

# **Sowing the Seeds: A Curriculum for Promoting Higher Education among Hispanic Youth**

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Community Campus Partnerships for Health Fellow 2002-2003**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Sowing the Seeds Project (STSP) aims to create environments where higher education is promoted at a very early age (as young as pre-school) among Hispanic youth. This will be accomplished through multi-level strategies that would target classroom settings, school districts, university systems and the home to support the discussion, value and attainment of higher education for young people. The long-term vision of the project is to enhance the broader social systems and networks that would make higher education an achievable reality.

The Sowing the Seeds curriculum was implemented in Washington Heights, New York City a predominantly Hispanic immigrant community. As in many immigrant communities, young children are bilingual, while their parents are still primarily or solely Spanish speakers. The young people are also surpassing their parents in years of education, with many graduating from high school. The number of students, however, opting for post-secondary education is very low. Few programs have attempted to address the broader cultural and social environment that may not support a college education. Thus, the project has highlighted the importance of linking community health education to the long-term goal of increasing social opportunities for minority youth.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Maricela Ureño has been a community activist and educator working on areas ranging from grassroots awareness of U.S. foreign policy to community-based public health projects for over 15 years. She attended U.C. Berkeley as an undergraduate and received her masters in public health at Columbia University. She became active in the Central American movement in the early 1980's and was fortunate to be trained as a community organizer by the late Fred Ross Sr. who trained the late Cesar Chavez. Other work experiences include: working as a school teacher in the New York City public schools, working for HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs in the Caribbean, Central and South America, and working on adolescent pregnancy and school drop-out prevention programs. Currently, she works with Public Health Solutions and the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia's Center for Community Health Education.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The following people and institutions are thanked for their support and contributions to this project .

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Seth Dembar

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## Session One: Hispanics and Higher Education

### Objectives

- To identify my hopes for my children and the necessary steps for achieving these hopes
- To increase knowledge on the current status of Hispanics attending college.
- To identify challenges and barriers faced by Hispanics entering higher education.
- To increase knowledge on economic and social disparities between college educated and lesser education.

### Methods

Personal reflection, presentation, brainstorm, question and answer

### Materials

Personal reflection hand-out

Data on Hispanics and Higher Education Hand-out

Data on College Education and Financial Benefits

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### A. GUIDED PERSONAL REFLECTION (10 minutes)

Facilitator will take the group through the following personal reflection.

*“You have waited in anticipation the birth of your son or daughter. At last you are cradling you baby in your arms. Instantly, you are a mother/father/parent. The instinct to protect this baby and provide them with the best is overwhelming. In your arms, you feel that you could look at this baby forever. Even at this tender age you start to have hopes and great dreams for your child.....”*

Pass out the handout and have parents write out:

1. Their educational dreams for their children.
2. Steps to helping their child achieve the dreams.

Facilitator will collect the hand-outs and will hand it back at the end of the training to see if parents would like to add other steps. Parents will keep this sheet with other materials provided.

### B. HISPANICS AND COLLEGE (15 minutes)

Presentation:

Hispanic youth is the fastest growing population group in the United States. As Hispanics, we represent one quarter of all new entrants into the labor force.

In this country, education has been the key to occupational, workforce, economic and social advancement. However, few Hispanics, in comparison with other ethnic groups, complete a university education. Hispanics also have the highest high school drop out rates.<sup>1</sup>

According to the 1990 US Census:

- Only 64% of Hispanics aged 22-24 not born in the US graduate from high school.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Sorenson, Dominic Brewer, Stephan J. Carroll & Eugene Bryton, *Increasing Hispanic Participation in Higher Education: A Desirable Public Investment*, RAND 1995.

- Only 74% of Hispanics aged 22-24 born in the US complete high school. (In comparison, 91% white Americans and 84% of African Americans complete high school.)

Hispanics are less likely to enroll in a university within four years of completing high school.

- 58% of white Americans start enroll in a college or university within four years of graduating high school.
- 45% of Hispanics enroll in college or university within four years
- 47% of African Americans enroll in higher education within four years of graduating from high school.<sup>2</sup>

Hispanics are less likely to finish their college/university studies within four years than are other ethnic groups.

- Only 12% of Hispanics aged 22 have completed their college education.
- Only 16% of African Americans have completed their university studies

(In comparison, 30% of white Americans have completed their college education by the time they are 22 years old).<sup>3</sup>

### C. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS? (15 minutes)

#### 1. **Brainstorm:**

**What are some of the barriers faced by Hispanics with regard to attaining a college education?**

The facilitator will write down the responses generated by the workshop participants. Distribute the worksheet that summarized the responses from the focus group and the barriers identified in the literature.

#### 2. **Presentation and discussion on the following barriers**

##### **a. Barriers Hispanics Face according to the Washington Heights Inwood Coalition Parent Group Interview**

“They have to take too many remedial classes and they loose their enthusiasm.”

“College is expensive and there aren't many scholarships.”

“Parents need to take English classes.”

“We need more programs.”

“Elementary and high schools are not preparing our children well.”

