Through the looking glass: The communication between nonprofit coalitions and the community

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Through the Looking Glass: The Communication between Nonprofit Coalitions and the Community

by

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Through the Looking Glass: The Communication between Nonprofit Coalitions and the Community

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Issues surrounding teenage sexuality are very controversial in the United States. This country has the highest rate of teen pregnancies in the industrial world. To help inform communities about the complexities of teen sexuality issues, nonprofit organizations and nonprofit coalitions use context-specific communication to design informative programs and materials that I classify as interface agents. Nonprofit coalitions and organizations implement these interface agents with hopes of combating the current schizophrenic sex messages we receive about sexuality from the media and the US administration. This research evaluates the communication that occurs between a nonprofit coalition and the community on the issue of teen sexuality. Fourteen members of the nonprofit coalition TEENS were interviewed about coalitional opinions of teen sexuality issues, the interface agent that TEENS designed, and membership in TEENS. Also, 54 viewers of the interface agent responded to a survey about their beliefs on teen sexuality issues, the interface agent, and TEENS.

Through my analysis of this data, the role of communication themes is examined. The coalition sees the needs of the community at three levels: home, local, and national. TEENS use their cumulative experience as a coalition to justify their use of the IA as one solution to the issues of teen pregnancy. Viewers of the IA report that education is the best way to solve the issues surrounding teen pregnancy. They state that the IA is good for general awareness, but the IA did little to inform the viewers about the sponsor organizations or the coalition. The theoretical implications of identification, internal/external communication, auto-communication, and paradox are discussed. Finally, policy implications that suggest more effective objectives for the coalition are suggested.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These pages mark the culmination of my two-year journey in the great mountain West. During my time at the University of Montana several people have entered my life and helped shape my future. First and foremost, I would like to thank a few faculty and staff members that have been invaluable to my career at the University of Montana. To begin, a large debt of gratitude is owed to my advisor, Shiv Ganesh. He had to endure two years of my antics and questioning as an advisee. Shiv has spent more time with my thesis than anyone else, and his ideas, editorial prowess and overall guidance has made this project possible. I also owe a big thank you to Melanie Trost. Her support and encouragement of my professional and personal life allowed me to continue when I hit those inevitable speed bumps along the way. I am very lucky to have worked with both Shiv and Melanie. Thank you! I would like to thank Annie Sondag as well for finding the time to read through this manuscript and offer an “outsider’s” perspective I could not have gained without her. Finally, I would like to thank Jan Perrin. Whether it was helping me figure out the university red tape or just talking to me about the Spartans, Jan always put a smile on my face and made my life easier.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge my family. Thank you for your support and love. I dedicate this thesis to my grandpa, Donald Round. You not only taught me how to fish but how to live life. I will always have a place for you in my heart. I hope I will continue to make you proud.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Chapter One: Introduction**

  Rationale 1
  Out of balance: Sex, Media and Politics 2
    Sex 2
    Media 6
    Politics 8
  The Counterweight: NPOs, Coalitions and Context-Specific Communication 11
    NPOs Defined 12
    The NPO Sector 12
    Context-Specific Communication 14

**Chapter Two: Literature Review**

  Lenses 22
    Identification 22
    Paradox 23
  Levels 24
    Community Centered Communication 24
      Staff/Client 26
      NPO/Community 27
      NPO/Community subsets 27
      Internal/External communication 30

**Chapter Three: Methods**

  Background and Overview 34
  Participants 36
  Instruments 39
  Procedures 41

**Chapter Four: The Coalition Results**

  Issues of Teen Pregnancy 44
    Home 45
    Local 47
    National 53
  The IA 56
    Objectives 56
    Logistics 61
  The Coalition 67
    Objectives 68
Chapter Five: The Viewers Results

Viewers on Teen Pregnancy

Question 4: How do you think the adolescent pregnancy, as an issue in (this community), should best be addressed? 89

Question 13: Please list where you think adolescents gain information about sex. 91

The IA

Question 5: How effective is the exhibit in meeting the goals of the coalition? 93

Question 6: Do you identify with the message(s) that are being portrayed in this exhibit? If yes, why, if no, why not? 97

Question 7: How well does this exhibit inform you about adolescent pregnancy prevention? Please explain why. 99

Question 12: What is the purpose of the (exhibit)? 100

Question 14: After viewing the (exhibit), are you more likely to speak with a family member (i.e. sibling, parent, child) about issues surrounding adolescent sexual activity? Why or Why not? 101

The Coalition

Question 8: Please list who you believe sponsored this event. 103

Question 9: From the above list, please give a brief description of the services you are aware these organizations provide. 104

Question 10 & 11: Are you aware of TEENS? If yes, please tell us what you think the coalition objectives are and how you learned about it. 106

Chapter Six: Discussion

Research Questions Revisited 110

Discussion Points 112

Chapter Seven: Implications

Theory 118

Policy 122

Limitations 123

Conclusion 124

Appendix A: Interview Schedule 125

Appendix B: Viewers Questionnaire 126

Reference List 130
## LIST OF TABLES

### Chapter Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Predictions of Implementation Communication</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model Use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Participant Summary</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Independent Coding Results</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adolescent Pregnancy Issue Categories</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Adolescent Pregnancy Issue Results</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sex Information Categories</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sex Information Results</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Effectiveness Categories</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Effectiveness Results</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Identification Categories</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Identification Results</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Prevention Results</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Exhibit Purpose Categories</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Exhibit Purpose Results</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Conversation Starter Categories</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Conversation Starter Results</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>IA Sponsor Results</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Awareness of Services Categories</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Awareness of Services Results</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>TEENS Awareness Results</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

**Chapter One**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>&quot;Untitled&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>&quot;Michael and Jackie&quot;</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter Three**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>&quot;Willie&quot;</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter Four**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>&quot;Claude&quot;</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter Five**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>&quot;Mother and Child&quot;</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Critics of our media world remind us that the United States is out of balance. In an environment where sex sells, it is difficult to find messages that promote sexual health and responsibility. Couple this with the current political climate, which promotes “abstinence-only” education, and we get a society filled with contradictory messages about sex. Yet, the needs of the United States population concerning sex education are evident. Teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are major threats to most Americans teenagers; however, very little is being done to inform people about issues concerning teenage sexuality. One way to spread knowledge is through the programs and services of nonprofit organizations (NPOs).

NPOs can assist in the education of local community members because they are best positioned to offer culturally specific information to local groups (for examples see Botvin, Epstein, Baker, et al., 1997; Botvin, Griffin, Diaz, & Ifill-Williams, 2001; Marsiglia, Holleran, & Jackson, 2000; Kandel, 1995; Hecth, Marsiglia, Elek-Fisk, et al., In press). An effective way for NPOs to reach local groups is to collaborate with agencies that offer similar services. These coalitions offer diverse opinions about community issues and can educate local residents while sharing expenses among all members involved in the coalition. This project, therefore, focuses upon the communication between a nonprofit coalition (NPC) and its community in the context of teen pregnancy/sexuality issues.

NPCs use various channels to deliver safe-sex messages to the community (e.g. campaigns, out reach programs). I define these channels as Interface Agents (IAs).
Interface agents are the *intentional, systematic, planned communication between an organization and its community*. How IAs are designed is paramount to the communication that occurs between the coalition and the community. IAs can eventually work to balance the tension between the media's portrayal of sexual activity and the abstinence-only information pushed by the current Republican administration, as well as inform the community about some of the complex issues surrounding teen pregnancy and sexuality.

I am specifically concerned with how issues of teen pregnancy are co-constructed by the community and NPCs. How does the community define its needs in terms of teen pregnancy? How do community based coalitions define community needs? In this chapter, I discuss issues involving teen sexuality (specifically teen pregnancy) in the US and emphasize the benefits NPOs’ and coalitions can offer the community with regard to these issues.

*Out of balance: Sex, Media and Politics*

*Sex*

Adolescents are having sex and with sexual activity comes risks. A recent survey conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that nationwide almost 7% of children have had sexual intercourse by the age of 13. This number balloons to 45.6% by the time they are in the 12th-grade (CDC, 2002). Of the students that reported being sexually active, 42% of those did not use a condom in their last sexual intercourse. Condom usage becomes even more problematic when you break down the numbers by grades. Sixty-eight percent of sexually active 9th-graders reported using condoms during their last sexual encounter. By the time students reach the 12th
grade, only half of them reported using a condom during their last sexual intercourse (CDC, 2002). One out of every two students, by the time they are seniors in high school, is having unprotected sex. But the story does not end there. Overall, 14% of high school students have had more than four sex partners during their lifetime, and approximately 8% of students have been forced to have sexual intercourse that they did not want. Broken down by gender, 10.3% of females have reported having unwanted sexual intercourse, as compared to 5.1% of males (CDC, 2002). Also, younger females are more likely to report having unwanted sex. Research shows that four in every ten females who had intercourse before 14 years of age report that it was not voluntary or wanted (Moore & Driscoll, 1997). In terms of risk involved with teenage sex activity, of the 15 million people who contract STIs annually, one quarter are teenagers (Kaiser Family Foundation, KFF, 1998). Moreover, they are also more likely to obtain STIs during this portion of their life than any other time period (CDC, 2000). Teen sexuality and unwanted sexual encounters are important and complex issues concerning adolescent pregnancy.

On the whole, we find that the US still has the highest rate of teen pregnancies and births in the developed world (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, NCPTP, 1997). Thirty-five percent of women become pregnant before the age of 20 (about 850,000 women) and 80% of those pregnancies are unintended (Henshaw, 2003; Henshaw 1998, emphasis added). Teenage pregnancies are more dangerous for the mother and the child, and to make matters worse, if the teen has also contracted an STI, it may be passed on to her child, or could possible be fatal for both the mother and the child (The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1999). Statistics show that teenagers are having sex and
are at risk, but speaking out on these teen sexuality issues in the U.S. is made more
difficult by the politics and morality of the religious right, which would prefer to keep the
dissemination of this material within the family and/or church.

Research done on communication patterns and risks involved with intercourse
reveal a troubling trend in American culture. Communication is occurring but the type
and breadth of conversations is not making an impact on issues of teen sexuality.
Research has shown that embarrassment and social norms may prevent some people from
disclosing important personal sexual information (Isbell, 2003). Even in relationships
characterized by frequent sexual interaction, talk about issues involved with intercourse is
uncommon (Metts & Fitzpatrick, 1992; Reel & Thompson, 1994). Edger, Freimuth,
Hammond, McDonald and Fink (1992) noted that “heterosexual college students do have
uncertainties about new sexual partners, but the motivation to reduce these uncertainties
is driven more by concern about potential for developing the relationship than by anxiety
over the risks inherent to sexual activity” (p.100). One study reports that only 20% of
sexually experienced students reported discussing safer sex topics with their partner
(Cline, Johnson, & Freeman, 1992). Yet, when people do talk about issues of sexual
activity, the focus is more likely to revolve around condom usage in terms of pregnancy
than any other risk factor (i.e. STIs). Unfortunately, even those who talk about safe sex
do not differ in condom usage as compared to those that do not talk about safe sex prior
to sex (Cline, Freeman, & Johnson, 1990).

Within in the family unit, the “birds and the bees” talk is notably absent for
teenagers. Only around 10% of American families have any kind of ongoing sex
discussion, and a majority of children and parents report dissatisfaction with the quantity and quality of family discussions about sexual issues (Warren, 1992).

These statistics still hold true even though research has shown that “healthy family sex communication facilitates children’s open discussion with dating partners and favorably influences their attitudes towards birth control” (Warren, 1992, p. 130). Even the texts given to teenagers about sexuality are problematic. In an article comparing two ideologically divergent popular female sexuality texts targeted towards teens, Hayden (2001) found that both texts wound up invoking a pro-life discourse, and gender norms were naturalized. Teenagers are engaging in intercourse, yet the messages (or lack of messages) about issues of teenage sexuality are mixed and infrequent.

Teenage sexual activity does occur in the US (surprise, surprise!!) and there is a significant risk associated with it; unfortunately, this information does not make it to the media spotlight. If new research is shocking enough, it may get a spot on the nightly news, but who are the people that watch the news? How much information is getting to
the people that need it most? To address the media issue, I next shift my focus from the reality of teenage sexual activity in the US, and evaluate the messages that are portrayed most often in the media.

Media

Increasingly more programs on television and the movies are depicting sex. Each year there are 14,000 portrayals of sex on television and in Hollywood movies. Of those 14,000 portrayals, only 165 deal with risks involved in sex, such as pregnancy and STIs (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001). Another study found that 75% of television programs involved sexual content, and 5.8 scenes per hour contain sexual talk and/or behavior (Kunkel, Cope, Farinola, Biely, Rollin, and Donnerstein, 1999). Importantly, risks involved with sex seem to be trivialized in this blitz of sexuality in the media. Only 4% of all sexually oriented content deals with risks, and of that 4% only half deal with risks as a direct topic (KFF, 1999). Even when the media does address issues of sex in sexual intercourse, the results are mixed. Dejong, Wolf, and Austin (2001) found that a large portion of safe-sex public service announcements (PSAs) miss their target. In an analysis of 56 PSAs, it was found that most failed to meet the needs of the high-risk target group. Only 5 of the 56 mentioned condom use, and 9 out of 10 PSAs failed to make any mention of alternative solutions of preventative measures whatsoever (Dejong et al., 2001). As stated earlier, the messages about issues of sexual activity are out there but they are mixed, vague and infrequent at best. And when it comes to portraying explicit sex, the media knows how to target teens. Some areas of the media are worse than others. Music videos are at the top of the charts in terms of sexual content. Six out of every ten videos portray sexually explicit content and the words used to describe
sexual acts have also become more explicit since the introduction of music videos (Center for Communication Policy at UCLA, CCP, 1996; KFF, 1999). Teenagers who watch music videos are getting more sex references per minute than any other form of media (Lowery & Shidler, 1993).

So what does this all mean? Seventy-five percent of teens state that TV shows and movies make it seem normal for teenagers to have sex and early teenagers (13-15 years old) rank the media as the top source for information on sexuality and sexual health (Peterson, Moore, & Furstenberg, 1991; KFF, 1996). A study funded by the National Science Foundation found that young females who watched 22 hours of prime-time television a week (or just slightly over three hours a day) were more likely to have a “recreational attitude” towards sexual activity (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). Ward et al. (1999) also found that 82-92% of the teens surveyed found the content of television programs to be realistic.

As stated in the previous section, the risks involved with intercourse should be a serious concern for any sexually active teenager. Yet, because a majority of teens identify with the media’s portrayal of “life,” the (mis)information offered by the media is more likely to be attended to and retained, becoming a part of the teens’ identity. Coupled with the fact that many teens use the media as their main source of information about sexual topics (Peterson et al., 1991), we have a recipe for disaster. Now let us look at the inefficient stance the current U.S. administration is taking towards issues of teenage sexual activity in America.
Politics

In 1996, a new section of the Welfare Reform Law established a grant program that supported abstinence education. The law made available 50 million dollars in grant monies a year between 1998-2002 for states who wanted to fund this form of education (Van Dyck, 1998). Abstinence education was defined in the law as an educational and motivational program that:

1. has as its exclusive purpose, teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity;
2. teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school age children;
3. teaches that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and other associated health problems;
4. teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in context of marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity;
5. teaches that sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects;
6. teaches that bearing children out-of-wedlock is likely to have harmful consequences for the child, the child's parents, and society;
7. teaches young people how to reject sexual advances and how alcohol and drug use increases vulnerability to sexual advances; and
8. teaches the importance of attaining self-sufficiency before engaging in sexual activity. (Welfare Reform Law, 1996)

In 2002, President Bush renewed funding for abstinence education through 2005. Bush also upped the appropriations for abstinence education from $55 million to $135 million dollars for the 2002-2005 time period (Health and Human Services, HHS, 2002). This increase was “to ensure that more children receive the message that abstinence is the best option for avoiding unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases” (HHS, 2002). The new budget for 2003 included an increase of $33 million for abstinence-only education fulfilling the President's pledge to fund abstinence-only programs at $135 million. Another $73 million dollars of this budget was to be allocated
to community-based abstinence education programs, "which provides support to public and private groups for the development of abstinence education programs for adolescents in communities around the country" (HHS, 2002). Once again this money was earmarked for organizations that promote abstinence-only educational programs. Finally, in April of 2002, the House Commerce Committee voted to continue funding for abstinence-only programs. The committee extended the funding for another five years, until 2007. The increase in funding has made an impact in the public school system. In 1988, only 2% of secondary school sex education teachers taught abstinence as the only way of preventing pregnancy; by 1999 this number had jumped to 23% (Starkman & Rajani, 2002). Earmarked funding for abstinence-only education has pushed this form of safe-sex education to the forefront of the public school health curriculum.

It is evident, however, that this push towards abstinence-only education is problematic. One problem that arises is that students are not receiving proper information about such topics as birth control and condoms as effective methods of contraception, information that teachers believe the students need (Darroch, Landry, Singh, 2000). In a recent study, 90% of teachers believed that students should be taught about contraception, yet 25% are instructed not to teach the subject and many teachers avoid covering sex education topics for fear of adverse community reaction (Starkman et al., 2002).

A second problem that emerges is the lack of credible information to substantiate the effectiveness of abstinence-only education as the "best" and therefore primary curriculum to teach in school systems. Only recently has research been done to evaluate abstinence-only education (see Christopher & Roosa, 1990; St Pierre, Mark, Kaltreider,
yet the U.S. Government is designating millions of dollars to support this movement. A National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy study in 2001 found that abstinence-only education had no significant impact on the initiation of sexual activity in teens, or the frequency with which it occurred (NARAL Pro-Choice America, NARAL, 2003). The Sexuality Information and Education Counsel of the United States (SIECUS) reported similar findings. In their report titled “Toward a Sexually Healthy America,” no evidence emerged that a “Just Say No” attitude towards sexual activity works (Kempner, 2001). What the researchers did conclude was that a well-rounded sex education curriculum that includes abstinence, as well as pregnancy and STI prevention, is the best approach to sex education (Kirby, 1999; Kirby, 2001). Then-Surgeon General David Satcher made a similar statement in his 2001 letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Satcher (2001) stated:

A majority of Americans favor some form of sexuality education in the public schools and also believe that some sort of birth control information should be available to adolescents...To date, there are only a few published evaluations of abstinence-only programs...Due to this limited number of studies it is too early to draw definite conclusions about this approach. (np)

In this letter Satcher also spoke of the research to support an all-encompassing sex education curriculum:

Programs that typically emphasize abstinence, but also cover condoms and other methods of contraception, have a larger body of evaluation evidence that indicates either no effect on initiation of sexual activity or, in some cases, a delay in the initiation of sexual activity (Satcher, 2001, np).

What becomes clear in the push for abstinence-only education is the political agenda of the current U.S. administration. The abstinence-only initiative has become yet another thinly veiled component of the pro-life campaign because it emphasizes the conservative
platform that the administration stands on (Liberated Christians, 2002). President Bush continually disregards trends in teenage sexual activity in favor of abstinence-only education programs. The President has opted to push programs that please his right-wing constituents rather than back a comprehensive safe-sex program that would benefit the majority of American teens (Bagocius, 2003; Dailard, 2000).

In summary, what is created in American culture is a tension. On one hand, the popular media (the primary institution of learning about risks of sexual activity) is creating a persona of sexual activity devoid of responsibility. The plethora of images portrayed to teenagers about sexuality creates norms that it is "okay to have sex." Further, the messages that teenagers are likely to receive from school about sex stand in contradiction to media messages. This contradiction could well be addressed by NPOs that focus on the issues of teen sexuality and comprehensive community sex education.

*The Counterweight: NPOs, Coalitions and Context-Specific Communication*

Nonprofit organizations play an important role in the education of the local community on issues of teen sexual activity. The threats associated with sexual intercourse are very real in every community, from urban centers to rural communities, but to tackle mixed messages of the media versus abstinence-only education, action must be taken at the local level. The ability to act locally and define the specific needs of the community is imperative to the success of any behavioral change in the population (Johnson, 1997). The ability to tailor information about teen sexual activity and teen pregnancy will increase the likelihood that the message will be attended to and accepted. This context-specific communication is where NPO contributions are felt. Most NPOs are community-based organizations and have community-based goals. Although some
agencies have affiliations with larger, national NPOs, most community-based agencies are structured around the needs of the specific community in which they are located. In the following sections I will define what a NPO is and discuss its prevalence in American society. I will also give examples of NPOs that focus on issues of teen sexual activity and the benefits of context-specific communication.

NPOs Defined

While it is difficult to define NPOs, a common description is as follows:

A group(s) of individuals who associate to (a) perform a public task delegated to them by the state; (b) provide services for which there is a demand that state and for-profit organizations will not fulfill; or (c) influence policy in the state, the for-profit sector, or other nonprofits. Other common characteristics NPOs share are (a) the existence of a formal constitution, (b) a system of self-governance, (c) a mission that does not include seeking a profit, and (d) use of a volunteer workforce (Hall, 1987, np, emphasis added).

I emphasize point “b” because it is the most crucial to my argument; NPOs meet needs that are not being fulfilled by the state or for-profit industry. In the case of sex education, the state and the for-profit industry have created a contradiction for NPOs to resolve.

