning July 1, 1999. The organization sponsor is the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg, Inc (UJO). ✦ Williamsburg Learning Institute: partnerships with various adult vocational schools are used to bring high demand training classes to Williamsburg. As employers look for new job skills, the UJO school can quickly put together a training class to teach the skills. All participants receive career counseling and job placement assistance. The organization sponsor is the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg, Inc. ✦ Crown Heights Career Advice and Assistance Program: residents of Crown Heights can receive professional career counseling, training tuition support and placement to help launch a new career. The program is managed by FECS Health and Human Services in partnership with the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council.
<p>Results</p>	<p>Each program offers a viable path to economic independence. CTICS program: 7 people have stayed employed for the past ten years in professional IT related jobs. Williamsburg Learning Institute: every year an average of 250 men and women take career track training classes (CDL, small business management, real estate sales, facilities management, entrepreneurship, construction management, sales, AutoCad) in Williamsburg through the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg, Inc (UJO). Crown Heights Vocational Scholarships: After the first two years of operation, more than 40 people have successfully completed certificate based training programs and secured new employment.</p> 

The work of David Rubel Associates has been reported on in The New York Times, New York Daily News, New York Newsday, El Diario-La Prensa, City Limits Magazine, Chronicle of Philanthropy, Hamodia and Tablet Magazine.

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