##### **b. Points of View Regarding Remedial Education**

SOME AT CUNY

- In 1997 87% of students entering the two year community colleges did not pass their remedial courses. And, 72% of students entering a four year college didn't pass their remedial course exams.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Pelavin and Kane, *Minority Participation in Higher Education*, Washington D.C. , Pelvin Associates 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

- Many students go to community college and university without adequate education preparation as a result of the deterioration in urban public schools. This can result in diminishing the racial diversity in institutions of higher education.<sup>5</sup>

## OTHERS AT CUNY

Some in the CUNY system do not believe that universities and colleges should focus on remedial education.

## OTHER VOICES ON REMEDIAL EDUCATION

It needs to be noted that 82% of four year public colleges offer remedial courses and 30% of all students entering their first year take at least one remedial class.<sup>6</sup>

Since 1983 three studies of university education undertaken by the federal government have found that there has not been an increase in demand for remedial courses.<sup>7</sup>

A study by the Ford Foundation prepared by the Institute for Higher Education Policy, found that remedial courses are a primary and necessary function of institutions of higher education. They found that remedial programs were a good investment, in terms of their overall cost and the benefit to society.<sup>8</sup>

Others believe that those opposed to remedial education are motivated by some other political agenda. They use the issue of remedial education to discredit public education and to advocate for increased funding for private education.

### c. Financial Barriers

- At state and local colleges, there are differences in price depending upon one's state or city residency status. Attending a public institution in a state where one is not a legal resident may end up costing more.
- There are many scholarships and financial resources available which we may not be aware of. Although private university's are usually more expensive than public ones, they also have more resources to support students, as long as a minimum grade point average is maintained. For example, some parents send their children to less expensive state schools and pay for the education with student loans, while at a private, more expensive college the student might have been eligible for scholarships to cover tuition which do not need to be paid back.

### d. Barriers Faced By Immigrants

- Students who are legal residents, but not citizens, may have to pay higher tuition costs because they are not citizens, even though they completed their elementary and high school education in this country. Also,

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<sup>4</sup> Jon Marcus, "Revamping Remedial Education City University of New York grapples with a complex web of issues surrounding programs for unprepared students." Cross Talk, The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Vol. 8 No.1 Winter 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

since they are not citizens, they are not eligible for work study to help defray the costs of tuition, or able to get jobs which might help them pay for school.<sup>9</sup>

- A law called the “DREAM ACT” (S.1291- Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors.) as introduced. This law will allow students who have grown up in this country, who have attended and graduated from a US high school to become legal residents or citizens, attend college and work legally.<sup>10</sup> This law will be introduced in Congress during the 2003 session. Sowing the Seeds Workshop

Homework: Talk to someone at home about a university education. Make a note, mental or on paper, of what were people’s responses or reactions.

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<sup>9</sup> Tactaquin, Catherine and Arteaga Gomez, Claudia, “*Call to Support Higher Education and Legalization for Young Immigrants,*” National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, June 24, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## Sowing the Seeds Workshop

### Session 1: Hispanics and Higher Education Worksheet: Personal Reflection

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions: Write your answers to the following questions in the boxes below.**

What are some of your educational hopes and dreams for your children?	What are some steps you could take to help your children realize these dream? (In other words, what could you start doing now to ensure your children can realize their dreams?)

**Sowing the Seeds Workshop**  
**Session 1: Hispanics and Higher Education**

**Data on Hispanics and Educational Attainment**

According to the 1990 US Census:

- Only 64% of Hispanics aged 22-24 not born in the US graduate from high school.
- Only 74% of Hispanics aged 22-24 born in the US complete high school.
- In comparison, 91% white Americans and 84% of African Americans complete high school.

Hispanics are less likely to enroll in a university within four years of completing high school.

- 58% of white Americans enroll in a college or university within four years of graduating high school.
- 45% of Hispanics enroll in college or university within four years
- 47% of African Americans enroll in higher education within four years of graduating from high school.<sup>11</sup>

Hispanics are less likely to finish their college/university studies within four years than are other ethnic groups.