The NPO Sector

The proliferation of NPOs in the US is best described as a silent expansion. Yet this sector is no longer just small groups of grassroots organizations trying to make a difference. The NPO sector is a $500 billion industry and in 1995 accounted for 6.9% of the U.S. gross domestic product. The sector employs over 8.6 million full-time employees, which account for over 16% of all service employment (Sokolowski & Salamon, 1999). Put differently, the nonprofit sector employs more than the 50 top U.S. corporations combined. Between 1977 and 1990, the number of NPOs increased by 22% and NPO employment grew by 44% (Leete, 2001). From 1990 to 1995, the NPO sector
grew by 20%, and exceeded the growth rate of the entire economy by a ratio of almost 3:1 (Sokolowski et al., 1999). This growth can be traced to a demand for services that NPOs provide plus the decline in similar services offered by for-profit and government agencies (Ben-Ner & Van Hoomissen, 1990). The NPO sector also is one of the main employers of nontraditional workers (i.e. volunteers, contract workers), who are quickly becoming a large portion of the American workforce (Gossett, 2002).

NPOs are funded in several ways, but despite popular belief, private philanthropy is not the primary source of funding. 320 billion dollars are raised through service fees that NPOs charge members (i.e. membership fees, subscription dues, service charges etc.). The second largest source of funding comes from the public sector (Salamon & Anheier, 1996). As of 1995, public sector funding accounted for 30.5 percent of the $500 billion that the NPO sector accumulates (Sokolowski et al., 1999).

More importantly in terms of issues of teenage sexual activity, within the NPO sector, 46% of the employment is in the health field. U.S. NPOs employ more people in the health sector than any other developed nation by almost a 2:1 ratio (Sokolowski et al., 1999). By 1990, NPOs accounted for 51% of all hospitals, and 32% of clinics and other health care organizations (Leete, 2001). The emphasis on health combined with the overall presence of NPOs in the United States adds to the legitimacy of these organizations as important and appropriate agencies for sex education, but macro level statistics about the sector do not tell the whole story. The context-specific communication that NPOs generate with their communities is the key to any NPO’s success.
Context-Specific Communication

A public is defined as a “distinct group of people, organizations or both whose actual or potential needs must in some sense be served” (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991, np). Four types of publics are identified as important to NPOs: 1) input publics (e.g. donors and suppliers) provide resources; 2) internal publics (e.g. staff and volunteers) convert resource into useful goods and services; 3) intermediary publics (e.g. agents and facilitators) deliver goods and services; 4) consuming publics (e.g. clients and local residents) gain satisfaction from the goods and services provided (Johnson, 1997). It is the “consuming public” that NPOs are most concerned with and around which most organizational goals and missions revolve. The consuming public is where context-specific communication occurs.

Effective context-specific communication is comprised of the organization’s ability to tailor its mission and goals to the community needs in which it is located. Many of the largest NPOs in the US recognize this and structure their organization into local chapters. For example, The United Way has more than 1400 “community-based” United Way organizations (United Way, 2003). The American Red Cross operates over 500 chapters in all 50 states (American Red Cross, 2003). In the realm of sex education, Planned Parenthood operates 126 affiliate branches and 875 health clinics (Planned Parenthood Federation of America, PPFA, 2003) these are examples of larger NPOs in the US. There are thousands of smaller NPOs that operate in each and every community. In Missoula, Montana for example, a city of only 60,000 people as of December 2003, there are over 700 registered nonprofit organizations (Wheeler, 2003).
Another way that NPOs construct effective context-specific communication is through coalitions. Coalitions are temporary alliances of NPO that come together in order to achieve both political and nonpolitical objectives (Dluhy 1990). For instance, if there is a shrinking pool of resources available to many NPOs, agencies come together in a coalition to help reduce costs and prevent overlap in services. Many agencies that join coalitions work together to manage cost more effectively, plus coalitions often allow members to network with agencies that share similar clients. Agencies can provide resources for one another and share the knowledge base among all coalition members (Rausch, 2004). As Wolf (1999) states, NPOs membership in a coalition can, “allow all the participants to accomplish more in terms of programming, to cut costs, to garner more income, or to achieve greater visibility and prominence” (p.330). The tailoring of specific messages to a community can be designed by a diversity of opinions and experts in the nonprofit realm, thus delivering a more cost effective product to the consuming public.

The term “community”, and the cultural weight that the notion brings with it, works well for NPCs that operate in the human service sector. “Community” functions as an ideograph, acting to hold together the meaningfulness of people, things, and performances. The term manages to hold both the traditions of social commitment and expressive individualism together loosely yet productively (Della-Piana & Anderson, 1995). As Della-Piana et al. (1995) state:

The local practices and discourse of organizing create and maintain community-as-a-sign that references the significance held by membership of community service organizations and the signifying systems of the larger culture in which the traditions and themes of individualism and social commitment conflict...the traditions and themes (of an agency) are grounded in the ways members of the organization made sense of the term
The term “community” helps organize the external communication of NPCs mission in several ways. First, the term lends credibility to the coalition with the members it serves. Coalition messages that revolve around the concept of “community building” or “community improvement” make linkages between the member agencies and the people it serves. Second, the use of community becomes auto-communicative for agency members (Isbell, 2004). The traditions and themes of community become a part of agency and member identity even as they communicate to others. Such identification gives meaning to the processes undertaken in the “everyday practice and discourse of organizing performed by the members of an organization whose mission was (and is) to accommodate personal goals, to care for others, to contribute to the common good, and to serve the community” (Della-Piana et al., 1995, p. 188). As Rothenbuhler (1991) says, “communication and community grow in each others shadows; the possibilities of one are structured by the possibilities of the other” (p.76).

Thus far I have argued that a) education on issues of sexual activity and teen pregnancy are important to the teenage population, but the messages that teens receive are rife with contradictions, and b) NPOs and nonprofit coalitions are critical to the delivery of comprehensive sex education messages to the community. I next develop the notion of Interface Agents as a lens to examine the nature of the relationship between NPOs and the community with reference to issues of teenage sexuality.

**Rebalancing: The Interface Agent**

The third piece of the teen sexuality puzzle is the interface agent (IA). Specifically, I define interface agents as the *intentional, systematic, planned*
communication between an organization and its community. I use the term IA because unlike the term “campaign,” it highlights the dual nature of the communication that occurs between the community and NPOs. IAs are not just a channel for message dissemination, but also a culturally embedded identification target for both community and the NPO. Thus IAs have the potential of becoming the face of many organizations, and possibly the only interaction that a community has with a certain organization.

While IAs can take multiple forms, including campaigns, retreats, out-reach programs, galas and events, in the health sector, the predominant IA appears to be the campaign. And at the heart of many health campaigns lie communication and education (Kreps & Maibach, 1991). All one has to do is take a cursory look through today’s media to realize that most public health advertisements are actually campaigns run by various nonprofit organizations. NPOs and NPCs use various channels to spread their messages. Television, print and radio are the most common with poster placement in public schools and health messages on billboards also being used.

The interface itself can be viewed from two different angles. The IA is actually designed and implemented by the organization. The NPO must evaluate the needs of the community and implement IAs that will reach and be attended to by the community members. The second angle is from the community’s perspective. The IA is placed so that the community members will actively process the message. The IA is the vehicle through which the NPO attempts to identify with the community and solicit its identification, but the community’s perception of the IA and NPO will affect the ability of the IA to meet the needs of the community members.
Figure II. Michael: I was 15 when I first found out I was going to be a father. My daughter's name is Corina and she is going to be one year old. Right now Jackie, her mother, and I are engaged to be married. We met at a dance. One of the things about having a little girl is you are never lonely. I remember when we didn't have her, there was not much to my life. Now, if we look at it, she is my life.

Jackie: I wake up at 7 in the morning and have to be at school by 8:45. The hardest class I have is English because I have to pass it in order to graduate. My work time is scheduled at 5 P.M. I work at Wendy's. Most of the time I close, and closing is until about 3 A.M., scrubbing floors. Corina's beautiful. She looks like me; she looks like her father. She gets into everything. She makes me laugh. I always want to be with her.

Note: Photo and caption entitled “Michael and Jackie,” by M. Nye, 1998, From Children of Children: Portraits and stories of teenage parents. All rights reserved.

IAs can be seen as a marketing tool for the NPO. This designation has both positive and negative effects. Both marketing and Interface Agents are premised upon a client orientation. As Johnson (1997) points out:

Successful marketing in a nonprofit organization requires a complete understanding of an organization's clients-their needs, attitudes, and behaviors. A nonprofit organization must never forget that it exists to serve the needs of its clients. When a nonprofit organization does not understand or heed the needs of its clients, marketing can be a dismal failure (p. 382)
This marketing concept “stresses that the only way an organization can achieve its own goals is by satisfying the needs of its clients” (Johnson, 1997, p. 382). Unfortunately, the marketing-oriented focus comes with negative consequences.

As I stated earlier, in many cases the IA becomes the “face” of the organization to the community members. The perceptions of the organization can be forged based on the interaction that the agent has with the community members, and they may base their knowledge of the organization solely on the IA. This can be a double-edged sword for the NPO in two ways. First, a well-designed IA should meet the needs of the community as well as achieve the NPOs goals, but the inverse is also true, and can be potentially devastating to the NPO. A poorly designed campaign could have negative effects on the community and cause the community members to not attend to further IAs that the NPO may put out.

Second, the client orientation of the IA becomes problematic when considering the organizational paradoxes that come with a client orientation. A paradox occurs when an intervening and competing goal prevents the successful accomplishment of the original goal (Stohl & Cheney, 2001). A client orientation could put a NPO into a paradox of adaptation. The issues surrounding teenage sexuality are complex and politically charged. NPOs endeavor to serve the community but in serving them the paradox of adaptation can occur. The adaptation paradox occurs when an agency reacts to outside forces to such a point that the original missions or objectives of the organization are lost (Stohl et al., 2001). With so many different opinions in one community about the same issue, trying to pander to all of constituents could cause ineffective practices on the NPOs part. It is this paradox that I seek to address while
evaluating the interface agent. The following research questions help me to structure my study.

*Research Questions*

Thus far I have developed an organizing framework that I will continue to use throughout my research. The problem and resolution of teen sexuality issues are placed in a bi-level framework. The first level highlights the coalition and the context-specific communication between the local community and the NPC. The second level is the community opinion of issues concerning teen sexuality at the local level and their opinion of the IA.

*The NPC on teenage sexuality issues and the IA*

NPCs may be the best option for reaching the community, but there are barriers to NPCs that can hamper their effectiveness in the community. IAs are designed by NPCs with their own vision of community needs. The NPC is usually rooted in issues of teenage sexual activity, and their views can be very jaded by the work they do. There are also certain paradoxical issues that may impede the overall effectiveness of the coalition and the IA design. These potential problems are addressed in my first set of research questions:

RQ1- What are the needs of the community surrounding issues of teen pregnancy and sexual activity as defined by the coalition? Do these needs reflect actual community needs or not?

RQ1a- How does the NPC justify these issues and the ability to meet the needs?

RQ1b- How are these issues reflected in the IA?
The viewers on teenage sexuality issues and the IA

With the deluge of media portrayals that do not stress responsibility it is important to get the counter balancing messages out to the community. These messages must be rooted in the needs and culture of each specific community. The community will react to these IAs in various ways depending on the corpus of knowledge available to the members about the NPCs delivering them. As stated above, the double-edged relationship that IAs have between the organization and that community can hurt or benefit organizational goals. Finally, if the IAs are not based on the needs of the community, then the community may never acknowledge the IAs. All of these quandaries and pitfalls help to establish my second set of research questions:

RQ2- What are the needs of the community in terms of issues of teen sexuality and pregnancy as defined by the viewers of the IA?

RQ2a- Do the viewers perceive the IA as addressing needs defined by the community?

RQ3- How does the viewer’s perception of the NPC relate to its perceptions of the IA?

RQ3a- Do these perceptions have an effect on the integration of information from the coalition?
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Lenses

Nonprofit organizations and the coalitions they form are the central focus of this research. In the rationale I outlined the current state of teenage sexuality in the United States. Here, I examine the state of NPO research in the communication field. An understanding of what research has been done on NPO communication and the themes this research has emphasized will provide depth to my study. NPO research has incorporated many traditional organizational communication lenses. I summarize two organizational communication lenses present in NPO research: identification and paradox. In terms of this research, I address the importance of paradox and identification with reference to the success or failure of the IA. I begin my summaries with identification.

Identification

Identity is what makes it possible for us to recognize an individual or an organization as distinct (Cheney, 1983). The process of identification is the assimilation of one’s self-identity with that of the organization’s identity. Research in the realm of identification has examined such areas as: stakeholder scrutiny; the marketing-bias in organizational identity; and auto-communication, or the innate drive an organization has to preserve its identity (see Cheney, 1983; Christensen, 1995; Cheney & Christensen, 2000).

Identity as a lens is used frequently in NPO research. Auto-communication, marketing-bias, stakeholder scrutiny and organizational/self identity are all present in NPO studies. With relevance to the current research, the lens of identification is essential to understanding the perceptions of teen sex issues by the community, and the coalition.
Identification also has implications for the design and message of the IA. The second lens key to our understanding of the nonprofit sector and NPCs is paradox.

**Paradox**

As defined by Stohl et al. (2001), the term paradox is used in the sense of “pragmatic or interaction-based situation in which (during) the pursuit of one goal, another competing goal enters the situation so as to undermine the first pursuit” (p.354). Within organizations this can be seen in terms of a double bind. An organization attempts to have its members internalize work norms, but in the process contradicts the tenets of its original mission (Stohl et al., 2001). Plainly stated, an employee encounters a paradox when they are given a command and later given a second command that conflicts directly with the first, and the employee is given no alternative on how to get out of the situation. Paradoxes potentially limit the positive impact of participation by causing employee paralysis (Stohl et al., 2001).

Stohl et al. (2001) identified four major categories of paradox. The categories are as follows: structure, agency, identity and power. Several paradoxes are listed under each category. A paradox of structure concerns the architecture of participation, such as planned creativity. A paradox of agency concerns the efficacy of the individual in the organization, such as asking an employee to have ownership over work that is designed by the organization. The identity paradox deals with issues of inclusion and participation, such as self-managing to meet the companies’ goals. A power paradox concerns the nature and exercise of power in the organization, for example, being told to be creative (Stohl et al., 2001).
These two macro organizational communication lenses are important to the understanding of previous NPO research in the communication field because they help us understand organizational communication phenomena in the NPO context. In the next section I discuss these and other issues in terms of a bi-level framework: community centered communication and external/internal communication.

Levels

The sub-field of nonprofit communication within organizational communication literature is growing. Although there has been no “official” count of the research done in this area, over the last decade there has been a notable increase in studies published using NPOs for research and data collection. With that in mind, this section takes a closer look at NPO studies conducted under the organizational communication banner. For the purposes of this research, NPO literature can be organized on two levels: community centered communication and the external/internal (see Cheney et al., 2000) level of communication. My rationale for this categorization is twofold: 1) It gives (the reader) a better understanding of the two areas of research in which NPO literature has unfolded and 2) By categorizing research into these areas, and then emphasizing the organizational communication lenses used to understand the results, I can highlight the needed relationship between theory and research.

Community Centered Communication

Here NPO research has focused on the communication between the organization and the people it serves. In more basic terms, this relationship can be defined as the external communication that occurs between an agency and the community. Such communication is evident in three areas/domains: the staff/client relationship, the

...
NPO/community relationship, and finally, the NPO/community subsets relationship.

Each category examines a different aspect of external communication as it relates to NPO literature in communication. Before examining these three domains it is important to examine the critical concept of community. As Dunham (1970) states:

Discussion of community revolves around two basic points: first, since (NPOs) operate in communities, they must understand community patterns and behavior. Second much community (interaction) is concerned with changing the community; for this, a specialized knowledge of the community is needed as well as methods to facilitate that change. (p. 32-33)

The knowledge of the community and the ability to work in the community are integral to the design of the IA. Without the “specialized knowledge” of the community, the agent will not facilitate the intended change.

Much of the early literature defined community based on geographical or economic factors (see Dunham, 1970; Cox, Erlich, Rothman & Tropman, 1977). Yet these categorizations of community do not get to the subtle nuances of culture within certain groups. One of the primary interests of communication scholars is understanding communication among people within a particular setting (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000). Geographic, demographic and economic factors do not tell us much about the culture of the community. I feel that Geertz’s (1973) metaphor for culture works well for community: community is a web spun of space, identity, emotional connection, interdependence, common symbols, and mutual influence. Adelman and Frey (1997) extended this metaphor stating:

Community is constituted (created) and reconstituted (sustained) in communicative practices... Community is both created and sustained by everyday patterns of human interaction (spinning the web) that take on shared meaning among the members of a particular group... Communication, therefore is not just a variable contained within a
community; community itself is best regarded as a phenomenon that emerges from communication... Communication is thus the essential, defining feature- the medium- of community. (p.5)

The IA interacts within this culturally embedded notion of community. In order to package community identity in the IA, the organization should have an understanding of the community’s culture. Centralizing community and cultural identity will help us understand the three domains below.

*Staff/Client.*

The ways in which NPOs and coalitions interact with the community members they target for service varies widely. The interaction that occurs at a more dyadic level between the staff of NPOs and the clients they serve is the focus of this sub-section. One key example of this interaction is Trethewey’s (1999) article on the contradictions of organizational life.

Trethewey (1999) uses paradox to evaluate the interaction between the staff and the clients they serve. She applies this lens when investigating the staff/client relationship in an NPO whose mission is to assist low-income, single parents in obtaining education and job training. The organization is unable to fulfill its mission because of the paradoxical guidelines it has put in place to participate in the program. Because the demand for service exceeds the supply available, the organization selects clients that have already demonstrated their self-sufficiency (rather than selecting clients who need training to become self-sufficient). Thus, the people who have the greatest need for becoming self-sufficient are denied access to the program (Trethewey, 1999), and the paradox is created.
Instead of focusing on dyadic communication between the organization and the client (as described above), NPO/community communication involves the macro communication that occurs between the organization and the community as a whole.

Kandath, Papa and Singhal (in press) identify paradoxes that occur when organizations communicate expectations to the communities they serve. Kandath et al posit that paradoxes at the conceptual level result from social change initiatives being immersed in power relations. As an example of this, Kandath et al. reported how individuals would internalize new knowledge of social change (from the nongovernmental organizations or NGO) but at the same time had views on an issue that contradicted their new knowledge. “This reflects the lack of recognition by a person that their ideas within one system of thought or behavior contradict with their ideas within another system of thought or behavior” (Kandath et al., in press, p.31).

The paradox identified by Kandath et al. (in press) highlights another paradox in nonprofit work. My research identifies a potentially paradoxical situation in a NPC. I will discuss the presence of this situation and the implications my study has on future communication studies of paradox.

A community subset is defined as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives (Lewis, Hamel, & Richardson, 2001). The subset can be donors to the organization, board members in the organization, or a specific population within the community. I have identified two studies that are central to the understanding of the NPO/Community relationship. Both
articles apply themes of identification to help understand the interplay between the organization and the members.

Different groups of people evaluate/interpret the messages of organizations depending on how closely they affiliate with the NPO. Patterson and Allen's (1997) study identified three groups of people and evaluated how each subset interpreted the legitimacy of the organization based on organizational discourse to the community. What the authors found was that only the community members who had close identification with the NPO perceived legitimacy. The theoretical implications of this study point to the fact that while one way to manage identification works with one group, overall, different messages needed to be tailored to the unique values, beliefs and perceptions of each subset (Patterson et al., 1997). This study also emphasizes the need to design IAs that are based on needs of the community. IAs that identify with the subsets not only are attended to in terms of the message, but also shape and reshape the identity of both the community and the organization.

In a similar study, Lewis et al. (2001) posit a model for communicating to various stakeholders in times of organizational change. Their study of different information dissemination strategies to stakeholders gives the reader a descriptive/normative model for how organizations decide who gets pertinent information concerning organizational change. The authors take a marketing approach to identification (although they do not use this term) when conceptualizing this model. Lewis et al. (2001) posited 6 different models for marketing planned change to a populace. The models were then categorized into four quadrants based on organization needs (see table 1).
Table 1: Predictions of Implementation Communication Model Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High need for communication efficiency</th>
<th>Low need for communication efficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need to know model</td>
<td>Quid pro quo and marketing model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal dissemination model</td>
<td>Equal participation and marketing models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low need for consensus building</td>
<td>High need for consensus building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Lewis et al., 2001

On one axis of this quadrant is the need for communication efficiency (High need versus Low need). Communication efficiency is defined as the accomplishment of a communicative task with a minimum expenditure of time, effort, and resources. Organizations are likely to use communication efficiency when (a) available channels for communicating are limited; (b) when there is urgent need to implement change and little time to interact about it; and (c) when resources devoted to the change are scarce and few can be devoted to the communication task (Lewis et al., 2001).

On the other axis of the quadrant is the notion of consensus building, or the effort put forth to achieve commitment to a course of action implied by a joint decision. Consensus building is likely to be considered when (a) changes are perceived to be controversial or novel, (b) when a history of resistance to similar change is present, (c) when critical resources are controlled by the community members, and (d) when ongoing support and cooperation will be needed to maintain the change (Lewis et al., 2001).