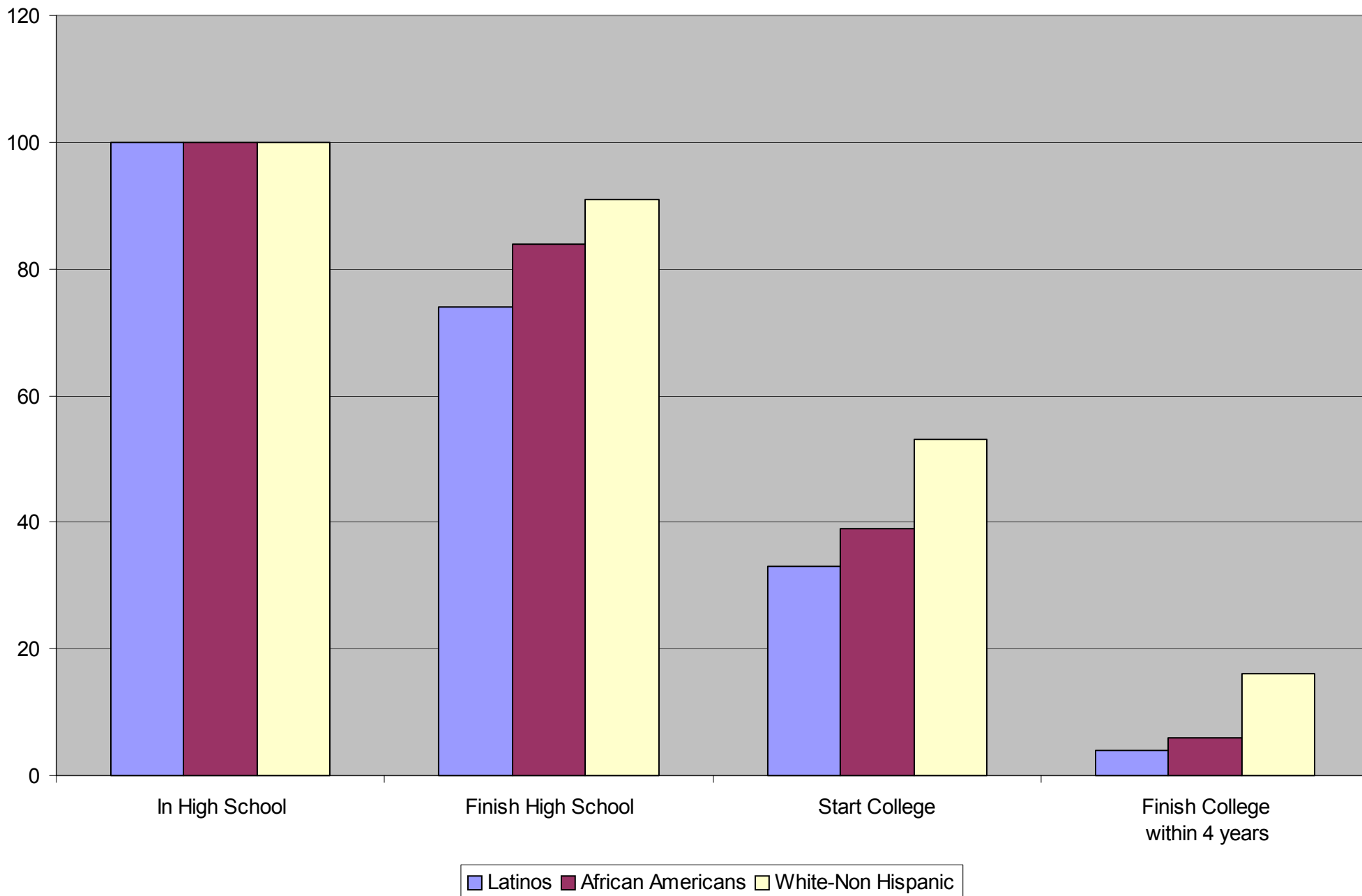
- Only 12% of Hispanics aged 22 have completed their college education.
- Only 16% of African Americans have completed their college studies.
- 30% of white Americans have completed their college education by the time they are 22 years old.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Pelavin and Kane, *Minority Participation in Higher Education*, Washington D.C. , Pelvin Associates 1990.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

### Educational Outcomes by Ethnicity



## **Sowing the Seeds Workshop**

### **Session 1: Hispanics and Higher Education**

#### **Barriers**

**Presentation and discussion on the following barriers:**

**a. Barriers Hispanics Face according to the Washington Heights Inwood Coalition Parent Group Interview**

A group interview with Parents at P.S. 128 identified the following barriers:

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- “They have to take too many remedial classes and this makes them lose their motivation.”
  - “College is expensive and there aren't many scholarships.”
  - “We parents have to learn English, we need to take English classes.”
  - “We need more programs.”
  - “The schools (elementary, intermediate and high school) are not preparing our students well.”
- 

**b. Points of View on Remedial Education**

Some at CUNY Say:

- In 1997 87% of students entering the two year community colleges did not pass their remedial courses. And, 72% of students entering a four year college didn't pass their remedial course exams.<sup>13</sup>
- Many students go to community college and university without adequate education preparation as a result of the deterioration in urban public schools. This can result in diminishing the racial diversity in institutions of higher education.<sup>14</sup>

OTHERS at CUNY SAY

Some in the CUNY system do not believe that universities and colleges should focus on remedial education. However, it needs to be noted that 82% of four year public colleges offer remedial courses and 30% of all students entering their first year take at least one remedial class.<sup>15</sup>

Since 1983 three studies of university education undertaken by the federal government have found that there has not been an increase in demand for remedial courses.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Jon Marcus, “Revamping Remedial Education City University of New York grapples with a complex web of issues surrounding programs for unprepared students.” Cross Talk, The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Vol. 8 No.1 Winter 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

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Others believe that those opposed to remedial education are motivated by some other political agenda. They use the issue of remedial education to discredit public education and to advocate for increased funding for private education.

#### **e. Financial Barriers**

- At state and local colleges, there are differences in price depending upon one's state or city residency status. Attending a public institution in a state where one is not a legal resident may end up costing more.
- There are many scholarships and financial resources available which we may not be aware of. Although private university's are usually more expensive than public ones, they also have more resources to support students, as long as a minimum grade point average is maintained. For example, some parents send their children to less expensive state schools and pay for the education with student loans, while at a private, more expensive college the student might have been eligible for scholarships to cover tuition which do not need to be paid back.

#### **f. Barriers Faced By Immigrants**

- Students who are legal residents, but not citizens, may have to pay higher tuition costs because they are not citizens, even though they completed their elementary and high school education in this country. Also, since they are not citizens, they are not eligible for workstudy to help defray the costs of tuition, or able to get jobs which might help them pay for school.<sup>18</sup>
- A law called the "DREAM ACT" (S.1291- Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors.) was introduced. This law will allow students who have grown up in this country, who have attended and graduated from a US high school to become legal residents or citizens, attend college and work legally.<sup>19</sup> This law will be introduced in Congress during the 2003 session.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Tactaquin, Catherine and Arteaga Gomez, Claudia, "Call to Support Higher Education and Legalization for Young Immigrants," National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, June 24, 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

## Session Two: Creating a Cultural Need for Higher Education

### Objectives

- To increase knowledge on college education and future opportunities.
- To identify how parents can begin to stimulate or sensitize their children to the value of a higher education from the earliest years.
- To introduce the term “social capital” and identify personal and community “social capital” opportunities.

### Methods

Presentation, brainstorm, question and answer

### Materials

Data on College Education and Financial Benefits Hand-out,  
What Can I do now? Hand-out  
Hand out on resources

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## Ice Breaker- Review Homework

### A. College Education and Future Opportunities

#### 1. Brainstorm:

**Why is a college education important or helpful?**

#### 2. Support the brainstorm with the following information

- Better opportunities for employment and retaining good jobs

Rapid technical advances require more than a high school education. Young people need two to four years of post high school education in order to increase their likelihood of obtaining better jobs.

- Earn more money

In general, someone with a college degree earns more income over their lifetime than someone without a college degree. People with two years of college education earn more than someone with only a high school education.

In 1998:

1. Males who completed 4 years of college or more earned 98% more than males who only completed high school.
2. A woman who completed 4 years of college or more earned 84% more than males who only completed high school.

- A good foundation for getting ahead in life.

Provides exposure to a wide variety of disciplines and areas of study and also allows for students to develop knowledge in specific areas of their interest. A university education provides students with the skills to be able to express their point of view and thoughts in a clear manner. This, in turn, will help them analyze and make decisions.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Getting Ready for College Early, A Handbook for Parents of the Students in the Middle School and Junior High School Years. U.S. Department of Education.

## **B. Ensuring/Supporting my Child's Success**

### **1. Brainstorm:**

#### **What can we do?**

Facilitator will write down all the ideas the parents mention.

### **2. Presentation:**

The ability to read and write form the base of the skills needed to attain a university education. We, as parents, need to take every opportunity to read with our children, to teach them counting, to do math. If we can't read, then tell them stories. It is important to talk to our children starting at a young age about going to college. Approach discussions about college and higher education as if it is common, something necessary, not special. Don't wait until your child is in high school to start motivating them towards higher education. Speak with your child's teachers, encourage them to talk to the students about college. Visit colleges and universities with your child, attend a graduation. Talk to them about friends and relatives that have gone to college, be it in this country or another country. If your child will be their first person in your family going to college, talk to them about how they are forging the path for the rest of the family

We can start with the following even with very young children:

(Distribute hand-out and review with parents.)

1. It's important to talk to infants and toddlers (0-2 years of age). This helps them learn to speak and develop their vocabulary. Point to things close by and describe them as you play.
2. Start reading to your child as early as 6 months. Listening to the same words over and over will help them develop their verbal skills. Reading to them is one of the best ways of helping them learn. Reading in any language is important. Don't worry if you can't read English well. (If you don't know how to read, or if you don't read well or only find books in English, then make up a story to go along with the pictures you see in the book. You can also tell them "Stories", these stories can be stories you heard as a child, can be about the days events or something funny that happened. You can also make a story book with your child, cut out pictures and write words describing them underneath.)
3. Use the sounds in words. Sing to reinforce playing with sounds. The sound of a human voice is critical to babies.
4. Take every opportunity to read to your children. When you are walking on the street, read signs with them, point out the letters and words in shops, restaurants, pharmacies, medical offices, vegetable stands, Laundromats, stop signs, the movies, etc. Read them the signs in the subway, teach them the ABCs in the street.
5. Teach them to count. Make up songs with numbers. Take every opportunity to count with your child. As you are picking plantains or apples count. Count people on the street, birds, plates, letters in the mailbox, etc.
6. Limit the amount of television your children watch but do take advantage of educational programs like Sesame Street, In Between the Lions and other educational videos and programs for kids.
7. Take books for your kids with you when you go out of the house. Give them a notebook and crayons to draw and color.

8. Show your children that reading is important. Let them see you reading the paper, a magazine, a book or novel.
9. Take advantage of community resources. Your local library has many educational programs, many have story times just for kids. There are also books in Spanish for your children to read. As relatives or friends to bring you books in Spanish when they come to visit from other countries. Also, book companies like Scholastic sell books in English and Spanish that are less expensive than in the bookstores.<sup>21</sup>

### **C. Tapping Into Available Resources**

#### **1. Brainstorm:**

**What do you think the term “Social Capital” means?**

#### **2. Present the term building on participants’ responses.**

“Social Capital ” is a term used to describe the non-financial resources that can help advancement and identification of other resources. Social capital refers to people one knows or friends of friends who have achieved economic and social advancement. These people might have contact that can help with work, accessing financial resources such as they might know which banks have the best interest rates, they might have information about which schools are best, how to access scholarships and financial aid. We might know someone who can help us through their experience. These contacts are as important as money and can help with social advancement. In addition to people who can help up, there are also resources in the community that can help us identify the help we may need.