Overall, this model for implementation of communication focuses on the ways in which organizations market planned messages to community subsets. How the NPO perceives subset identification will have implications of how the communicative interaction between the NPO and the members (and ultimately the community as a whole) will
commence. The construction of an IA therefore "requires not only the symbolic representations of culture, such as visual images and language reflecting that of the participants, but also a consideration of cultural values, and the variability inherent within any particular cultural group" (Hecht et al., in press, p. 3).

Eventually we can begin to see how paradox and identification focus the communicative relationship between NPO and the communities they serve. However, a singular focus on community centered communication does not account for the way in which an organizational identity is shaped through communication with the community. It is therefore important to look at the relationship between internal/external communication.

*Internal/External communication*

Internal/external communication is an organizational communication theme that examines the omni-directional flow of an organization's communication and how it affects identity. Much of the research on communication campaigns focuses on the delivery of a message (vis-à-vis campaign channels) and external effects on a community, with little regard to internal processes (for example Fishbein & Yzer, 2003; Valente & Saba, 1998; Slater, 1999). The campaign channel has an implicit unidirectional communication flow. Channels are designed to deliver information from a campaign to a community. Literature on campaign channels focuses on the delivery of the message and its effect of the target (see Murphy, 1980; Krugman, 1983; Pool, 1983; McGuire, 1989; Valente, 2002).

However, organizational communication scholars have begun to examine the symbiotic relationship between internal/external communication. While in the past many
organizational communication scholars only concerned themselves with the internal messages of an organization to theorize about identity (for example, Tompkins & Cheney, 1985; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998), in recent times more researchers are studying the linkages between internal and external communication of an organization to help posit new models of identification. A new push by NPOs towards market-related communication attempts to link both external and internal communication (Ganesh, 2003). Such communication serves to influence the community as well as to confirm the organization’s own internal perceptions (Cheney et al., 2000). Cheney et al. (2000) summarize the idea behind market-related communication well when they state that:

"Market-related communication seeks to link internal and external audiences around the same concern, identity...a strong corporate identity can raise employee motivation while inspiring confidence among an organization’s external target groups (p. 246)."

With this link (via market-related communication), internal and external messages become important to the organization to manage both its external and internal identity, but all forms of external communication also serve to consolidate identity even as they build an image, thereby establishing a system of auto-communication (Cheney et al., 2000). Auto-communication is a process of organizing through which a communicator evokes and enhances its own values or codes (Christensen, 1995; Ganesh, 2003). The external message becomes a tool to reinforce the values and concerns of the organization, thus the external audience becomes not only a receiver of the message but an ideal reference point in terms of which the sender evaluates itself. “In this ‘looking-glass’, the [organization] recognizes itself, chiefly in terms of how it wants to be seen by others (Cheney et al., 2000, p.247, also see Cooley, 1983). In the contemporary organization, auto-communication is stimulated by the quest for identification and a growing need
among organizational members for identification and belongingness (Cheney et al., 2000).

Ganesh (2003) found that many organizations no longer were centered around the needs of their communities but rather on the demands of a market economy. The marketing-bias occurred in response to funding agencies' demand for satisfactory results, as well as a need for the (NPO's) to legitimize their own existence. Mission drift occurred due to this marketing-bias. This shift in focus, from the needs of its constituents to developing the best interests of the agency, is how organizational narcissism develops (Ganesh, 2003). The author stated that the (NPO) becomes more concerned with maintaining and promoting its own existence than with addressing the needs of its community. By conceptualizing the notion of organizational narcissism within the study at hand, we can see how the funding paradox can potentially wreak havoc on the NPO's initial goals and drastically affect the relationship between the NPO and the community.

Yet another example of the external/internal interface is found in research conducted at a faith-based nonprofit. Isbell (2004) posits a model of identification that is embedded in members' empathy towards the external mission of the organization. Based on this model, there is a correlation between the identification of external concepts (i.e. community) and the internal justification for organizational participation (Isbell, 2004). This notion of organizational mimicry could assist in answering my research questions based on organizational justification. It will be interesting to see if organizational mimicry will affect the way members of the organization justify and rationalize the IA’s design.
IAs are therefore usefully conceived of in terms of identification theory. This grounding in identification theory distinguishes the IA from campaign literature and gives it relevance to organizational theory. The IA, due to its roots in identification, serves as an omni-directional target of identification between a community and an organization.

The literature on NPOs in communication studies is small but growing. In terms of the research at hand, this literature review gives a more comprehensive overview of NPO research and helps to better frame the research questions. First, the literature I use to establish IAs as culturally grounded, systematic communication between a community and an organization develops criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the IA being researched. My research questions ask specifically about the effectiveness of the IA with the community. The literature review gives insight on how to begin the evaluation process, and gives suggestions for reasons an IA may not be effective. Second, this literature review emphasizes the importance of NPOs and the coalitions they form in the community, and also highlights some of the difficulties NPOs run into when trying to communicate with the community. Finally, the notion of identification is central to my research questions and my argument as a whole. The communication process I posit is predicated on the notion of identification at the organizational level, the community level, and between the two entities.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Background and Overview

For my research, I was granted access to TEENS (alias given). TEENS is a coalition of NPOs and state agencies that have interests in teen pregnancy issues. TEENS’ mission is to work on developing a community strategy for the prevention of teen pregnancy and to address the special needs of pregnant and parenting teenage girls. The coalition is part of a larger coalition working towards the betterment of children and youth in the local community. TEENS was founded in 2003 and, at the time of data collection, it had just passed its first year anniversary. There are a variety of member agencies at TEENS. Some of the agencies include public school officials, teen parent homes, day care agencies, state public health members, and NPOs concerned with women’s rights. TEENS holds monthly meetings to set objectives and coordinate joint programs. The coalition also serves to network similar agencies that overlap in services and share clients.

In the spring of 2004, TEENS brought an art exhibit to the area. It was the first program for TEENS, and its first introduction in the community. The exhibit was the first IA of the coalition. In keeping with the above-mentioned definition of the IA, this exhibit was the planned, intentional communication between the local community and the coalition. The exhibit was brought to the area with the intention of raising awareness about teen pregnancy and also to promote the coalition. The exhibit, entitled Children of Children, is a nationally touring exhibit produced by artist Michael Nye. The exhibit consisted of fifty black and white photos with three to six minute audio stories accompanying each photo. Each picture and story presented a teen parent. The stories
were neutral, in so much that they did not take a stance on teen pregnancy or birth right issues. The stories just told of the hardships of teen parenting. The exhibit displayed numerous people from many cultures. The exhibit represented both teen mothers and teen fathers, and the age range of the stories went from twelve to eighty. The exhibit tried to represent a cross section of America. The exhibit was hosted in the local mall, and it was free to view by all.

Figure III. I had my baby before I was 18 years old. When I got pregnant I didn't know I was going to get pregnant that way. When my daddy found out he was so upset. I got ashamed and I got afraid. It wasn't long before the baby delivered, and my father said, "I'm going to keep that boy." And I went to crying. When my son was growing up my father told me, "Don't come around too much." He told me to stay away. [Later] he apologized to me, saying he wished he had let me raise my son. And I told him I forgive him. We forgive each other.

Note: Photo and caption entitled “Willie,” by M. Nye, 1998, From Children of Children: Portraits and stories of teenage parents. All rights reserved.

In order to answer my research questions, I collected two different data sets. The first data set examined the opinions of the TEENS members. I conducted fourteen qualitative interviews from current TEENS members in the spring of 2004. The second
set of data examined the opinions of the “viewers” of the IA. Fifty-three people who viewed the exhibit completed a 14 question, open-ended survey. Both the survey and the interview schedule asked demographic questions, as well as questions about the IA, the community and the coalition (see appendices A and B for the interview schedule and the open-ended survey). The following section is divided to represent information about each data set. For example, in the next section on participants, the coalition data will be represented first, followed by the viewers’ data. This ordering will be used throughout this methods section.

**Participants**

I interviewed fourteen current members of the TEENS coalition. To recruit interviewees, I requested a members’ list from the TEENS intern. During my first meeting with the one of the TEENS founders, I went through the list of 22 people and weeded out any members who had not participated in over six months. I also tried to eliminate multiple members from the same agencies. I wanted to ensure that I obtained an array of agencies when conducting my research, and not just rely on the views of two or three NPOs. Of the fourteen interviews conducted, only two were from the same agency. Three others were employed by the same NPO but worked on different programs, serving different sets of people. Once I had a workable member list, I began contacting people by phone or email. At the same time, it was announced to members during a TEENS monthly meeting that I had permission to conduct interviews with TEENS members. Seventeen people were contacted and I was able to schedule fourteen interviews. All fourteen interviews were used in my analysis.
Table 2: Participant Summary (N=14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alias</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Degree type</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Agency Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annika</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Public School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christie</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>BSN</td>
<td>Nurse/specialist</td>
<td>Government health agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominique</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Executive director</td>
<td>Home for teen moms and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayle</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Outreach director</td>
<td>Female services agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katarina</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Seeking BA</td>
<td>Intern</td>
<td>Student/ TEENS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laila</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Program director</td>
<td>Agency for teen mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marian</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Case manager</td>
<td>Home-based Program for children of teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Intern</td>
<td>Unemployed/ TEENS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Adoption caseworker</td>
<td>Social service agency for pregnant teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>Program for teen fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serena</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>Coalition of prevention agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steffi</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Seeking BA</td>
<td>Program leader</td>
<td>Program for nontraditional careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>MPH</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>Government health agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>BSW</td>
<td>Executive director</td>
<td>Agency for teen parents and their children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demographic data for my interviews is summarized below (see table 2 for a
itemization of interviewee information). All participants have been given aliases to
protect their identity. Of the fourteen key informants, twelve were females and two were
males. All those interviewed had or were seeking a college degree. Two participants were currently in college, and seeking a bachelor’s degree. Ten individuals currently held a bachelor’s degree, and two people had obtained master’s degrees. The age range for the group was rather wide. The youngest participant was twenty-two years old, and the oldest participant was fifty-seven; the mean age was approximately 37 years old. Six people were in their twenties; two people were in their thirties; three people were in their forties and three people were in their fifties. Nine different NPO programs and/or agencies are represented in this sample. Also, two different government agencies were interviewed.

For the second data set, I collected fifty-three open-ended surveys. Viewers of the exhibit were approached to complete the questioner. Potential respondents were culled from those that were actively viewing the exhibit. I defined actively viewing the exhibit as listening to at least two stations, or four pictures. Numerous people were approached during the week that data collection occurred. About one out of every seven people approached agreed to fill out the survey, although I did not track the specific number of rejections to acceptances. People were given a description of the survey and asked if he/she was willing to participate. The only requirement for participation was age. All participants needed to be eighteen years of age or older. If the respondent agreed to complete the survey, I gave him/her a consent form explaining the study and their rights as a respondent. In order to minimize any deleterious effects that all respondents encountered during the study, each respondent was informed both in written and verbal form that the study asked their opinion on teenage pregnancy in the local community, and that any participant would discontinue participation at any time during the data
collection. The surveys were administered during the week that the exhibit was on display. Of the 53 respondents, all but one was used for analysis. I opted to discard one survey because the responses were illegible.

The demographic information for the set is as follows. The range of ages for the participants went 18-73, with the mean age for the set was thirty-four. Although there were a wide variety of ages represented, there was a skewed gender distribution. Forty-two participants were female, and ten participants were males. There was also a skewed distribution of diversity. Forty-five people identified themselves as Caucasian or of European decent. Three people stated they were at least part Hispanic/Mexican. I also had one Native American and one African American. Two people did not give an ethnic identity.

Instruments

The interviews of TEENS members were approximately a half-hour to one hour in duration. They took place at the interviewees’ agency, unless they stated a more convenient place to meet. I had an eighteen-question interview that was scheduled but flexible (Lindlof, 1995). This interview style allowed me to keep a consistent set of questions, while giving me the opportunity to ask follow-up questions that might come to mind in a particular situation. I asked all informants three types of questions: 1) questions relating to the exhibit, 2) questions relating to the coalition, 3) questions relating to the community (see appendix A for full interview schedule). An example of these questions is as follows:

- In your own words, please describe the benefits (the exhibit) offers the community and specifically teenagers.
• What (do you think) makes (the exhibit) effective in reaching teenagers/community members? Why might it not be effective?

• How do the organizations that comprise TEENS affect the ability of the coalition to achieve its goals?

• What does being a TEENS member mean to you?

• What do you think are some of the problems concerning sexual activity and teens in the local community?

• What do you see as the needs of the community concerning adolescent pregnancy, parenting and prevention services?

Also included in the eighteen questions were four demographic questions. All the interviews were conducted face to face. Each interview was audio taped and I also took notes during the session.

I used a questionnaire for my second round of data collection. The survey consisted of fourteen open-ended questions. I administered the questionnaire at the mall during the exhibit. The survey took approximately twenty minutes to complete although some respondents took longer. The format of the survey replicated that of the interview schedule. The respondents were asked three forms of questions: 1) community questions, 2) exhibit questions, 3) coalition questions. Three demographic questions were also asked in the set of twelve. An example of my open-ended questions is as follows:

• How do you think that adolescent pregnancy, as an issue (locally), should best be addressed?

• Please list where you think adolescents gain information about sex.

• What do you think is the purpose of the (exhibit)?

• How well does this exhibit inform you about adolescent pregnancy prevention? Please explain why.

• Please list who you believe sponsored this event.
• Are you aware of TEENS? If yes, please tell us what you think the coalition objectives are and how you learned about it.

Procedures

After my interviews were completed, I transcribed each audiotape. During my transcription I used Wood and Kroger's (2000) orthographic method of initial data analysis. This early analysis allowed me to discover themes that were emerging from the data. Once all of the interviews were transcribed, I commenced open coding (see Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). My analysis of the interviews was thematic (Owen, 1984). I identified salient themes from my transcriptions. The themes were created by first reading through each interview and making notes in the margins. I analyzed themes across all interviews looking for recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness in accordance with Owen's (1984) prescriptions for data analysis. I also used analytical induction (Bulmer, 1979; Hubner & Miles, 1994) and grounded theory (see Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Cobin, 1990) to create and compare exhaustive categories to explain the data. The themes that emerge from this data can then be juxtaposed against the survey results to evaluate the research questions.

The open-ended surveys were analyzed in a slightly different format. At the conclusion of the exhibit, I collected all the surveys. I numbered each survey and transcribed them into an Excel spreadsheet. I then took on the task of categorizing the data. I created categories for six of the twelve questions. Each category was based on the responses from that question solely. I read through the data for each question and began to capture the categories that emerged from the data. Each category of questions was produced from the data for that question. The categories are specific to each question and no cross over in categories is made, although language in the categories is
similar. In order to validate the categories that emerged, I had a coder also organize the data. For this procedure, I would first have the coder unitize the response in each question. For example, a response might state that the purpose of the exhibit is to “raise awareness about teen pregnancy and promote TEENS.” This statement represents two units: 1) Raise awareness, 2) Promote TEENS. I gave the coder a sheet with all the responses for a question and let him/her parse out the units. While the coder was unitizing, I was also independently unitizing. After an entire question was parsed, I would check my units against the coder’s units. All unit disagreements were evaluated, and decided upon. The unitization results were calculated by straight percentage. The number of disagreed upon units was divided by the number of total units to get a percentage of unit agreements (see table 3 for complete results).

Once a question was unitized, I explained the categories that emerged from the data for that question. The questions had anywhere from three to thirteen categories. The coder and I then independently ordered the units into appropriate categories. For example, a category may order all responses dealing with awareness raising. The coder would then put all units that spoke to awareness raising into this category. Once again, after all units were ordered, we would come together and compare our results. All responses were recorded, and a Cohen’s Kappa analysis was run to find the intercoder reliability and validate the categories in each question. All disagreements were talked about and placed into a mutually agreed upon category once the responses were analyzed.
Table 3: Independent Coding Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Unitizing percentage</th>
<th>Cohen’s Kappa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>.90</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Unitizing percentages were calculated by dividing the number of agreed upon units by the total number of units.

Of the remaining eight questions, three were demographic questions that I used to calculate my descriptive statistics in this section. Four of the questions asked for a list of agencies or services, and were ordered by how many responses were given (i.e. how many times TEENS was listed as a sponsor for the exhibit). One question was a nominal “yes or no” response. An independent coder was not needed for validation of these questions.

As a side note to the procedures, I was also a participant observer within the organization. I took fieldnotes following Geertz’s (1973) ethnographic model of thick description and Emerson et al. (1995) guidelines for obtaining and evaluating fieldnotes (also see Schwartzman, 1993). I took notes during TEENS meetings and at the exhibit. I used my fieldnotes to help add richness to my description of the data site and the structure of TEENS.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE COALITION RESULTS

The coalition chapter evaluates the opinions of TEENS members. I argue that NPOs and the coalitions they form are the best way to address issues of teen sexuality because of their ability to design context-specific communication, but paradoxes in the coalition can hamper the effectiveness of the group to meet its goals. The chapter is broken down into three parts. The first part looks at the opinions of the coalition members on issues of teen pregnancy in the local community. The second part revolves around TEENS members' perspectives of the IA. The final part looks at the goals of the coalition, the issues of the group, and the collaboration process. I use the opinions of TEENS members to answer my first set of research questions. The results from this data set answer questions such as, what are the needs of the community as defined by the organization (RQ1), and how does the coalition justify these issues and the ability to meet the needs (RQ1a)? In the discussion section, I will also compare the responses of the coalition members with the answers from the exhibit viewers to see where possible discrepancies in opinion lie. In terms of theoretical implications, I will unpack this data with reference to identification and paradox. This analysis of the coalition will further our understanding of certain organizational communication themes with reference to the NPO sector.

Issues of Teen Pregnancy

The opinion of coalition members' about teen pregnancy issues are important to the overall understanding of other parts in this chapter because it (a) gives a bearing point from which to understand the rationale behind the exhibit that the coalition is bringing to the community and (b) it provides a justification for the coalition's existence within the
community it serves. When I asked TEENS members about local teen pregnancy issues, respondents’ answers fell into three categories: Home, Local, and National. Each of these categories gives structure to the overall issue of teen pregnancy according to the respondents. I begin this analysis with the home and TEENS opinions of personal and family teen pregnancy issues.

Home

In this category respondents spoke about two subjects; issues of the teens personally and issues that concern the family unit. The construction of the adolescent as a superhuman that has no mortality and no sense of responsibility manifests itself in the views of the respondents. “Teenagers have this feeling that ‘it’s not going to happen to me’,” Nick states. “So that means that they are less likely to use birth control unless it has been really shown to them.” The superhuman attitude comes with a feeling of immortality, and thus resistance to birth control seems like a logical response. As Nadia posits, “there is a lot of resistance on the part of adolescents to seek safe methods of (sexual activity). On their part there is a great resistance to seek out (birth control).” The teenager won’t become pregnant, or impregnate someone, because teenage pregnancy does not happen to him or her. “The teenagers I work with, a lot of them don’t use birth control for various reasons,” Nick asserts. “One of the main reasons is they don’t believe in it. They don’t believe that they are going to become parents.” Opinions, such as these, outline the lack of knowledge each individual teen has about sexual intercourse and healthy sexual habits. As Steve states:

We want our young people to be sexually literate. To be able to understand sexuality more than they do now. To be able to understand appropriate and healthy ways to protect, it is literacy.
The sexual illiteracy of teens can be linked to many issues and areas. In this category, the family unit plays a role in the sexual literacy of teens.

The family unit is seen as one of the places where children receive education about sex. It is the place where the “birds and the bees” story is told. The family is a haven where a child can go to seek information about things they don’t understand. However, sex and the issues surrounding sexual activity have caused problems in the family unit according to TEENS members. “I think we tend to ignore it, and pretend that it is not happening,” Annika surmises. “It’s happening!” Parents are struggling to address the issues with their teens, and the climate for conversation is deteriorating. Christie echoes this sentiment:

It is a hard issue and I know this stuff and I still have a hard time, so I know that other parents that don’t know (how to talk to teens about sex) really have a hard time, so it’s hard. And schools with the debate now of abstinence only, because that is what is getting the money, so it is really creating a lot of problems.

Nadia continues by stating:

I do believe that the safety of our children is at risk. If we have got junior high kids engaging in massive amounts of oral sex and that is part of their culture, their subculture. They have parents that don’t know where their kids are and this is going on. They don’t have the energy; they don’t want to argue with their kids, they don’t have they energy to get in conversations about how to protect their children.

According to TEENS members, Parents are confused and struggling to say the right things to their children. “This is an issue that teenagers are very interested in, and not only are they interested in it, they are interested in having the opportunity to talk about it,” Laila states. “I think that it is something, because adults are so uncomfortable about talking about teen sexuality, I think that we don’t create an atmosphere that makes it comfortable for them to talk about it.” The conversations do not happen or happen too
late in life. By the time conversations do occur adolescents have already picked up misinformation or formed bad habits. "I think that it is really important to talk about it as soon as there is an inkling of interest in the opposite sex," Mia posits.

The home category combines opinions of TEENS members on teen pregnancy issues that occur with the teen and in the family unit. The next section moves from teen pregnancy issues at the personal/family unit to the local unit, and it analyzes the viewpoints of agency members on local issues surrounding teenage sexuality.

*Local*

The local category organizes responses that affect more than just the family or the teen. These are issues that the coalition members see as prevalent in the local community and need to be addressed. In this section I break down local teen pregnancy issues into two areas, (1) adolescent pressures and (2) education.

Adolescent pressure has long been spoken of and documented. Adolescence is an age where teens struggle between awkward and cool. Many teens will have their first encounters with drugs, alcohol and smoking during the adolescent years. It is also the time of raging hormones. It is not surprising then that members perceived that the pressure to have sex has become part of the teenage culture. "I think that there is a great pressure to have sex. Powerful. It doesn’t come from one place, I think it is a systemic problem," Nadia states. Steffi also made a similar statement:

(Teens) feel that society is giving the message that they should be sexual beings and before they maybe have all the knowledge and maturity to deal with all the consequences of being sexually active or being in a relationship that is healthy. A lot of kids are having sex before they are prepared to have a sexual relationship.
Not only is there pressure from many places to be sexually active, but some respondents see teens as disenfranchised from the community. As Annika emphasizes, “I think that a lot of kids don’t really have a sense of belonging anywhere or a strong sense of who they are.” According to interviewees, the pressures placed on teens are leading them to make potentially life-changing decisions. “They are sexually active,” Gayle states. “Teens are one of the biggest populations we serve in this community.” Adolescents have sex before they are educated about it and TEENS members feel pressure is partially to blame.

Annika explains:

I think that we forget about the humanness. I think we don’t look at sex as something that is wonderful between people that really care about each other. It is just kind of a thing that you are supposed to do to prove that you are a man or a woman. I think boys especially seem to be a lot more homophobic than women are and I think that they are really bothered by that. There is a lot of stuff going on, have you scored yet, have you this. I think boys especially are homophobic, it is almost like I have to prove myself because I don’t want anyone saying that I am a homosexual whether I am or not. I certainly don’t want someone saying that. It starts in eighth grade, freshman pressure.

Additionally, other issues cloud the decision making process for teens. Nick describes what he has seen working with teens, “a lot of time sexual activity happens around drinking and other party situations. Their judgment gets a little flawed because of the alcohol use.” In the words of some members the use of drugs and alcohol, and the combination of many pressures at once can take its toll on any teen that is placed in that situation. Annika summarizes what is happening at her job:

It is not just tell your kids to use birth control. It goes way beyond that. We are also dealing with the adolescent frame of mind that it will never happen to me. We are also dealing with the fact that 75 to 85 percent of teen pregnancies result from the use of drugs or alcohol on one or both parties. The drug and alcohol is major, you can have kids that would (say) ‘I would never do that’, get a couple of drinks and they lose their ability to make good decisions. Candy is dandy but liquor is quicker. It is really
true. Especially in a state like Montana, these rural states, we have more of a problem with alcohol use and I think that we have more of an acceptance of it. And of course now we are having a lot of street drugs and stuff coming in, but there is still this attitude that I am a mountain man and I can handle my beer. They don’t realize what this message is telling our kids. Lots of kids go to parties every week, I have had kids in this program that partied a lot, got pregnant, decided not to have an abortion and they aren’t sure who the dad is because they went to three parties last week, got drunk and had sex with three different guys, and so they don’t know who the dad is.

The pressure of teen life is one category in the local issues concerning teen sexual activity. The second category in this section involves education.

According to TEENS members, education is one of the most commonly stated problem concerning local teen pregnancy/sexual activity issues. I organize education opinions into two realms: (1) general awareness and (2) public education issues such as the hot button debate over abstinence.

Member perceptions about the issues that concern teenage pregnancy are varied. It is not solely about sexual activity, drugs, and alcohol. There are also issues of violence and domestic abuse, issues of poverty and welfare, and issues of education and availability of services, just to name a few. “It is not just that you are pregnant anymore, there are issues of relationship violence and other things that compound the problem,” Summer posits. Unfortunately, people have a hard time wrapping their heads around just one of these issues, let alone numerous issues all intertwined. It is hard for some community members to believe that these aforementioned issues even exist in the local community. “I also think that maybe people still think that (this town) is still a sheltered (rural) town and that it won’t happen here,” Mia claims. “It is obvious that it does.”

Due to this “rural” attitude, many interviewees spoke to the need of general awareness raising about issues and services involved with teen pregnancy. Serena posits,
“I really think that the community needs to know more about the issue and not just look at it as a problem that is affecting people other than people that are immediate friends and families.” Some TEENS members feel that the people of this community come to realizations about teen sexuality too late. As Annika states, “It really frustrates me, it seems that we are all ready to be reactive, and not ready to be proactive as a society, so it costs us a lot of money.” In this community there are some prevention efforts going on, but they don’t deal with issues like teen pregnancy. Laila’s experience has been this:

My perception is that we are always talking about prevention, and we are always talking about prevention of drugs and alcohol abuse but we really leave the sexuality piece out of it. I think it is because our culture has a difficult time dealing with teen sexuality. It is not something that people want to be aware of or discuss.

In my research with coalition members, I talked with people from over a dozen agencies who worked in some facet of teen sexuality, and/or teen parents, yet relatively little is known about these agencies. Katrina has only been with the coalition for a short time and she couldn’t believe the amount of services available. In her own words:

I haven’t done anything with teens, and that is not really my area, and I will be honest, I didn’t know maybe 70% of the organizations that are available for teens, for teen parents, and my eyes have been totally opened. I know speaking with some of my friends...they are like what are you talking about, what is that program, or what is this service, or I have never heard of that. I think that you just don’t know. I think within the sex education programs they don’t just give out a list of here is where you can go, and here are the services, they are not going to do that. I think that the community needs for better awareness and tolerance and I think that is the biggest thing. I think that so many people treat teen pregnancy as this horrible taboo thing, like a disease or the plague, and everyone is going to catch it, when in fact there are ways to prevent it, but there are also ways to deal with it. I think that not only tolerance but community support is important as well.

It is the opinion of some TEENS members that the issues of teen sexuality and pregnancy need to be reframed as part of the general awareness raising effort in the local
community. Members feel that stereotypes burden teen parents, and this burden can be addressed with community education. TEENS members believe that teen pregnancy is not just about an irresponsible decision between two teens, but a plethora of issues that need to be addressed. One suggestion for increasing the knowledge of issues and services involved with teen pregnancy is to focus more education around the parent generation. As Gayle puts it:

I think we need to get into their parents generation and I think that would be something that, yeah we hear and talk to the teens all the time, and we know where they are coming from, but maybe we need to go to the parents and talk to them more and educate them more. A lot of times in the generation they came from it is definitely not talked about at all, ever. They don’t know how to talk about it with their kids. I think that not only the teens but the parents as well. If they can provide their kids with the information, the more likely they are to protect themselves.

General awareness raising for the local community can work toward many positive goals and can battle strong held stereotypes. Another education area that can work for or against issues of teen sexuality is public school sex education.

In this community, public school curriculum is reviewed every seven years. In this upcoming year (2004-2005), the public school system is going to review the health curriculum, part of which involves sex education. In the last seven years, there has been a major change in the political atmosphere, and more monies have been granted to abstinence-only education. Within the community, programs that endorse abstinence are receiving funding, whereas more comprehensive sex education programs are competing for an ever-dwindling pool of grants. Many of the agencies in TEENS are comprehensive programs. Their attitudes about the sex education issue reflect this stance. “My concern locally is the health education curriculum is going to be reviewed next year,” Serena explains. “I really hope that (the community) maintains its current
commitment to the comprehensive sex education program.” The respondents, who spoke of the sex education curriculum, spoke as if we would be losing ground by not educating in a comprehensive way. Some stated that we have not done a great job educating in the first place and a movement towards abstinence-only would only continue to hurt the prevention effort. As Steve describes:

> It was easier to have intercourse with less risk of pregnancy, but those other risks inherent to it, are not addressed. I want to see a comprehensive holistic approach that is a lot more commonplace, that is taught at age appropriate levels that is taught without fear, without encouraging shame. We don’t deal well with sexuality, and that is a reality-based comprehensive needs deficits.

There were many strong opinions about the sex education program and specifically abstinence-only education. Katarina views abstinence-only education this way:

> Abstinence-only doesn’t work. Honestly, the sex education programs include abstinence as a part of the education, but it just seems that somewhere the education, not necessarily is failing teens, but it doesn’t seem to creating enough realistic awareness.

She continues by saying, “Abstinence-only is all they teach and that is very limiting.”

One of the respondents went to the public schools in this community and she had some interesting insight to the argument over abstinence-only education. Marian describes her viewpoint:

> I don’t think that there is enough education, enough of the right education to prepare (teens). The sex education program is lacking. I did go to the public schools here, and there is not that much. It is very much abstinence based, and kids just don’t listen to that. They need to hear every option for them, and they are going to have sex if they want to have sex. I think that they need to narrow and look at what kind of protection is available if they do want to ask for it. I don’t think that it should be obtained through parent permission or anything like that. I definitely think the education part is lacking and it needs to start in the middle schools at an earlier age, because there are people getting pregnant earlier now.
I asked her what she considered the “right” education. She replied, “The right education, I mean definitely abstinence based needs to be there, but you also need to give, if you are having sex, information on how to protect yourself, (how to) buy condoms.”

Education in both the local community (in terms of general awareness raising) and in the public school system (with comprehensive sex education) is a large part of the work the coalition is trying to accomplish. It is one of the defining features of the coalition and one of the biggest goals of the exhibit (IA). In next section, I examine the interviewee opinions about teen pregnancy issues that occur at the national level.

**National**

The final organization of opinions about teen pregnancy issues is at a national level. Many of the issues that occur in the ‘home’ section and the ‘local’ section are blamed on national problems. It is in this section that TEENS opinions on the media’s involvement in the sexualization of teens and the US government’s role on teen sexuality issues are ordered.

According to my respondents, the media, more so than any other institution, becomes the scapegoat for many the problems that are currently occurring with teenage sexual activity. From Annika’s point of view:

The kids are bombarded with (sexuality), the music, the whole media, everything. These kids, a lot of them have it in their head that you really have dated someone for a long time if you wait for a month before you have sex with them. Some of them, if you wait a week it is a long time. We have to deal with the realities of what kids listen to, the shows that they watch, the messages they get through the media, even on the computer games there are messages being given. This is a male, this is what men do, this is what women do, and they are not always very accurate.

Some TEENS members feel that the climate of the United States is becoming increasingly sexualized. Television is using sex to draw audiences, and the audiences are
getting younger. Unfortunately, as the audience gets younger, so does the age group we sexualize. “I think that children are really sexualized in our culture. In our culture we see a young 13 or 14 year old as the epitome of attractiveness and sexuality,” Steffi posits. The attention younger audiences are receiving from television marketing seems to be having an effect. “The media is really really powerful,” Nadia explains. “I do believe that kids now a days are sexual, the environment is increasingly sexualized. A child that is raised in a sexualized environment will become very sexually active very early on. Inappropriately early.” The media has become the learning center for children and teen on issues that our society does not want to talk about. Where the education falls short the television picks up the slack. Steve sees it this way:

There are so many ways that people are sexual beings that we don’t really talk about. The blinders are on to see mass culture. TV commercials using sex to sell, I think those are common messages. We don’t hear about are more reality based messages that sex can be wonderful, sex can be deadly, sex can be something that is unexpected, sex can be something that helps bind people more closely together. We don’t hear about those kind things as deeply as we hear or receive messages created primarily by marketing people. They do a great job in stimulating an interest in sex.

The media becomes the scapegoat according to coalition members. TEENS members see the effects of media marketing on adolescents, and tries to counteract that with their own messages.

Adding to this issue of media sexualization is the mixed messaging that we get from the US government. The two institutions seem to be on total opposite wavelengths. Laila sees our culture as one of split personalities, contradicting each other:

We live in such a schizophrenic culture, because youth are bombarded with messages of sexuality. They are marketed with sexual messages, and they are exploited sexually. There is a lot of that happening, which are things that we don’t tend to want to talk about or look at either and then at the same time we have an administration that is saying abstinence-only.
This is the only choice, you should choose to be abstinent and that is the only choice. We are not even going to allow discussion about anything else... We have that on one hand and on the other quite a lot of messages that are you know basically MTV... if that isn't something to sexually stimulate teenagers, it is pretty insane to say on one hand we are telling them wait until you are married, and on the other hand we are creating this home media that sexualizes everything.

Sex sells and it seems to sell well. "It is a very complex issue of what sells. I do believe that it is monetarily driven" (Nadia). Media has the money and can push the image that it desires. The agencies that would compete with this media barrage are limited by the funding that is available. The US government has its own agenda for teen sexuality issues and the funds are allocated accordingly. "Funds need to be set aside for prevention services and services for teen parents," Dominique posits. "Studies upon studies have come out saying that comprehensive education is the best practice. Abstinence-only, that is where the money is, that is where Bush has signed the money to be, and that makes it very tough. Just because the money is there doesn’t mean it works.” The funding issue has come to a head in recent times because many of the coalition members will have to compete for the same funding. Some TEENS members see the government as doing an injustice to the national population. Marian works in childcare services and explains how difficult it can be in this field:

Funding. That is what most of it comes down to is getting funding to serve the kids and the babies. There are only so many spots in every organization, and I think that most organizations are beyond full. Childcare is across the board one of the hardest things, it is very expensive for childcare and there is only limited funding and there are so many restrictions put on (the funds).

The lack of funding creates a lack of agency voices committed to comprehensive sex education. It is not just teen pregnancy. It is about all the issues that surround teen sexual activity that suffer when the agencies cannot receive funds. Serena worries that teens
will not get the message about STDs as well. “It is not just (local) teens, but teens across the US are becoming a little less conscious of STDs.”

The issues of teen pregnancy and sexual activity are prevalent at all levels of our society. In this subchapter, I have organized coalition opinions about teen issues at the home level, the local level and the national level. The opinion of interviewees about teen issues creates a need or a problem that should be addressed. In the next subchapter, I analyze the coalition’s opinions of the interface agent and how the IA can fulfill the need created in this subchapter.

The IA

Organizational members’ attitudes towards the Interface Agent were diverse. I have categorized these responses into two sets: (1) objective and (2) logistics. Objectives can be defined as the goals or “pie in the sky” hopes interviewees had for the IA. Logistics encompass responses about environmental issues (such as placement of the IA, and the emotional impact the IA creates for the observer), as well as the neutral stance of the exhibit. Above, I discussed how TEENS members posited the issues of teen pregnancy as needs (problems) in the community. In this chapter, members’ objectives for the IA are structured as solutions to the problems in the previous chapter. The IA is a planned communication between the coalition and the local community. This subsection reports the rejoinder of TEENS members to the needs of the first chapter. I begin my analysis with the objectives of the IA.

**Objectives**

Most interviewees spoke of an IA objective during the course of my interview. Although many respondents had their own opinions of the IA objectives, I organized their
responses into three sets: (1) awareness raising, (2) eye opening, and/or (3) conversation starting. The objectives were posited in a forward-looking manner, and were used to fill voids the coalition members saw in the community. An example of this occurred when Katarina stated that, “the exhibit...is to just promote a consciousness and conversation about teen pregnancy and societies responsibilities or how (community members) should support the issues with education.” In this statement Katarina is using awareness raising (“to promote a consciousness”), and conversation starting objectives for the IA.

Figure IV. I am 25 years old. I was 18 when I became a father. When I first met Lisa I was so drawn to her; her character was so kind and gentle. She was very pure in spirit. I was planning on finishing college, go perhaps to Japan and teach English there and continue writing. Lisa and I both agreed that we didn't want to abort the child. After the child was born we took it to the adoption agency—together. A week later Lisa decided that she wanted to take the child back from the adoptive parents and raise the child on her own. Part of me was heartbroken. I knew I would marry her. I knew I would become a father. But I was grieving the loss of the person I would have become. The quote "I will restore to you the years the locusts have eaten" really helped me get through this time of desperation. I'd like to move from behind the distanced person that I think I became when Lisa had Chris. I think I've separated myself from a part of my life that I need to get back into.

Note: Photo and caption entitled “Claude,” by M. Nye, 1998, From Children of Children: Portraits and stories of teenage parents. All rights reserved.
The Objective of awareness raising may be the most vague of the three sets. Many interviewees stated that the IA would “raise awareness,” but left the statement hanging with little explanation of what information people obtained. As Marian states, “It definitely raises awareness, it is not opposing, it is not glorifying teen pregnancy, it is just letting people know that it is out there.” Along the same line, Gayle posits that, “I think that it would allow people to be more aware. It is always good to remind parents and teenagers.” Later in the interview she states that “(The exhibit) lets them know that it (teen pregnancy) is out there and can’t be ignored.” These objectives about awareness raising are usually connected with opinions about the community’s lack of acknowledgment on teen pregnancy. Christie and Steve exemplify this connection in the following statements.

Christie: You look at the picture, you put on the headphone, you listen to their story and you are relating with the teenager, or someone that was pregnant when they were 12, and I think it is a real awareness, a real wake up call hopefully to younger kids.

Steve: I think (the exhibit) will help people get an understanding about the entire realm of sexuality and what it means to become a parent. It is not just a biological event; it is overwhelming in many ways. There is more to it, a growing awareness.

In both of these statements, the organizational members speak of the community as asleep or unenlightened on the subject of teen pregnancy, and the IA as the spark that will ignite a better understanding of the issues entrenched in teen pregnancy thus creating a problem/solution connection between teen pregnancy issues and the IA. In the second objective set, TEENS opinions become less general and more focused towards adolescents and family.
The “eye opening” objective organizes TEENS perceptions about the IA as a solution in a preventative light. Although the exhibit strives to remain neutral on teen issues many of the coalition members speak to the benefits that the IA will have on adolescents. As Steffi puts it, “It makes people think about what would I do if that happened to me. It makes you process it on a personal level.” This processing of the issue is where many of the coalition members see the preventative aspect of the exhibit coming to play. Nadia posits, “I think it will make them contemplate the situation...if they are not sexually active they might think about when they might choose to be so, and what risks are involved.” In a similar vein Nick speaks about the IA causing some teens to think twice:

You know, teenagers that listen to some of these stories will realize how real it is to have to raise a child and how hard it makes your life and how it changes your life. Hopefully (the exhibit) will cause some of them to think twice before having unprotected sex.

In these objectives coalition members voice their hopes that prevention will occur. Mia states:

“I think it is a really good way of opening people’s eyes to the hardship of (teen pregnancy), and also seeing the beauty of it...even if it catches them for five minutes, they will be thinking about it for five minutes. It will become more than that, hopefully it will become something that think about in the middle of a situation that could potentially put them in the same situation.”

The final objective set I use to organize coalition responses is conversation starting. This set categorizes statements about the IA as a catalyst for conversation between family and friends. Marian states:

I think (the exhibit) is effective also because it is an interactive exhibit. They will be getting the stories and they will be able to analyze them how they want. If they have questions, maybe than they can go home to their parents and I think we should encourage that.
Gayle furthers this objective by positing:

It may stir up different conversation in the family, things that don’t usually, or not at all talked about in families, and I think that is the biggest issue. Kids today are not getting their information from parents or sources that are accurate.

The conversation set also works as a starting point for a discussion on the lack of community conversation around adolescent sexual activity. Annika posits “we need to talk a little bit about what a healthy relationship is and help kids from their early adolescent years to talk about what is a good boyfriend and what is a good girlfriend.”

Many coalition members echoed this sentiment. “With this project we just wanted to bring this to the community to stimulate conversation,” and “I think first and foremost it opens the subject up for dialogue,” states Katarina and Nadia. Another coalition member used a more cautious tone. “I am not saying that (the exhibit) is going to prevent a single teen pregnancy,” Dominique conjectures, “but it is going to open the door to communication and some people will be open to hearing more information.”

All the objectives stated by TEENS members work to fulfill a need in the community. In their opinion, if there is a need for awareness raising, then the exhibit can deliver information. If there are stereotypes in the community, the exhibit can make you rethink them. If not enough conversation is occurring around the issues of teen pregnancy, then the IA can stimulate conversation. Members posit IA objectives as the solutions to some of the issues present in the local community. In the next section, TEENS members spoke of the issues they faced in terms of logistics behind the exhibit.
Logistics

The logistics category incorporates environmental statements about the actual exhibit itself, the emotional climate it creates, and the space it is sited. I organize statements about the neutrality of the exhibit in this section. In the logistics set, the coalition members speak about the IA and project some positive and negative aspects of how the exhibit affects the viewers.

When the coalition members spoke in terms of logistics, the location of the IA was the most commonly given response. The majority of the interviewees spoke of the benefits that the mall would have on accomplishing the objectives of the exhibit. Many of the respondents spoke of awareness raising and how the mall would help. As Steve states, “we are trying to reach a broader community...and kids in particular are going to be at the mall...the mall may be the difference.” Dominique concurred with Steve by saying, “I think (the coalition) is happy about the mall because there is a lot of teens that hang out there.” The mall as the location for the exhibit also helped open eyes. As Mia states:

I think one aspect for why we choose the mall as a venue is because it has every range of age of the community walking through it. I think that it is really important that the teenagers and junior high students that are there after school see what this is.

Marian elaborated more on how the mall can help make teens think:

(The mall) is a big hangout. The fact that it is free, and that people can go in without paying, I think it will reach the teenagers. A lot of them go to the mall without their parents, and this is the side that a lot of them don’t talk about at home. They can get some true stories, just kind of on their own time.