#### **3. Identifying our Social Capital and Community Resources**

##### **Brainstorm:**

**Who are some of the people or what are some of the resources that are our "social capital"?**

Let’s make a list.

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<sup>21</sup> A Guide for Reading, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, Yes I Can.gov.

3. Distribute Higher Education Resource Sheet

<p>Alianza Dominicana Tel. 212-740-1960</p>	<p>ASPIRA Tel. 212- 564-6880</p>
<p>Columbia HeadStart Carmen Rodriguez, Director Tel. 212-923-5237</p>	<p>FYI, Fresh Youth Initiatives Andrew Rubinson, Director Tel. 212-569-7780, 212-781-1113</p>
<p>Hispanic Federation <a href="http://www.Hispanicfederation.org">http://www.Hispanicfederation.org</a></p>	<p>Hispanic Scholarship Fund <a href="http://www.hsf.net">http://www.hsf.net</a></p>
<p>Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans <a href="http://www.yesican.gov">http://www.yesican.gov</a></p>	<p>Inside Schools <a href="http://www.insideschools.org">http://www.insideschools.org</a></p>
<p>Institute for Higher Education Policy <a href="http://www.ihep.org">http://www.ihep.org</a></p>	<p>National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights <a href="http://www.nnirr.org">http://www.nnirr.org</a> Tel. 510-465-1984 ext. 304</p>
<p>Office of Higher Education, New York State <a href="http://www.highered.nysed.gov">http://www.highered.nysed.gov</a></p>	<p>Pew Hispanic Center <a href="http://www.pewhispanic.org/index.jsp">http://www.pewhispanic.org/index.jsp</a></p>
<p>Prep for Prep <a href="http://www.prepforprep.org">http://www.prepforprep.org</a></p>	<p>Public Health Solutions Lisa Maldonado, co-director Lmm9@earthlink.net 917-586-3260</p>
<p>Sponsors for Educational Opportunity Tel. 212-532 2454 <a href="http://www.SEO-NY.org">http://www.SEO-NY.org</a></p>	<p>The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid <a href="http://www.finaid.com">http://www.finaid.com</a></p>
<p>U.S. Department of Education P. O. Box 1398 Jessup, MD 20794-1398 Tel. 1-877-433-7827 <a href="http://www.ed.gov">http://www.ed.gov</a> For educational publications, <a href="mailto:edpubs@internet.ed.gov">edpubs@internet.ed.gov</a></p>	<p>Washington Heights Inwood Coalition Ana Lopez, Director of Parent Education Tel. 212-781-6722</p>

Homework: Do one or more of the activities on the list of “Things Parents Can Do Now” and make a note of how it went to share with the group.

**Sowing the Seeds Workshop**  
**Session 2: Creating a Cultural Need for Higher Education**

**Data on the Financial Benefits of a College Education**

In 1998:

1. Males who completed 4 years of college or more earned 98% more than males who only completed high school. *For example, a man with a high school education earns \$20,000 a year, he would earn \$39,600 with a four year college education.*
2. A woman who completed 4 years of college or more earned 84% more than males who only completed high school. *A woman with a four year college education would earn \$36,800 compared to a woman earning \$20,000 with only a high school education.*



# Sowing the Seeds Workshop

## Session 2: Creating a Cultural Need for Higher Education

### Things Parents Can Do Now

1. *It's important to talk to infants and toddlers (0-2 years of age.) This helps them learn to speak and develop their vocabulary. Point to things close by and describe them as you play.*
2. *Start reading to your child as early as 6 months. Listening to the same words over and over will help them develop their verbal skills. Reading to them is one of the best ways of helping them learn. Read in any language is important. Don't worry if you can't read English well. (If you don't know how to read, or if you don't read well or only find books in English, then make up a story to go along with the pictures you see in the book. You can also tell them "Stories"; these stories can be stories you heard as a child, can be about the days events or something funny that happened. You can also make a storybook with your child, cut out pictures and write words describing them underneath.)*
3. *Use the sounds in words. Sing to reinforce playing with sounds. The sound of a human voice is critical to babies.*
4. *Take every opportunity to read to your children. When you are walking on the street, read signs with them, point out the letters and words in shops, restaurants, pharmacies, medical offices, vegetable stands, Laundromats, stop signs, the movies, etc. Read them the signs in the subway teach them the ABCs in the street.*
5. *Teach them to count. Make up songs with numbers. Take every opportunity to count with your child. As you are picking plantains, apples count people on the street, birds, plates, letters in the mailbox, etc.*
6. *Limit the amount of television your children watch but do take advantage of educational programs like Sesame Street, In Between the Lions and other educational videos and programs for kids.*
7. *Take books for your kids with you when you go out of the house. Give them a notebook and crayons to draw and color.*
8. *Show your children that reading is important. Let them see you reading the paper, a magazine, a book or novel.*
9. *Take advantage of community resources. Your local library has many educational programs; many have story times just for kids. There are also books in Spanish for your children to read. As relatives or friends to bring you books in Spanish when they come to visit from other countries. In addition, book companies like Scholastic sell books in English and Spanish that are less expensive than in the bookstores.<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>22</sup> A Guide for Reading, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, Yes I Can.gov.