The placement in the mall allows adolescents to learn about issues involving teenage pregnancy in a comfort zone lacking in parental oversight. Finally, the mall was
Nonprofit Coalitions, 62

referenced in terms of conversation centers. With many parents and children going to the mall together, some viewers may start a conversation about teen sexuality issues in the mall that can carry over to the home. Nadia asserts:

I am hoping that families will be at the mall, or kids will be at the mall and they will go home and say mom did you hear what I saw at the mall. Mom will go down the next day and see and that will bring the conversation to the dinner table. So the parents can say, well are you having sex? Could you be pregnant? Because I wouldn't want to be...it might bring up the topics and subjects that need to be addressed in the home.

In terms of environmental logistics, coalition members see the mall as a place that will deliver a diverse set of people to educate about teen pregnancy issues. Yet, even with a majority of respondents believing the mall to be one of the most effective parts of the exhibit, there were still criticisms about the location.

Although numerous people could potentially see the exhibit, the fact that people are going in and out can be problematic. “I think I saw a lot of people this week that walked past it,” Steffi said. "(they) would look at the pictures and not stop.” Nick concurred, "I have seen a lot of people stop, put on the headphones and listen for about a minute and take them off and walk away...each story is about two and a half to five and a half minutes long. For some people two and a half minutes is longer than they want to stand and listen to something.” On top of the foot traffic that the mall encounters, many casual viewers did not come for the exhibit. As Steffi observed, “I guess it is the mall and people come to do that. I saw a lot of teenage groups come through and they barely stayed and listened to it because one of their friends wanted to go shopping.” Another obstacle to the mall environment is the climate the building creates. “You have to put yourself in a place,” Laila avows. “The mall being the bombardment of stimuli and things
that are constantly distracting. It epitomizes that which has become a part of our culture, which I think is a bit of a problem.”

A second logistical set is the exhibit itself. Many coalition members spoke of the emotional space that the IA created. This space invoked feelings within the viewer that hopefully helped raise awareness, stimulate conversation and/or open people’s eyes. The exhibit created this emotional space with black and white photos, and interactive stories. As Nick relates:

The black and white photographs for one thing, they pull you right in without listening to the stories...you can get lost in each one of them. You can put the headphones on and hear the stories of the person from the picture, and it is just so personal. You are alone with this person because you have the headset on and everything around you disappears. It is a one on one experience with this person who is photographed maybe six or seven years ago telling their story to you. It is not exactly interactive, because you can’t ask questions and talk back, but it is close enough to being interactive. I think that the personal part is so effective.

Over and over, many of the interviewees spoke to the “power” of the IA. As Laila put it, “the stories humanize the issue.” The pictures and audio “draw you in” (Katarina). “The pictures are amazing, but the words are even more amazing” (Dominique). The emotional space carries the messages of the exhibit in a way that is captivating for the viewer. The emotional space is no longer about raising awareness or opening eyes. It is about being captivated by a story of a man or a woman who became a teenage mother or father. “The exhibit is real people, and its not just fact or not just saying if you do this, this will happen,” Gayle states. “It is showing real people, capturing their stories, and so (the viewer) sees that, the reality to (teen pregnancy).” The format is also appealing to younger generations. “Kids love headphones. I think there will be a draw to it. It is like a TV, I mean it is perfect,” Christie states. “Just knowing my boys, they would listen to
it. They would be curious enough to just stick the headphones on and hopefully watching the first one will draw them into the rest of them.” The shift from a learning environment to an entertainment environment is an important tool for gaining attention. Nadia states it best when she says:

> They are going to see faces of young and old and they are going to be telling their stories. The lesson is here without the lecture. You don’t have to shake a finger and lecture. It is a massive amount of communication going out without lecturing. You do it in a different way and it is so powerful.

Just as the mall had its disadvantages so too does the exhibit itself. The IA has 50 pictures with audio stories that range from two minutes to six minutes. There are large time requirements in order to even listen to a portion of the pictures. “You are not going to get the effect of the whole exhibit by listening to one,” Nick claims. “So even if you are interested for three and a half minutes, you get through one story, big deal. You have to take time to do this.” And time can be a hard thing to give up for the causal viewer who came to the mall for different reasons. Another issue of time concerns the duration of the exhibit. The IA was placed in the mall for nine days. Once the nine days are up, the exhibit moves on. As Steve sees it, “It is a one shot deal in a way. I know we have tried to plan a lot of associated events, but I don’t know what is going to happen with the (events).”

Another disadvantage to the exhibit is that it is a small fish in a big sea. The IA is trying to put out a message about teenage sexuality. It is up against contradictory messages from different media outlets. It battles mixed messages from the family, church, and school. Annika states, “I think that a lot of people won’t (view the exhibit) because they think they have all the answers anyway.” Gayle adds:
I think teens are constantly sent negative messages about what they shouldn’t do, and so it is another kind of message that is being is sent. I know in the exhibit they are saying that they are not condemning or condoning anyone, they are just telling a story or each individual story, or couple. So to (teens) it could be something that they could easily look over, they know that is teen pregnancy they have heard about it, nothing new to them, they know they can get pregnant, it is taking the next step, to okay there is another person that is pregnant and there is their story. It kind of seems like information that they are numb to or used to it.

In the end, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. Most coalition members interviewed acknowledged that not everyone would attend the exhibit. The placement of the exhibit at the mall and the emotional space that the exhibit created was a combination that the members were happy with. “Anything you do is going to miss some people, but I really think that there is nothing we could do about that at this point. I think as far as timing and location, it is where it needs to be. And the way it has worked out, it is probably as effective as it is going to be,” Summer said.

The final logistic set was the neutrality of the exhibit. The issue of teenage sexuality is a hot button topic in many communities. The exhibit proposed to go beyond issues and just portray the stories of those affected by teenage pregnancy. The neutrality of the exhibit was often remarked about in interviews with the coalition members. If the messages were neutral and let people draw their own conclusions, then fewer people would shy away from this controversial issue. Laila posits:

Because it is a controversial issue and it attaches to many controversial issues, such as teen sexuality and reproductive rights, and all of those things for our culture are huge with diverse views. I think this exhibit is a way to bring that forward, in a way that doesn’t immediately polarize people. I think that it is very humanizing, these are people’s stories, and I think it just helps you to look at it a little differently. I am just hoping that it can raise awareness about the whole issue of teen pregnancy, because it is not really anything that we have been talking about in our community.
The nonjudgmental stance that the IA takes allows all members of a polarized community to become aware of the teen pregnancy issues. "It is not going to preach, it is a nonjudgmental approach that is more likely to be well received by all kinds of different people, so they are going to hear these stories and see these photographs that are big, and not necessarily identify but to understand better than before the challenges of teen parenting," states Christie. As Dominique explains, it becomes a safe issue:

I would say that it is a safe forum for just saying that there is teen pregnancy, it is an issue period. That is what is so great about it. It doesn’t say that there shouldn’t be teen pregnancy, it doesn’t say teen pregnancy ruin lives, or teen pregnancy should be celebrated, it simply says that it is an issue.

The exhibit not only creates an emotional space but a safe harbor, away from the politics surrounding the issue. However, the neutral stance can be problematic as well. No matter how neutral the stance may be, people will have issues with it. Steve states:

There is always the possibility that someone is not going to like it for whatever reason, some of the stuff says, it is not proselytizing, it is not pushing one point or another, not promoting or condemning, some people may think it should be condemning teenage sexual behavior. Some people could use that as a down side.

There was a general consensus among those interviewed that those closed minded people would pass over the IA. Even though the neutral stance should broaden the audience, many organizational members believed that those with the strongest convictions would not attend. "There are a lot of people that are very narrow minded about this," Annika posits. "They think that ‘I have it in my head why this all happened and I am not going to listen to anything else that goes against what I think personally’.”

The neutral stance also causes some confusion with coalition members. By taking no stance at all the objectives of the exhibit become clouded. "I don’t know where the
prevention would come in as far as awareness,” Gayle states. “(The exhibit) is just another model to look at, but I think a lot of (teens) may just pass through.” Not only is it difficult for some to see how the objectives of the coalition can be met, further more, the neutral stance makes it difficult to pinpoint who the IA is designed to educate. Serena posits, “I don’t know who (the coalitions) target audience is. I think it is just a general education for the community. I haven’t heard (us) talk about a specific target population.” Coalition members’ questions and concerns make it apparent that even the neutral stance of the IA has disadvantages. Oddly enough, very few members spoke of the organizational benefits that come from the exhibit. The IA is marketing the coalition as well as sending a message about teenage pregnancy. Serena was the only respondent that summarized the internal benefit of the exhibit when she stated, “One benefit that is not as major, but for TEENS in a nonjudgmental way (they) will be able to make it first public appearance…and so rather than starting with a really controversial kind of campaign, they are starting with the exhibit, which is both artistic and educational.”

Overall, this subchapter shows the complexity of an IA about teenage pregnancy issues. There are logistical pros and cons that arise from the exhibit, but according to TEENS members the objectives of the IA help fill a need in the community. In the final subchapter, I will analyze the coalition members’ opinions of TEENS and their membership with the coalition.

The Coalition

Here I analyze the coalition’s view of itself. The organization of this section occurs in three categorizations. First, I examine the objectives of the organization. Second, I examine issues that arise from coalition work. Finally, I examine what
collaboration means to the coalition members. This subchapter in particular has organizational communication implications. In my theoretical discussion, I will draw upon these responses to examine issues of paradox, identification, and auto-communication.

Objectives

In much the same way the coalition members spoke of the IA objectives, they also spoke of coalition objectives. One of the main TEENS objectives is education. “Our main goal is to educate the public about reality of this,” Annika states. TEENS members see the coalition as a way to bring light to the issue. “It is really important to just bring the issue out into the open” (Steffi). Laila also affirms the need for openness about the issue. “I hope that TEENS can just raise awareness and continue to bring this recognizably difficult issue... out there and talk about it.” The issues around teen pregnancy are complex but the coalition members feel it is important to make sure all issues surrounding teen sexuality are addressed. “(We) need to educate the community about the realities of teen pregnancy,” Dominique posits. “I think that our goal is to link teen pregnancy to all of those risk factors that come before it.” The way to continue this awareness raising is through more programs and projects. According to agency members just being a coalition will not help the local community. The coalition needs to stay active and visible. As Christie states, “Well more projects would be one way to keep (raising awareness). This exhibit is going to be a great thing, but once it is over we need to try and come up with other things. And maybe just getting the word out, getting news releases, getting messages about issues, statistics, numbers.” Katarina adds, “I think more panels, community panels, and other projects are going to be important.” The more
channels you can use to spread information, the more likely people will attend to the message. Katarina continues by saying:

I think as far as (TEENS) goes I think it will be fine. I think we will continue to get the message out in creative ways and just keep open communication between organizations and the community. I think that creates more of an awareness or education of what services and opportunities or resources are provided.

Although many of the respondents spoke in terms of community wide awareness, there are several members that also pointed out teens and teen parents specifically need education. “I think that it is great when TEENS can involve more teen and their efforts, and do some peer-to-peer education and advocacy,” Serena states. Teen parents are the ones that have to deal directly with the stereotypes placed on them from society, so speaking with them early and trying to prevent pregnancy is one of TEENS objectives.

Marian describes why teen awareness is so important:

(I hope to) just keep bringing awareness to the community. It would be nice to keep letting people know, to help with the issue. I still see a lot of resistance to teen parents; I would definitely like to see (TEENS) work with the teen parents themselves, in all aspects. I think you can ask a lot of teen parents, and it has been very hard for them and they would love to try and dissuade other teenagers from becoming pregnant. Awareness is a big thing for me.

Another group that TEENS should work with is parents of teens. Many coalition members viewed parents as confused or not knowing how to parent. TEENS' members can work towards fixing that problem. Gayle describes how:

(Parents) wanted to know how to talk to their kids about sexuality and how they are feeling about it. (Parents) are feeling out of touch with what their kids are going through. I don't know how TEENS could do that as far as reaching out to parents, maybe through the schools, maybe through (local agencies). (TEENS) should be communicating with parents and see where they are coming from and see how they feel about teen pregnancy and sexuality of adolescents; what they think is appropriate, and not appropriate.
Another goal of the coalition is to educate and work with the school system. “I think that (TEENS) should hit the schools,” Steffi states. A few of the members spoke of different programs that TEENS could bring into the schools to help the sex education process. “I think that maybe as a group that we could have some panels that go to the schools…talking about the realities of teen pregnancy,” Annika posits. Marian elaborates further on her ideas for a teen panel program:

(TEENS) can definitely help with the awareness with the teachers; working together on what is appropriate. We do have a bunch of different aspects from the parenting to the prevention, so if we can work with the administrators and the teachers, and whoever is going to be teaching these kids, come up with a program, maybe even get kids who are teen parents…on the panel to go in, I think…we can work with the teachers and administrators.

One member blended both media and in-class education as a way to deliver educational messages to a media savvy audience. “I think that (media literacy) is a very good approach,” Laila states. “We have found that media literacy is very effective with youth… I think part of what (TEENS) is trying to do is educate parents, and schools and youths using the media literacy approach.” The biggest educational goal for some coalition members is working with the curriculum review board. TEENS can have a hand in crafting a new health curriculum that can be implemented in the schools. As Christie describes, “we were trying to change the curriculum a little bit by getting into it. I think by us just having meetings with the school board, we presented a lot of good topics and (the school board) listened.” Nick takes it one step further by positing TEENS as a coalition working against the abstinence-only campaign:

(TEENS) is trying to implement a curriculum within the high schools. They are trying to get into the health curriculum and talk about teen sexuality and parenting issues and birth control. They are trying very hard
to counteract the abstinence only ideas that are flowing around the nation right now, with what we call abstinence based.

Although the framing of TEENS education goal is slightly different throughout these examples, the importance of filling the education need is a prominent goal with coalition members.

The final objective of TEENS is to become a catalyst for conversations. TEENS needs to be in constant conversation with the community in order to keep a pulse on those they serve. Gayle's experience has been one of learning by contact:

I noticed that just by having my (teen) group once a week that it brings me back down to the level where I am actually interacting with them. I am talking with them, and listening to where they are coming from, and that is where I learn the most. Actually being in with that population that we are trying to serve.

According to agency members, TEENS needs to not only teach but also be taught by those they are trying to serve. Some members of the coalition also remarked about the need for conversation not only between TEENS and the community, but also between community members themselves. Steffi posits:

I think that (TEENS) is doing things like (the exhibit) that really reach a broad cross-section of the population. It is really powerful because it makes people have discussions about (the issue) and I think a bunch of parents that come and see the exhibit go home and have conversations with their kids or make the pledge to be more supportive, have more open conversation that would be really important. I think that it is something that everyone wants to happen.

The objectives members posit give TEENS a sense of purpose and validates the work of all members. These opinions are important in my discussion of identification and auto-communication. The objectives of the organization also work in the problem/solution argument that members set up in the 'issues' section. In the next section, I move from the objectives of the coalition, to the issues that arise from coalition work.
Coalition

This section organizes responses about the inner-workings and members feelings about the coalition. The coalition section analyzes responses about TEENS’ structure and organization. It also evaluates member issues of time and money. It is a members view of the internal working of TEENS.

The first category in this section addresses the newness of the group. Many members of the group spoke about the TEENS accomplishments with reference to the duration of time they have been formed. The group first came together in the spring of 2003. The newness of the organization revolves around the fact that TEENS is only one year old. Laila uses the “new” theme in terms of how much has been accomplished in a year.

We have only been going a year and I think that for a coalition that has only been going for a year… we have accomplished some amazing things. I am pretty impressed with what we have gotten done. (The exhibit) is our first big thing, this will be the first time that the community will even know about TEENS.

Serena also looks at the last year as a building and foundation year:

It took like three four months to come up with a mission statement and a full year to find new members and solidify its membership, and that is a little slower that it might have been, but I don’t think that it is that bad. I think that this year it has been about internal capacity building rather than outside projects, so I think it is great that by the end of the first year they are doing one big public project.

The new theme is also used when referencing future growth and prosperity. Mia comments on the growth:

I think that TEENS will eventually… get funding and propose more events and purpose more involvement and more exposure because TEENS is such a young coalition. Still, I think that it is important that growth happened and it happens soon and they get the message that they desire out there.
With the newness of the coalition come growing pains. In the last year, much time was spent organizing the structure and function of the group. Over the last three months, much of the coalition time was spent on the logistics of the exhibit.

Many of the new coalition members have yet to obtain full understanding of the mission of the organization because of the devotion TEENS has spent on the exhibit. Also, the initiative of the coalition to represent all sides of the teen pregnancy issue has caused mission drift. As Serena sees it, “TEENS needs to develop a couple of logic models for who they want to reach. Each logic model needs to talk about how they want to reach that specific population.” She continues by stating, “I think that TEENS is going to have to decide whether they want to represent all views, whether they want to bring on some pro-life groups in (the community). I know originally they did want to do that, and the groups just haven’t joined. Maybe that is better too, maybe TEENS just needs to go along with its current membership.” Although the coalition was founded under the banner of neutrality and openness to all, at least one member of the coalition sees benefits in not continuing to reach out to the pro-life contingent. Other goals that were established a year ago also have members pondering. “We want to come up with a comprehensive way to address teen pregnancy prevention,” Dominique posits. “I don’t think we know what that is, that is half our battle, to figure out what that would look like.” Thus far, many agency members see the coalition as new with room to grow in the future, but with that growth needs to come a realignment of goals and objectives for years to come.

Also, after a year the coalition needs to redefine its organizational structure. Many of the more entrenched members of TEENS see inefficiencies that could burden
the overall effectiveness of the group. Some of the benefits of a coalition can also be troublesome to the running of an organization. TEENS is a relatively small coalition with only about 12 active members/agencies. There has never been a designated head of the coalition, just an intern that deals with the behind the scenes issues and facilitates the meetings. The lack of leadership can cause frustration. “I think that there have been some white knuckles here and there,” Serena surmises. “There hasn’t been the same kind of oversight as if you had an actual staff person to devote all their time to it.” The absence of a head contact person can set back time, and hinder communication. Katarina speaks about her experience with TEENS:

Sometimes I feel the lack of organization doesn’t allow me to do well. I need to ask (someone) a question but where is (that member), she is over at her agency, in a meeting. I can’t get a hold of her, and I need to know something now, and there is now one else that knows. I can call other people on the list but they don’t know, so I guess that communication is sometimes hard, but that is just a part of this and something I have to work out.

Another issue with the structure of the coalition is in planning. Even though there are only about 12 members in the coalition, that number also represents the number of agencies that have their own agenda, present at the table. Each person comes to TEENS for a slightly different purpose. Some may come for prevention reasons; some may come for teen pregnancy service reasons and so on. The planning and coordinating of numerous platforms can be difficult. Laila mentions this in our interview. “Some of the difficulties, the planning. I am working with the coalition… you have to get everybody on the same page. You have to have a discussion about that. You have to listen to everybody’s ideas. You have to make a decision and than move forward.” The coordination of the group is imperative to restructuring for future work. Serena views a
coalition as the parent to many sub-committees working on different issues all at once.

She explains:

An event is great but it reached only some people and it doesn’t really look at policy change and it doesn’t really change any infrastructure. It doesn’t address concerns and sex education curricula. They have enough members where they could have two or three committees working on different sides of different issues… Otherwise at every meeting everyone is like, well we are almost done with this what next? If we actually develop a plan with measurable outcomes and steps to knock off the list, I think there will be things done.

From these interviews TEENS future can be seen as tenuous to some. The group has accomplished a lot in one year, but if future plans are not set, then the group may flounder.

One of the most consistently mentioned coalition issues is time. It was the biggest challenge or restriction to most people. No one is paid to work on TEENS. The members need to schedule in time to meet coalition goals in their already busy schedule. “My times clash with the ongoing meeting times,” Summer states. “It has been more a time constraint than anything else.” Many members spoke about the time issue, and how they could put more time into TEENS, but there is not enough hours in a week. “I am competing for my own time,” Dominique states. “I could put 40 hours a week into TEENS if I had the time.” For coalition members it is a juggling act, and sometimes one ball falls. Steffi explains, “I think it is challenging. Everybody has a lot on their plate, I can understand that too. You are asking people who are already doing more than they are getting paid for to go volunteer for something else.”

The passion this small group has for issues of teen pregnancy drives them to complete their goals, even though time is limited. As Steffi claims, “any project is going to be driven by people that feel passionately about it.” TEENS may be lucky to have
passionate people because the work is getting done. “I think that we have some caring people. They are really busy,” Nadia describes. “Maybe we are just lucky to have some unusually committed people who do follow through. It might be pure luck.” Serena does not see it as luck, but the passion does keep the coalition going. She explains:

(TEENS) is lucky, it is not luck it is a matter of passion. Its members, almost all of its members helped start (TEENS) since (it) started a year ago. So they all feel really committed to it and they all have a stake in how it turns out. So their willing to do more work for the coalition than that is often true in older coalitions where it is a lot harder to maintain that sense of ownership of it. It think that is why they are able to function without any staff, the members contribute a lot of their staff time and energy to the (TEENS’) projects.

Yet, with all the passion this group may have, time still eventually takes its toll. Burnout occurs and member attrition occurs. Steffi put in a number of extra hours during the exhibit and the stress from additional hours made life difficult:

I am a little burnt-out, but there are other grants that I am doing now and I am filling in for someone else and there have been a lot of other things going on this week so, it is a little intense. I guess I did work 60 hours this week, it felt like more than usual. That comes and goes it is part of the nature of any job I think, as long as it is not consistent.

In a year’s time, at least one member of the coalition was disturbed by the attrition of members. “It has only been a year or so that (TEENS) has even existed, seeing the member list start to dwindle,” Katarina remarks. “Its not that they don’t want to or have an interest, but it is the time and this group has had a hard time setting regular meetings and it never will work for everyone.” In order to alleviate some coordination and time issues an internship was designed to liaison with agency members. Unfortunately this person is burdened with numerous responsibilities. “I think a lot is left up to the intern,” Katarina posits. The intern takes care of the mass emailing, the meeting and minutes, as
well as coordinates many of the behind the curtain issues involved with the funding of the exhibit. Serena explains the precariousness of the situation:

If (TEENS) had funding of its own to pay for stuff they would have been able to put more time into fundraising earlier one, and one person would have been able to see the process through from beginning to end, instead of passing from one student intern with a limited amount of time to another student intern with a limited amount of time.

The coalition becomes reliant on an individual that is only there for one semester and then moves on. The reliance on one person can be dangerous and put the entire coalition at risk. Christie states, "(the person) we had last year from the university just drove (TEENS). She was always upbeat and she drew people in. It was very positive." But Steve points out:

I think of just the fragility of the organization, it is hard to watch. For example, if (the intern) had been hurt, and couldn’t continue to go through the process and all that would have been huge... if (she) had to pull out for whatever reason, than that might have made it hard to rebound.

Katarina’s solution to this reliance on one member, and the attrition of the coalition members is a reaffirmation of support. After a year, she proposes that everyone meet and re-ante for the year to come. In her words:

I just want to know who are going to be the core team players here. Who is going to be at the meetings and who has a real investment for there organization, the agency, them personally, surrounding the issues of teen parenting, teen pregnancy and prevention. I don’t know exactly how I am going to do that, I think it is going to be at a meeting. We just take that meeting and really get honest with it, and discuss that...we do have certain guidelines, just going over those, the way we vote, the way we organize, the way we do the different things we do, not just being so laissez-faire about everything.

The last coalition issue in this section deals with money. Almost every nonprofit study speaks to the issue of funding and money at some point. Nonprofits are in a constant search for funding and TEENS is no exception. The members of TEENS spoke
about money frequently. I have categorized the money responses into two areas: the need for support from all member agencies, and the affects of minimal coalition funding.

The coalition is comprised of many organizations, but the funding in the teen pregnancy realm is so scarce that finding more money can be difficult. This became apparent in my interviews. The members wanted the exhibit to occur, but had little if any money to donate. Dominique was surprised by this, “agencies that we thought would be right on board haven’t come through, and that is really interesting to me... maybe they don’t have the funds. Some of the agencies, I am surprised that they haven’t jumped on board like expected and they may come through.” The competition for funding really takes a toll on the coalition. While most members would love to give money, they must keep their priorities straight. Their agency needs funding first. Summer explains her point of view:

How do we not compete with others? Each one of us sits at the table and we are all thinking that I know of a source, but I have to apply for that too, so how do I have them apply for it and I apply for it, and be part of this group. None of us want to feel like we are double dipping in a funding source, so how do you let a funder know that you are part of this other group without jeopardizing either of the funding possibilities. It is difficult to say the least.

Dominique also expressed similar views of the funding situation:

I even found myself, when making the fundraising list, thinking gosh I just asked them for money for (my agency). I think that because we are working for the same thing that it is worth it to make that decision, and to make that clear boundary between the two programs.

In the end though, TEENS had to rely more on outside funders. “My agency doesn’t have the funds to give money contributions,” Marian states. “I made copies for the newsletter, that’s about all we can afford to do.” Some agencies are so far in the red that they have to make serious cuts and cannot even entertain ideas of funding the exhibit.
We are bare bones. We are cutting positions and we are supposed to cut three million dollars from the budget,” Annika describes. “This is not a good time. There is just no money.” Other coalition members were constrained by parent organizations. Gayle encountered this problem:

I have written to our development director and faxed the information about TEENS, and she wrote back saying that our budget is way over and we have already over budgeted. It may be something that I need to push harder... Unfortunately it is out of my hands, I don’t do the budget. Education has a small budget. It is something that I would like to push on more, and I know TEENS needs a lot of help. But how do you convince other programs that this is really something effective? It has been a struggle to get that money.

Even those organization that could donate money, only could give a small amount and had reservations about giving. Laila explains:

We don’t have a lot of money, (My agency) is on a very tight budget, but we could choose to donate 100 dollars. Some of the other agencies that are members of the coalition, they might be funded from federal dollars that they cant take money out of their budget for these types of things.

Steve’s agency was also able to give a small donation to fund the exhibit, but was hesitant about when they would be distributed. Steve describes his situation, “say we contribute something early and nothing happens, well that money might have been better spent... The money has been contributed, just not received yet. Once there is enough money showing that it was actually going to happen...we could follow some of the other stuff.” He also had to be creative with the way he got funding from his agency. Steve explains:

It is being supported by a small amount of money from a prevention fund... The justification is while this is overtly talking about Teen pregnancy, we are talking about sexual activity that could involve the transmission of HIV and we are still trying to raise awareness about those behaviors, and I think that it was a justification that we were able to come up with, on why HIV funds could be used.
The lack of funds becomes a point of contention for the coalition members. They do not let it affect the workings of the coalition, but the lack of financial support from many of the member agencies is holding back the efficiency of TEENS in producing programs. In the second “money” section, I take a closer examination of how funding effects the coalition.

I asked TEENS members about how the funding of the coalition affected them. There was a wide array of answers, and not all of them were negative. “It forced us to think outside of the box,” Dominique states about getting funding for the exhibit. “We had to bring in other agencies and departments into the process.” Summer also saw some benefits to the lack of funding:

I think it can work as a great team building activity as well; we need to commit to something like (the exhibit). We all committed and it’s a coalition, we don’t just all stand up and say well I am sorry that you didn’t raise the money, we are all going to be there if we need to raise 500 more dollars, then we will probably all brain storm some last ideas, that we can tap into. It is a good thing for all of us to come together in a close activity, so we will deal.

Still, the lack of funding was difficult, especially for those directly dealing with the fundraising effort. “It was a lot of scrambling, and we were working a lot harder on the funding aspect of it all,” Mia describes. Funding is a reality of nonprofit life, and it can make working a pain. “You have to look at the reality of it,” Katarina explains. “How much are you going to raise, how much need to be raised, and that is just the biggest problem... I think that is put a lot of strain on people especially (in my agency).” TEENS had a committee in charge of raising the money. Laila was on the committee and explained the pressure of funding. “Certainly raising money is a big concern to me...we have to put some pressure on. See about putting out a donation box. I feel that we can do
Nonprofit Coalitions, 81

it. We might have to put a little pressure on a few more people that I feel should want to be sponsoring.” The pressure TEENS applies this time can cause problems in the future. People who give money now may not want to fund again in the near future. Steffi wonders about how often you can go back to the well. “I think it worked out this time. It makes it challenging if they want to bring it next year to do outreach. It is a barrier. All the people that funded it this time probably won’t find it next time.”

All of these coalition issues in this section have created a picture of TEENS that the members use to give relevance to their work. Funding and time are scarce. The funding question is an ongoing problem for TEENS. The coalition has to go through some growing pains and reorganization to keep the passionate few that do all the work from burning out. In the next section of the coalition chapter, I will analyze the benefits of collaboration and the problems that an all-inclusive mission can bring to TEENS.

Collaboration

Coalitions are about collaboration. TEENS objective was to not only bring in many agencies that worked on teen pregnancy issues, but also to span the political chasm and bring in a diverse set of opinions from all political stand points. In this subsection I organize responses about collaboration as well as the diversity issue of TEENS.

Teamwork is what gets the job done. TEENS' members spoke about the benefits of collaboration in terms of teamwork. TEENS brought agencies together so they could share services and work together towards an issue of concern in today society. Katarina summarizes the benefits of TEENS this way, “It is bringing members from all these other agencies and other organizations in this community who are concerned with teen pregnancy and parenting and prevention. It just shows that in fact we can have people
work together, it can be successful and it can be done.” TEENS allows members to share services, prevent overlap of services and split expenses on projects. “What I like about collaboration is that not one person is recreating the wheel,” Summer states. The collaboration prevents to many similar messages about the same issue saturating the community and making people numb to all messages. Steffi posits:

One of the dangers in (this community), having how many hundreds of nonprofits, at some point it gets kind of ridiculous having everybody trying to do their own thing and have their own vision. I think that you ultimately don’t serve the community best when you are not working together, so I really like the idea of collaborating and coalitions.

The collaboration also allows agencies to network together and get a better sense of each other. It keeps people from feeling isolated, fighting a giant issue with no help. “It is just good to get together with people that know what in the heck you are talking about. They know they are doing it to, they are seeing it to, and it kind of reenergizes me,” Annika states. “You are kind of out there by yourself.” The members use TEENS as a way to learn, communicate and share expertise. “I see (TEENS) as a vehicle for learning more about what is going on in the community,” Nadia claims. Nick sees TEENS as more a vehicle for communication and networking:

I have a better conduit for communicating with or hearing from the other members from (TEENS). I guess the best thing for me, is the networking opportunity, I get to know who’s who in the zoo, and people figure out who I am.

And finally, collaboration is a way for TEENS members to fulfill a personal responsibility they feel towards teens. “Being a (TEENS) member is important to me because I am doing my part as an educator to that population of people to prevent pregnancy which again combining goals and missions with other programs,” Gayle states. During numerous interviews, coalition members commented about the positive
aspects of collaboration. It gives a positive frame for the combination of services and networking. The second aspect to the collaboration section is the diversity and reach of TEENS.

TEENS was first brought into being with a mission of inclusion and diversity; a way to get everyone with every opinion to the table and talking. Many TEENS members commented on the benefit of such a mission. “I don’t think (TEENS) is taking sides, which I think is good,” Nadia states. “When we get together, I don’t find anyone proselytizing our beliefs or our agency’s beliefs.” The diversity brings many different viewpoints to the table. “It is important to have a diverse group there that is concerned about these issues,” Laila claims. “Each group has its own unique thing to contribute.” By bringing messages with a diverse perspective to the community, you can add legitimacy and viewership that one agency might not be able to achieve. Steve explains it this way; “the single message in the mission is that teen pregnancy is important, and we are concerned that we need to pay more attention to it, and to do that well, we need to have these diverse group prospective.” The diversity of the groups helps TEENS achieve some of its many objectives, but other members of the coalition don’t see TEENS as being diverse enough.

The agencies that comprise TEENS are all relatively similar in beliefs. There is only one agency that takes a pro-life stance. The rest of the agencies believe in a more pro-choice, comprehensive sex education platform. Not one of the agencies is on board with the new abstinence-only push. Dominique spoke at length about the problems this can create:

The difficult thing is that (TEENS) is made up of people that are ready to be real about teen pregnancy prevention and sex education. The groups
that we are missing are those that have a completely different thought. And so before we take total action and come up with a community message and start a political process, we really need to become a comprehensive coalition... If we are all on the same side saying the same thing, it becomes a support group for teen parents and that is not our formal mission. It is part of our mission to grow the membership.

What many members may see as a diverse array of opinions, others may see as a support group. The coalition has made numerous attempts to reach across the aisle, but there has been no response. As Mia sees it, “people that aren’t working towards the same direction have not become involved.” And the people that have difficulty with the coalition may not stay. “If somebody starts to have difficulty with the other people in the coalition, I think they would stop being a part of the coalition,” states Nick. Of course what you wind up with then is a “support group” style coalition instead of a diverse group.

Another issue that comes up with the (lack of) diversity is the ways in which decisions can be made on issues. One of the big issues for some coalition members is the change in the sex education curriculum. TEENS was working with the public school system, but there was a lot of controversy over the meetings, so the TEENS subcommittee disbanded. A few people commented on this issue, and it came to light that having a diverse range of opinions on the topic can hurt the coalition’s effectiveness. As Laila explains:

(The education subcommittee) was one place where we really had to recognize that in our group there are different flexibilities with having a particular point of view. We may not be able to have one voice on that particular issue. We will have to decide when we can have one voice and when we can’t. I think that particular issue it might be better to approach things a little differently and try to have input but not input that will create more division

The coalition may not be able to accomplish some of its education goals, if the diversity standards are met within the coalition. If more people join who have pro-life, abstinence-
only views, the coalition may not be able to do programs with one voice. This inability to speak as one may be a good thing and a bad thing. Serena states her view on the one voice idea:

What was happening was that (TEENS) was creating a united front, which means that it is only one voice. There is a lot of disagreement among (TEENS) members about what curricula should look like, and I think that that kind of disagreement is healthy because it shows how complex the issue is. So if (TEENS) is speaking with solely one voice against 50 voices from the abstinence-only point of view, I think it would actually be weaken so what they are doing now.

So one voice may be good in one area and not good in another. The whole education reform itself has caused controversy for the group both externally and internally. Nick posits that education shouldn’t be a TEENS issue at all:

I don’t think it is really a (TEENS) issue. I think it is an issue of some of the people within the coalition, everybody in (TEENS) doesn’t, it is not their focus. I think (TEENS) itself shouldn’t try to micromanage everything that everybody within (TEENS). (The coalition) shouldn’t take the lead in what some of the individual agencies do. I think it would be unwieldy; it would be too hard to manage.

Collaboration has both positive and negative results for TEENS. Collaboration allows the group to network and work jointly towards a common. The diversity of the coalition is not what the group initially expected, but the greater diversity may hinder the effectiveness of the group. Also the diversity of opinions may lead the group to tackle issues that it should not attack as a whole.

Summary

All the sections in this chapter create a picture of the coalition painted by the members’ opinions. My first research question asks coalition members about the need of the community surrounding teen sexual activity. From the interviews, three levels of needs arise. The coalition members spoke of teen issues at home. They talked about the
pressures of teen life and the dilemmas of being a parent of a teenager. The members also spoke about the local level issues concerning teen sexuality issues. Teens experience peer pressure that can result in poor choices, and the educations of teens and adults about issues of teen sexuality are incomplete and inconsistent. The third level at which respondents discussed teen sexuality is at the national level. TEENS members spoke of the effects the US media and the government have on teens and families. The messages are opposed and cause a tension between high sexual activity (as portrayed on TV) versus no sexual activity (the message the republican administration has for our teens). These three levels of the sexual activity issue answer how coalition members see the issues of teen sexuality in the community.

The second research question (RQ 1a) asks how the coalition justifies these issues and the ability to meet the needs of the community. In responses to this question, coalition members used their own experiences in the field of teen sexual activity as proof for the issues. Most interviewees spoke of their experiences with at-risk youth, and teen parents when giving examples for the interview. They also positioned TEENS as a coalition that could work against the problems with teen sexual activity in the community. Members would speak of TEENS objectives and how they benefited the community. TEENS members saw themselves as educators of an ignorant population. The coalition would enlighten community members on the complex issues involved with teen sexuality.

Finally, the members of the coalition took the needs of the community and posited the IA as a solution to those needs. According to TEENS members, the IA would educate the viewers of the exhibit about the issues of teen sexuality. This positioning of
the IA as a solution to the problems of the local community answers research question 1b (how are these issues reflected in the IA?). The IA could inform all age groups and cultures. Members talked about how it would be a conversation starter in families, and an educator of community members. In the next chapter, I report the results of the open-ended survey that was administered to the viewers of the exhibit. After this analysis, I will compare the two chapters and discuss the implications of my findings.
CHAPTER FIVE: THE VIEWERS RESULTS

The second results chapter reports my data from the community members that viewed the exhibit. In this research I argue that the messages the coalition send out to the community become auto-communicative. The community members become a reference point by the coalition for evaluation. In order to capture the auto-communicative process, the community members’ opinions need to be collected. In this chapter I will present information that will depict the viewers’ opinions of community issues, followed by the viewers opinions of the IA, and, finally, the viewers’ opinions of the coalition. This chapter directly addresses research question two and three. From the following results, I will answer what the needs of the community are from the viewer standpoint (RQ2). I will also be able to discern the effectiveness of the IA in meeting the needs of the community (RQ2a), and the viewers’ perceptions of the coalition (RQ3 and RQ3a). For my policy discussion, the viewers’ opinions on the IA and the effectiveness of the coalition’s marketing can be addressed. Also, in terms of external communication, this chapter highlights the communities’ opinion on TEENS’ external marketing. In the first section I report the viewers’ opinion on teen pregnancy issues as they relate to the local community.

Viewers on Teen Pregnancy

In this subchapter two questions are asked of the viewers that deal directly with teen pregnancy issues. One question evaluates the viewer’s opinion on how issues of adolescent pregnancy should be addressed. The second question asks viewers where they believe that adolescents receive most of their information about sex. It is important to understand how viewers perceive deficiencies of education (question 4), as well as report
the common learning techniques viewers believe teens rely on to gain information
(question 13).

*Question 4: How do you think the adolescent pregnancy, as an issue in (this community),
should best be addressed?*

The purpose of this question was to establish what viewers thought to be the
“best” way to educate people about adolescent pregnancy. The question sheds some light
on where people’s opinions lay on the topic as well as where viewers see a dearth of
education coming from. The question had a range of responses and, consequently, I
thirteen categories emerged to organize the data. Table 4 displays the list of categories,
the definitions used to organize the answers, and some of the typical responses from these
categories.
Table 4: Adolescent Pregnancy Issue Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>This category reflects peoples’ responses geared towards education and learning. The category encompasses not just general sex education but also responses concerning the need for general community information, as well as information needed about safe sex and birth control.</td>
<td>It should be addressed by more education in classes and more classes geared towards increasing self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of stories</td>
<td>The experience of others describes this category. Responses that involve addressing the issue through the sharing of personal experiences define this group. Although it is a form of education, this category specifically relates to those that have some experience in the area of teen pregnancy, whether it be as a teen parent, the parent of a teen parents, or a service worker with teen pregnancy.</td>
<td>Incorporating peers that can share their story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to services and supplies</td>
<td>A few people responded to this question by stating that we need better access to items such as birth control, abortions, social services etc.</td>
<td>It is important to have assistance for pregnant adolescence and their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open dialogue</td>
<td>Some respondents saw the best way to address the issue of adolescent pregnancy was by opening a dialogue with people about teen pregnancy. This category encompasses responses about communicating with others and being open and honest with adolescents.</td>
<td>To change that there needs to be a dialogue across he boundaries of age, race, and other factors. It is a topic that affects the whole community and needs to be addressed in and open facilitated way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>This category organizes those that thought prevention is the best way to address teen pregnancy.</td>
<td>Through prevention, holistic methods of prevention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of teen issues</td>
<td>Only a couple of responses landed in this category, but the general theme was that of empathy towards what kids are going through. People need to be aware and conscious of the teen pressures, especially if they are decades removed from their teenage years.</td>
<td>With compassion and understanding. Try to understand kids unclear on sex and pregnancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community awareness and programs</td>
<td>The responses for this set incorporate the activities of agencies other than the schools. It is the category where people included the IA as a way to deal with the issue of teen pregnancy.</td>
<td>With things like this, things that are neither one side nor the other of the issue, but rather just showing people be real.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstinence</td>
<td>Although it may be a specific kind of education, it is a hot button topic and I thought it necessary to itemize out how many people thought abstinence to be the best way to deal with the issue of teenage pregnancy.</td>
<td>By promoting abstinence and family values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting adoption</td>
<td>Once again this category is straight and to the point. It covers units that promote adoption as the best policy for adolescent pregnancy.</td>
<td>Promoting adoption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental education</td>
<td>Another specific form of education that covers the need for education of teen parents and also parent of teens in general.</td>
<td>Provide workshop for parents on how to educate their children about pregnancy, STDs etc. in their homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The media</td>
<td>These responses wanted the media to address the issue more responsibly than it currently does.</td>
<td>Thru schools, billboards, newspaper, handouts... Address teen pregnancy via heroes or famous people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home support</td>
<td>The at home category speaks to the need of families to support the teen from within. It organizes the responses that call out to the parents to take charge.</td>
<td>Thru parental involvement. The more parents are aware of what pressures kids go thru, I believe the more aware they will become of the need to be involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Support</td>
<td>The final category organizes the need for support of teens and all people involved with teen parents.</td>
<td>Loving nonjudgmental support during and after pregnancy is vital.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the categories were designed and the units were sorted, I counted the number of responses in each category to come up with the most common responses. The
top three responses are education, community awareness/programs, and open dialogue.

Education was the top choice by a wide margin, with 36 responses in that set. The next three categories, community awareness/programs, open dialogue, and teen support all had nine responses apiece.

Table 5: Adolescent Pregnancy Issue Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>Abstinence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open dialogue</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Parental education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community awareness/programs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Support</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>At home support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Understanding of teen issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to services/supplies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Promote adoption</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of stories</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Multiple responses were given

From this examination, the viewer of the exhibit thought that education of community members is the best way to address the issues of teen pregnancy. All the categories and responses are ordered in table 5. In the next section, I analyze viewers' opinions on where teens are getting their information.

Question 13: Please list where you think adolescents gain information about sex.