**Sowing the Seeds Workshop**  
**Session 2: Creating a Cultural Need for Higher Education**

**Community Resources**

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<p>Columbia HeadStart Carmen Rodriguez, Director Tel. 212-923-5237</p>	<p>FYI, Fresh Youth Initiatives Andrew Rubinson, Director Tel. 212-569-7780, 212-781-1113</p>
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<p>Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans <a href="http://www.yesican.gov">http://www.yesican.gov</a></p>	<p>Inside Schools <a href="http://www.insideschools.org">http://www.insideschools.org</a></p>
<p>Institute for Higher Education Policy <a href="http://www.ihep.org">http://www.ihep.org</a></p>	<p>National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights <a href="http://www.nnirr.org">http://www.nnirr.org</a> Tel. 510-465-1984 ext. 304</p>
<p>Office of Higher Education, New York State <a href="http://www.highered.nysed.gov">http://www.highered.nysed.gov</a></p>	<p>Pew Hispanic Center <a href="http://www.pewhispanic.org/index.jsp">http://www.pewhispanic.org/index.jsp</a></p>
<p>Prep for Prep <a href="http://www.prepforprep.org">http://www.prepforprep.org</a></p>	<p>Public Health Solutions Lisa Maldonado, Co-Director Lmm9@earthlink.net 917-586-3260</p>
<p>Sponsors for Educational Opportunity Tel. 212-532 2454 <a href="http://www.SEO-NY.org">http://www.SEO-NY.org</a></p>	<p>The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid <a href="http://www.finaid.com">http://www.finaid.com</a></p>
<p>U.S. Department of Education P. O. Box 1398 Jessup, MD 20794-1398 Tel. 1-877-433-7827 <a href="http://www.ed.gov">http://www.ed.gov</a> for educational publications, edpubs@internet.ed.gov</p>	<p>Washington Heights Inwood Coalition Ana Lopez, Director of Parent Education Tel. 212-781-6722</p>

## Session Three: College on My Mind

### Objectives

- To increase knowledge on high school courses and tests required.
- To increase knowledge on colleges and universities.
- To increase knowledge on the many sources of financial assistance

### Methods

Presentation, Question and answer

### Materials

Hand-outs: H.S. requirements, specialized NY high schools, colleges and universities, financial assistance

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## Ice Breaker-Review homework

### A. WHAT CLASSES SHOULD MY CHILD TAKE?

Although high school students apply to colleges in their senior year, they need to think about preparing for college applications from the first day of high school. It is important for your child to develop good study habits early. Always be sure that your child does his/her homework as early as primary school, this will help make doing homework a habit and this will help in creating a culture where education takes precedence. It is also important for you to oversee your child's academic progress. There is a new movement in education now to view education as a K-16 experience, not a K-12. The K-16 view on education includes access to higher education as part of the expected package. With this view for example, high school requirements for graduation are the same requirements required by colleges and universities. This is not always the case. So again it is important for us as parents to know the requirements needed for college/university entrance and ensure that our children are fulfilling these in high school regardless of the high school requirements for graduation.

Make sure that your child is taking at least the following over the four years of high school:

- 4 Years of English
- 4 Years of Math
- 1 Year of US History
- 1 Year US Government
- 1 Year Global History
- 1 Year other history or social science
- 3 Years of Science (Living Environment, Chemistry, Biology or Physics)
- 4 Years of a Foreign Language

Also, encourage your child to keep up with current events and to participate in after school activities, like sports, music, dance, yearbook and other clubs. Make sure his/her extracurricular activities do not interfere with his/her grades.

As you child reaches the eleventh and twelfth grades, he/she may have opportunities to take Advanced Placement (AP) classes. These classes prepare students for AP exams given at the end of each school year. If

your child receives a high enough score on these exams, he/she can receive college credit for the classes. High scores will also demonstrate to colleges that your child has the ability to succeed in college-level classes.

## **B. WHAT TESTS SHOULD MY CHILD TAKE?**

### **PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test/National Merit Scholar Qualifying Test)**

Traditionally, high school students will take this exam in the fall of their junior year (11<sup>th</sup> grade). Some advanced tenth graders will choose to take this exam as well. This exam is an abbreviated form of the SAT and allows students to become more familiar with standardized testing. This test measures critical reading, math problem-solving and writing skills. Although students cannot use the PSAT to get into college, they can use PSAT scores to win merit-based scholarships. If a student performs very well on the PSAT, they may become a National Merit Scholar. This distinction comes with scholarship money that can be used towards a student's undergraduate education. National Merit Finalists and Semi-finalists may also qualify for other scholarships offered by colleges and businesses.

### **SAT I: Reasoning (Scholastic Achievement Test)**

This test takes about three hours and is offered six times a year. It has two sections and the highest possible score is 1600. The first section is the verbal section and tests the student's reading comprehension, vocabulary and analytical skills. The second section is the math section and tests the student's mathematical and spatial reasoning. Each section is worth 800 points. Test-takers lose points for answering questions wrong, so it is not advantageous to just randomly answer questions.