The second question reports the viewers' opinion on where teens obtain information about sex. As opposed to the last question, where respondents were pondering the "best" way to address the issue, this question looks at how information about sex is being transferred, and what are the actual ways that information on sex is being disseminated to adolescents. I have categorized people's responses into eight sets.
Most of the sets are self-explanatory, and because I asked viewers to list outlets, there
may have been more than one response per respondent. Table 6 shows the eight
categories and the definitions I used to guide organization.

Table 6: Sex Information Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>This set incorporates all forms of media. Movies, TV, music, and the internet were the most common responses, but this set also includes outlets such as newspapers, cartoons and magazines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>The peer pressure and friend network covers this set of responses. Many people replied that the majority of information comes from the banter of friends and peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions and experiences</td>
<td>In this category, units speak to the assumptions that teens make about sexuality with no real knowledge. It also gets at the fact that many teens learn about sex from sexual activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex education</td>
<td>The public schools role in informing teens about sexuality. Responses from this set include school, teachers, and sex education classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Information about sex comes from parents and siblings according to the units in this category. Brother and sisters, or mom and dad dispel myths and educate teens according to some respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Other than family members, any trusted adult that teens feel comfortable in approaching is the defining characteristic of this set. This would be family friends or older adults that a teen may know and trust to ask personal information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community groups and events</td>
<td>Some respondents reported that teens receive their information concerning sex from church groups, nonprofit organizations and campaigns/programs that these agencies host.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everywhere</td>
<td>We get information from all avenues of life. We, as humans, are constantly processing information and storing it in our brains.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final totals report the top two categories as friends and media. The third and fourth categories are family and sex education. All four responses were given rather frequently, but education fell to the fourth spot on the list (complete results are listed in table 7).
Table 7: Sex Information Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>Community groups/activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Everywhere</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex education</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions/experience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Multiple responses were given

In this section, I reported on the viewers' opinions of needs in the community concerning teen sexuality, and where viewers believe teens are getting their sex information. In the next section, perceptions of the IA from the viewers' standpoints are reported.

The IA

The exhibit was an important piece of awareness raising for the coalition. In this section, I evaluate the viewer's frame of the IA. I asked four questions about the exhibit to viewers. One question touched on the effectiveness of the exhibit. Other questions asked about the purpose of the exhibit, did it aid in prevention, and did the viewer identify with the IA. I also asked a fifth question that asked whether the IA would affect the dialogue at home. This fifth question incorporates the viewers' opinions of community issues and the IA. From this report, I can look at the effectiveness of the IA in the community, and start hypothesizing recommendations for further programs to the coalition. To begin my analysis, I will report whether the viewers found the IA to be effective.
Figure V. Becky says it was very difficult to break the news to her father that she was pregnant at 15.

Note: Photo and caption entitled “Mother and Child,” by M. Nye, 1998, From *Children of Children: Portraits and stories of teenage parents*. All rights reserved.

**Question 5: How effective is the exhibit in meeting the goals of the coalition?**

The first question in the survey dealt with the viewers perception of effectiveness of the exhibit. I wanted to find out what people thought of the exhibit and what was or was not effective in meeting the goals of the coalition. The answers to this set fell into 9 categories (see table 8). Although the majority of the viewers perceived the exhibit to be effective, a few had contrary opinions.
### Table 8: Effectiveness Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The physical exhibit</td>
<td>This category includes responses that believed the characteristics of the physical exhibit itself were the reason the IA was effective. The set includes units that speak to the photos and audio portions of the exhibit as well as the informal, intimate space created and the overall format of the exhibit.</td>
<td>This exhibit is effective because it appeals to both sight and hearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of stories</td>
<td>The second category includes responses about the diversity of stories. The exhibit told a diverse range of stories from young to old, male and female, and all races.</td>
<td>People from a variety of backgrounds, ages and experiences reinforce reality, talk about what they learned and understand now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaks Stereotypes</td>
<td>This category includes responses about stereotypes. With so many misconceptions and stereotypes about teen pregnancy, the responses in this set speak to the IA battling those misconceptions.</td>
<td>It makes a strong point; helps break taboos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>This set refers to the use of the mall as an effective way to reach people, especially teens.</td>
<td>I think that showing this in such a public place in a subtle way is a great idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not forced/neutral</td>
<td>The coalition members were hoping that the neutral stance of the exhibit would increase audience attention and help viewership.</td>
<td>It is very effective; it does not take a stand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human-side/Personal</td>
<td>People that thought the exhibit was effective because of its personal touch. The human voice or face of the exhibit and the glimpse into real people's lives were some of the responses that were placed into this set.</td>
<td>Very effective in telling first hand stories from real people who've experienced teenage pregnancy in their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional response</td>
<td>A few respondents answered this question with emotional responses. The IA was effective because it was powerful or striking.</td>
<td>I found the exhibit to be extremely moving and powerful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality check/reaches</td>
<td>The effectiveness of the exhibit was a reality check for teen and adults alike. In this set, responses about how the IA reached out to people and made them rethink what was occurring in their life is the guidelines for this category.</td>
<td>As a young person who has had sex, I especially began to think otherwise about it. It's scary to think of giving up school or hurting family members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I found that the vast majority of people perceived the exhibit to be effective. Forty-seven viewers stated that the exhibit was effective versus six people who did not. The top category of effectiveness was the human-side response. The way the IA brought the human aspect to an issue was important. Many viewers did not know someone who had been through a teenage pregnancy, but this exhibit brought out a human side that many people do not get in their normal life. The second most common set was the physical exhibit. Many people thought that the exhibit itself, with the audio stories and photographs made the IA effective (for complete results see table 9).

There were also a few people who did not perceive the exhibit as effective. These people saw the exhibit as “stories, not commentary.” One person was not sure how effective it would be because “people didn’t stop to listen.” Finally, one person didn’t think it was effective because it did not “assist in the understanding of the issues.” Overall though, more people thought the IA was effective than those that did not.

Table 9: Effectiveness Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human-side/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not forced/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Breaks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exhibit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stereotypes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality check/</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reaches out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Multiple responses were given
The first question in the IA subchapter sets up the exhibit as an effective program because of the human rendering of the issue. The second question in this section establishes whether people can relate to the issue vis-à-vis the IA.

*Question 6: Do you identify with the message(s) that are being portrayed in this exhibit?*

*If yes, why? If no, why not?*

This question was asked in order to get a sense of how (or if) people identified with the message(s) of the IA. As I posited in my rationale, the more a person identifies with the topic, the more likely the messages will be assimilated into their thought process. For this question, I divided the responses into six categories (see table 10). In the results section, I will give a few samples of why some people did not identify with the IA.

### Table 10: Identification Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the issue</td>
<td>This set organizes respondents who said they have experience with the general issue. They have seen it, worked with it.</td>
<td>I have known many young parents and there are striking parallels- abuse, poverty, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universality</td>
<td>Anyone can relate is the general theme of this category. It can happen to anyone, we are all human.</td>
<td>Any parent can identify with the child rearing issues raised, and any person can identify with the humanity of the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality check</td>
<td>These responses encompass those that rethought their actions, or realized that it could happen to me.</td>
<td>I began to think twice about my actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional response</td>
<td>These respondents empathized with the message. They related to the fear and feeling being portrayed in the stories. They had an emotional reaction.</td>
<td>The emotions I related too, the fear of unknowing, the fear of telling your parents, the happiness and excitement of being pregnant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal parallel</td>
<td>These people identified with the exhibit by personal parallel. They found that the stories reminded them of a portion of their life, and can consequently relate.</td>
<td>My mother had me when she was 17, and many of the women’s stories and determination remind me of her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical message</td>
<td>This set of responses covers those that basically reiterated the message of the exhibit. These respondents gave an unemotional summary of the message.</td>
<td>Well, I think they’re portraying experiences- they aren’t saying “yay, teen pregnancy” but they aren’t saying “bad”- its pretty neutral and raises awareness of numerous experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of those surveyed 40 respondents stated that they identified with the exhibit’s message(s). Seven people did not identify, and five people did not respond to this question. The top category of the six is personal parallel. In the last question, people thought that the IA added a touch of humanness to the issue, in this question; people identified with the IA because of it reminded people of past experiences and life trials. Also, a fair share of identification occurred because we are all human. Ten people thought that the message(s) was/were applicable to everyone because we are all human and have experienced the trials of teen life and thus related to the IA in a more general way (for complete response breakdown see table 11).

Of those that didn’t identify, there were three main themes given for why the messages were not received. The most frequent responses were they had “never been pregnant” or “never had children” and thus could not fully grasp the messages used by the IA. One person stated that she had “never been a teen mom”, and another person had never associated with a teen parent and consequently did not relate. Once again, these responses made up less than 10% of the entire response set for this question.

Table 11: Identification Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal parallel</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universality</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical message</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the issue</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality check</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Multiple responses were given
From identification, I move to the analysis of prevention. The next question reports peoples’ opinions about the IA and how well it informed people about prevention.

*Question 7: How well does this exhibit inform you about adolescent pregnancy prevention? Please explain why.*

Prevention is one of the main goals of TEENS and was one of the main goals of the exhibit. There are agencies that are affiliated with the coalition that concern themselves solely with prevention issues. Because this was the first program that TEENS held in the community, I queried viewers about whether or not prevention was a message in the exhibit. What I found was a pretty split opinion.

The responses came down almost 50/50 in terms of yes/no. Twenty-one people stated that there was an effective prevention message, 18 people stated that they were not informed about prevention. Also, 3 people were indecisive about the prevention message and 10 people did not respond to the question (for complete breakdown of responses see table 12). Many people went both ways and no clear decision can be made about how well the exhibit informed people about prevention.

Table 12: Prevention Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were a few stated objectives for the exhibit given by the coalition members. In the next analysis, I report what viewers thought the purpose of the exhibit was in their own words. Because the IA is neutral in stance, I questioned people on what they felt was the purpose of the exhibit.
Question 12: What is the purpose of the (exhibit)?

What people take away from the exhibit is critical to the accomplishment of coalition goals, and is also the measuring stick for a successful IA. Thus far I have established that the IA adds a human face to the issue of teen pregnancy and that people relate to the messages vis-à-vis personal parallels. The results indicate that prevention was not a strong message in the exhibit. These categories include what the respondent did take away from the exhibit. Eight categories emerges from the data (see table 13).

Table 13: Exhibit Purpose Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness/</td>
<td>These respondents stated that the main purpose was to make community members aware of the issue or educate. Many viewers simply stated, &quot;raise awareness&quot; as their answer. Other people stated that the main purpose was to educate, pure and simple. This grouping also includes responses that spoke to the passing of information to the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase dialogue</td>
<td>Viewers who believed that the purpose of the IA was to increase the conversation occurring about the issue are included in this set. This category covers an increase of dialogue, both within the family unit and among community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debunk stereotypes</td>
<td>Teenage pregnancy and teen parents are fraught with stereotypes. The stereotypes can be debilitating and lead to a cyclical pattern of teen pregnancy. In this set, viewers believed that the main purpose of the exhibit was to debunk the stereotypes/myths and break the cycle of teen pregnancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact teens</td>
<td>This category includes the responses about the reality of teen pregnancy. Some viewers spoke of how the exhibit will impact teens by telling of the hardships of teen pregnancy. This category covers the &quot;reality&quot; unit or the impact that the exhibit delivers on teens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect/emotions</td>
<td>For some, the purpose of the IA was to make you think about teen pregnancy, or to make you feel for their situation. In the end it is about relating to others that are going through a difficult time. Not everyone has experienced teen pregnancy first hand, but this exhibit helps people relate to those that have. Respondents felt the exhibit facilitated compassion, gave hope and inspired tolerance. Viewing the exhibit promotes a feeling that good things can come out of troubling times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service</td>
<td>Of all the categories, this one may be the most vague. In essence some people stated that the exhibit was just a public service for the betterment of all. The exhibit just reaches out to the community and offers a public service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevent</td>
<td>Although we already have a pulse on what people think of the prevention goal, viewers did state the purpose of the exhibit was to prevent teen pregnancy. The prevention category also shows where this goal falls with respect to other goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human face</td>
<td>Many people stated that the purpose of the exhibit was to share stories of teen pregnancy, and this category orders those responses. It gave the issue a human face and allowed people to share their stories to everyone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the responses to this question, the main purpose people took away from the IA was awareness raising (see table 14 for complete results). There were four times as many responses in this category than in any other set I described. The next three categories are all closely grouped, affect/emotions (10 responses), debunk stereotypes (9), and human face (8). Prevention, as the goal of the exhibit, was only given about 6% of the time, with only five people stating it as a purpose. It seems that many viewers had their awareness raised about teen pregnancy.

Table 14: Exhibit Purpose Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness/Educate</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>Impact teens</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect/emotions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Prevent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debunk stereotypes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Public service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human face</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase dialogue</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Multiple responses were given

In the next question, I analyze the perceived affect (or interaction) that the exhibit may have on the community.

Question 14: After viewing the (exhibit), are you more likely to speak with a family member (i.e. sibling, parent, child) about issues surrounding adolescent sexual activity?

Why or Why not?

From my examination, we know that the viewers believe the main objective of the IA is one of awareness raising. The last question in this subchapter evaluates whether or
not dialogue will begin due to the exhibit. There are four general categories to this question (see table 15). Below I will give examples for each response and than posit the results.

Table 15: Conversation Starter Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Categories</th>
<th>The Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td><em>It's an important subject and everybody needs to know the consequences and importance of protected sex</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td><em>No, because it is a private matter that isn't very easy to discuss</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already Have</td>
<td><em>I have always been willing to speak about issues surrounding sexual activity with adolescents</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td><em>I'd like to think so- but it is such a &quot;touchy&quot; topic, I hope I can do it</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those polled, 30 people stated that the exhibit would help spur on conversation about issues of teen sexual activity. Only four people would not open a dialogue because of the exhibit (for complete response breakdown see table 16). This begs the question of what the conversation will be about, but people who viewed the exhibit were moved enough by it to open up dialogue with others.

Table 16: Conversation Starter Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already have</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The IA section has put into place opinions that the viewers used to describe the exhibit. According to viewers, the exhibit is an awareness-raising tool, which puts a human face on the issue of teen pregnancy. People identified with the issues via parallel experiences and were moved to discuss it with others. Unfortunately, as viewers see it,
the prevention information did not come through as a main message of the exhibit. In the last subchapter, I evaluate the frames that viewers have of the coalition and other services associated with teen pregnancy and prevention issues.

The Coalition

In this section I analyze what community members know of the service available to teen parents. As I have stated earlier, this is the first major project the group has hosted. The exhibit is the first marketing tool the coalition has used to really spread the word about TEENS. I wanted to evaluate how effective the IA was at marketing the coalition and also get a sense of what people knew about the agencies that offer teen services. In my survey, I asked four questions pertaining to agency issues. The questions and results are listed below.

*Question 8: Please list who you believe sponsored this event.*

The exhibit was set up in such a way that the IA sponsors were only listed near the front of the exhibit. The only other marketing material was small flyers that were set in between some of the pictures. The survey was distributed directly after each viewer was done with the exhibit, and most respondents filled out the survey right next to the sponsor board, yet the results show that not everyone walked away knowing who sponsored the event.

Of the 52 usable responses, 34 people were able to list at least one sponsoring agency. Twenty-one people only listed one agency, but only 2 people could list five or more sponsoring agencies. Also, 12 people gave no response or didn’t know who sponsored the IA and 6 people just listed general information without any specific agency
name listed (for a complete breakdown see table 17). Of the 34 respondents who listed a sponsor, over half of them (19) listed TEENS as a sponsoring group for the exhibit.

Table 17: IA Sponsor Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One agency</td>
<td>21 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 agencies</td>
<td>11 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+ agencies</td>
<td>2 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Response</td>
<td>6 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response/Not sure</td>
<td>12 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed TEENS</td>
<td>19 37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question helps set up what viewers know about the people that are behind the scenes. Some of the respondents knew of at least one agency. Also, from a marketing standpoint, over half of the viewers listed TEENS as a sponsor. In the next question, I ask viewers about what services the sponsor agencies offer.

*Question 9: From the above list, please give a brief description of the services you are aware these organizations provide.

The second question in the coalition subchapter tests people’s knowledge of the services available in the community. It is important not only for people to know the names of the organizations, but to also have some semblance of the services that they offer. During the exhibit, there was a literature table set out with information from all of the sponsoring agencies. The table was open to any organization that deals with teen sexuality issues who wanted to promote their group. TEENS had one flyer out that listed the services and mission of the coalition. In the week I spent observing the exhibit, very few people actually spent any time looking through the material.
Table 18: Awareness of Services Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Categories</th>
<th>The Definitions</th>
<th>The Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific service</td>
<td>Actual services that one or more of the sponsor agencies offer</td>
<td>(One agency) offers case management and advocacy for young parents, pregnancy counseling and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General services</td>
<td>Nonspecific listing of general services that have no attachment to any one agency</td>
<td>They help teen parents learn skills to raise their children, or They provide different levels of help.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 40 respondents that listed an agency from question eight (34 who gave at least one response and the six that listed general things but no specific agency) 18 knew of no services that the agencies offered. Ten people were able to list (to some degree) the services offered by the agencies and six people listed general services but nothing specific to the agency (see table 18 for definitions of services). In terms of TEENS services, of the 19 people that listed them as a sponsoring agency (see question 8), only three of them listed any services that TEENS offers (see table 19 for specific results).

Table 19: Awareness of Services Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific services</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General services</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect services</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No services</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed TEENS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The exhibit was able to get people cognizant of the sponsoring agencies, but not the services that they offer. Viewers walked away from the IA getting a general sense of teen pregnancy, but they still have relatively little knowledge of where to go if services
were needed. In the last two questions, I ask respondents directly about their knowledge of TEENS.

*Question 10: Are you aware of TEENS?*

*Question 11: If yes, please tell us what you think the coalition objectives are and how you learned about it.*

The last two questions in this subchapter deal directly with TEENS and how much people learned about the agency. A few coalition members spoke about the exhibit being the first marketing event for TEENS. These questions get to the success of the marketing. The first question is posited as a yes or no question, which leads up to question 11. Below I list the results from the two questions. Since question 11 is double-barreled, some people answered only one of the two questions.

The response to question ten was almost even. Twenty-seven people stated that they were aware of TEENS, whereas 23 people stated they were not aware (3 people did not respond). Of the people who circled yes to question ten, 12 people addressed how they learned about TEENS. Eight of the 12 people worked for a TEENS member agency (none of these eight people were interviewed for the first set of data collection). Only four people knew of the coalition from “outside” sources (for a complete list of all results see table 20).

The second part of question 11 also revealed some interesting results. Of the 27 people that knew of TEENS only eight could list three or more objectives for the organization. Seven people listed one objective, or gave a general response (i.e. “educate and support young parents). Nine people listed no objectives at all. So once again, even
though the name of the coalition may be recognizable, many viewers are walking away from the exhibit without any knowledge of TEENS' objectives.

Table 20: TEENS Awareness Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you aware of TEENS?</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the objectives?</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listed 3+ objectives</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed one or general</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed no response or no</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where did you learn about TEENS?</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with member agency</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local university</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The exhibit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears that viewers are basically unaware of services. My results also establish the IA to be largely ineffective at raising awareness about the coalition and agencies involved with teen sexuality issues. The exhibit may raise awareness about certain issues, but it does not give enough information about available services. Overall this chapter begins to answer my research questions about community members. The chapter answers how the viewers see issues of teen pregnancy in the community. It also highlights what viewers took away from the exhibit and their understanding of the
agencies in the area. Finally, it gives me guidance for recommending potential improvements and changes for TEENS to consider.

My analysis of the viewers' data answers my second set of research questions. RQ 2 asks what are the needs of the community concerning teen sexuality issues. Two questions from the survey directly address this question. First the viewers believe the best way to address the issues of teen sexuality is through education. Education is the key to understanding of teen issues with both teens and community members alike. The viewers also saw peer networks and the media as the top educators of teens currently. According to viewers, these two categories are the most influential educators of sex. RQ 2a than asks whether or not the IA addressed the needs of the community. In response to this question, the viewers saw the exhibit as very effective. Many of the respondents identified with the messages of the IA. They thought that the purpose of the IA was to educate, thus fulfilling a need in the community. The viewers also stated that the IA would lead to more conversations with family members concerning teen sexuality issues.

In response to research question 3, how do viewers' perceptions of the coalition relate to the perceptions of the IA, I found that very little knowledge of the coalition was present in the community. Most viewers knew little of TEENS, and even after the exhibit, few viewers could list the services available of teens in the community, or even the sponsors of the exhibit. It appears that although the IA was effective in educating and starting conversations about teen sexuality issues, the IA did not increase the cognizance of services in the community with viewers. Also, the IA did not effect the perceptions of the coalition and vice-versa (answering question 3a).
In next chapter, I will summarize the results of my research questions and discuss the results from the two results chapters while addressing some of the issues that arise from the data. In the last chapter, I will incorporate communication theory to discuss implications from the research. I will also make some policy recommendations based on my research. This chapter will include the limitations of my work and hypothesize about how this research can further our understanding of communication theory and coalition practice.
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

My goal for this research was to find out how a complex issue like teen pregnancy was dealt with by a nonprofit agency. I believe the data sheds light on my research goal. The 14 interviews gave insight from numerous organizations on how they (as members of a coalition about teen pregnancy) see issues surrounding teenage sexual activity, and the need for services provided by NPOs and state agencies. The 54 open-ended responses, also helped fill in the picture about issues of teen pregnancy. Not only did I have the interviews (which gave the coalition’s side of the issues), I also had viewers’ responses about my research questions and goals. In this discussion, I will revisit my research questions and also list discussion points that arise from the data.