### **SAT II: Subject Tests**

Some schools will require students to take one or more SAT II subject tests in addition to the regular SAT I. There are several subjects students can choose: US History and Social Studies, Spanish, French, English Reading and Comprehension, English Writing, Math, Chemistry, Biology, Physics. Students should determine which SAT IIs is required for their college applications.

### **ACT**

This test is very similar to the SAT. This exam also lasts about three hours, but it has four sections: English, Math, Reading and Science Reasoning. Unlike the SAT, test-takers do not lose points for answering incorrectly. So, it is advantageous to answer all questions. This test can be scored from the lowest score of 1 to the highest score of 36.

### **Which test should my child take?**

All colleges and universities will accept the SAT I. The more elite schools will also require one or more SAT II subject test(s). Only some schools will accept the ACT instead of the SAT I. If your child has the time, he/she can take both the ACT and the SAT I. Otherwise, the SAT will be sufficient for applying to college. It is important for your child to check the admission requirements for each school he/she is planning to apply to.

### **When should my child take the SAT/ACT?**

Generally, students should try to take the SAT I at the end of their junior year. It is more advantageous to take it at this time because if your child is not satisfied with his/her score, he/she can retake the exam in the fall before submitting college applications.

## What is a good score on the exam?

How good a score is will depend on what schools your child is applying to. During your child's tenth and eleventh grade, he/she should start researching colleges and universities they would like to attend. As your child is researching, he/she will find that schools generally will publish the average SAT or ACT scores and Grade Point Averages (GPAs) of their current students. Your child can use the averages to figure out what test score would make his/her application to the school competitive.

### Helpful Websites

- <http://www.collegeboard.com>
- <http://www.princetonreview.com>
- <http://www.petersons.com>

## C. Researching Colleges and Universities

Deciding what college to go to can be the most difficult, but most important decision for a teenager to make. As your child researches the different schools, here are some questions that will help them to decide what are some factors he/she needs to consider when choosing a school.

- **Where do I want to go to school?**

Urban, Suburban, Rural. Cold or warm climate.

- **What size school do I want to go to?**

Small	500-1,000 students
Medium	1000-10,000 students
Large	10,000+ students

- **What extracurricular activities do I want to participate in?**

- **What majors or academic programs am I interested in?**

- **What kind of a school do I want to go to?**

University – Generally a bigger school and offers Bachelors of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Masters and PhDs.

College – Generally smaller and often focuses on the liberal arts. Colleges offer Bachelors of Science, Bachelors of Arts and Masters programs. They do not offer PhDs.

Community College – Small schools offering only an Associates degree (2 years) and technical certifications. These school do not offer any higher level degrees.

### Public Colleges/Universities in New York City

Public colleges/universities are significantly cheaper than private schools. In the admissions process, these schools also prefer admitting New York residents over out-of-state applicants.

*CUNY (City University of New York)* <http://www.cuny.edu>

The CUNY system has 17 undergraduate colleges in New York City. Six are community colleges, which means the highest degree they grant students is an Associates Degree (2 years). The other 11 colleges offer Associates degrees and Bachelors degrees (4 years). Generally, the community colleges are easier to get into. After a student finishes his/her associates degree at a community college, they can transfer to another CUNY college to study two more years for a Bachelors degree.

A high school student can apply to several CUNY colleges with one application. At the end of the application form, a student can select up to six colleges he/she would like to attend. The student must list the schools in order of preference and he/she may be admitted up to three of the six colleges. The student only has to \$40 for one application to six schools.

When an applicant applies for college in the CUNY system, he/she can apply for the Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) or College Discovery program if they are meet the economically and educationally disadvantaged guidelines. The guidelines can be found on the CUNY website. The SEEK program is available at the four year colleges and the College Discovery program is available at the two year colleges. These two programs help students who would otherwise be unable to get into college, gain admission, and provide academic support to ensure they succeed in school.

The CUNY application deadline for fall admission is March 1<sup>st</sup>. However, the admissions committee will consider applications after the deadline if there is still space in the schools.

#### Public Colleges/Universities in New York State

*SUNY (State University of New York)* <http://www.suny.edu>

The SUNY system has 64 undergraduate colleges/universities in New York state. The majority of the schools are colleges while the rest are universities and community colleges. Like the CUNY application, a student can apply to several schools using one application. However, the student is responsible for paying an application fee for each school he/she applies to (unless he/she qualifies for fee waivers). That means if a student applies to 3 SUNY schools, he/she will have to pay \$40 per school, for a total of \$120.

There is no formal SUNY application deadline. However, to maximize the chances of getting in and getting financial aid, students should apply by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### Private Colleges/Universities in New York State

Although private schools cost more, they may also offer more scholarship money. Do not avoid applying to private schools because of cost. Apply and then see how much financial aid the school is willing to give your child. You may be pleasantly surprised!

Students who also meet income guidelines may enter New York State private schools through the HEOP (Higher Education Opportunity Program). This program helps students from economically and academically disadvantaged background enter competitive private colleges and provides academic support during school. The program also provides career counseling to help ease the transition between college and the working world. Students admitted through this program are required to attend a summer pre-freshman program that helps students improve their basic math, reading and writing skills. They also have opportunities to access tutoring and career planning workshops.