Research Questions Revisited

In the first chapter, I posited several research questions, to which I sought answers as I was analyzing my data. The first set of questions asked about coalition opinions on teenage sexuality, and how TEENS can work to fulfill a need. My first research question asked what the needs of the community was surrounding teenage sexual activity issues. TEENS members spoke of the issues at three levels: home, local and national. The coalition members’ posited community needs at all three levels. Research question 1a than asked how the coalition justifies its definitions and meet the needs of the community. TEENS members spoke of the problems surrounding teen sexual activity. Members then justified these issues, by positing first hand experiences across numerous NPOs that work on teen issues. Finally, the coalition positioned themselves as a beneficial way to deliver information to the community around the issues of teen
pregnancy, thus establishing rhetorical ground to justify the IA. The IA was posited as a solution (or fulfillment) of certain needs at the home, local and national level (answering research question 1b- how are the needs reflected in the IA?). TEENS members saw the IA as a conversation starter at the home level. At the local level, members saw the exhibit as delivering general awareness and at the national level, the IA would be a competing message in the “schizophrenic” society that is created between media messages and the political environment.

Chapter five examined the viewers’ opinions of teenage sexuality issues, as well as the opinion on the IA and the coalition. The opinions in chapter five answered my second set of research questions. The viewers thought that the media and peers were the most common way for teen to gather information about sex, and that the best way to address the issue surrounding teenage sexuality was via better sex education not only in the class but in general (RQ2). Research question 2a asked whether the IA addressed the issues of adolescent sexual activity, and the respondents stated that general awareness was raised about the issues, and many viewers were more likely to have a conversation about teen sex and pregnancy after viewing the IA. The last set of research questions queried the viewers’ opinions of the coalition and the relationship these opinions might have on the IAs effectiveness. In general, the viewers knew very little about the coalition of the other sponsor agencies of the IA. It seems that the IA did little to inform people of the specific services local agencies offer for sexually active teens. The viewers saw the exhibit as a conversation starter and a general awareness pieces, but not as an effective marketing tool for the sponsor agencies (RQ3a). In the next section I list discussion points that emerged from my research.
Discussion Points

From the data collection and analysis, four discussion points arise. First, there seems to be some congruent opinions about teenage sexual activity between the coalition members and the viewers. Both the viewers and the coalition members see peers and friends playing a big role in teens lives. The coalition members talk of teen pressures. Many of these pressures come from friends and schoolmates. The viewers, likewise, stated that much of the information about sexuality comes from peers. Although both parties agree on friends as hubs of information about sexual activity, neither side targeted “friends” when speaking of solutions to teen sexuality issues. The coalition member spoke about the need for general awareness raising and better sex education in the public school systems, but rarely was there mention of specific goals targeted towards peer leaders. There is an implicit hope that better sex education will stem the transfer of misinformation between peers. Viewers also gave few solutions to the peer problem. Viewers widely believed that education is the best way to address the issue, but education reform is slow in coming. With the current money crunch in public education and NPO funding, comprehensive education is hard to finance. Both the viewers and the coalition members see education as the key to more informed adolescents, but that does not address the teens of today.

The media also plays a big role in the issues surrounding teenage sexuality. The coalition members and the viewers acknowledge the growing importance the media has on adolescent lives. Both data sets spoke of the media as a way for teens to cull information about sex. The coalition members scapegoated the media as a national threat to our youth. Once again though, the data gave little insight to how the media messages
could be counteracted. Only three viewers mentioned media as a medium for dealing with teenage pregnancy. The coalition members set up the IA as a way to counteract the national media blitz of sexuality, but many also acknowledged a certain numbness that the national media has created. With so much sexualization of people in the media, some coalition members worried that the IA would be ineffective because people were numb to the issue.

Overall, the two groups agree that peers and the media are two key issues in teenage sexuality and posit education as the solution to these issues. Education is an important step, but as one member of the coalition stated, “social change is slow in coming.” In this light, it seems that more emphasis should be placed on combating current media messages and educating peer leaders. The second discussion point addresses the general education objective of the interface agent.

In my analysis of data about the IA, one point comes to mind. The coalition members had explicit objectives for the IA, and the viewers’ data validates the success of those objectives. People stated that they were informed about teen pregnancy issues. However, given that the IA was devoid of opinions about teen pregnancy issues, the question of what message people took away from the exhibit becomes relevant.

The IA was promoted as a neutral exhibit. The mission of the IA was to raise awareness about the issues without passing judgment. After viewing the exhibit, one can tell that the artist went to great lengths to ensure that the exhibit’s message was neutral. This neutrality was a selling point for the coalition in order to obtain funding and reach a wider audience. The neutrality of the exhibit also may have hampered the effectiveness of the IA. The coalition members spoke about the objectives of the exhibit. Members
Nonprofit Coalitions

hoped that the exhibit would raise awareness about teen pregnancy, that it would open eyes and that it would start conversations about the issues. The viewers of the exhibit stated that these objectives were accomplished. The viewers stated that they thought the purpose of the exhibit was to raise awareness. Many of them identified with the messages, and many also stated that they would talk more about teen pregnancy issues with family members. On the whole, the objectives, as stated by TEENS interviewees were met. But what is general awareness raising? And how are people informed about issues of teenage pregnancy when the IA is neutral to all issues? The mission of TEENS is to raise awareness about the many and varying issues of teen sexual activity. The coalition is also comprised of many voices. A neutral IA does not offend, and may increase viewership, but the messages of the IA are more implicit. I asked specifically about whether prevention came through as a message from the exhibit. Many people stated that it did not, or if it did, only subtly. This result is not to say that prevention will not occur, that was not measured in this study. What the question indicates is that one message (prevention) did not come through to some, and subtly came through to others. There is a lack of clarity on what the general awareness of the IA is to the viewers. Are people aware of the hardships of teen pregnancy? Are community members now aware of the many serious issues involving teen sexual activity? Will teens be more likely to engage in preventative sexual behavior? The general awareness and neutrality of the exhibit give no specific information about the issues of teen sexuality.

The Third discussion point deals with the coalition. In general, TEENS members see TEENS as a force to battle against adolescent pregnancy issues, but the viewers’
knowledge of the coalition and the sponsor agencies can hurt TEENS ability to interact with the community.

The coalition members spoke of TEENS as a medium to educate the public. TEENS could work towards a comprehensive sex education program. The coalition could also work with the community and tear down stereotypes. The members spoke about needs in the community concerning teen sexuality issues, and than spoke of how the coalition could be the group that fulfills those needs. Although few members spoke of the IA as a marketing tool to place TEENS on the map, the exhibit was the first IA of the coalition. Unfortunately, the viewers of the exhibit gained little knowledge of the coalition or the member agencies from the IA. This can be problematic for a coalition that is attempting to have a presence in the teen pregnancy field. However, it can work to its advantage, if the coalition wants to be behind the scenes. The members see a need in the community and place TEENS as a solution for that need; unfortunately most coalition members did not focus on the marketing aspect of the IA. The lack of knowledge about TEENS in the community makes it difficult for the coalition to educate people about services available to teens.

The fourth discussion point that emerges from the data deals with the mission of the coalition. Much like the exhibit, the coalition is trying to remain neutral on many teen sexuality issues. The coalition wants to represent a diverse set of opinions from all political spectrums. Currently it does not have a true variance of opinion. As one interviewee stated, TEENS is more like a support group for people that have the same beliefs. Only one of the member agencies takes a pro-life stance, and none of the agencies are working from an abstinence-only platform. The question than becomes,
what next? Some members spoke about keeping TEENS membership as is. With a set of people that all have similar platforms, TEENS could complete more projects and share the financial burden among numerous groups. The coalition could function as a great networking opportunity, and also work to reduce overlap of services between agencies, and consequently save money for all agencies. On the other side of the argument, by reaching out to all agencies, TEENS could bring numerous groups to the table. With a diverse set to opinions, myths and misnomers about all the member agencies could be dispelled. This is an interesting conflict. The coalition wants to communicate pluralism of opinions, but in doing so cloud the facts about sexuality. The neutrality of the IA is symptomatic of TEENS’ desire for diversity. Its desire for plurality of opinions thus handcuffs the coalition to general messages that do not address important facts about sexuality so as to not offend any one member’s agency. The diversity of the group may hamper TEENS’ ability to come to agreements on decisions about outreach campaigns. TEENS seems to be at a crossroad. It can become a networking coalition that has a diverse set of people all talking about teen sexuality issues. Or, TEENS could produce more issues oriented campaigns with a membership of homogeneous opinions. Both options have their advantages and disadvantages, but trying to be both coalitions in one seems to be a recipe for ineffectiveness.

This chapter has brought forth four discussion points. First, the media and teen peers are major sources of information about sex. Communities need to stress messages that combat the current trend of media sexuality and get accurate information to peer leaders. Second, the neutrality of the IA clouds the facts about teen pregnancy and gives a basic level of information that is ineffective in addressing specific issues involved in
teen sexuality. Third, the coalition did not effectively market the coalition in the exhibit. The lack of branding makes it difficult to educate people about the services that TEENS and its member agencies offer. Fourth, the need of plurality of opinions is causing a conflict of mission points. Neutrality is symptomatic of TEENS plurality and is clouding the coalitions communication about teen sexuality facts. In the next chapter, I describe the theoretical implications my research has on the field of communication, as well as offer some policy recommendations based on this data.
CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS

Theory

The theoretical implications of my research involve both communication themes I discussed in chapter two: identity and paradox as well as the role of implicit/explicit goals in achieving goals. In terms of identity, this research adds to a growing body of literature on internal/external communication. Cheney et al. (2000) states that internal/external communication serves to influence the community as well as to confirm the organization's internal perceptions. TEENS members spoke of the needs of the community around issues of teenage sexuality. Members spoke of the problems in the community, which needed a solution. The IA attempted to influence and inform the community about issues surrounding teenage pregnancy, while also internally confirming the coalitions purpose to the members. The IA presented not only an external message to the community, but also served as an internal identification marker for TEENS members. The neutrality of the exhibit was a reflection of the mission of the coalition and an identity statement internally for members.

As the coalition tries to manage the messages of the IA, and consequently, the internal and external identities, the messages to the community become auto-communicative. Auto-communication is a process of organizing through which a communicator evokes and enhances its own values or codes (Christensen, 1995; Ganesh, 2003). The external message becomes a tool to reinforce the values and concerns of the organization. The [coalition] recognizes itself, chiefly in terms of how it wants to be seen by others. The viewers of the exhibit become a reference point from which TEENS can evaluate its own identity. The response to the IA and the acknowledgement of TEENS as
a new service to the community becomes auto-communicative. In other words, the coalition members mimic the external messages internally. This organizational mimicry creates a cyclical pattern where the organization reflects the external message and the external message reflects the internal mission of the coalition. TEENS has an external message of education and the internal identity of a teacher. Every person I interviewed spoke of education as a external mission for the coalition, and rationalized their participation in the coalition as an educator; a person with knowledge that can help teach people (via the IAs) about the issues of adolescent sexuality.

A second theoretical implication deals with communicative paradoxes. As defined by Stohl et al. (2001), a paradox occurs when a person in pursuit of one goal has another competing goal enter the situation so as to undermine the first pursuit. Within a coalition, paradox attempts to have its members internalize work norms, but in the process contradicts the tenets of its original mission (Stohl et al., 2001). The research on paradox has identified four major categories of paradox: structure, agency, identity, and power. Within each category are numerous paradoxical situations. These paradoxes are not mutually exclusive though. There is one potentially paradoxical situation at TEENS that highlights the overlapping nature of Stohl et al.’s (2001) typology.

As I stated above, TEENS is at a crossroad. This crossroad and how to navigate beyond it is potentially paradoxical. The coalition has two mission statements that do not work together. One mission statement of TEENS is to bring together multiple voices on the subject of teen sexuality. The second mission statement is to bring awareness of the issues surrounding teen pregnancy to teens and adults alike. As a few members stated in my interviews, these two mission statements are working against each other. If the
coalition attempts to meet its goal of diversity and inclusion, then the coalition will have problems agreeing on programs that offer specific information on the issues of teen sexuality. Likewise, if TEENS wants to continue to design IAs in an efficient and collaborative way, then seeking a diverse set of opinions on the topic of teen sexuality impairs the efficiency of the coalition to produce IAs.

This one potentially paradoxical situation at TEENS can be categorized as all four types of paradox: structure, agency, identity, and power (Stohl et al., 2001). As a paradox of structure, this situation highlights the coalition’s reaction to outside forces in such a way that the coalition’s soul is lost (i.e. the social pressure to have multiple voices on the issue of teen sexuality, and not produce IAs that are perceived as controversial). This situation can also be categorized as a paradox of agency. This occurs when TEENS is supposed to be a coalition that represents all political views on the issues of teen sexuality, yet if inclusiveness is achieved in the coalition, than cooperation will decrease.

Taking this same potentially paradoxical situation, I can also classify it as a paradox of identity. The members of TEENS commit to the coalition because it has a mission to educate the community. Yet, currently the commitment of members make TEENS a support group rather than a diverse coalition of opinions. Finally this situation can be seen as a paradox of power. Members of TEENS would speak of the diversity of opinions that the coalition exposed, while simultaneously speaking of the homogeneity of opinions and the ease in which consensus was conferred.

This one situation can be defined in four different categories of paradox. This research highlights the struggles that a coalition has in managing paradoxical goals. My research also calls to attention a theoretical issue that needs to be addressed.
Understanding the effects of paradoxical situations is important in studying organizational communication, but the current research on paradoxes fails to demonstrate that actual paradoxical situations involve multiple, overlapping paradoxes. This lack of mutual exclusivity of categories is problematic in current communication literature. More research needs to test and reevaluate the way communicative paradox is approached in our field.

A third theoretical implication of my research concerns the implicit nature of the IA. A body of literature on campaign effectiveness states that explicit messages are the most appropriate channel for message retention (O’Keefe, 2002). As O’Keefe (2002) states, “messages with more specific descriptions of recommended actions make it easier for receivers to imagine themselves performing that action, which in turn enhances persuasive effectiveness” (p. 10). Yet, another body of literature sees the relevancy of leaving the message of the campaign implicit. In some instances people will respond to implicit messages better than explicit messages (McGuire, 1985). When people are motivated and able to draw the conclusions for themselves, then it can be better to leave the message of the campaign implicit (Sawyer & Howard, 1991). Self-generation of the conclusion is likely to be more memorable (Slamecka, & Graf, 1978) and people who are highly invested or sensitive to the topic addressed in the campaign are more likely to draw conclusions from implicit messages rather than explicit messages (Sawyer et al., 1991; Stayman & Kardes, 1992). The implicit message is less likely to offend those highly sensitive to the topic, and encourages thought from those that are highly invested in the topic.
The success of the IA in reaching the goals of the coalition furthers the research on implicit messages. The exhibit was brought to the community because it was neutral and thus less controversial. The exhibit allowed people to draw their own conclusions about the sexuality of teens. The goals of the exhibit as stated by TEENS runs parallel to the goals of the exhibit as stated by the viewers. TEENS saw the exhibit as eye opening, awareness raising, and a conversation starter. My research of the viewers concurs that these are the messages of the exhibit. Although both sides of the implicit/explicit argument are viable, this research proves that highly sensitive messages are best portrayed in an implicit manner.

Policy

Aside from theoretical implications, policy implications also emerge from my research. I have two suggestions for policy change in TEENS. First, the marketing aspect of the IA needs to be taken into greater account. The IA presents an image of TEENS to the community. This image needs to be better managed. The IA helps establish the coalition in the community. TEENS is a nonprofit coalition with no working budget. The establishment of a recognizable name would increase the coalition's chances of receiving grants and funding. The marketing of the coalition is germane to the coalition's existence in the community. The coalition needs to strategically manage the marketing aspects of the IA in order to increase name recognition in the community, which leads to increased community support.

Second, TEENS needs to address the desire to have a diverse membership. TEENS needs to decide whether it wants to include members from all political spectrums, or continue to form an identity with a homogenous opinion set. As I stated
earlier, both choices come with positive and negative results, but a choice needs to be made. Continuing down both roads curtails the efficiency of the whole group. There are scare resources for NPOs in the field of adolescent sexuality. The well of money is shallow and drying up. As long as the health of the US economy is tenuous and the current Republican administration steers our government, little reprieve in the funding drought can be expected. Greater efficiency will stretch the funding dollars further.

Limitations

As with any study there are several factors that should be kept in mind when evaluating this research. First, my study evaluated key informants from TEENS and the viewers of the exhibit. Although every major member of TEENS was interviewed, no agency other than those associated with the coalition was represented in the data. The coalition has a very homogeneous opinion on teen sexuality, and the opinions expressed in this research represent that uniformity. Likewise, the respondents to the exhibit in many cases had similar opinions about teenage sexuality. Those that have differing opinions were in the great minority of the sample. While every effort was made to obtain a diverse data set, more members with differing opinions about teenage sexuality would give this research more perspective. In future studies, agencies that take a pro-life and/or abstinence only platform should be interviewed.

Second, in future studies an evaluation of the IA could lead to a better understanding of effectiveness. This research was done over a one-month time span. A longer research project that can follow-up with viewers would help determine the effectiveness of the IA, and the overall retention of messages that the IA delivered. Third, although this research is about issues involving teens, no adolescent responses
were analyzed. Further studies of this nature should endeavor to seek out the opinions of teens. Research about adolescences is one sided without the opinions of the target population being studied.

Conclusion

My research only begins to scratch the surface of many issues. First, teenage sexuality has numerous issues about which all people should be informed. Teenage pregnancy is just one of the many issues teens deal with on a daily basis. Alcohol and drugs, as well as abuse and self-esteem, are just a few of the issues that play into a teen’s existence. The further I am removed from my adolescent years, the harder it is for me to remember these trials. I hope that my research continues to inform readers about these issues and rekindles some of the memories of adolescence that we tend to sweep into the recesses of our mind. Second, there are many issues that NPOs and coalitions deal with that are outside the realm of for-profit organizations. These agencies run on very limited funding and with non-traditional workers constituting their workforce. The research we have on NPOs and NPCs is diminutive with reference to the overall body of organizational communication literature. TEENS as a data site opened my eyes to the realities of teen life and the issues of coalitions. During my time with TEENS, I was able to meet some truly passionate people. I met people who work for peanuts and put in long hours all to better our society. I also met teenage parents. I was able to talk informally about their lives and plans. I gained insight into a life that I will never experience, a life full of stress and uncertainty, a life full of stereotypes and disapproving glances. This research has opened my eyes. My research has educated me.
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Organization Members
Interview Schedule

Personal Background
1. Age
2. Gender (not to be asked out loud)
3. Occupation/position at TEENS
4. Education
5. What is your involvement with TEENS?
6. In your own words, please describe the benefits Children of Children offers the community and specifically teenagers.
7. What do you think are some of the problems concerning sexual activity and teens?
8. How does TEENS address those problems?
9. Can TEENS do a better job of reaching teenagers/ the community at large? How so?
10. Do you feel that Children of Children effective in reaching teenagers/ community members? What makes it effective or why is it not effective?
11. What are some of the organizational difficulties involved in bringing the Children of Children exhibit to The area?
12. Do you feel that there are any constraints put upon you when attempting to bring Children of Children to The area? If so by whom?
13. Do you think that money or funding affects the exhibit? Why or Why Not?
14. Do you think that the organizations that comprise TEENS affect the ability of the coalition to achieve its goals? Why or Why not?
15. Have you ever had any personal difficulties working with TEENS? What are they? What did you do?
16. What do you see as the needs of the community concerning adolescent pregnancy, parenting and prevention services?
17. Has there ever been a time when you thought that the needs of the community members (teens) were not being served by TEENS? How did you deal with this?
18. What does being a member of TEENS mean to you?
APPENDIX B: VIEWERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Remember, if at any time you do not feel comfortable answering a question you can skip it and go to the next one.

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: ________________

3. What is your Ethnicity or ethnic identity? ______________________________________

4. How do you think that adolescent pregnancy, as an issue in the area, should best be addressed?

   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

5. How effective do you think the Children of Children exhibit is? Why is it effective/ineffective?

   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
6. Do you identify with the message(s) that are being portrayed in this exhibit? If yes, why? If no, why not?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

7. How well does this exhibit inform you about adolescent pregnancy prevention? Please explain why.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

8. Please list who you believe sponsored this event?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
9. From the above list, please give a brief description of the services you are aware these organizations provide?

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

10. Are you aware of The TEENS coalition?
    
    Yes    NO

11. If yes, please tell us what you think the coalition objectives are and how you learned about it.
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
12. What do you think is the purpose of the Children of Children exhibit?


13. Please list where you think adolescents gain information about sex.


14. After viewing the Children of Children exhibit, are you more likely to speak with a family member (i.e. sibling, parent, child) about issue surrounding adolescent sexual activity? Why or Why not?


Thank you for your time and effort. Please return your survey to the administrator
REFERENCE LIST


Isbell, M.G. (2003, Nov.). "We Weren't Intimate Enough to Talk About It": *Sexual History Disclosure Among College-Age Partners*. Presented at the National Communication Association Annual Conference. Miami.