For more information about the HEOP program, please go to the following website:

[http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/COLLEGIATE/introduction\\_to\\_heop.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/COLLEGIATE/introduction_to_heop.htm)

The application deadline for most private college/universities is between mid-December to March 1<sup>st</sup>. Please check with each school for their specific application deadline.

#### Helpful Websites

- <http://www.cuny.edu> (CUNY website)
- <http://www.suny.edu> (SUNY website)

- <http://www.princetonreview.com> (Information on most US colleges and universities)
- <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm> (Deciding on a college)

## **D. How do I pay for College? - Financial Aid 101/**

### **What forms do I need to fill out?**

**FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) – This application can be found in every high school’s guidance counselor’s office. This free application can be completed and submitted anytime after January 1st of the year your child will enter college. On the form, you will need to provide information about your income and assets. In order to qualify for any federal financial aid, your child must submit a FAFSA. This application can be found in any guidance counselor’s office or at the FAFSA website (<http://www.fafsa.org>)

**CSS** (College Scholarship Service) – This application is required by many private schools in addition to the FAFSA. Unlike the FAFSA, there is a fee that must be paid to submit this application. This application can be found in any guidance counselor’s office or from the college board website (<http://www.collegeboard.com>)

Many private colleges and universities also have their own supplemental financial aid forms too. Please check with each school your child is applying to for specific guidelines.

### **What types of financial aid are available?**

**Scholarships/Grants** – This a form of aid that helps students pay for their education. These do NOT have to be repaid. Generally, scholarships are given to students who have certain qualifications (good grades, community service, athletics, artistic talent). However, there are also many need-based scholarships. These type of scholarships are given to students based on need demonstrated by their family’s income. Scholarships and grants can be given to a student from the school they are planning to attend or by an outside organization. The best way to search for scholarships is through the fastweb website: <http://www.fastweb.com>.

New York State offers the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for New York State residents. If New York State residents attend a college/university in New York State and meet income guidelines, they can qualify for grant money from the state to help pay for college. Most schools will automatically send NYS students an application form.

Nationwide, the Pell Grant and the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) are offered to students who show financial need. Students are automatically considered for these two grants when they submit the FAFSA.

**Loans** – This is a form of aid that must be repaid, with interest. There are several types of loans. There are Student Loans, Parent Loans, and Private Loans.

### *Student Loans*

Most students rely on federal loans because they have lower interest rates. There are three types of federal loans for students. The first type is a Subsidized Stafford Loan. With this loan, the government will pay the interest while the student is in school. A student must show financial need to qualify for this loan. Once the student graduates, he/she will have to pay back the loan plus interest. The amount of money a student can borrow depends on what year of school he/she is in. Currently, freshmen can borrow up to \$2,625, sophomores can borrow up to \$3,500 and juniors and seniors can borrow up to \$5,500.

The second type of loan is the Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, where the student is responsible for paying the interest, while the he/she is in school. However, the student can defer the payments on the interest until after graduation. All students, regardless of need can qualify for this type of loan.

The third type of student loan is the Perkins Loan. This loan is awarded to students who demonstrate exceptional financial need. It is a subsidized loan and the interest rate will always be 5%. There is a 10-year repayment period. Your school will determine the amount of the loan, however, the limit is \$3,000 per year. Again, the student is required to repay the loan after graduation.

#### D. Parent Loans

Parent Loan on Undergraduate Students (PLUS) loans let parents borrow money to help their children pay for college. The interest rates are variable and capped at 9%. Repayment starts 60 days after the money is given to the school and the repayment period is 10 years. Unlike the student loans, the parents are responsible for making sure the money is repaid.

#### E. Private Loans

If a family is still unable to cover all college costs with the federal loans, they can apply for a private loan through a bank. However, private loans usually will cost more in fees and interest rates. It is always best to try to apply for as many federal loans as possible before looking for private loans.

#### *Work Study Jobs*

Many financial aid packages include work-study money. If a student qualifies for work-study money, then the student is eligible to apply for a work-study job. A work-study job will pay a student a certain amount of money for working and the student is expected to use the money to help pay for expenses. Students cannot work more than 20 hours a week.

#### Helpful Websites

- <http://www.fafsa.org> (FAFSA application)
- <http://www.collegeboard.com> (Database of scholarships and CSS application)
- <http://www.fastweb.com> (Database of scholarships)
- <http://www.hispanicscholarships.com>
- <http://www.collegeview.com>

## **Sowing the Seeds Workshops**

### **Session 3: College on My Mind**

New York City specialized high schools. These high schools require entrance exams or artistic auditions. These are the top ranking high schools in New York City.

- \*\*Bronx High School of Science
- \*\*Brooklyn Technical High School
- High School for Math, Engineering, and Science at the City High School of American Studies at Lehman College
- Queens High School for the Sciences at York College
- \*\*\*Stuyvesant High School
- Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts

#### Helpful Websites

- <http://www.nycenet.edu>

**Sowing the Seeds Workshops  
Session 3: College on My Mind**

**What High School Courses Does My Child Need to Take to Go to  
College?**

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## **Sowing the Seeds Workshop Session 3: College on My Mind**

### **College Admissions Tests**

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The CUNY system has 17 branches in New York City. <http://www.cuny.edu>
- ***State colleges and universities in New York State***  
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### **How Do I Pay for College?**

#### **What forms do I need to fill out?**

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